

STEPPING STONES ACADEMY

***Where All Children Can Learn and
Our Teachers Make the Difference!***

Family Handbook



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MUSTANG STRONG!

*Si usted está en necesidad de un intérprete para revisar el manual, por favor póngase en contacto con
Dedre Stewart-Alliger al 623-465-4910.*

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WELCOME TO STEPPING STONES ACADEMY!

Where All Children Can Learn and Our Teachers Make The Difference!

It is with great enthusiasm I welcome you to Stepping Stones Academy! Whether you are a new or returning family, I know we are going to have an awesome year! Stepping Stones Academy offers something for everyone. For parents, this is a safe and protective environment on a small, friendly campus where students receive a quality academic education. For students, Stepping Stones Academy is more than a school – it is a place where everyone knows who they are, cares about them, and works together to achieve success!

The idea of Stepping Stones Academy started in 1997 when I had a dream of starting a small, family-friendly school which offered a high academic program. I dreamed of a campus where all children were able to learn in a safe and secure environment surrounded by caring and capable educators. This dream became a vision --- a vision that led to the opening of Stepping Stones Academy on September 7, 1999. All people involved in Stepping Stones Academy share this vision --- a vision that fulfills not only this dream, but also provides children with life-long skills to help them become productive and responsible citizens.

The Family Handbook contains the policies and procedures governing Stepping Stones Academy. I ask each family to review these guidelines and contact me with questions. As we move forth, I welcome you once more to Stepping Stones Academy. Thank you for sharing your children with us!

Ms. Stewart-Alliger, School Principal
MUSTANG STRONG!

MISSION STATEMENT

We envision an environment that provides academic, social and personal skills students need to become confident and responsible citizens. We believe learning should be based on individualized, relevant activities and frequent assessment to monitor student progress and achievement. We promote high student expectations with consideration and respect for all individuals; thereby, developing life-long learners and productive members of society.

The Family Handbook and a list of employees with contact information are available on Stepping Stones Academy's website at www.steppingstonesacademy.org. Employees' Resumes and Fingerprint Clearance Cards are available in the School Office.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PARENT COPY – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

I acknowledge the following:

- I have received a copy of the Stepping Stones Academy Family Handbook.
- This Handbook contains important information about my child's rights and responsibilities as a student at Stepping Stones Academy.
- Included in this Handbook is information about Stepping Stones Academy's expectations for student conduct and student discipline, including the circumstances under which Stepping Stones Academy may suspend or expel students.
- This Handbook is available on Stepping Stones Academy's website, which may be found at www.stepsstonesacademy.org.
- I may schedule an appointment with the Principal if I have questions about the information contained in this Handbook.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

A. Custody of Students

Parents shall be given reasonable access to their students at Stepping Stones Academy and to their students' school records. Exceptions will be made in cases where there are court orders restricting the right of one parent to access a student and/or the student's official school records. It is the responsibility of the parent who has a court order restricting the rights of the other parent to notify Stepping Stones Academy of the conditions of the court order and to provide Stepping Stones Academy with a copy.

B. Enrollment Criteria

The Principal of Stepping Stones Academy determines if students are admitted in accordance with the following criteria: Stepping Stones Academy has the capacity to serve the student without adversely impacting the educational opportunities for students currently enrolled. Factors to be considered in making this determination include, but are not limited to the following:

- Physical capacity of the school building and classrooms
- Availability of staff members (i.e., teachers, related service providers) and other resources
- Capacity in relevant grade-levels, classrooms, and special programs
- Whether the student's admission violates the provisions of a court order.

C. Enrollment Procedure

Stepping Stones Academy has an open-enrollment policy in accordance with A.R.S. § 15-184. All students are welcome to apply for enrollment. There is no tuition or fee charged for attending. Stepping Stones Academy has the right to review the student's educational records and, pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-184(J), may refuse to enroll a student who has been expelled or is in the process of being expelled from another educational institution. Stepping Stones Academy does not discriminate in its admissions or enrollment practices on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, gender, income level, disability, English proficiency or athletic ability.

All students who submit a timely application will be enrolled, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program or class/grade-level. An enrollment packet shall not be considered complete until all paperwork is completed in accordance with current state law (See A.R.S. §15-828 and A.R.S. §15-872). Students continuing from one year to the next will be required to complete Intent to Enroll form by the designated date in order to receive priority enrollment. Failure to disclose accurate, complete, and truthful information on the enrollment application may result in revocation of acceptance of open enrollment or removal from enrollment.

Admission priorities for Stepping Stones Academy are as follows:

1. Students who are currently enrolled and who have submitted a timely Intent to Enroll form indicating they will be returning
2. Students returning to Stepping Stones Academy for a subsequent school year
3. Students whose siblings already attend Stepping Stones Academy
4. Students whose parents or grandparents are employees of Stepping Stones Academy and/or members of the Stepping Stones Academy Governing Board.

If remaining capacity is insufficient to enroll students submitting timely applications, Stepping Stones Academy selects students through an equitable selection process such as a lottery, with preference to siblings of a student selected through such process. Students who submitted a timely application but who were not admitted due to lack of capacity may request to be placed on a waiting list and contacted should capacity exist at a later date. Students whose applications are submitted after the Open Enrollment timeframe shall be admitted only if capacity exists at the time their application is submitted. In its contract with the AZ State Board for Charter Schools, the total campus enrollment for students in K-8th grades is 225 students.

D. Emergency Card

Each student must have an emergency card on file in the School Office. The card lists the names of people to contact in case of a student's illness or injury. It is important the information on this card remain current. Parents are responsible for updating this information during the year.

E. Immunizations

Stepping Stones Academy follows AZ state law (A.R.S. § 15-872) for required immunizations. Before a student attends school an immunization form must be on file in the School Office. Needed information includes the student's name and birthdate, dates and dosages of the immunizations, and name of the physician/health agency that dispensed the immunizations. The required immunizations include:

- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) – Two doses
- Hepatitis B – Three doses
- DTP (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) – Four or five doses (Students who receive the fourth dose after their fourth birthday do not need additional doses to enter Kindergarten.)
- Polio – Four doses (Students who receive the third dose after their fourth birthdays do not need additional doses to enter Kindergarten.)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) – One dose (Students who had chicken pox do not need this vaccine; however, a completed varicella survey must be on file in the School Office.)
- Td or Tdap Booster – One dose required 10 years after the last of Dta/DTP/DT/Td
- MCV4 (Meningococcal) – One dose required at 11 years of age.

The Department of Education allows for immunization exemptions for reasons of religion, medical, and personal beliefs. Families wishing to be exempt must have a letter on file in the School Office. For medical exemptions, a physician-signed document must be on file. Students with immunization exemptions may not attend school if an outbreak of an illness occurs, and the days missed count in the student's total number of days absent.

F. Insurance/Injuries/Illnesses

Stepping Stones Academy requests parents contact the school if a student contracts chicken pox, pink eye, lice, or strep throat. Any student who becomes ill or is injured during the school day reports to the School Office. Parents may need to pick up the student from school. For a life threatening illness or injury, local emergency medical authorities are immediately called. Expenses for these services are the responsibility of the parents. Parents are responsible for insurance coverage for a student's medical and dental costs due to injuries occurring during school activities.

