

LIVING ETHICS SCHOOL

(International Training Center for the World Core Curriculum)



LES OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

2018 – 2019

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Vicki Johnston, Director

LES MISSION STATEMENT

A working / learning / living community
- to promote caring relationships
with Nature and the Human Family
through experiential learning
that is meaningful, purposeful and holistic;
- to embrace heartfelt values,
blending arts and academics, and thereby
attracting the very soul of the Child
through the Harmonies Way Curriculum.

- * All families are welcomed at the Living Ethics School without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, or physical or emotional need.
- * The Living Ethics School is exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501 (c) (3).
- * The school is accredited by the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools
- * Parents, guardians, staff, and faculty are notified of any changes to these Guidelines via e-mail or website posting.

“The Community’s main focus is collective modeling of a gestalt of healthy pursuits, establishing right human relations, and consciously contributing to a universal culture. The new era Center is not just a place to send the children for academic study, but a cultural center of conscientious role models and mentors,”

- *Vicki Johnston excerpt from Education For True Culture.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Classroom Hours

Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten / 1st Grade	8:45 AM – 2:30 PM
Elementary (2 nd - 6 th Grade)	8:45 AM – 2:45 PM

Before/After School Care is available as a convenience for parents for an additional fee:

Before School	7:30am – 8:30am
After School	3:30pm – 5:30pm

World Core Curriculum

Robert Muller outlined The World Core Curriculum and assembled the discrete branches of science, the arts, and humanities under the auspices of four interpenetrating spheres of life. The World Core Curriculum approaches every subject imaginable as a dynamic part of the following Four Harmonies: Our Planetary Home and Place in the Universe; The Human Family; The Miracle of Individual Human Life; Our Place in Time.

Harmonies Way - Teaching Stories

Children universally love to listen to stories and dramatize them.

That is why we choose to teach in this format using stories and plays to connect with the child on all levels of knowledge and experience. The stories cover a wide range of curriculum including botany, zoology, earth science, biology, meteorology, the history of the human family, American history, and an in depth cultural study each year. A synthesis of science and math is woven into the stories and told in terms of the mutually sustaining relationship between the whole and its parts. Currently, the Friends of the Forest stories include specific math concepts, while various other story sets are under revision and development in order to strengthen this aspect further.

Enrollment

Enrollment for current students occurs in Spring of each year for the following school year. Enrollment will be via on-line registration.

Tuition

School tuition is calculated on an annual basis, payable at the start of the school year. A payment plan is available which will divide the yearly tuition into 10 monthly installments. Payments are due regardless of early withdrawal. **All tuition payments and enrollment fees are non-refundable.** If tuition is paid by installment, it is due the first of each month. **If tuition payment is made after the 5th, add \$25.** Each Tuition payment is the same regardless of the number of days in the month. Tuition will not be reduced for months with school holidays, days missed due to personal holidays or illness. Please submit all checks to the office with your child's name and "*tuition*", "*field trip*", "*cookbook*", etc., on the memo line. Make checks payable to "CLE". Returned check fee \$25.

Parent Mentoring Program

As part of the process of becoming a true *Community Center*, we have initiated a mentoring program. For our learning community to benefit the most from this program, we need active involvement from parents, grandparents, and the surrounding community. Study of other successful community centers has made us more aware of how much impact adult involvement can have on the optimal education of our children. Each one of us has unique skills and talents to share with our children. Mentoring is a win-win situation, for the mentor will get as much out of the program as the children who are learning valuable skills.

The Living Ethics School is able to maintain affordable tuition by organizing as a community. We rely on developing outside resources as well as resources available through the adults in our community. Parents often have jobs, connections, expertise, hobbies, or interests that can contribute to our learning environment in various ways. Whether working individually or through parent formed committees, parents who share their knowledge with the students greatly enrich each child's school life.

Parent Volunteer Hours

Parents are one of our greatest resources! We welcome parent involvement at all levels of LES life. You may choose from a wide range of services we need to keep the school running smoothly. The Volunteer Coordinator will be happy to help you determine how you may best contribute to the community. **Each family is required to provide a minimum of four (4) volunteer work hours per month or pay the equivalent of \$15.00 per volunteer work hour missed.** Our Volunteer Coordinator will arrange assignments with each family.

There is a sign-up sheet available on-line through our Shutterfly account. Please record your volunteer activities on-line to receive credit for your volunteer hours.

Please be aware that when a commitment is made to provide volunteer service at the school, the teachers and children are depending on each volunteer to be there. For LES to be most successful, it is important for individuals to honor their volunteer time and responsibly follow through with their commitments.

