

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ACADEMY
SPARROW CHARTER SCHOOL**

**PARENT-STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2017-2018**

“Education is not a question of what knowledge children need to acquire to enter society, but what capacities in human beings can be developed to bring new forces into society.”

– Rudolf Steiner

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As of July 13, 2017

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Introduction

National University Academy (NUA), Sparrow Charter School is a public charter school of La Mesa Spring Valley School District. Sparrow is a child-centered, comprehensive K-8 school guided by the Core Principles of Public Waldorf Education. NUA Sparrow also has a homeschool program.

Sparrow places equal emphasis on a solid academic foundation, artistic expression, social development, and the developmental needs of the child.

Sparrow's integrated, thematic approach to learning emphasizes a child's relationship to the natural world while promoting respect for the environment and humankind.

This handbook contains key information for parents and/or caregivers for the school year listed on the cover page. Some items are cited from the La Mesa Spring Valley School District Student and Parent Handbook and are noted with an *. Additional information – such as Sparrow's program philosophy, enrollment information, parent resources, etc. – can be found at the Sparrow website (<http://nuasparrow.org/>). Additional information about La Mesa Spring Valley Schools can be found at their district website, <https://www.lmsvschools.org/>.

Practical Information

School Day Hours - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

Drop-off	8:15am-8:30am
Kindergarten	8:30am-1:00pm
Kindergarten Pick Up	1:00pm
Grades 1-8	8:30am-3:00pm
Grade 1-8 pick-up	3:00pm

School Day Hours - Thursday

Drop-off	8:15am-8:30am
Kindergarten	8:30am-12:30pm
Kindergarten Pick Up	12:30pm
Grades 1-8	8:30am-12:30pm
Grade 1-8 pick-up	12:30pm

After care available for a fee:

Kinder nap	Mon, Tues, Wed, Friday 1:00-3:00pm
All students	Mon-Tues, Wed, Friday, 7:00-8:15am & 3:00-6:00pm
All students	Thursday, 7:00-8:15am & 12:30-6:00pm

2017-2018 Calendar

Orientation	TBD
First Day of School (first semester)	August 22
Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences	October 25, 26, 27, November 1, 2, 3
<i>Harvest the Arts Evening Fundraiser</i>	<i>November 4</i>
Veterans Day (school closed)	November 10
<i>Lantern Walk - after school</i>	<i>specific to each class</i>
Thanksgiving Holiday (school closed)	November 20-24
<i>Spiral Walk Kinder and 1st</i>	<i>December 3</i>
Winter Break (school closed)	December 18-January 1
School Resumes	January 2
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (school closed)	January 15
End of First Semester	January 18
Start of Second Semester	January 22
Presidents' Day (school closed)	February 16-19
Spring Parent Teacher Conferences	March 21-23
Spring Break (school closed- including Monday after break)	March 26-30, April 2
School Resumes	<i>Tuesday</i> April 3
Smarter Balanced State Assessments (Grades 3 and up)	April 30-June 1
Memorial Day (school closed)	May 28
Last Day of School (dismissal at 12:30pm)	June 8

Punctuality, Arrival, and Pick-Up

If the adults in a child's life have a good approach to punctuality and attendance, the child will learn reliability and respect for others. Consistent punctuality, difficult though it is for all of us, will do more than anything else to strengthen the will of both adults and children. For this reason, Sparrow maintains a consistent daily rhythm for the children. The beginning of the school day establishes the mood for the day with activities such as movement, speech, and music, which bring the class together and prepare the children for work. It is important that your child is present for these activities and it is equally important that the class not be interrupted by latecomers.

Late Arrival

If your child arrives at or after 8:30am, you are required to walk the child to the office to sign the child in and to receive a tardy slip. The child will then wait at the classroom door with the slip until the teacher can stop the class to greet the child. Students who accrue 5+ tardies will have a letter sent home to notify parents of this issue. In the event of 10+ tardies, the Sparrow administration will schedule a Student Success Team meeting with parents, administration and teacher to develop a specific attendance improvement plan for the student. If excessive tardiness persists, a truancy proceeding may be initiated.

Drive-Through System

If you plan on dropping your student off using the drive-through, you must enter using the first parking lot entrance on Echo Dr. Please drive through and drop off your child directly in front of the lunch area/kindergarten playground between 8:15am and 8:25am. Please do not park or linger in the drive-through area, as this may hold up the line of cars. Students will proceed around the front of the church through the courtyard to their classrooms, where they will be greeted by their teachers. The children will put away their backpacks, lunches, snacks, etc., and prepare to begin the day promptly at 8:30am. If you plan to walk your child to class, please park in the parking lot in front of the school. Children should always be accompanied by an adult in the parking lot.

Pick-Up Process Monday - Friday

Kindergarten Morning Session Pick Up: 1:00 at the drive through area

Grades Pick-up: 3:00 pm at the drive through area

Please be timely. Children are to be picked up from the drive through area promptly. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher after school, please schedule an appointment with her or him.

If someone other than a parent or legal guardian is picking up the child, written authorization must be on file in the Sparrow office. (This handbook generally refers only to parents, even though some portions of text would be more accurately written as "parent, legal guardian, or other authorized individual.") If a parent wants his or her child to walk home independently, the parent must submit a letter to the Sparrow office authorizing it for the school year.

Parents who pick up students after 3:10pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday, or 12:40pm on Thursday, will be taken to the after-care staff and parents will be charged accordingly.

Dress Code

An important objective of our school is to nurture and protect childhood. We strive to create a wholesome environment that is truly childhood-friendly. As you and your child are making wardrobe selections, the following guidelines must be adhered to. If a child attends school wearing something inappropriate, teachers will make an effort to facilitate something to borrow, turn inside out and a call home. If necessary, arrangements must be made to have the appropriate clothes brought to school that day for the student. If something is borrowed, the item should be washed and returned the next school day.

- When at school, children's clothing, backpacks, lunch baskets/boxes, and other accessories should be free of media advertisements; references to drugs or alcohol; messages of racism, sexism, bigotry, intolerance, and/or weapons or acts of violence; slogans; inappropriate language; cartoons, cartoon characters, and other fictional characters; caricatures; lights or other distracting accessories; etc..
- For the safety of the children, please remember that all sandals and shoes must be as flat as possible and have a fastening strap or support. Kindergarten children require shoes that they can manage themselves (e.g. shoes with zippers, Velcro, or buckle closures). Shoes with wheels, high heels, platforms, or similar are prohibited.
- Dress should be conducive to the work and activities of school and **should be weather appropriate**.
- Jackets and sweaters should be labeled with first and last name.
- Hats are encouraged when worn **outside** for the purpose of protection from sunburns or cold.
- Tops and dresses with straps at least 1" wide are acceptable.
- Midriff tops and undergarments that show **are prohibited**.
- Children should wear shorts underneath dresses or skirts at all times. The lowest edge of the skirt or shorts should fall below the tip of the longest finger with the hand extended down along the side of the leg.
- Lipstick, perfume, and make-up are prohibited until 6th grade. For the middle school grades, if students do choose to wear make-up, it must be natural colors and non-distracting.
- Hair coloring is acceptable in grades 6 and up. Before that, it should be addressed on a case by case basis with the classroom teacher (depending on circumstances, such as medical or other life circumstances.)
- Nails should be natural not synthetic extensions/additions.
- Earrings and piercings: Earrings are accepted as posts but dangly earrings are only for grades 6 and up and not longer than 1". They should not be worn on days when games class or physical activities are planned.