G. Hearing and Vision Screenings

Stepping Stones Academy contracts with an outside health care provider to conduct an annual vision and hearing screening test. Guidelines recommended by the AZ Department of Health Services Vision Program and AZ Department of Health Hearing Conservation Program are followed. The vision and hearing tests are given to students in Kindergarten, first, second, fourth, and sixth grades; students in the special education program; students with a 504 Accommodation Plan; and students retained from the previous school year. The health care provider contacts parents of students who do not pass one or both of the screening tests.

H. Withdrawal Policy

Parents withdrawing their students from Stepping Stones Academy before the end of the school year notify the School Office and sign an official withdrawal form. Students are responsible for returning all textbooks, library books, and other school materials to the School Office in the same condition as the students received them. If books or materials are damaged or not returned, parents are responsible for the replacement cost. The Principal determines the amount of the replacement cost based on the value of the damaged/lost item.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, or disability. Stepping Stones Academy provides a nondiscriminatory learning and work environment ensuring all students and staff are free from unlawful discrimination. A lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in the education programs of the school. This commitment extends to all school programs and school sponsored events. A full copy of the grievance procedure is available from the Principal.

The following individual has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Dedre Stewart-Alliger, Principal
35812 N. 7th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85086
623-465-4910 ddsa@steppingstonesacademy.org

In the event a student experiences discrimination, the student should report the incident to the Principal within ten (10) school days. The inability of a student to speak English should not prevent the student from reporting a violation. Every reasonable measure to interpret a non-English speaker's concerns will be taken. Any person who believes he/she has been the subject of or is a witness to discrimination or harassment shall immediately notify any staff member or the Principal. Complaints that cannot be reported immediately must be reported within thirty (30) calendar days. The school employee receiving the report or complaint, or who personally witnesses discrimination or harassment, shall immediately inform the Principal of the report or complaint and complete a Statement of Facts form. The Principal investigates the incident personally, or designates another school employee to conduct the investigation at the Principal's discretion. The alleged victim or witness is required to complete a Statement of Facts form, or if a Statement of Facts form is not available, set forth in another written form all information relevant to the complaint, including a description of the conduct alleged (i.e., specific words, statements, or actions), names of perpetrator and victim, places, times, and other witnesses. The Principal shall contact an outside agency (i.e., Child Protective Services or law enforcement) as required by statute or when otherwise deemed appropriate by the Principal.

In all cases, regardless of whether a violation of policy is found or a complainant no longer wishes to pursue his/her complaint, the investigation shall conclude with a written investigation report. The report shall include findings, conclusions and any possible recommendations, including any discipline referral resulting from the alleged conduct, to be prepared by the individual who conducts the investigation. The report shall be drafted as soon as possible after the investigation is closed.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Regular school attendance is a key to student success. Students who are absent miss valuable classroom instruction, including hands-on experiences, discussions, and opportunities to strengthen relationships that form a classroom community. In order for students to learn, they must first be at school. Arizona state law requires students to attend school and that parents ensure their students attend. Arizona's truancy laws authorize consequences for not only the truant student, but also for the student's parents.

A. Absence Policy

Stepping Stones Academy's school day is from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Students are dismissed at 11:30 a.m. on early dismissal days. If a student is absent, parents should call the School Office by 8:30 a.m. to report the absence. Students who are absent from school on the same day as a Stepping Stones Academy activity may not attend the activity without prior approval from the Principal.

Stepping Stones Academy does not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. An absence is an absence. Arizona state law defines an absence as attending school less than 5 ¼ hours per school day. Children absent for more than 1 ¾ hours (105 minutes) in one day are considered absent. On early dismissal/half days children must attend the full time to be considered in attendance.

Students absent more than the state-allowed 10% of the school year (18 days) are considered to have excessive absences and are truant as defined by A.R.S. § 15-803. As per state law, students absent for more than 18 days may be reported to a truancy officer. If a student is absent for 10 consecutive days, per state requirements, the student may be withdrawn from Stepping Stones Academy.

Students are expected to complete assignments and tests missed during an absence. Students are allowed two school days for each day absent to complete assignments with the total not to exceed ten days. Students absent on the day of a test or due date of a project are responsible for completing the test/project upon returning to school. The student is responsible for missing assignments and returning them to the teacher in the required amount of time.

B. Late Arrival Policy

Children arriving after 8:00 a.m. are considered as a late arrival. Doctor's and dentist's appointments are considered as excused late arrivals. All other reasons for arriving late are considered unexcused.

Children arriving within 1 ¾ hours (105 minutes) after 8:00 a.m. are considered as a late arrival. Children arriving later than 1 ¾ hours are considered as absent. Children are allowed two unexcused late arrivals per quarter. Children acquiring three or more unexcused late arrivals are required to make-up the time as determined by the Principal.

C. Early Departure Policy

Children departing from school before the 3:00 p.m. dismissal time are considered as early departures. Doctor's and dentist's appointments are considered as excused early departures. All other reasons for early departures are considered unexcused.

Children leaving within 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours (105 minutes) from dismissal times are considered as early departures. Children leaving earlier than 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours before dismissal time are considered as absent. Children are allowed two unexcused early departures per quarter. Children acquiring three or more unexcused early departures are required to make-up the time as determined by the Principal.

Students may earn the Perfect Attendance Award each month, quarter, and year. To earn the monthly award students must attend school each day with no more than one unexcused late arrival and one unexcused early departure in the month. To earn the quarterly award students must attend school each day with no more than two unexcused late arrivals and two unexcused early departures in the quarter. To earn the year award students must receive the Perfect Attendance Award for all four quarters. Excused late arrivals and early departures do not affect the awards.

D. Arrival and Departure Procedure

Transportation of students to and from school is the responsibility of the parents. Stepping Stones Academy has two driveways. The north driveway is to enter campus, and the south driveway is to exit campus. At no time are vehicles allowed to park in front of the school along 7th Street. This includes during non-school hours.

Drivers may use the driveway in front of the School Office to drop-off and pick-up students. Parents are not to get out of their vehicles or leave their vehicles parked in this area. Drivers wishing to leave their vehicles are to park in the parking lot. Parents are not to visit with people on the sidewalks while in this parking area, including teachers or other parents. If parents wish to visit, they are to park in the parking area.

Students should not arrive to school earlier than 7:30 a.m. unless they are attending Stepping Stones Academy's before-school care program. Students arriving at school between 7:30-8:00 a.m. report to the Courtyard. Students are to be picked up at the end of the day by 3:20 p.m. unless they are attending Stepping Stones Academy's after-school care program or another extra-curricular activity. Students waiting to be picked-up at dismissal time remain near the School Office in designated areas.