Following are some ideas for ways parents can participate at our school:

- * In-class projects
- * Mentoring one or a group of children
- * Maintenance of center (grounds, garden work, classroom)
- * Teacher assistance (bringing snacks, cleaning, making copies, arranging or driving for field trips)
- * School celebrations (food and activity coordination)
- * Parent/Teacher special committees (marketing, fundraising, GEMUN, etc)
- * If you are unable to volunteer, you may contact our office for information regarding capital needs, supplies, equipment or simply pay the full non-volunteer tuition.

Immunization

Whether or not to immunize is the personal decision of each family made after careful consideration of the most current information, the medical history of their family and the particular medical needs of their child.

The Texas Department of Health randomly monitors school records; therefore we require that all students have current immunization records or a letter of exemption on file. If a “religious or conscientious” exemption is requested, you must contact the TDH in writing 90 days prior to admission at the following address:

TDH Bureau of Immunization and Pharmacy Support
1100 W. 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756
website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/>

See also <http://vaccineinfo.net> for helpful information regarding immunization / exemption legislation.

Field trips / Transportation

Permission for participation in all field trips is made through electronic authorization at the time of registration on-line. Field trips include the whole class, including part time students who are not attending on days the outings are scheduled. If your child does not attend the field trip there is not an option for your child to remain at LES on that day. Classrooms are closed during field trips.

Parent participation is necessary to meet the minimum ratio of adults to children for field trips. Parents volunteering to drive for field trips should use school office personnel as co-ordination point.

Children at least four years old, and at least 36 inches tall must wear a safety belt in the vehicle. Children not meeting this requirement must have the appropriate car or booster seat prior to leaving LES; these are to be provided by the parents.

COMMUNICATION AT LES

Please remember to check our website for general information. **www.le-school.org**
Send email correspondences to office@le-school.org. Please add this address to your email address book so that school messages will not be considered junk mail. *Please make the effort to read all school email communication.*

Office and Administration

The main office is the clearinghouse for all information and communications including written notices, tuition payments, and correspondence. All communications should be directed to the office either personally, in writing or via e-mail. Announcements will be posted on the large chalk board in front of the school, sent through e-mail or by paper distribution.

The office is open Monday - Friday 8:50 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. (excluding breaks and holidays). When visiting the school office, please enter through the glass pane door at the southern end of the building. Please label all correspondence with the appropriate staff member's name and/or purpose of the communiqué, e.g. "Tuition," "Ms. Vicki". Phone messages are checked throughout the day and will be distributed accordingly.

Classroom Visitation / Observation

The staff requests advance written or verbal notice from visitors so we will be expecting you. Please remain unobtrusive and allow the regular flow of the day to proceed. Switch off cell phones, or switch to vibrate mode.

If you have questions or special concerns to discuss while visiting the classroom, please wait for a break if at all possible. We also suggest that the parent observes alone without siblings.

Telephone Calls

Phone coverage is dependent on office staffing. We will attempt to answer the phone during center hours. We will retrieve messages if we are temporarily away from the office. If you simply need to get a message to your child's teacher, you may leave a message on the answering machine. However, whenever possible, a written note is much more effective.

Communicating with Your Child's Teacher

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher at any time to set up a meeting. Let us know immediately of any problems at school or personal stresses in your child's life that require our special love and focused attention.

Written suggestions, comments, and questions are welcome and encouraged at any time. Teachers can better tend to children's needs when teachers are informed immediately of any problems at school or personal stresses in the child's life that require our special attention.

Parents may place written messages in the office or leave a phone message. If they need

to speak with the child's teacher, even briefly, parents should schedule an appointment or conference as unscheduled conferences tend to interrupt classroom activities. Conversations regarding the child's needs or behaviors should be held between the parent and the child's teacher, away from the child. This serves to respect the child's right to privacy. Conversations between the parent and teacher often exclude and seem never ending to the child.

LES Notes to Parents

Teachers periodically send notes or emails with information about upcoming school or classroom activities, field trips, or general information. Please check your emails regularly for important notices.

Presentation Nights

Presentation Night is a chance for the children to share things they have been learning in the classroom, and for the older children to perform plays, music, and dance. Presentation nights are scheduled throughout the school year. Please make every attempt to attend these events, as the children work very hard on their presentations.

Community Meetings

Community meetings provide a forum for you to bring your energy and ideas to help benefit the school. The meetings are run by both parents and teachers. They include discussions on improving parent involvement, forming committees to help raise funds, promoting LES within our community; and helping serve teacher needs in the classroom. This is a school-wide forum that is integral to our community. Please check your e-mail for meeting dates and times.