Decisions regarding appropriateness are at the discretion of the teacher. If your child arrives at school dressed inappropriately, we will give you a courtesy call to remind you of our Dress Code. The student will not be ostracized or singled out in any way. If persistent violations of the Dress Code occur, the teacher and/or the Site Administrator will counsel the student and/or parents.

Snack and Lunch Guidelines

Nurturing our bodies as well as our minds is important at Sparrow. Meals and snacks eaten at school provide additional opportunities to foster respect for healthy bodies and a healthy earth. Families are encouraged to support this philosophy by following these guidelines:

- Please send snacks and lunches that use wholesome ingredients free of artificial dyes and preservatives (organic, if possible)
- Fruits and vegetables are encouraged.
- Sugar content should be minimal.
- Gum, candy, soda, sports drinks, and juices are not allowed.
- Highly-processed foods carry little-to-no nutritional value and are strongly discouraged.
- Please send **only water** in reusable water bottles for your child to drink at school.

The avoidance of commercialism and excessive food packaging is another aspect of keeping things as natural as possible. Please try to send snacks and lunches to school in reusable containers and with reusable cloth napkins. Snack and lunch baskets/boxes and accessories should be devoid of media/commercial images and other, similar content, as listed in the Dress Code section, above.

Due to the possibility of severe allergic reactions, children may not share food. Please remind your children to help protect their friends by keeping lunch and containers to themselves. Your teacher may contact you with other guidelines for your child's lunch and snacks.

Peanut-Free School

Due to the potentially life-threatening effects of peanut exposure for our students with peanut allergies, we are a peanut-free school. Please refrain from bringing peanuts, peanut butter, or food items that contain peanuts, such as trail mix or granola bars with peanuts. If your child eats peanut products at home before coming to school, please be sure their face and hands are washed thoroughly and that there is no trace of peanut oil or dust on their clothing. We know this is a challenge for many parents, but none so much as the parents of children with this baffling and dangerous allergy. Thank you for respecting the safety of their children. In the event that a student has a severe allergy to another food ingredient, such as all nuts, that student's classroom may remain fully nut-free or free of the specific allergen. Consult with your child's teacher for guidance.

Media

The philosophy of Sparrow is based upon an understanding of the developing child. While television and other media can serve as a source of information and entertainment for adults, children do not operate in the same developmental stage as adults. Research has shown that exposure to media entertainment for young children may have a detrimental effect upon their self-image, their ability to concentrate and develop attention span, their relationship skills, values, reading skills, physical skills, energy levels, psychological health, creativity, and social behavior.

Because we believe that the impact of electronic media can have detrimental effects on a child's healthy growth and development, we encourage families to incorporate our media-free philosophy into the daily lives of their children. To that end, we expect that our families significantly limit or eliminate the use of media (television, videos, video games, computer games, iPods, CD players, feature movies, apps on tablets/smart phones, etc.) for their children. We ask for complete elimination of electronic media during the school week: from late afternoon on Sunday to after

school on Friday. We realize that limiting or eliminating media from your child's life might feel like a tall order. However, with support and reassurance, families may find that more free time means more creative and quality time together.

Concerns about the effects of television have centered almost exclusively on the content of the programs children watch. Many might argue that watching a nature program is educational and good for the child. However, as Marie Winn states in her book, *The Plug-In Drug*, "It is easy to overlook a deceptively simple fact: one is always *watching television* when one is watching television rather than having any other experience." Winn goes on to say that certain specific physiological mechanisms of the eyes, ears, and brain respond to the stimuli emanating from the screen regardless of the cognitive content of the programs. Television viewing requires the taking in of particular sensory material in a particular way no matter what the material might be. The sedentary mode of watching television does not match the active internal experience that occurs in response to what is being viewed. For example, one would not jump out of the way of an oncoming car on screen, yet one may feel the anxiety, fear, and panic of the situation being viewed. There is, indeed, no other experience in a child's life that permits quite so much intake while demanding so little output as watching television does.

In order to function in a society which relies upon mastery of the spoken and written word, a child must acquire fundamental skills in oral and written communication. Frequent use of electronic media can be counterproductive to the development of brain functions needed to master skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and language development. It can also work against the natural development of analytical thinking. Joseph Chilton Pearce, Ph.D., an internationally-renowned educator, author, and lecturer, states that the child's first seven years are devoted to development of the symbolic, metaphoric language structure in the mid-brain and that all future cognitive development rests on the integrated functioning of the right and left sides of the brain. Television viewing disrupts this development and can cause a child to be easily distracted and bored. Reading, writing, speaking, and reasoning are functions of the left side of the brain. This is the part of the brain that orders data and analyzes what it perceives. The right side of the brain perceives the world as a whole and does not code and decode, as does the left side. Television viewing engages the right side of the brain, and as a child is inundated with the short sequences and the accelerated pace found in a television program, the ability to use the symbolic analytical-thinking brain functions may be diminished.

Real multi-sensory experiences are the seeds of imagination and creativity. It is important that your child be able to absorb the curriculum of the day – without electronic interference – in order to integrate and process it during sleeping hours. This is how learning becomes an integral part of life. Allowing your child to attend to the tasks of growing and learning without the stimulation of electronic media will enhance his or her ability to focus and become immersed in each day's curriculum.

We encourage you to speak with staff or other parents in the school for suggestions, support, and resources that you might find helpful on this subject. Here are some suggested alternatives (courtesy of Pasadena Waldorf School, Media Guidelines, 2010):

- **Early childhood:** Do domestic work alongside the parent – dishwashing, gardening, laundry, carpentry, and polishing shoes or tables. Play with simple toys and objects made from natural materials, listen to stories, watch and create puppet shows, dress up, bake, etc.
- **Grades 1-6:** Parents, read to your child or ensure the child in the older grade is reading independently. Always have available books that are at the reading or pre-reading level of the child. Tell stories, visit the library, do chores around the house, clean, keep craft and art supplies on hand, arrange areas in the yard outside where a child can garden, dig, build, etc. Visit the park, climb trees, ride bikes, jump rope, skate, go on walks and hikes, build and fly a kite, draw, etc. Take your pet for a walk. Do simple cooking and mixing activities, or make a lemonade stand. Practice musical instruments and have a family band. Play cards, start a photo album, etc.

Important Aspects of Sparrow Program

Philosophy

Sparrow is a child-centered school that places equal emphasis on a solid academic foundation, artistic expression, social development, and the developmental needs of the child. Our integrated thematic approach to learning emphasizes a child's relationship to the natural world while promoting respect for the environment and humankind.