Students may ride their bicycles or walk to school. Skateboards, roller blades, scooters, golf carts, dirt bikes, and other similar types of vehicles are not allowed on campus. Students enter and exit campus by using the pedestrian gate at the painted crosswalk on 7th Street. Students walk their bicycles to and from 7th Street and the bike rack. Upon arriving at school, students report to the Courtyard. Bicycles are to only be parked in the bike rack. Students are not allowed to ride their bicycles around campus or in the parking area. Stepping Stones Academy is not responsible for damaged or stolen bicycles.

At departure time, students riding their bicycles or walking wait in the designated areas near the School Office for the crossing guard to escort them across 7th Street. Students are to follow the directions of the crossing guard. Students may not ride their bicycles or walk home during the school day, even with written parent permission.

E. Closed Campus Policy

Stepping Stones Academy is a closed campus. Students may not leave campus during school hours without adult supervision by authorized personnel. Students are released only to their parents or authorized persons listed in the registration packet or on the student's emergency card. If students are to leave with someone other than the listed people, the parents must provide the School Office with a written note giving the student permission to leave with the designated person. Verbal authorization is not acceptable. Students leaving campus without written parent authorization are subject to disciplinary consequences and may be reported to the law enforcement authorities.

F. Chronic Health Problems

Stepping Stones Academy provides continuing learning for students with chronic health problems while they are absent from school, as well as provides for the integration of students with chronic health problems into the regular education program as much as possible according to A.R.S. § 15-346(C). Parents are to contact the School Office if they anticipate their student's chronic illness may cause intermittent or extended absences. Medical Certification of Chronic Health Conditions forms are available and must be completed annually by the student's health care provider.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICIES

A. Academic Standards Requirement

Stepping Stones Academy promotes high academic standards and challenges students to meet and exceed the AZ College and Career Readiness Standards. Parents are updated frequently about students' academic progress, and, as required by law, Stepping Stones Academy shares information about students' academic performance with the AZ Department of Education and AZ State Board for Charter Schools.

- Students in K-8th grades earn letter grades of A, B, C, D, or F in academic subjects. Letter grades are recorded on the report card at the end of each quarter. At the end of the school year, the original report card is placed in the student's cumulative file. The report card is the official record of the student's grades.
- Students are required to earn a minimum C grade average in each class by the end of the year to be promoted.
- Students transferring to Stepping Stones Academy during the year transfer their academic grades from their previous school. The letter grades are calculated into the total grade average and point totals. A student transferring during the year must earn the required minimum C grade average in each graded class by the end of the year to be promoted. A student enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy fifteen or more school days earns letter grades from Stepping Stones Academy.
- Students not meeting the minimum C grade average in one or two classes may enroll in the Stepping Stones Academy summer school program. Students completing summer school classes and earning a minimum of a C in each class are promoted to the next grade level. Students not enrolling in the Stepping Stones Academy summer school program or not earning the required C grade are not promoted. Students earning an F in one class all four quarters are not eligible for summer school and are not promoted.

B. Grading Scale

Students earn letter grades based on a percentage grading scale. The grading scale is as follows:

90% - 100%	A	60% - 69%	D
80% - 89%	B	59% & lower	F
70% - 79%	C		

Grades are calculated with a 4.0 point system. Each letter grade is worth the standard point value of:

4.0 points	A	1.0 point	D
3.0 points	B	0.0 points	F
2.0 points	C		

To calculate the total number of points per class, the points for each quarter are added together. Students must earn a minimum of eight points per class by the end of the year to be promoted.

C. Promotion and Retention

The decision whether or not to retain a student is made after a careful review of all data related to the student's progress and in close cooperation and communication with the student's parents. The following data is reviewed as part of the decision-making process:

- Student's academic progress and earned grade average (ie: 70% C)
- Attendance records
- Formal and informal assessment results
- Any other pertinent information.

When considering promotion or retention for a student receiving special education services, the teacher and IEP team will consider each of the following factors:

- Extent of achievement of goals and objectives as stated in the student's IEP
- Extent of competency of regular curriculum objectives in mathematics, reading and language.

Grade level placement is a part of a student's educational program, and promotion/retention is a part of a change in placement determined by the student's IEP team.

D. Student Assessments

- All Arizona public schools, including charter schools, are required to properly administer state-mandated assessments. Students participate in state-mandated testing beginning in third grade. A copy of the test results is placed in the student's cumulative file and provided to the student's parents. Additional school tests may be administered, depending on students' grade-level, to assess students' academic abilities.
- Report Cards – The report card is the official record representing the student's academic performance. Reports cards are issued at the end of each quarter and a copy for the parents is sent home. At the end of the year, the original report card is placed in the student's cumulative file and a copy is given to the parents.

- Parent-Teacher Conferences – Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled at the end of first quarter and halfway through third quarter. The student, parent, teacher, and Principal may also request conferences during the year.

E. Assignment Policies

Stepping Stones Academy views schoolwork, whether completed in class or at home, as a way to assist students with mastery of concepts.

- Class Supplies - Stepping Stones Academy provides a Suggested School Supply List on its website. Students are asked to have these items before beginning school and replenish the supplies as needed. All items brought to school must include school-appropriate words, numbers, and pictures. If families require assistance in obtaining the required items, assistance is available or the items may be provided at no cost. Please contact the Principal for more information.
- Student Agendas - Students in 2nd-8th grades need a Stepping Stones Academy Agenda. Agendas are available from the School Office. Students are required to write their assignments in the Agenda each day. Teachers check the Agendas on a daily basis.
- Homework Amount – Students are to expect homework Monday - Friday. The amount of homework depends upon the grade level and class activities. Students are expected to read and practice math skills each night.
- Assignment Due Dates – Assignments are to be completed and turned-in on the due date by 8:00 a.m. If assignments are not turned-in on time, assignments are considered "late." Students are deducted points for late assignments. Students absent from school are allowed two days for each day absent to complete assignments not to exceed ten days, excluding tests and class projects. If a student is absent on the day of a test/project, the test/project is due when the student returns, unless alternative arrangements are made with the teacher.

SECTION 504 SERVICES

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no otherwise qualified individual with disabilities, shall solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity in Stepping Stones Academy.

The law also requires that facilities be readily accessible for use by individuals with disabilities. Stepping Stones Academy complies with the requirement of this law. The Principal, Dedre Stewart-Alliger, serves as the Section 504 Coordinator for Stepping Stones Academy, and questions concerning the law may be addressed to the Principal by calling 623-465-4910.

Any person who believes he/she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of disability by a student, staff member, or third party may file a grievance under this procedure. Stepping Stones Academy prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a grievance or cooperates in the investigation of a grievance. Grievances should be submitted to the Section 504 Coordinator within 60 days of the date the person filing the grievance becomes aware of the alleged discriminatory action. A complaint should be in writing, containing the name and address of the person filing it. The complaint must state the problem or action alleged to be discriminatory and

the remedy or relief sought. The Section 504 Coordinator or her/his designee shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. This investigation may be informal, but it must be thorough, affording all interested persons an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the complaint, including the opportunity to present witnesses. The Section 504 Coordinator will maintain the files and records of Stepping Stones Academy relating to such grievances. The Section 504 Coordinator will complete the investigation and issue a written decision on the grievance no later than 30 days after its filing, unless extenuating circumstances require an extension of the 30 day timeline. In such a case, the Section 504 Coordinator will communicate with the complainant concerning the need for an extension. The person filing the grievance may appeal the decision of the Section 504 Coordinator by writing to the Governing Board of Stepping Stones Academy within 15 days of receiving the Section 504 Coordinator's decision. The Governing Board shall issue a written decision in response to the appeal no later than 30 days after its filing.

