

Carolina Day Lower School Handbook Grades PK-5

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CAROLINA
DAY SCHOOL

Philosophy of the Lower School

The administration and faculty of the Carolina Day Lower School are committed to the preparation of each child for life in today's complex world. We recognize the diverse needs of our students and seek to enhance the individual worth of each child. Our purpose is to address the needs of each student within a group context through successful development of individual potential. By fostering the "giftedness" in each child, we work toward the fulfillment of the whole person.

Providing a complete educational experience includes a carefully planned sequential program which takes into account what is developmentally appropriate. The program involves an integrated approach to the academic, social, emotional, and physical areas incorporating the attainment of traditional skills while promoting individual expression, creativity, and critical and analytical thinking.

Our school provides a nurturing environment in which the child can develop self-reliance, self-esteem, and self-motivation. This atmosphere is conducive to the growth of moral integrity, social conscience, and respect for others. By encouraging our students to value a sense of unity, sportsmanship, and community service, we seek to build character.

Fulfilling this philosophy requires us to make every effort to recognize and promote continuity without sacrificing a vision of the future.

Guidelines for Lower School Behavior

Discipline leads to the development of self-control and the creation of community. We believe that it is a subject that must be taught, just as reading and math are taught. Year by year, young children are in the process of learning appropriate behavior. Because discipline is essential to the academic and social success of each child and to his/her moral development, we will take the time to work with students, individually and as a class, to develop an understanding of appropriate behavior. When necessary, we will follow through with consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Our One Rule — The Golden Rule

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. As a Lower School, we consider the Golden Rule to be our first rule — our "one rule." It provides us with a unifying principle from which we can create an ethical order and a sense of respect for oneself, other people, and the environment. The Golden Rule gives us a starting-point as we strive to make our classrooms and our school a good and safe place for students and teachers.

Each classroom or grade will begin the school year with several discussions about the most important rules they need in order to help them do their work in a safe, comfortable environment. The students and teacher will create their classroom rules together. These rules, along with the Golden Rule, will provide guidelines for student behavior during the school year. Most routine disciplinary matters will be handled by the classroom teacher. Should the need arise, the lower school principal will assist in disciplinary matters.

Consequences & Disciplinary Procedures

When a student does not adhere to school or classroom rules, the following steps will be taken.

- 1. The student will be invited to evaluate his /her behavior.**
A major goal is to encourage the student to assess his/her behavior to determine why it is not working.
- 2. The teacher will help the student develop an action plan, which will most likely include a written reflection or letter.**
The most significant aspect of this step consists in helping the student to identify *specific* ways to change *inappropriate* behavior into *successful* behavior.
- 3. The teacher will get a commitment from the student to change the behavior.**
- 4. The teacher will refuse to accept excuses.** The student will be held accountable for his/her actions.
- 5. If the plan is not successful and the behavior persists, the teacher will determine appropriate consequences for the inappropriate behavior.** Parents will be notified so that they can work with the teacher to bring about the desired changes in behavior and/or attitude. The principal of the lower school and school counselor will be consulted as needed throughout the process.
- 6. The following behaviors cannot be tolerated and will result in the child being sent home immediately:**
 - a. Any actions which jeopardize the safety of other children or of the child him/herself.
 - b. Defiance of a teacher or refusal to follow directions given by the adult in charge.

7. Repeated incidences of dangerous actions toward others, defiance of adult authority, or dishonest behavior (lying, cheating, or stealing) may result in suspension or expulsion from Carolina Day School.

The purpose of our approach to discipline is to help children learn to take responsibility for their actions and to demonstrate positive behavior. We continually strive to affirm the development of self-respect, deep appreciation for the dignity of each individual, and concern for the rights and needs of others. However, if the child is not responsive and continues manifesting behaviors that threaten individuals, or the security and harmony of the school community, action will be taken to ensure the safety of others and to ensure that the values of the community are upheld.

Honor Pledge for Lower School Students

As I have learned from the Golden Rule, I promise that I will treat others in our school community as I want to be treated. This means that I will be honest in all that I say and do:

If I am asked about something that has happened or something I have done, I will tell the truth.

I will respect school property and the belongings of others. I will not take or use anything that belongs to someone else without permission from the owner.

I will do my own work. I will not copy another student's paper unless this is permitted by the teacher. I will not copy answers from the teacher's papers or books. I will not plagiarize.

I understand that I am responsible for my own behavior and that I can make the choice each day to live by the Honor Pledge.

Toys In School

In order to keep each student's full focus and attention on the school's learning activities, toys of any kind (including electronic games, key chains, and trading cards) cannot be brought to school unless specifically requested by teachers.

Cell Phones

Lower school students are not allowed to bring cell phones to school. Cell phones can be a distraction, and there is no need for lower school students to use them during school hours. If a child needs to call home, he/she will be able to use the teacher's phone or the phone in the office.

Before- and After-School Care

The standards set for the school day will be maintained in the Before- and After-School Care Programs. For specifics on the Early-Morning and After-School Care, see pages 84 and 85, respectively.

Arrival & Departure from School

(See Page 3 in the online PK-12 Handbook.)

Absence Policy

(See Page 4 in the online PK-12 Handbook.)