Our intention is to blend the content as required by the State of California (hereafter referred to as "California" or "State") – in the form of the Common Core Standards – with the instructional practices demonstrated by the Waldorf approach. Our approach is greatly influenced by Jean Piaget's research on child development, Lev Vygotsky's theory of social learning, Rudolph Steiner's perception of the inner life of the child, and Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. We believe sound educational practices based on what we now know about learning and the developing child are the best way to engage children in the habits of deep, life-long learning while sustaining their childlike wonder and curiosity about the world.

Sparrow Educational Program Overview

The Sparrow program is built on five practices, listed below and discussed in depth throughout this section of the handbook:

- Integrated curriculum that balances intellectual, emotional, and creative elements
- Developmentally-appropriate, relevant work for children
- Social inclusion, safety, and respectful community-building
- Non-punitive, positive discipline that teaches self-control and fosters intrinsic motivation and personal responsibility
- Outdoor, experiential learning through gardening, sustainable living projects, and time in nature

Integrated Curriculum

Our grade level classes' main lesson blocks integrate multiple subjects within a conceptual theme, so students see the deeper connection between and among various facets of life and learning. There is no true compartmentalization in our world, and therefore learning experiences are offered in a manner that reflects life's interconnectedness.

As a public charter school, it is our responsibility to fully address the California and Common Core Standards. When brought in through our integrated approach, this content takes on new meaning and relevance for the children. The academic curriculum is thoughtfully integrated with poetry recitation, drama, painting, music, sculpting and drawing. This model of education through the arts awakens imagination and creativity, building a strong foundation for abstract thinking and intellectual challenges that are gradually and appropriately introduced throughout the grades.

Developmentally Appropriate, Relevant Work

According to Piaget, Steiner, and many other experts in the field of child development, there are common phases of development shared by children of a similar age. At Sparrow, we take those into consideration when planning the content we bring to our students at various ages and the manner in which we present it. The trend in American education of pushing abstract concepts on children of younger and younger ages is only resulting in frustration and growing rates of learning disability diagnoses. When a concept or skill is approached with the proper timing, the learning is deeper, more easily understood, and retention is long-lasting.

We also understand that each child develops according to his or her own internal timeline and comes to us with his or her own set of strengths. Teachers at Sparrow are keen observers of each child and provide additional support or introduce new challenges, according to each child's needs.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion at Sparrow is defined as overcoming the problems that lead to exclusion so that all students have the opportunity to fulfill their potential and participate fully. Inclusion, belonging, and emotional and physical safety are crucial to the success of any endeavor that includes people and learning. According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is difficult to meet the typical needs required for school success such as self-esteem, confidence, achievement, and respect for and by others until more foundational needs are first met. The foundational needs that schools can influence include safety and belonging. When students feel included and safe; when they are not worried about being teased or ridiculed; when they do not fear bullying, being wrong, or being left out; they can relax into giving their full attention to learning and bring their whole selves happily to the task at hand.

Therefore, community-building is a critical and integral component of our educational program. Class meetings teach conflict-resolution skills and foster respectful communication. Class Agreements are developed with the children at the beginning of each year, and are referenced daily to remind us of our goals as an inclusive and compassionate community.

Positive Discipline

Using Jane Nelsen's Positive Discipline approach, teachers, staff, and volunteers at Sparrow help children develop intrinsic decision-making that is positive, thoughtful, and respectful of themselves and others, while maintaining a consistent, safe, and harmonious learning environment. Expectations are clear, and communication is firm, fair, and kind.

The Positive Discipline approach teaches important social and life skills in a manner that is deeply respectful and encouraging for both children and adults.

Jane Nelsen gives the following criteria for effective discipline.

- Helps children feel a sense of connection (belonging and significance)
- Is mutually respectful and encouraging (kind and firm at the same time)
- Is effective long-term (consider what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about him/herself and the world, and what to do in the future to survive or thrive)
- Teaches important social and life skills (respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school, or larger community)
- Invites children to discover how capable they are (encourages the constructive use of personal power and autonomy)

Sparrow early childhood staff also use Kim Jon Payne's Simplicity Parenting model in the classroom and as a book study with parents. The focus of Simplicity Parenting is to facilitate a sense of ease by encouraging parents to limit distractions and say no to too much, too fast, too soon. Today's busier, faster, supersized society is waging an undeclared war . . . on childhood. As the pace of life accelerates to hyperspeed – with too much stuff, too many choices, and too little time – children feel the pressure. They can become anxious, have trouble with friends and school, or even be diagnosed with behavioral problems. Kim John Payne's simplifying path allows kids individuality to shine and their attention flourish. It builds a safe, warm and secure family base camp from which a child can launch out into the world with resiliency. It helps parents and teachers make small doable changes, worry less – and enjoy more.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices are based on principles and processes that emphasize the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and restoring relationships when harm has occurred. At the foundational level, Community Connections Circles help build trust, positive feelings, and a sense of belonging within the classroom community. These circles are also known as 'class meetings' in Positive Discipline practices. When an issue or problem arises in the classroom or between a few individuals, Responsive Circles help students bring problems they are noticing to the attention of the whole class, so together the whole class can work to solve the problem. When there is a more serious disciplinary issues, Mediation Circles use of restorative process to respond to disciplinary issues in a restorative manner. This process addresses the root causes of the harm, supports accountability, and promotes healing for the victim(s) and offender. Harm circles also responds to an individual and that individual's specific behavior in an attempt to bring her or him back into the community. When an offense has been serious enough that a student is removed from school for a period of time, Formal Conferencing supports the successful re-entry of a student before or following suspension, or expulsion. The goal is to welcome student to the school community in a manner that provides a plan to support and promotes student accountability and achievement.

Outdoor, Experiential Learning

Unlike previous generations, children in today's world are indoors much more than they are out. Regardless of the reasons, they are losing a crucial connection to nature. At Sparrow, there is ample time outdoors, and not just during recess. Throughout the year, gardening, outdoor projects, and field trips to our region's natural spaces all reconnect children with the earth and the cycles of nature.

The Grades

In order to foster a close and profound relationship with each child, the class teacher ideally leads the same group of children from grades one through three, and another class teacher loops with grades four through six, with a third teacher leading them through seventh and eighth. This gives the children a feeling of camaraderie and commitment and affords the teacher the opportunity to work closely with the children and their families. This model offers accelerated learning, stability, and continuing guidance to each child.

In the grades, each school day begins with the "Main Lesson:" a two-hour period in which the core curriculum is presented. Presenting core academic subjects in the Main Lesson block allows the students to have adequate time to follow through with all work projects, thus promoting in-depth, long-term learning. The integrated main lesson topic is taught experientially and artistically in blocks of three or four weeks.

The day also includes snack; lunch and recess times; outdoor chores, gardening, and projects; read-aloud and storytelling times; practice periods; handwork; meditation; watercolor painting; and music.