If it is determined discrimination occurred, Stepping Stones Academy shall take the appropriate steps to prevent the recurrence of discrimination and correct the discriminatory effects on the complainant and others. Stepping Stones Academy shall maintain confidentiality as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The availability and use of this grievance procedure does not prevent a person from filing a complaint of discrimination on the basis of disability with the U. S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Stepping Stones Academy will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that disabled persons are provided other accommodations, if needed, to participate in this grievance process.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Stepping Stones Academy makes available special education and related services to all eligible students. The teachers are trained to teach to diverse learning styles and ability levels. Stepping Stones Academy believes in close collaboration between staff, general education teachers, special education teachers, and parents. For more information about Stepping Stones Academy's special education programs, please contact the Principal.

A. Child Find

In compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Stepping Stones Academy is required to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students who enroll in Stepping Stones Academy.

All new students are screened within 45 days of their initial enrollment. The classroom teacher completes the screening after reviewing the student's abilities in the areas of vision and hearing; cognitive or academic; communication; motor; social or behavioral; and adaptive development. If any concerns are noted, the student is referred for additional help.

B. Procedural Safeguards

Parents of a student with a disability or suspected of having a disability are entitled to a Procedural Safeguards Notice, which explains the rights of the parent and student to ensure they are protected through the special education process. A copy of the procedural safeguards notice is offered to parents once annually and in specific instances; however, copies are always available by contacting the School Office.

C. Referral

Students are referred to the Student Study Team (SST) when interventions developed by the teacher and/or parents have proven unsuccessful. The SST typically consists of the student's parents, Principal, and teachers, including the special education teacher and classroom teacher. The SST generates additional intervention ideas to try in the classroom. As the teacher tries the interventions, the student's progress is charted. If the interventions are unsuccessful and sufficient progress is not made, the team will determine if a 504 Accommodation Plan or a special education evaluation is needed. Before any testing is scheduled, written parental consent is obtained.

D. Evaluation

A special education evaluation will be considered after the SST has made a referral and suspects that the student may have a disability. Before the evaluation can be conducted, informed parental consent is required. Stepping Stones Academy contracts with private specialists to provide needed services for students requiring related services. Services include but are not limited to speech therapy, and occupational therapy. Results from the evaluation are shared with the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET), which consists of the student's parents, Principal, classroom teacher, school psychologist, special education teacher, and any other needed personnel (i.e., speech therapist, occupational therapist, etc.). The results of the evaluation determine a student's eligibility for special education services, but do not automatically qualify a student for these services. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) sets out the rules and regulations regarding eligibility and the determination of whether a student qualifies for special education services. By law, Stepping Stones Academy must follow these rules and regulations.

E. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

If it is determined by the MET that the student qualifies for special education services under the definition and guidelines of the IDEA, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be written for the student, setting out specific goals, accommodations, services, and placement. The IEP must be reviewed at least annually.

STUDENT AWARDS

Stepping Stones Academy hosts assemblies to recognize students for monthly, quarterly, and all-year awards. Students receive a certificate for monthly and quarterly awards and a medallion for all-year awards. Students must attend Stepping Stones Academy for the entire month to earn monthly awards, the full quarter to earn quarterly awards, and the entire year to earn all-year awards.

A. Monthly Awards

- Literacy Achievement Award – The Literacy Achievement Award recognizes students reading 300 or more minutes during the month outside of the school day. Students complete the calendar and return the calendar to school by the deadline. Students must attend Stepping Stones Academy for the full month to earn this award.
- Fast Facts Award – The Fast Facts Award recognizes students practicing math skills 300 or more minutes during the month outside of the school day. Students complete the calendar and return the calendar to school by the deadline. Students must attend Stepping Stones Academy for the full month to earn this award.

- Perfect Attendance Award – The Perfect Attendance Award recognizes students attending school every day of the month with no more than one unexcused late arrival and one unexcused early departure. Excused late arrivals and early departures do not affect this award. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the full month to receive this award.

B. Quarterly Awards

- Perfect Attendance Award – Students earn the Perfect Attendance Award by attending school every day in the quarter with no more than two unexcused late arrivals and two unexcused early departures. Excused late arrivals and early departures do not affect this award. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the full quarter to earn this award.
- Honor Roll Award - Students earn the Honor Roll Award when they earn A's and B's in every graded class in the quarter. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the entire quarter to receive this award.
- Academy Award – Students earn the Academy Award when they earn A's in every graded class during the quarter. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the entire quarter to receive this award.
- Mustang Award – The Mustang Award is given every quarter to two students from each classroom. Students are selected based on exhibiting the character traits on a consistent basis (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship), demonstrating appropriate conduct, displaying a positive attitude, following campus rules, and showing high and/or improved academic performance. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the full quarter to earn this award.

C. All-Year Awards

- All-Year Literacy Achievement Award - Students earn the All-Year Literacy Achievement Award by earning the monthly Literacy Achievement Award each month of the school year. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the entire year to receive this award.
- All-Year Fast Facts Award - Students earn the All-Year Fast Facts Award by earning the monthly Fast Facts Award each month of the school year. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the entire year to receive this award.
- All-Year Perfect Attendance Award – Students earn the Perfect Attendance Award by earning the Perfect Attendance Award each quarter of the school year. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the entire year to earn this award.
- All-Year Honor Roll - Students earn the All-Year Honor Roll Award when they earn A's and B's in each of the four quarters. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the entire year to receive this award.
- All-Year Academy Award - Students earn the All-Year Academy Award when they earn A's in each of the four quarters. Students must be enrolled at Stepping Stones Academy for the entire year to receive this award.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Stepping Stones Academy is a family-oriented campus! Parent involvement is enthusiastically welcomed and very much appreciated! Parents are valuable members of the school community, and Stepping Stones Academy thanks all of the families for their participation and support.

A. Mustang Volunteer Parents Group (M.V.P.'s)

The Stepping Stones Academy parent group is known as Mustang Volunteer Parents (M.V.P.). All parents are members of the group just by being parents of students at Stepping Stones Academy. Participation is free, and there is not a formal membership process. Parents are encouraged to attend the monthly M.V.P. meetings and provide ideas for school events.

The M.V.P. group plays a vital role in the school's success. Parents attending the meetings serve as liaisons between other parents, staff members, and Principal. Parents also help with campus events (i.e., Picture Day, Field Day), assist with fundraisers (i.e., Read-a-Thon, Raffles and Silent Auctions), serve as chairpersons and committee members for campus activities (i.e., Book Fair, Mustang County Fair), donate supplies and food for school activities (i.e., Micro businesses, snacks for class parties), and provide community service to the school (i.e., organizing Mustang Clothing Exchange, helping at lunch).