Family Contact Information

Family contact information will be distributed via email at the beginning of each school year and updated periodically as new families enroll. Information includes family members' names, email addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. If you wish to be excluded, please opt-out of School Directory at time of on-line enrollment.

Emergency Preparedness

Fire drills and severe weather drills will be practiced regularly.

In the event of fire, gas, toxic fumes or other reasons requiring the school to be evacuated, the children will meet at the designated safe area, in front of the school inside the white fence near the road.

In the event the school is not safe to re-enter, the designated pick-up point for parents is at the Creekwood United Methodist Church located on Country Club Road at Old Stacy Road, two blocks south of the school.

In the event of a tornado warning, the designated safe areas are the hallways and restrooms in the main building. All children and teachers in the cottage will come to the

main building.

School Closing due to Inclement Weather

Families will be notified by text and/or e-mail and/or Facebook posting if the school is closed for the day because of weather conditions. If in doubt, we follow Lovejoy ISD school closing.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Please make every effort to drop off and pick up your child on time. Please notify the school office by email if your child will be late or absent.

Teachers will not release children to relatives, neighbors, or friends, unless written communication stating who will be picking up the child has been received, or they are listed on the child's enrollment information in the office.

Drive counterclockwise around the entrance for drop-off and pick-up. For the children's safety, please stay in your car and in line around the driveway circle. By staying in the car accidents are avoided and a steady flow is maintained. Safety of the children and others is paramount. When dropping off or picking up, if you require extra time, please park your car rather than block the flow of traffic.

CREATING AND MAINTAINING A PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT

A peaceful environment is the key to Living Ethic School's philosophy. In order to create and maintain a peaceful environment, please follow these guidelines:

LES is a unique facility in that the classrooms are open and easily accessed. Therefore, we ask visitors to be aware of the potential for distracting students. Please switch cell phones off, or to vibrate mode, and use hushed tones when speaking. When speaking quietly, the children naturally lower their voices. Parents wanting extended conversations with each other are asked to do so quietly in a side room or outside. Please limit cell phone conversations to outside areas away from Center activities (in your car or the parking lot).

Non-Violent Behavior

Toys, games and clothing depicting violence or that encourage violent behavior are not permitted. This includes guns, swords, knives, war toys and action figures as well as misuse of items such as rocks and sticks.

Home Activities

Parents are encouraged to spend time with their children reading, gardening and doing other outdoor activities, creating art, or doing handiwork or craftwork, rather than allowing children to watch television and play computer games. Research has shown that

violent behavior increases with the amount of time spent watching shows and cartoons with violence, or playing violent computer games.

Peaceful Problem Solving

When conflicts between children occur, teachers help the children solve their differences by using a peaceful problem solving process. Over time, the children learn to use these skills to resolve disagreements independently and peacefully. Using this same process at home will further enhance the children's problem-solving abilities.

Additionally, the peaceful problem solving is individualized and appropriate to the child's level of understanding and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior, responsibility for their actions and self-control. Methods such as time-out or more aggressive verbal communication are not accepted at LES, we prefer to solve our differences through peaceful communication and problem solving.

Relationship Skills Workshop

The peaceful problem solving process is taught at the required *From the Heart* workshop. Children learn most effectively when they receive consistent messages at school and at home. This workshop helps parents understand our methods and how to apply them. The workshop is FREE and conducted by Vicki Johnston, the founder and director of LES. A recommended reading list is provided.

Dress

To maintain a peaceful environment, children should wear comfortable play clothes free from violent or disrespectful pictures and words and avoiding commercialized images and characters. Bags, backpacks and lunchboxes are subject to these guidelines as well. It is important that children be allowed to get dirty and not fear doing so. Their clothes will be exposed to paint, water, mud, chalk, pastels, glitter, etc. Bring a pair of mud boots to leave at the school to avoid muddy shoes at pickup time. Easy on/off shoes are preferable, especially for the younger children. All children should keep a complete set of seasonally appropriate extra set of clothing at the school.