Each day closes with a compliment circle and a class meeting, bringing the class together to honor one another's academic and social contributions, and to practice the social skills that lead to respectful, responsible citizenship.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten-aged children learn best through imitation and example. In the Sparrow kindergarten, extensive time is given for guided free play in a classroom environment that is homelike, includes natural materials, and provides examples of productive work in which children can take part. Oral language development and early literacy are addressed through songs, poems, and movement games. Mathematical concepts are addressed in concrete ways through building and play.

In kindergarten, as in the grades, daily, weekly, and seasonal rhythms are emphasized. The rhythm of each day flows evenly between group and individual, directed and non-directed, gross and fine motor skills, and indoor and outdoor elements. The rhythm of each week is marked by special activities falling on different days. Indoors and outdoors, the rhythms of nature's changing seasons are observed and experienced.

Toys and learning materials generally consist of simple materials drawn from natural sources that can be transformed imaginatively to fit a wide variety of purposes, allowing children to employ and strengthen their imagination and creativity.

Please see the Kindergarten Handbook attached.

Graduation

Sparrow graduates emerge from this nurturing environment as compassionate, creative, eco-literate citizens able to act responsibly and thoughtfully in a complex society, empowered with the knowledge that their unique contributions, skills, and ideas will change our world for the better.

Student Assessment

Measurable Student Outcomes

The following are the assessment methods used to accurately determine if students are meeting the school's stated performance standards and the individual potential of individual students:

- Report cards are given at the end of each semester. The report is based upon teacher observations, anecdotal notes, and formative assessments. The child's strengths and achievements will be highlighted, and areas for further progress identified.
- Parent conferences for all students take place at least once a year, or more if requested by the parents, teachers, or students.
- Comprehensive student main lesson books and portfolios include student work samples, practice papers, written work and reports, artwork, etc.
- Oral recitations, presentations, reports, performances, or demonstrations occur regularly beginning in first grade, by both individuals and groups.
- A public open house is held for all grades once a year, during which student work is exhibited.
- State Standardized assessments, beginning in third grade, are administered in compliance with State laws governing Charter Schools.

- Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) formative assessments are given two times per year beginning in second grade to identify individual strengths and areas for growth and to communicate benchmark progress to our charter stakeholders and authorizers.

Standardized Assessments

The state-mandated standardized assessment program consists largely of computer-adaptive assessments that are linked to the Common Core State Standards, produced by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

California is currently revising its accountability system to include a school accountability dashboard. Some of the measures will use assessment scores, along with attendance, disciplinary information, graduation rates and more. These scores are aggregated at the school level, which reflects all of National University Academy (NUA). For specific program information directly related to Sparrow, please contact the office.

Sparrow will attain its growth target by following the curriculum designed to include the Common Core State Standards. By the time students graduate from Sparrow, they will be performing at a level that meets State standards. Sparrow recognizes that differences in the educational program and curriculum sequence may be reflected in variations in scores in specific areas of the SBAC assessments in the early grades. As students progress toward the exit outcomes, these variations will diminish.

In order to meet the Federal goals of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), a minimum of 95% of Sparrow students in each class must participate in the standardized tests. Sparrow and NUA overall needs all parents and guardians to support their children's participation in State mandated California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CASPP) testing, in order to maintain NUA Sparrow's charter status.

Parent Involvement

To sustain the high-quality educational experience, it is crucial that each family contribute to our school community. There are a number of ways to be involved in the life of the school, as discussed in this section.

Support through Volunteering

A large part of the experience and success of our school relies on parent support through volunteering. Much of what makes our program unique would not be possible without parent volunteers! Both in-school and out-of-school volunteer time is needed. Sparrow strongly encourages 20 hours per year per student or 10 hours per year for single parents. There are many different opportunities to volunteer that allow flexibility with scheduling. Assisting with specialty classes, making crafts, doing laundry, bringing flowers, sewing and making costumes, supervising at lunch and recess, and chaperoning outdoor education trips all require parental assistance. Playground-, garden-, and site-beautification are important tasks affecting the quality of school life and require the support of parents. Participation in class projects, special events, and parent education events offer valuable opportunities to work with and interact with other Sparrow families. Please note that all volunteers in the classroom or as chaperones on school activities/field trips must submit a live scan fingerprint for our school and must be cleared by the office prior to volunteering directly with students.

Parent participation is also needed in NEST and various committees such as:

- Gardening
- Communications
- Hospitality
- Field Trips and Assemblies

- Special Events and Festivals
- Fundraising and Grant-writing
- Community Outreach

These committees are important for supporting the daily operations and culture of the school, and for conducting the long-range planning and work that will help our school succeed.

Parent Meetings

Monthly opportunities to meet and discuss topics of interest among parents and the Site Administrator are another way to help enhance the quality of your student's experience and the effectiveness of our school. Join in the monthly "Circle with Sarah" on the second Tuesday of the month to meet other parents, raise questions and concerns, share ideas, and discuss topics and tips for supporting your child at school. Meeting times will include a teleconference option for any parents that cannot attend in person.

Commitment to the Educational Program

Parents who embrace and support the school's educational philosophy at home enhance their children's experience. Providing open-ended toys and tasks that allow your child to explore, build, create, and imagine; creating daily and weekly rhythms for your child at home; and sharing meals as a family are some of the important ways that parents can enhance their child's educational experience at Sparrow.

Support the School's Media Expectation

Our philosophy includes a commitment to understanding and nurturing each child's unique inner development. For reasons thoroughly defined in the Media section of this handbook, we believe that significantly reducing or eliminating children's time spent with media will further enhance their ability to fully develop. We request that our families try to significantly limit or eliminate the use of media (television, videos, video games, computer games, iPods, smart phones, CD players, movies, etc.) at the very least during the school week from Sunday late afternoon to Friday after school.

Support the Snack and Lunch Guidelines

Nurturing our bodies as well as our minds is important at Sparrow. Meals and snacks eaten at school provide additional opportunities to acknowledge our appreciation for the natural world. Families are encouraged to support this philosophy at home by following the guidelines outlined in the Snack and Lunch Guidelines section of this handbook.

Support Ecological Awareness

The school strives to teach children to develop love and respect for the earth. Children come to learn that we are part of a much larger macrocosm that needs to be kept in balance while they learn about life cycles and the seasons through planting and composting in our school garden. We promote recycling, reusing, repairing, and sustainability with the students. As this philosophy is respected at home, the awe and wonder evoked in our children will serve to promote a desire for wholesome living and the development of ecological awareness.

Aesthetics and the School Environment

Children live in rhythm and beauty and so thrive in aesthetically pleasing environments, both in the classroom and out of doors. We strive to create and maintain a unique and creative environment. Classroom motifs change throughout the school year to reflect seasonal and curricular themes.

The 3rd grades and above classrooms will richly reflect the ongoing cultural, historical, and academic themes of the curriculum. The 1st and 2nd grade classrooms have a nurturing ambience, which supports the younger children's transition from home to school. Pastel colors, softened lighting, and play spaces that integrate folklore and the natural elements of the season are used to accomplish this.