The M.V.P. group meets monthly, August through May. The meeting dates are published on the school's website and in Campus Highlights, the weekly newsletter. Parents wishing to be actively involved but unable to attend meetings are to contact the School Office for more information.

B. Homeroom Parent

Each classroom has a Homeroom Parent, who serves as a liaison between the teacher and other parents in the class. Parents interested in serving as Homeroom Parent are asked to contact the teacher at the beginning of the year. The responsibilities of the Homeroom Parent depend upon the grade level and needs of the teacher. Examples of responsibilities are organizing parent volunteers for class parties, contacting parents about needed supplies, and attending M.V.P. meetings.

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

Stepping Stones Academy's uniform policy is designed to help foster a professional environment in the school and prepare the students for the professional world. The uniform policy is also designed to create a safer and more pleasant school environment, encourage and support positive peer relations, avoid inappropriate attire at school, and support the school's philosophy of, "School is the job of the students, and students are expected to dress appropriately for this work and learning environment ... an environment that provides academic, social, and personal skills students need to become life-long learners and responsible and productive citizens."

The uniform policy is in effect each school day. Students are to wear the school uniform to school and all school-sponsored activities. Students will be notified in advance if the uniform policy is altered for a special event. The Principal has the authority and is responsible for making final decisions about issues relating to the uniform policy. Students who are consistently out of school uniform may be suspended by the Principal.

Attire that may not be worn at any time includes, but is not limited to:

- Clothing deemed as disrupting the learning environment
- Clothing with gang-related apparel
- Clothing that does not fit correctly, such as too short, too tight, too loose, low-cut, of sheer material or revealing in any way (ie: exposed midriff)
- Clothing with obscene pictures or sayings, messages of a political or religious nature, messages or logos including or referring to alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, drugs, violence, or weapons
- Clothing that is faded, stained, discolored, frayed, torn, ripped or excessively worn.

A. Shirts and Outerwear

- The traditional style of polo shirts is required, but shirts do not need to be the Polo brand.
- Shirts must have buttons at the neckline. Shirts may not have snaps, zippers, or a v-neckline.
- Shirts are to be one color. Any solid color is acceptable. Shirts with patterns, stripes, or more than one color are not allowed.
- Shirts may include the manufacturer's logo but the logo may not include any lettering, except for the Stepping Stones Academy school logo. The logo must be on the upper left side of the shirt.
- Shirts are to fit appropriately. Shirts must be long enough so when arms are raised directly above the head, shirts are at least 1" below the top of the waistband on the pants.
- A t-shirt may be worn under the polo shirt. T-shirts hanging longer than the polo shirt must be tucked in. Short sleeved t-shirts may not have the sleeve hanging longer than the polo shirt sleeve.
- The Stepping Stones Academy t-shirt must be worn for field trips and other designated campus events. The Stepping Stones Academy t-shirt may be worn on Fridays. Other t-shirts may not be worn.
- The only sweatshirts that may be worn in class are the Stepping Stones Academy sweatshirts or pull-over style sweatshirts that are one color. Any solid color is acceptable. Pull-over style sweatshirts must include ribbing around the wrist, waist, and neckline, and not include any lettering.
- Coats may be any color and include school-appropriate words and designs. Coats may be worn outside, but not inside.

B. Shoes

- Shoes are required at all times.
- Shoes must have a back or strap across the back.

C. Pants - Pants refer to long pants, capris, shorts, skirts, jumpers, overalls, and similar styles of clothing.

- Pants must be plain khaki (tan shade).
- Pants must have a sewn hem and fit appropriately. Sagging of pants is not allowed. Long pants may not drag on the ground. Shorts and skirts must be approximately as long as the middle of the thigh.
- Leggings and tights may be worn and may be any color or school-appropriate design.

D. Jewelry, Cosmetics, Hair, and Other Accessories

- Make-up is not to be worn in excess and may not be brought to school.
- Excessive jewelry is not allowed. Rings, bracelets, and necklaces with spikes, sharp points, or other dangerous objects may not be worn.
- Spiked or gauged earrings or earrings with large hoops or sharp points may not be worn. Students must conceal pierced body parts, excluding pierced ears, while on campus and attending school events.
- Students with tattoos must conceal the tattoos while on campus or attending school events.
- Hats, caps, and visors may be worn outside, but not inside. The bill of the cap must face the front. The items may be any color and must include school-appropriate designs.
- Hair color must be one "natural" color. Examples of "natural" hair colors are black, red, brown, and blonde. Hair may be highlighted a "natural" hair color or dyed one "natural" hair color at a time.
- Hair extensions, feather hair clips, and other similar hair accessories may not be worn. Mohawks and faux hawks are not allowed. Words, numbers, and pictures may not be shaved into the hair.

Students who are not in proper uniform will be sent to the School Office and the parent will be called to bring appropriate uniform attire. Students will not be permitted to return to class until they have uniform clothing.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

A. Communication between Staff Members and Parents

Stepping Stones Academy promotes communication between the school and families. Parents are encouraged to contact staff members with questions and concerns.

- Email – All staff members have a school email address. The addresses may be found on the school's website at www.steppingstonesacademy.org.
- Scheduled Meetings – Parents may schedule a meeting by contacting the School Office or their student's classroom teacher.

- Informal Visits –The best times to visit with staff members during the school day are from 7:30-7:45 a.m. or 3:30-3:45 p.m. Parents are asked to refrain from visiting with teachers from 7:45-8:00 a.m., during class time, and from 3:00-3:30 p.m. During these times teachers are on duty and supervising students.
- Telephone Calls – Parents may contact staff members by calling the school at 623-465-4910. If the staff member is unavailable, parents may leave a message with the School Office or on the staff member’s voicemail.
- Written Notes – Parents may write notes in Student Agendas or drop off notes in the School Office.

B. Community Service

Stepping Stones Academy encourages community service as a way for students to help on campus and learn about responsibility. Every class is assigned community service for one month. The class spends approximately twenty minutes each day completing community service at Stepping Stones Academy, such as picking up trash from the playground and sweeping sidewalks.

C. Computer Use Policy

Stepping Stones Academy has computers in each classroom and a fully equipped computer lab. To use the internet, students must have a signed Internet User Agreement on file in the School Office.

Use of computers, software, network system, and internet is a student privilege and not a student right. Staff members supervise students during computer use, but it is the student’s responsibility to use the computers for authorized academic purposes only. Folders and files stored on school computers are not private and are reviewed by school personnel. Stepping Stones Academy has a Cyberpatrol system to regulate the accessed internet sites; however, students may still come in contact with controversial or uncensored material. Parents may revoke their student’s privileges from the computer by notifying the School Office in writing. The Principal may revoke students’ privileges due to misconduct and may enforce further disciplinary action, including the involvement of law enforcement authorities.