CHOICES FOR BETTER HEALTH

Nutritious Foods

Diet has a profound effect on children's health, behavior, and academic proficiency. In the spirit of community, rather than policing children's lunches, the teachers offer the following guidelines:

- * Provide a nutritious breakfast to start each day. Something as simple as peanut butter on whole-grain toast supplies both protein and carbohydrates.
- * In lunches, offer a lot of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and nutritious proteins (nuts, seeds, nut butters, cheeses; stuffed eggs are all good choices).
- * Remember to read labels on products being careful to avoid additives such as artificial colors or flavors, products made with artificial sweeteners (Aspartame, Splenda, etc), dairy products with rBGH or rBST (recombinant bovine growth hormone or recombinant bovine somatotropin), high fructose corn syrup, excessive sugars, sodas, candies, bleached flour, and processed, packaged foods. Examples of products that do not fit into these guidelines are "Lunchables" and other quick or "instant" meals and many yogurts – check the ingredients on all labels! Foods containing the additives mentioned above should not be brought to school. The best foods come in their own packaging!
- * Children are asked to not share their lunches with others, so parents can be assured their children are eating what they packed. When providing goodies for a gathering, special occasion or snack, please make sure they meet these criteria as well. We encourage healthier alternatives to the traditional grocery store birthday cake such as fruit or homemade breads or muffins. Families may be asked to provide classroom snacks occasionally throughout the year. Please involve the children in the preparation and selection of what nutritious items you bring. When you purchase fruits or vegetables for school use, please choose *only organic*. Also, please note that we have students who are vegetarians, vegan or have allergies/sensitivities to certain foods. We respectfully request that no child is excluded from snack time by offerings of food which they cannot have. Please ask the teacher about dietary restrictions.

LES Cookbook

Parents at LES compiled a cookbook as a fundraiser for the school. It is for sale for \$10, and includes healthy snack and lunch ideas, as well as some helpful nutritional information.

Illnesses and Injuries

If your child shows symptoms of illness, please keep him/her home until they are free of fever, vomiting, diarrhea and other symptoms (without the use of medication) for at least 24 hours. For all major illnesses (i.e. chicken pox, strep etc.) please allow plenty of recovery time for your child (3-4 days are suggested by most doctors). It is important to help keep classmates and teachers healthy. When a child becomes ill or injured during the day, the school will call parents or an emergency contact person whose information was provided at time of Enrollment and will have the student wait in the office or library

separate from other students.

Medications

If required, medications may be administered at school according to the following guidelines:

1. An authorization must be signed by the parent with each medication's name according to the label
2. The label must be on the container with the student's full name and the date brought to school
3. Teachers must administer the medication according to the label directions or as amended by a physician and may only be given to the specified student.
4. Expired medications will not be administered.
5. Medications should be taken home when no longer needed.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Student Mentoring

Mentoring is a common practice at LES. On occasion, the school allows the elementary-age children an opportunity to teach other students. At the beginning of each unit, students choose a subject or skill with which they are competent. Students will then meet with other (typically younger) students who are interested in learning more about the subject or skill. In this program, students are enhancing their understanding of a beloved subject by teaching it to another student, as well as sharing in the rewards of helping another learn something new. This may be as basic as helping by reading to a younger student or having the student read to them; or as specialized as showing another student how to build a musical instrument, crochet a clothing item, or build a rocket.

Student Teaching

Student Teaching in the elementary class is an opportunity for your child to share knowledge and research with classmates. Family outings and vacations can provide wonderful opportunities for your child to share their firsthand experiences with classmates. This can be a time for you to explore areas of interest with your child and an opportunity for your child to practice public speaking in a loving, encouraging environment. Items related to the current unit of study are recommended. *We cannot be responsible for lost or broken items.*

Fine Arts and Crafts

Art is very much an integral part of the whole curriculum and is incorporated in the Teaching Stories and all subjects. Formal art classes are held one morning per week for the elementary students.

Parents and other mentors introduce other arts and crafts to the children periodically throughout the school year. This may include the performing arts, backdrop and set design, creating costumes, film making, jewelry design, movement, clay and 3D objects, poetry and playwriting.

Music

Music is also an integral part of the Harmonies Way – Teaching Stories Curriculum. We see music making as a very important and valuable part of every day life. Our students benefit from Zoltan Kodaly's as well as Karl Orff's approach to music education. The music room is purposefully available to students during the school day. During breaks and free time, students and parents are encouraged to play piano, drum, strum, sing and play any instruments available. Music classes are held for all students once a week. We meet and surpass Texas Music Curriculum Standards for grades K- 6.

GEMUN (Global Elementary Model United Nations)

Throughout the year, the older elementary students learn about the geography, culture, history, and social concerns of a specific country, which they then represent at GEMUN, a mock United Nations session. One weekend in May, students from the United States and other countries gather in Dallas for GEMUN. In preparation, students learn the United Nations rules of procedure, and how to write and present resolutions. They practice debate and represent their country by supporting or opposing other student's resolutions. Students present a large display with information on the country they represent. Some students serve as delegates, present resolutions and give speeches to encourage other delegates to vote for their resolutions. Other students serve as pages, forming the communication system to get notes between delegates in the different committees.