Sparrow is committed to using natural and high-quality products in every area of the school. In addition to being healthful, the use of natural products supports and enhances the children's inner connection with the earth and their responsibility as caretakers of our planet.

Festivals and Celebrations

Celebrating seasonal festivals at Sparrow is a way of observing the recurring rhythms and cycles in nature. As the earth makes its way around the sun, the solstices and equinoxes become the four cornerstones of the year's natural rhythm. They inspire our seasonal festivals in themes that are universal and culturally diverse. Sharing in the school's festival life is deeply nourishing to our individual inner lives and contributes to the integration and stability of the entire community. Seasonal festivals may change year to year and will be publicized in multiple venues in advance so that all families have enough notice to participate.

If you are planning a birthday party or other event requiring invitations to children at Sparrow, please make those arrangements outside of school.

Organizational Structure

Faculty, Staff, NUA Board and NEST Board, 2017-2018

Class Teachers

- Kindergarten: Gina Marrujo
 - Teaching Assistant: Yumi O'Berry
- Kindergarten: Helga Conklin
 - Teaching Assistant: Nobuko Su
- First Grade: Rich Aguilo
 - Asst.: TBD
- Second Grade: Lyra Matthews
- Third Grade: Christina Sears
- Fourth Grade: Nicole Martinez
- Fifth Grade: Donna Kendy
- Sixth Grade: Alexis Ahrens
- Seventh Grade: Alexandra Sannino
- Eighth Grade: Sattya Funke
- Homeschool: Larkin Underwood

Specialty Teachers

- Special Education: TBD
- Special Education Assistant: Elena Gonzalez
- Handwork: Bianca Rennick
- Games: Caleb Cardenas
- Spanish: Nick McCormack
- Eurythmy: Taiya Ryan
- Strings: Violin/Viola—Bram Goldstein, Cello- Elizabeth Brown

Staff

- Executive Director, NUA schools: Kimberleigh Kopp
- NUA Sparrow Charter School Principal and Director, NUA Lakeside: Sarah Adams
- Pedagogical Leader: Shivani Burrows-Goodwill
- Sparrow Vice-Principal: Alexis Ahrens
- Community Outreach and Development Coordinator: Neda Gilson
- Site Facilitator: Julie Geraths
- Grades classroom assistant: Raziya Credell

- Campus Supervision and Security: Bob Vence

NUA Sparrow Board

- Bree Ojeda, Parent Representative
- Guillermo Garcia, Community Representative
- Charles Anacker, Community Representative
- Nancy Rohland, National University Representative
- Brian Marshall, Superintendent, La Mesa Spring Valley School District,

Nurturing Exceptional Students and Teachers (NEST)

NEST is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (#45-4289257), made up of Sparrow families providing volunteer support and resources to enhance the educational experience of Sparrow's students.

NEST Officers 2017-2018

President: Kim Castillo

Vice President: Cesar Dominguez

Treasurer: Jennifer Fujimoto/Arynne Mehl

Secretary: Maureen Dotson

School Information

English Language Learners

The Home Language Survey given to all students identifies English Language Learners (ELL) students. Those students whose primary language at home is not English will be given the California English Language Development Test annually until they are re-classified. Sparrow will comply with the applicable requirements of the ESEA Act with regard to ELL students.

Special Education Students and Students with Disabilities

Sparrow complies with all applicable State and Federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. Special education services are provided jointly through Lakeside Union School District and NUA.

Health-Related Issues

- Medication: Parent and/or doctor permission is needed for Sparrow staff or faculty to administer medication. Students must come to the office to take medicine and Sparrow staff will keep a log in the office of any doses administered. Therefore, please supply clearly written instructions for administering medications consistent with the label. Please include how the medication is to be stored. Parents are responsible for keeping the medication current.

- Allergies/Medical Issues: Please notify the class teacher regarding any allergies, including food allergies, or medical issues.
- Epi-pens. The school will have Epi-pens available in the case of an emergency, but if a student also has his or her own individual prescription, it is recommended to provide 2 to the school for the child as well. Epi-pens will be kept in the classroom first-aid backpack, which will travel with the class to recess and lunch. The office will also maintain a set of Epi-pens in the office's first aid backpack that will also travel to before and after-care.
- Accidents/Emergencies: In case of an accident or emergency requiring a physician or hospitalization, we will immediately attempt to contact a parent. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the person listed on the child's Emergency Card (see also Emergency Release Form, as discussed in the next section).

Additional Health and Safety Guidelines (cited from the 2017-2018 LMSV Parent-Student Handbook)

- Anaphylaxis Treatment – EC 49414 Education Code authorizes schools to provide epinephrine auto-injectors to trained personnel to use to provide emergency medical aid to persons suffering from anaphylactic reaction.
- Confidential Medical Services—EC 46010.1 Education Code authorizes schools to excuse pupils in grades 7–12 inclusive from the school for the purpose of obtaining confidential medical services without the consent of the pupil's parent/guardian.
- Cooperation in Control of Communicable Disease and Immunization of Pupils—EC 49403 The School may permit a licensed physician or nurse to administer immunizing agents to prevent or control communicable diseases to pupils whose parents have consented in writing to such immunization.

The following guidelines should be followed to protect your child and other children from communicable disease:

- a) Children should remain home until free from a fever 100° or above for at least 24 hours.
- b) Children who have diarrhea or vomit at home, or are sent home from school because of this, should stay home until free from symptoms for 24 hours.
- c) Children should not come to school with an undiagnosed rash.

Children who exhibit signs of passable contagious conditions will be sent home until symptom-free or cleared to return by a medical provider.

- Emergency Information--To safeguard your child's health and welfare, the school must have current emergency information on file. Such information should include home address, home and work telephone numbers of the parents or guardians, name and telephone number of at least one relative or friend who is authorized to provide transportation and/or care for the child, and childcare provider information if applicable. This is especially important in cases of crisis situations or natural disasters. Students WILL NOT be released to anyone who is not listed on the emergency contact list.
- Head Lice Policy –NUA Sparrow recognizes head lice infestations among students require treatment but do not pose a risk of transmitting disease. If a student is found with active, adult head lice, he/she shall be sent home. Upon return to school, the student will be checked before he/she can return to the classroom. When it is determined one or more students in a class or school are infested with head lice, parents of students in that class or school will be notified. Staff shall maintain the privacy of students identified as having head lice.

Hearing and Vision Screening—EC 49452, 49452. The Governing Board of any school shall provide for the vision and hearing screening of pupils enrolled. A pupil may be excluded from mandated screening programs if the parent/guardian files a written statement refusing consent for the examination with the principal of the child's school.