Students are to act responsibly while using the computers and computer equipment. Students are to use computers, including the internet, for academic purposes only. Students are not to play games on the computers without teacher approval and are not to send, access, download, or print offensive or inappropriate messages or pictures. Students may only use assigned passwords, folders, and files. Students are not allowed to use passwords or access folders or files for which they do not have permission. Students are not allowed to change the computer or network settings and may not load unauthorized programs onto the computer or network system.

D. Student Medications

Students who require prescription medications during school hours must have written parent permission on a school medication form. Prescription medication must be provided to the School Office in the current, original container with the student’s name on the prescription label. Over-the-counter medications are not given at school by staff members. Medication cannot be sent to and from school with students. Parents must make arrangements to deliver and pick up medication from the School Office. The person picking up medication must be a parent, sibling 18 years or older, a family member, or friend over the age of 18 years as specified by the parent in writing.

Pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 15-341(A)(35),(36), students who have been diagnosed with anaphylaxis and/or breathing disorders may carry and self-administer emergency medications while at school and at school-sponsored activities. The student's name must be on the medication container and annual written documentation, which authorizes the possession and self-administration of the medication from the student's parent, is required.

E. Child Abuse Reporting

According to AZ State law (A.R.S. § 13-3620), school employees are mandated to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Child Safety (DCS) in the Department of Economic Services or the law enforcement authorities. This generally includes suspected non-accidental physical injuries, sexual abuse, or neglect.

F. Drug Free and Tobacco Free Campus

The possession or use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco products on Stepping Stones property is strictly prohibited, including in vehicles when dropping-off or picking-up students, at school activities, or at off-campus school events, including field trips. This policy is in accordance with Arizona state law and applies to all individuals on school property and attending school activities.

G. Field Trips

Field trips are used as a way to enhance educational programs and provide hands-on learning experiences. During a field trip students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and abide by Stepping Stones Academy's Code of Conduct.

- Permission Slips – Students must have written parent permission to attend a field trip.
- Parent Chaperones – Parents are welcome on field trips. Parents are to sign-up on the student permission form and turn-in the permission form and needed admission costs by the deadline. Names may not be added after the deadline. If a parent signs up and is unable to attend, money is not refunded or transferred to another person. Other family members may attend a field trip, but need permission from the classroom teacher.
- School Uniform – Students must wear a Stepping Stones Academy school t-shirt on field trips and follow all other school uniform guidelines.
- Lunch - Students and chaperones need to provide their own lunches for field trips. Lunches should be packed in insulated lunch bags. Soda/Pop is allowed on field trips. Gum is not allowed.
- Transportation – Stepping Stones Academy relies on its parents and staff members to provide transportation for field trips. Individuals other than parents wishing to drive must receive prior approval from the Principal. All drivers must be at least 21 years old with a current driver's license and valid car insurance. All students must be buckled in a seat belt, and students 12 years old and younger must ride in the back of the vehicle. In the case of an accident, the driver's insurance is the primary insurance and the school insurance is the secondary insurance.
- Student Assignment to Vehicles – Students are assigned to ride in vehicles based on availability. Drivers may request to have their own students as passengers, but may not request other specific students as

passengers. Parents who are not driving may not designate where students ride. Students are to ride in the assigned vehicle to and from the destination.

- Departure and Arrival – All people on the trip must leave with the group from campus, stay with the group during the trip, and return to school with the group. Students, drivers, and guests may not meet the group at the destination or leave early from the trip. Drivers are not to make any “extra” stops to and from the destinations.

H Library Use

Stepping Stones Academy has a campus library, and students are encouraged to use the library. Students are allowed to check-out books during the school year. It is the responsibility of the students to act appropriately and take care of the library materials. If books are lost, damaged, or not returned, students are responsible for the replacement cost. The Principal may revoke students’ library privileges due to misconduct and may enforce further disciplinary action, as necessary and appropriate.

I. Personal Items

Personal items not needed for class assignments are to remain at home. Students bringing personal items to school for class assignments are to receive prior approval from the teacher. Items are to be kept in the School Office or with the teacher. Students bringing items to school without permission face disciplinary action and parents are notified. If students inadvertently bring items to school and immediately turn them in to the School Office, students may not face disciplinary action. Items remaining on campus at the end of the quarter are donated to a local charity or discarded. Students may not sell or trade personal items (i.e., trading cards) on campus and may not exchange gifts at school, unless it is for a class activity approved by the teacher. Stepping Stones Academy is not responsible for the loss or damage to personal items. Loss of items is to be reported to the teacher and School Office immediately. The designated campus Lost and Found areas are in the Multi-Purpose building and School Office. Examples of items not allowed on campus are:

- Electronic Equipment and Games, such as Cell Phones, I-Pods, Tablets
- Non-Motorized Vehicles, such as Skateboards, Scooters
- Toys, such as Stuffed Animals, Footballs, Board Games
- Make-Up, such as Fingernail Polish, Mascara, Eye Shadow

J. Lunch Policies

Stepping Stones Academy offers a catering company for school lunches at a minimal cost. Students may also bring lunch from home. Students eat lunch in shifts based on grade levels. Students are responsible for providing their own beverages when bringing lunch from home. Pop/Soda is not allowed on campus and is not allowed as a beverage for lunch or snack. For the safety of all students, food may not be shared or exchanged. Students bringing lunch from home are to bring lunch in an insulated, sealed container. Food items should not require a refrigerator, freezer, or microwave. Students are to take their lunch bags home each day. Food left on campus is thrown away daily. Candy may be eaten at lunch; however, candy is to be kept to a minimum. Gum is not allowed on campus or school events, including lunch and field trips. Students are to use appropriate manners and social skills during lunchtime. On early dismissal days, students do not eat lunch at school.

Students may bring a healthy snack to eat during morning break. Students in K-4th grades eat snack during morning recess, and students in 5th-8th grades eat morning snack during a designated time. Students may not share snack items. Students may not eat food during class except for special class events with teacher approval.

K. Classroom Parties

Class parties are held for various celebrations, including holidays. The teacher notifies parents about parties and may request assistance in planning activities or providing refreshments. Parents are invited to attend class parties and may bring younger children. It is the responsibility of the parents to supervise the younger children while on campus. The Principal reserves the right to remove younger children from the room if they are disrupting class activities.

Students may bring birthday treats on or near their birthdays. Parents are to schedule the date and time for birthday treats with the teacher. Students are to bring enough birthday treats for all of the students and teachers in the class. Birthday treats may be purchased or homemade; however, parents should check with the teacher of School Office regarding students in the class with food allergies. If students have food allergies, prior approval of the treats must be obtained from the Principal.

Students may hand out party invitations at school when everyone in the class is invited. Students are requested to not hand out party invitations at school if the whole class is not invited.

L. Movies and Music in the Classroom

School-appropriate movies and music may be used in the classroom for educational purposes. Movies and music may not degrade any group, include inappropriate language, promote violence, or encourage illegal activities.

M. Pets at School

For the safety of the students, pets and other animals may not be brought to school, including for show-n-tell. Pets may not be removed from vehicles during arrival and departure times.