Tardy Policy

The lower school day begins at 8:15 a.m. and students will be considered tardy after 8:15 a.m. The lower school principal will be in touch with parents when students are tardy more than five times. **Students who arrive late, or who leave during the day for an appointment, must sign in and out at the desk of the nurse/receptionist.**

The Lower School's Homework Policy

In the Lower School the objective for assigning homework is to provide opportunities for students to develop “habits of scholarship” including study and organizational skills and a sense of responsibility. Homework activities will focus on review and reinforcement in order to achieve a learning goal. Homework creates a link between school and home.

Homework expectations vary according to grade level, and at times, according to a child's specific needs. For this reason, at the beginning of each year, teachers will provide parents with a list of homework expectations and guidelines for parental involvement.

Time estimates are given below. If your child takes significantly longer to complete assignments on a regular basis, it is very important that you discuss this with the teacher. The lower-school faculty knows the importance of playtime and family activities, and we want to ensure that each child's days and evenings are balanced.

Kindergartners will have short homework assignments one-two nights per week, beginning in the late fall. First-grade students will begin written homework assignments when the class begins the spelling curriculum. Parents of first graders can expect approximately 20 minutes of homework, which includes time spent reading a book provided by the school. In second grade, students will be asked to read every night, and they will have weekly spelling and math homework as well. Special assignments and/or projects will be added on occasion. The total amount of time spent on homework should be 30 minutes per night. Third and fourth graders will have nightly homework of no more than 45 minutes per night, consisting primarily of math, spelling, and reading. By fifth grade, students can expect to have approximately 60 minutes of homework per night.

Progress Reporting

The lower school faculty, in support of our mission statement, strives to keep parents informed of their child's progress throughout the year. Although conferences are scheduled during the year, informal conferences may be scheduled at any time by either a parent or a teacher to discuss the child's progress at school.

Written reports will be sent home at least three times during the year (two times in pre-kindergarten). Conferences will be scheduled twice during the year, once in the fall and once in the spring.

Policy for Classroom Parties

Holiday Parties

Holiday parties can be planned by classroom teachers and room parents for three holidays during the school year — Halloween, Valentine's Day, and the end of the year. Because the December holidays are so busy with service projects, programs, and the Holiday Breakfast, we request that no parties be held at that time. Other parties which are related to curricular studies may be planned at the teacher's discretion.

Parties should be scheduled for the last hour of the school day (except in the pre-kindergarten, where they should be arranged at a time convenient for the teacher). End-of-year parties should be scheduled during the last two weeks of school, depending on what works best for the class schedule.

The goal of classroom parties is for students to have a good time together, to enjoy worthwhile activities (such as a crafts project), and to have a treat. Teachers request that healthy snacks be prepared for these events and that no goodie bags be given. We have found that “less is more” for parties. Having just one-two crafts and one-two snacks is enjoyed more thoroughly than having many. Because of the social dynamics in some grades, teachers may prefer that parties be prepared for both classes together. Please discuss with the teacher teams whether the two classes in your grade level should have joint parties.

Note to Parents Regarding Social Activities

Birthdays

Teachers will recognize and honor each child on his/her birthday. We do not allow sweet treats or other snacks to be served to the class during the school day in honor of birthdays. We ask the support of parents in order to promote healthy eating habits and to minimize disruptions to the school day.

Please send birthday party invitations through the mail rather than bringing them to school. If a birthday party or any other kind of party is held immediately after school, we expect you to include every child in the class, all the girls, or all the boys. It can be extremely difficult, even devastating, for a child to feel that he or she has been left out of a party that most of his or her classmates will be attending. We ask for your care and sensitivity in this regard.

Dating Behavior

Because we do not believe that “dating” or “courtship” behavior is developmentally appropriate for lower school students, we strongly discourage these types of activities. We believe that encouraging these “grown-up” behaviors in students in these grades may rob them of their innocence and may hasten behaviors that they are not yet ready to understand or handle. Although these activities normally take place outside of school, discussions about them and resulting exclusive behaviors can have a strong negative impact on the classroom environment.

Scheduling of Social Events

(See Page 10 in the online PK-12 Handbook.)

Head Lice Policy

Classroom checks for head lice will be when a need is indicated. If lice or nits are found, you will be contacted to begin treatment immediately. You must bring your student to the nurse’s office for a head check before he/she can return to class after treatment to be sure he/she is nit-free; a child will not be able to return to class until he/she is clear. If you discover your child has lice at home, begin treatment (talk to your pharmacist for appropriate pediculocide suggestions) and call the school nurse as soon as you can so that we can begin checking classmates immediately. *It is essential that you report it to us.* We must be alerted to the situation so that we can keep any spread to a minimum. And please try not to panic. We understand how difficult a case of lice can be for a family, and we will do all that we can to be supportive and to work together with you.

Lost & Found

Carolina Day School expects each student to respect the property of others, and we strive to teach each student to be responsible for his/her own property. **Parents and students are expected to label all jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, lunch boxes, backpacks, and calculators with the student’s name.** All items found should be placed in “lost and found” or turned into the office receptionist.

Large amounts of cash should not be brought to school unless left in the safe in the Business Office. It is better to bring a check than cash. We also recommend that sums of money over \$20.00 not be taken on class trips.

Lower School Dress Code

(See the Lower School Dress Code online on the CDS website.)

**LOWER SCHOOL ROOM PARENTS
2010-2011**

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