Immunizations Required by Law—EC 48216, 48980, 49403 & C.A.C., Title 17, Chapter 4 Subchapter 8

California law requires parents of all children under 18 years of age or on first entry to a California school to complete a California School Immunization Record. Verification of immunizations against polio, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, rubella, mumps, and hepatitis B must be presented on admission to school. All children entering kindergarten shall have received their second measles vaccination and be immunized against hepatitis B and varicella. All out-of-state entrants, K–8, must have had a varicella vaccination. The second MMR, hepatitis B series, TD booster, and Tdap booster are required for all entering seventh-grade pupils. The hepatitis B series may be given over a period of six months. It is recommended the series be started a year ahead. Check with your school for new immunization requirements. Pupils not meeting the requirements will not be allowed to register.

New legislation (SB 277) would allow pupils who, prior to January 1, 2016, have a personal belief exemption on file to be enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school. The bill will prohibit advancement to the 7th grade unless the pupil has been immunized as required by the bill. Effective July 1, 2016, this bill will prohibit enrollment for all new pupils and those advancing to the 7th grade unless the pupil has been immunized as required by the bill.

Medicine and Sunscreen at School—EC 49423, 35183.5 Pupils requiring medication at school may be assisted by school personnel. Any medication to be dispensed at school must be brought to the school office by an adult. Parents must complete Form 09562, Medication Authorization and Plan, available in the school office or on the Internet at www.lmsvsd.org/Page/1110. The form must be signed by a California-licensed physician. School personnel may not assist a child with administration of medication unless Form 09562 has been filed with the school. This form must be completed each time there is a change in the medication and must be renewed each year.

If your child's physician would like your child to carry and self-administer asthma medication, the following forms must be completed and signed: 1) School Asthma Action Plan, 2) Request to Carry and Self-Administer Asthma Medication, and 3) Authorization for Use or Disclosure of Health Information. Students who need to take Epinephrine prescribed by a physician during the school day may carry and self-administer the Epi-Pen if two requirements are met: 1) The school must receive a written statement from the physician that includes the name of the medication, how it is to be used, dosage, and confirmation that the student is able to self-administer the medication (Form 09562). 2) The school district must receive a written statement from parent/guardian that contains a consent allowing the student to self-administer the Epi-Pen, a release allowing the school nurse or other designated school personnel to consult with the student's physician if questions or concerns arise, and a release absolving the school district and school personnel from civil liability if the self-administering student suffers an adverse reaction (Form CDE Ref. SB1912).

Pupils on a Continuing Program of Medication—EC 49423 & 49480

The parent or legal guardian of any public school pupil on a continuing medication regimen for an ongoing condition shall inform the school nurse or other designated school employee of the medication being taken, the current dosage, and the name of the supervising physician. With the consent of the parent or guardian, the school office staff or teacher may communicate with the physician and may counsel with school personnel regarding the possible effects of the drug on the child's physical, intellectual, and social behavior; and symptoms of adverse side effects, omission, or overdose.

Pupils may use sunscreen during the school day without a physician's note or prescription. School personnel are not required to assist pupils in applying sunscreen.

Oral Health Assessment—EC 49452.8 Kindergarten students and first-grade students who did not attend kindergarten must present proof of having received an oral health assessment (dental check-up) or completion of a form provided by the district on which the parent can indicate why an oral health assessment by a licensed dentist or other registered dental health professional cannot be completed.

Health Screening—H&SC 124100, 124105 A physical examination is required for all new children entering kindergarten or first grade. The examination must be given within six (6) months prior to entering kindergarten or ninety (90) days following the first day of school for new first graders. A pupil may be excluded from school for up to five days based on the failure to comply, or sign a waiver. Free health screenings are provided through the local health department.

Health Screening—Parent’s Refusal to Consent—EC 49451, 48980 & 20 USC 1232h

A child may be exempt from a physical examination whenever the parents file a written statement with the school principal stating they will not consent to a routine physical examination of their child. Whenever there is good reason to believe the child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, the child will be excluded from school attendance.

Emergency Release Form

In case of an emergency, your child will only be released to those people indicated on the child’s Emergency Card. Proof of identification will be required. Those NOT identified on the emergency card can only pick up the child with a written and signed note from the child’s parent. Sparrow may call the parent of the child for confirmation.

The child’s Emergency Card is kept on file in the office and must be updated at the beginning of each school year and whenever a change occurs (address, etc.) during the school year.

Field Trips

Field trips are taken throughout the year by all classes. These trips are conducted in conjunction with the curriculum and offer the students an opportunity to experience a deepening of their studies in a different environment. The teacher will share the purpose of the trip as well as guidelines with the accompanying adults/parents in order to meet the safety and/or health needs of the children.

The classroom teacher will arrange for field trip permission slips (liability release forms for school-related volunteer activities on or off campus) to be sent to the parents at least one week prior to the field trip. These need to be signed and returned two days before the event. Logistics will be taken coordinated Sparrow staff and parent volunteers.

Sparrow feels strongly about the safety of the children placed in our care. Therefore, it is important for parents to understand and agree to our policy regarding transporting children to and from school-related activities, in cases where buses are not available:

- Driver must hold a valid driver’s license.
- Driver must be 21 years of age or older.
- Driver must have submitted a live scan fingerprint before being cleared to volunteer and drive.
- Drivers will be assigned a “partner car” with whom they will caravan for the duration of the field trip.
- Drivers may not stop while transporting children for any reason other than an emergency. If an emergency should occur, please proceed to the nearest safe destination and call for help. Do not stop at the side of the freeway or at the scene of an accident, if possible.

- Drivers may not under any circumstances use a cellular phone while transporting students. If you find it necessary to make a call or send a text message, proceed to the nearest safe destination, stop your vehicle, and use your phone.
- The vehicle capacity is one passenger per seat belt. All passengers shall use their seat belts.
- No child under 12 may sit in a front seat with an airbag. Use of child car seats shall be in accordance with law.
- Driver's vehicle must be mechanically sound.
- Driver will observe all traffic codes.
- Driver must have adequate insurance coverage as required by the State
- The driver is in authority of the conversation and radio throughout the trip. Please redirect the children's conversation if it is heading in an inappropriate direction. Also, quiet the children when they need to be listening.
- When exiting the car, be sure children exit on the curb side of the car. Whenever walking to and from the car, be sure to stay together as a group.

As the supervising adult, the driver is responsible for the group of children assigned to his/her care. You are expected to exercise this authority as needed and as appropriate according to our Sparrow discipline guidelines.

All cars transporting children will contain the following:

Emergency information for each child in vehicle

Directions and map to destination

Teacher's cellular phone number

School phone number

Note: If you drive your personal automobile while on a field trip and you are involved in an accident, by law your liability insurance policy is used first. The district liability policy would be used only after your policy limits have been exceeded. The district does not cover, nor is it responsible for, comprehensive and collision coverage to your vehicle.

Campus Safety

The safety of our students is of the highest priority. Therefore, any visitor to the campus, including parents, must sign in and out in the Sparrow office whether they are visiting or performing volunteer services on campus.

Sparrow reserves the right to monitor who is on campus.

Students may only be released to adults listed on the child's Emergency Card, unless a signed note from the parent is present and identification is verified. (See Emergency Release Form section of this handbook).