This policy does not apply to service animals (ie: dog, miniature horse). Stepping Stones Academy does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities who use service animals if the work or tasks performed by the service animal are directly related to the individual's disability. Individuals with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in all areas of Stepping Stones Academy where activities or other people are allowed. A service animal shall be under the control of its handler and have a harness, leash, or other tether. The owner of the service animal is liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to students, staff, visitors, and/or property.

N. Playground Rules

Playground rules are established for the safety of the students and are to be followed whenever students use the playground equipment. Playground rules are explained to the students at the beginning of the year and reviewed quarterly. Students not following the playground rules are subject to consequences, including but not limited to verbal warning, time-out from the activity, loss of recess, Discipline Referral, and visit to the School Office.

O. School Pictures and Yearbook

Stepping Stones Academy contracts with a professional photography company to take students' individual portraits. Families may purchase picture packages. Pictures of students are included in the Stepping Stones Academy yearbook. The yearbook is available for purchase at the end of the year. Adults and students, excluding staff members using photographs for educational purposes, are not allowed to videotape or photograph students, staff members, or school grounds without prior permission from the Principal.

P. School Property Damage

The care of Stepping Stones Academy is the responsibility of everyone. Damage to school property, including buildings, furniture, computers, books, and playground equipment, is taken seriously and proper authorities are involved as needed. Students are responsible for damage they cause to the school, including monetary responsibility. The Principal determines the consequences and retribution for damages and is responsible for deciding if law enforcement officials or other legal authorities are contacted.

Q. Student Searches

Students possess the right of privacy of person as well as freedom from unreasonable search and seizure of property guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution. Students' individual rights are balanced by Stepping Stones Academy's responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of all of its students. The Principal may conduct searches when there is reason to suspect the health, safety or welfare of students, staff members, visitors, and any others, or school property, may be in danger. The Principal reserves the right to search a student and his/her belongings while on school property or attending school-sponsored events. The Principal also reserves the right to search school-owned property, including while a student is using the property. The Principal has the right to seize property and is responsible for determining if law enforcement officials and other legal authorities are contacted. If the situation warrants notification of these officials, the Principal is responsible for contacting the parents.

The following search or seizure guidelines are followed:

- General searches of school property and personal items may be conducted at any time when there is a reasonable cause for school employees to believe something which violates a law or school rule is on school property and when the search is reasonable in its scope. Searches may be conducted when a student or parent gives voluntary consent to search. Such searches of property may be made without the student present.
- Illegal items (e.g. firearms, weapons, drugs, tobacco, alcohol) or other possessions reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety or security of others or which might interfere with school purposes may be confiscated.
- Items that disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be removed from a student.
- A student may be searched when there is reasonable cause to believe the student is in possession of illegal or prohibited items.

R. Lockdown/Evacuation Policies

In the event of an emergency requiring the need to secure the campus, such as in the case of a lock-down, or evacuation of buildings, such as in the case of a fire, Stepping Stones Academy adheres to guidelines in accordance with the State of Arizona, Daisy Mountain Fire Department, and Maricopa County Sheriff's Department. Fire drills are held monthly and lock-down drills are held on a periodic basis.

S. Visitors

Stepping Stones Academy welcomes visitors to campus during the school day. To ensure the safety of the students, staff members, and visitors, Stepping Stones Academy adheres to the following guidelines:

- School visitors, including parents, are required to sign-in and sign-out in the School Office during the school day. This includes when parents chaperone field trips, help in the classrooms, and deliver materials to the classroom.
- Name tags are issued to all visitors, including parents, and must be worn while on campus. Name tags are located in the School Office and are to be worn so they are easily visible. Stepping Stones Academy requests name tags be worn in the upper left hand corner of the shirt when possible.
- Visitors under 18 years old may not attend school with students. Parents visiting or volunteering in classrooms may not bring other children with them, except for class parties.

T. Weapons in School

No student is allowed to carry or possess a weapon or simulated weapon on Stepping Stones Academy's premises. No student shall use or threaten to use a weapon or simulated weapon to disrupt any activity of Stepping Stones Academy.

Any employee who observes any person in possession of a weapon or simulated weapon on school premises shall immediately report the matter to the Principal. The Principal shall immediately take appropriate safety and disciplinary actions in accordance with Stepping Stones Academy's policies. The Principal shall immediately report a violation of this policy to a peace officer, pursuant to A.R.S. 15-515, if the weapon is a deadly weapon or the student is a minor in possession of a firearm. A student who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to expulsion.

U. Bullying/Harassment

Stepping Stones Academy does not tolerate bullying, discrimination, and/or harassment. Bullying is defined as acts of intimidation and/or harassment that have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm, is sufficiently severe and persistent, and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may be verbal, written, or physical. Cyberbullying is, but not limited to, an act of bullying committed with use of electronic technology including social media.

Harassment is defined as communication with another person anonymously or by verbal, electronic, mechanical, telegraphic, or written means with the intent to harass based on and/or motivated by race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, or disability. Harassment may include but is not limited to social exclusion, name calling, unwanted physical contact, and unwelcome verbal or written comments.

Intimidation is defined as intentional use of language or conduct to frighten, attempt to frighten, or coerce another person into submission or obedience.

Stepping Stones Academy shall investigate complaints of bullying, harassment, or intimidation and will take appropriate, timely, and responsive action. Any student who feels he/she or suspects another student has been the victim of bullying, harassment or intimidation is to file a complaint with the Principal. The student's report may be provided verbally or in writing. Retaliation directed toward a student or employee for the reporting of a case of bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated. Students involved directly or indirectly in retaliation will be disciplined pursuant to Stepping Stones Academy's Code of Conduct.

Should the Principal determine bullying, harassment or intimidation has occurred, Stepping Stones Academy will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Student discipline will be administered pursuant to the School's Code of Conduct if the Principal determines a student has engaged in bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation.

V. Student Records

Stepping Stones Academy has established written policies regarding the collection, storage, retrieval, use and transfer of student educational information collected and maintained pertinent to the education of all students to ensure the confidentiality of the information and to guarantee parents' and students' rights to privacy. These policies and procedures are in compliance with federal and state laws. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords families and majority age students rights to their education records.

- **Right to Inspect and Review**

Parents have the right to inspect and review a student's education records within 45 days from the day Stepping Stones Academy receives a request for access. Requests should be submitted in writing to the Principal and clarify the records to be inspected and/or reviewed.

- **Right to Amend Education Records**

Parents may request to have their student's educational records amended if they believe the information is inaccurate or misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. The request should be made in writing to the Principal, clearly identifying the part of the record the parent wants changed and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading. If Stepping Stones Academy decides not to amend the record as requested, the parent will be notified of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided to the parent when notified of the right to a hearing. After the hearing, if Stepping Stones Academy decides not to amend the record, the parent has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his/her view regarding the contested information.