Playground Expectations

- Children may be on the playground with adult supervision only.
- Children may be in the classrooms during recess or lunch with teacher supervision only.
- Children must stay within the school gates or teacher directed boundaries of play during recess and lunch.
- Shoes must be worn outdoors at all times.
- Ropes may be used only for jumping.
- Climbing in or shaking trees on school grounds is not permitted.

- Sticks or sharp objects are not permitted anywhere on school property.
- Kindergarteners stay inside the Kinder Play Garden.
- Jumping is allowed from shorter, fixed structures. Jumping from tables or the top of larger play structures is not allowed.
- Only one person may go down the slide at a time.
- The slide is one-way, going down. No climbing up the slide.
- Carrying one another or picking one another up is not permitted.
- Tag is allowed, but with gentle, 2 finger, touch for tagging.
- Screaming and roughhousing are not permitted.
- Use quiet voices when close to the school building.
- No playing in restrooms at any time.

Additional Information

- Toys from home should not be brought to school unless approved by the class teacher. Toys include skateboards, roller blades, scooters, trading cards, action figures, printed material of a violent or threatening nature, etc.
- Sports equipment from home may be acceptable if approved by the class teacher.
- The use of any type of electronic equipment (e.g., personal gaming devices, iPod, etc.) is not permitted on campus or during field trips.
- Cell phones should be left off during school hours, but may be used for emergencies with teacher approval.
- Eat only in designated areas while sitting down. Exceptions may be made for special occasions or events.
- Dispose of trash and recycle/compost other materials, as appropriate. Keep the school tidy and orderly.

Individual teachers may also have additional expectations, which they will communicate to their classes. Each teacher will develop a class management system appropriate for that age level to help the children understand and integrate all guidelines and rules into their daily activities. It is important for parents, staff, and volunteers to review and reinforce these guidelines with the students.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance by Sparrow students is extremely important for many reasons, including those listed below.

- Regular attendance shows a commitment by the family to the student's education.
- Sparrow is accountable for overall student performance. Lower student performance due to a low attendance rate can affect the school as a whole.
- Attendance at school is mandatory by law.

Absences

- Excused Absences: A student may be excused from school due to: illness, quarantine, attending a funeral service of an immediate family member, medical or dental appointment, or the observance of a religious holiday or ceremony. A student with an excused absence will be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit. The school Principal or Vice-Principal also has the discretion to excuse a school absence due to a student's circumstances.
- Unexcused Absences: all other absences will count as unexcused absences and trancies. A truancy is classified when a student misses more than 30 minutes of instruction without an excuse three or more times during the school year.

Sparrow expects that each student will attend school every day. by completing assigned educational activities that correlate to a minimum of 95% of the school days offered (171 days out of a maximum of 180). If a student misses 1 day or more of class assignments, and does not complete assigned independent study work, the parent/guardian will be contacted. In the event that a student misses any days of assignments for two consecutive learning period months, the parent/guardian will be required to meet with the School Principal to create and implement a plan for consistent attendance. According to the National University Academy board policy, after one missed assignment, an evaluation process will be initiated to determine whether it is in the best interest of the pupil to remain in independent study at this charter school.

At Sparrow, each main lesson block is a carefully designed, complete unit. The dynamics of the Sparrow curriculum make absences particularly disruptive to classroom flow and learning, such that even a few absences can adversely affect a child. Missed opportunities to construct understandings cannot always be replicated, and therefore absences should be reserved for incidents of illness. In case of illness, such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or a known contagious disease, please refrain from sending the child to school. Children should be symptom-free for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Sparrow staff must keep accurate records of student work in order to secure state funding. For safety and security reasons, teachers will also take attendance and notify the office which students are present.

IMPORTANT: If a child will not be at school or late on a particular day, a parent or guardian must call or email the Office at 619-462-1853.

Emergency/Safety (such as earthquake and fire)

Sparrow has a safety plan in place. All staff and teachers are aware of their specific duties, responsibilities, and procedures. As a routine part of our plan, students participate in routine safety drills regarding earthquakes, fire/natural disaster, and lockdown/shelter in place. Emergency Cards must be filled out at the beginning of each new school year.

Should there be an emergency requiring parents to pick up their children, we request that you enter the school at the designated entrance only – just as you would during pick-up times – and wait for your child to be released by a Sparrow staff member.

Discipline

Sparrow is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment for every child. We are equally committed to helping our children grow into healthy, happy, responsible adults. In order to respect, care for, and work with others, children must learn to truly love and respect themselves. Because of this belief, Sparrow utilizes the Positive Discipline approach authored by Jane Nelsen, which teaches important social and life skills in a manner that is deeply respectful and encouraging for both children and adults. Sparrow also uses non-violent conflict resolution practices as outlined in Restorative Practices. (Please refer to the Positive Discipline and Restorative Practices section in this handbook)

Teachers and staff will receive ongoing training and support to effectively and consistently implement Positive Discipline and Restorative Practices techniques.

The Sparrow Code

In order to create a school environment which fosters compassion, responsibility, and respect, our students will learn to embrace the Sparrow Code:

- Take Care of Ourselves,
- Take Care of Each Other, and
- Take Care of Our School.

Minor transgressions of the code or of class agreements are handled one-on-one between the student and the teacher; in small, private groups; or in class meetings. The focus of the student-teacher interaction is to help the child find more positive ways of meeting their needs, while respecting the needs of others.

Intervention Process

Behaviors such as roughhousing, fighting, shoving, spitting, pushing, hitting, kicking, biting and/or habitual use of vulgarity, harassing, threatening or intimidating another student are cause for immediate intervention, which may include temporarily removing the child from the immediate surroundings. If any of these occur, the teacher or staff member will fill out an incident report and notify the parent(s) of the student(s) involved. If the child continues to display disruptive or disrespectful behavior and isn't responding to redirection, the following procedures will be followed:

- *Facilitated student problem solving resolution with other students affected or a facilitated class meeting:* In Positive Discipline and Restorative Practices, the ultimate aim is to foster the development of healthy, positive self-advocacy and problem solving strategies within each student. Teachers and staff teach and model these techniques in class. When a conflicting behavior arises between two students or if a student's behavior is impacting the class in general, the teacher will first direct students solve the conflict first using their own skills and strategies (if grade level appropriate). If students are unable to resolve it themselves, the teacher or staff member will facilitate the problem solving. If it is a recurring behavior that affects many in the class, the teacher may facilitate a class meeting to help students find ways to address the behavior as a whole. The intent of the class meeting is to help the students as a group learn to listen to each other and share openly with each other, to recognize patterns of behavior that aren't working in others and themselves, to find healthy ways to support the group with more positive alternatives and to hold each other accountable for implementing agreements for improvement.
- *Student Behavior Report and Action Plan:* The teacher will write up a brief report of the behavior and give this report to the parents, who will be responsible for discussing the problem with the child, assisting the child to

correct the behavior, and then signing the report and returning it to school within one day. This is not designed to be punitive, but to allow the child to brainstorm with his/her parents about more appropriate behaviors. It is often difficult for a child to take responsibility for his/her own behavior, and the tendency is to blame others. It is up to us as adults to help the students understand their responsibility and then move on to behaviors that will help them feel more positive about themselves, with the intention of correcting/changing the negative behavior.