- **Right to Consent to Disclosure**

Parents have the right to require their consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records by the prior written consent of the parent, except to the extent FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

- **Right to File a Complaint**

Parents have the right to file a complaint with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office in Washington D.C., if they believe the district has violated the provision of FERPA. If a family wishes to file a complaint alleging a FERPA violation, he/she should first contact the Principal. If a reasonable solution is not made at the school level the complainant has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
 U.S. Department of Education
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20202

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate conduct at all school-sponsored events. Accordingly, students are prohibited from engaging in behavior that (1) obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with any educational, administrative, disciplinary or other activity sponsored or approved by Stepping Stones Academy; (2) endangers or threatens the safety of any person; or (3) inflicts or threatens to inflict damage on property of Stepping Stones Academy, school employees, students or others.

A. Character Counts Program

The Character Counts program is incorporated into Stepping Stones Academy's Code of Conduct. The program concentrates on the six traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The students are expected to apply these character traits throughout the school day, enabling them to demonstrate appropriate conduct and improve their job, social, and life management skills.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthiness
 Be honest and tell the truth
 Be reliable and dependable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a good reputation
 Do not lie, cheat, or steal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the right thing
 Support others |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect
 Follow the Golden Rule
 Handle disputes peacefully | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use good manners
 Consider feelings of others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use good language
 Be kind to others |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility
 Think before acting
 Do not blame others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be accountable for choices
 Do what needs to be done | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use self-control
 Give 100% effort |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairness
 Listen to others
 Play by the rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be open-minded
 Do not take advantage of others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns and share
 Treat everyone equally |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring
 Be kind
 Show compassion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forgive others
 Express gratitude | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help others in need
 Be tolerant of differences |

- Citizenship

Obey laws and rules	Respect authority	Protect the environment
Cooperate with others	Be a good neighbor	Improve the community

B. Classroom Rules

All classes at Stepping Stones Academy establish classroom rules based on the school’s Code of Conduct. The rules are explained to the students at the beginning of the year and reviewed at least once each quarter. The teacher addresses a student’s violation of class rules or disruption to learning within the classroom when possible. When warranted, the teacher may contact the parents and a meeting with the parents and student may be requested. Class interventions include giving the student a verbal warning, removing the student from the activity, and writing a Discipline Referral. The student may also be taken to the School Office to meet with the Principal. After the Principal talks with the student, one or more options may occur, including but not limited to, returning the student to class, scheduling a parent meeting, writing a Discipline Referral, assigning the student after-school detention, and/or assigning the student in-school or out-of-school suspension.

C. Categories of Misconduct and Possible Consequences

Stepping Stones utilizes a progressive discipline approach, i.e., consequences for first offenses are less than that for any subsequent offense. In addition to any specifically enumerated consequences, Stepping Stones Academy may take actions that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The student may be isolated from other students or removed from the classroom.
- The student’s parents are notified of the inappropriate behavior.
- The student may be assigned to detention, either during or after school hours.
- The student may be removed from the regular school program and/or recommended for expulsion.
- When appropriate, law enforcement authorities will be notified and legal action may be taken.

Campus rules and consequences are divided into six levels and explained to children at the beginning of the year and reviewed each quarter. The list on the following pages shows the range of disciplinary action that will be taken for each prohibited behavior. These statements are guidelines only, and disciplinary decisions are at the discretion of the Principal. The Principal will take into account the nature of the situation and the student’s discipline history before applying consequences. School rules apply, and students are subject to discipline, during: (1) any school activity/event, home or away; (2) coming to and going from school or school activity; (3) on campus or on any property of Stepping Stones Academy; or (4) in any other situation in which Stepping Stones Academy may lawfully exercise jurisdiction over a student. For any imposition of discipline, due process procedures will be closely followed.

Level 1 Rules - Level 1 rules include but are not limited to:

- Possession of Gum or Candy without Permission (ie: having gum in backpack, eating candy)
- Writing Notes without Permission
- Breaking Classroom, Lunchtime, or Playground Rules

Level 1 Consequences - Level 1 consequences include but are not limited to:

- Parent Notification
- 45 Minutes Recess Detention

Level 2 Rules - Level 2 rules include but are not limited to:

- Horseplay (ie: kicking, pushing, tripping)
- Teasing, Name Calling, and Put-Downs
- Spitting
- School Uniform Violation

Level 2 Consequences - Level 2 consequences include but are not limited to:

- Parent Notification
- 45 Minutes Recess Detention
- 90 Minutes After-School Detention.

Level 3 Rules - Level 3 rules include but are not limited to:

- Defiance or Disrespectfulness
- Inappropriate Written Words, Pictures, or Gestures
- Cheating
- Using Computer Inappropriately
- Profanity
- Forgery
- Lying

Level 3 Consequences - Level 3 consequences include but are not limited to:

- Parent Notification
- 45 Minutes Recess Detention
- 120 Minutes After-School or Saturday Detention

Level 4 Rules - Level 4 rules include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate Physical Contact
- Leaving Campus Without Permission
- Drawing or Writing Words or Pictures Displaying Violence, Inappropriate Body Parts, or Pornography
- Vandalism – Damage up to \$50.00
- Skipping Class
- Using Computer for Sending, Accessing, Downloading, or Printing Inappropriate Messages, Computer Sites, or Pictures
- Verbal/Physical Threats or Fighting
- Gambling

Level 4 Consequences - Level 4 consequences include but are not limited to:

- Parent Notification
- In-School or Out-of-School Suspension for 1 to 5 Days
- 180 Minutes After-School or Saturday Detention

Level 5 Rules - Level 5 rules include but are not limited to:

- Vandalism – Damage over \$50.00
- Possession or Use of Simulated or Imitation Weapon (ie: squirt gun, pretending to shoot someone)
- Possession or Use of Simulated or Imitation Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs, or Associated Paraphernalia (ie: candy cigarettes, pretending to smoke marijuana joint)
- Possession or Use of Simulated or Imitation Firecracker, Lighter, or Other Hazardous, Flammable Material (ie: fake lighter, pretending to pull fire alarm)

Level 5 Consequences - Level 5 consequences include but are not limited to:

- Parent Notification
- Out-of-School Suspension for 1 to 10 Days
- 240 Minutes After-School or Saturday Detention

Level 6 Rules - Level 6 rules include but are not limited to:

- Gang Activity
- Stealing, Theft, or Burglary
- Arson or Attempted Arson
- Intentional Activation of the Alarm System
- Items Displaying Pornography
- Physical, Verbal, or Sexual Assault
- Possession or Use of Real or Authentic Weapon (ie: gun, knife)
- Possession or Use of Real or Authentic Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs, or Associated Paraphernalia (ie: taking aspirin in class, prescription medication in pocket, cigarette package in backpack)
- Possession or Use of Real or Authentic Firecracker, Lighter, or Other Hazardous, Flammable Material (ie: lighting a match, sparklers in backpack, carrying a cigarette lighter)

Level 6 Consequences - Level 6 consequences include but are not limited to:

- Parent Notification
- Notification of Maricopa Co. Sheriff's Department or Other Legal Authorities
- Out-of-School Suspension for 1 to 10 Days
- Governing Board Hearing