- *Parent-Teacher Conference:* If three notices are sent home, a mandatory conference will be scheduled between the parent(s) and the teacher. If the parent(s) and teacher agree, the child may be included in the meeting. The teacher may request another faculty member or the Lead Teacher to be present. Parents may invite other individuals to the conference, if the teacher and/or Lead Teacher agree.
- *Staff Intervention:* If the problem does not improve, the teacher will call the parents to schedule another conference to determine the most appropriate course of action. It may be recommended that a Student Study Team be convened to study the child and his/her special needs. This team would consist of the class teacher, Sparrow's Principal, and other support staff, as appropriate. This team will work with the parent to cultivate healthy classroom and playground behavior.

Suspension and Expulsion

Concurrent with the above Intervention process, and in the interest of maintaining a safe and courteous environment for all members of Sparrow, there are certain behaviors that will not be tolerated and may result in immediate removal of the child from the school setting even while the intervention process described above is being followed. The school will regard suspension and expulsion as a last resort and is based upon the judgment of the school administrator. Criteria for suspension and expulsion of students shall be consistent with California Education Code 48900 and all other applicable Federal statutes and State constitutional provisions. All related hearings will conform to the applicable State and Federal laws regarding discipline, special education, confidentiality, and access to records.

The following represent typical grounds for suspension and expulsion:

- The threat, causation, or attempted causation of physical injury to another person or willful use of force or violence upon the person of another except in self-defense
- Possession of a real or replica weapon (e.g., firearms, knives, explosives)
- Unlawful possession, use, sale, or offer of any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant (including being under the influence of any such substances)
- Robbery or attempted robbery of school or private property
- Destruction or attempted destruction of school or private property
- Extortion
- Obscene, racist, or offensive acts or habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Disruption of school activities or willful defiance of valid school authorities

Sparrow maintains a drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco free environment.

Suicide Prevention

Prevention Instruction

Suicide prevention strategies shall include, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances student's feelings of connectedness with the school and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.

Sparrow shall promote the healthy mental, emotional and social development of students including, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, and resilience.

The NUA Executive Director or designee may offer parents/guardians education or information which describes the severity of the youth suicide problem, the National University Academy suicide prevention efforts, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, reducing the stigma of mental illness, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.

Staff Development

Suicide prevention training for staff shall be designed to help staff identify and find help for students at risk of suicide. The training shall be offered under the direction of National University Academy staff and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies and may include information on:

- Research identifying risk factors, such as previous suicide attempt(s), history of depression or mental illness, substance use problems, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, and other factors.
- Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions, including changes in students' appearance, personality or behavior.
- Research-based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health.
- School and community resources and services for students and families in crisis and ways to access them.
- National University Academy procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide.

Intervention

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the Program Lead, Executive Director, other school administrator, or school counselor. The school administrator or school counselor shall then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible and may refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community.

Students shall be encouraged through the education program and in school activities to notify a teacher, administrator, staff member, counselor, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

The Executive Director or designee shall establish crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications in the event that suicide occurs or an attempt is made by a member of the student body or staff on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination & Bullying

The National University Academy Sparrow Board of Trustees desires to provide a safe school environment that allows all students equal access and opportunities in the National University Academy programs, academic and other educational support programs, services, and activities. The Board prohibits, at any learning center or school activity, unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying of any student based on the student's actual race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression; the perception of one or more such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

The designated Coordinator for Nondiscrimination to handle complaints regarding discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and to answer inquiries regarding the National University Academy nondiscrimination policies is the Executive Director, Kimberleigh Kopp. She may be reached at kkopp@nu.edu or (760) 630-4080.

Communication

Communication Model

Direct communication lines foster understanding and help to resolve conflicts as they arise. These pathways form a structure and process that encourage parties who have concerns or who are involved in a conflict to reach resolution or agree to disagree.

To Whom do I Speak?

General questions (concerning daily operations, policy or procedural issues, enrollment, after-care, carpooling, school newsletter, etc.) should be addressed to the Site Facilitator in the Sparrow office. Some other types of questions are discussed below.

- Questions Concerning Your Child should be addressed to your child's teacher. We feel that healthy, open communication between parent and teacher is essential for your child's educational experience. If you need to relay a message to the teacher, sending an email directly to the teacher or a simple note with your child is best. In the event that the message requires dialogue, communicate directly with the teacher after school or leave a message at the office to schedule an appointment.
- Questions Related to NEST Committees should be addressed to the NEST President, who can direct you to the appropriate committee chairperson.
- Questions Related to Expenditures for Special Programs, such as suggestions for new programs or materials, should be addressed to members of NEST.
- Questions Related to Educational Issues, such as curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, and teacher-student relationships that have not been resolved through direct communication with the teacher should be addressed to the Sparrow Site Administrator/Principal.

- Questions Regarding NUA, La Mesa Spring Valley Unified School District, or Legal or Financial Issues should be addressed to the Sparrow Site Administrator/Principal.
- Questions Regarding Standardized Assessments should be addressed to the Sparrow Site Administrator/Principal.
- Questions Regarding Short Term Independent Study should be addressed to the child's teacher or Sparrow Site Administrator.

Parent Student Signature Page

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

By initialing each of the items below, I/we signify my/our acceptance of the contents of this handbook.

_____ I/We acknowledge that I/we have received an electronic or hard copy version of the National University Academy, Sparrow Program Parent-Student Handbook (handbook)

_____ I/We have reviewed its contents with our child.

_____ I/We understand that the handbook sets forth the terms and conditions of student enrollment at Sparrow, as well as the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of Sparrow students and parents/guardians.

_____ I/We will volunteer at least 20 hours per student per year (10 hours per single parent family).

_____ I/We will attend annual parent-teacher conferences, scheduled Student Success Team meetings, and at least one NEST parent-teacher organization meeting per semester.

_____ I/We will drop off and pick up my/our child on time, or will pay Open Minds, Sparrow's after-care program for the time accrued.

_____ I/We will significantly limit or eliminate my/our child's contact with electronic media such as TV, videos, video games, computers, and movies during the school week.

_____ I/We will dress my/our child comfortably for the weather, suitably for active school life, and appropriately for the classroom.

_____ I/We will read and respond to all school-to-home communications promptly.

_____ I/We will notify my/our child's teacher if something is happening in my/our child's life that could affect their progress and/or participation in school.

_____ I/We have read the handbook and agree to abide by the rules, policies, and standards set forth therein.

Parent Name

Signature

Date

Parent Name

Signature

Date

To be completed only by a student who is in grade 3 or higher: I acknowledge that my parent/guardian has reviewed the handbook policies with me.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date