

and we understand that different people may have different sensibilities. Students are, however, expected to dress appropriately for class and school activities, and to demonstrate respect for themselves, their teachers, and for learning.

Students should not wear clothing representing drug, alcohol, or tobacco culture, or with images of weaponry, violence, obscenities, or with any language or symbolism of hatred or disrespect for others.

Finally, we ask for you and your child to be conscious of clothing or accessories that may undermine TREE's mission of inclusion. Sometimes, wearing certain brands or designer labels (and boasting about the cost of such items) may alienate other students and make them feel "less than."

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

Sexual harassment is a violation of State law. Such harassment includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate personal remarks, questions, jokes or innuendos, and/or the sharing of other's information or images via text or online. Students who have any concerns should speak to the School Counselor or the Human Development Team.

## OFFICE TELEPHONE USE / ELECTRONIC DEVICES, GAMES AND TOYS

The telephones in the office area are for staff and parent use only, unless students receive explicit permission from a faculty or staff member. We do not allow students to carry or use their cell phones during school hours. Families will be contacted by a staff member via phone in the event of illness or emergency. Students should use email to communicate all non-emergency details or information with their families during the school day.

Electronic devices and games are not permitted at school. TREE Academy does not assume responsibility for the item(s) should they be misplaced or broken. The same policy also applies to non-electronic toys and games. Students may bring educationally appropriate toys and books to the classroom with their teacher's prior approval.

## BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

TREE Academy uses a restorative approach to most behavioral issues that arise during the school day. Students are taught to respect the rights of others, school property, others' property, and the emotional wellbeing of others. Behavioral matters are often handled by the classroom teacher, and, as needed, our Human Development team facilitates conflict resolution and further discussion with all parties involved.

## THE PROMISE COUNCIL

**These are the general steps of the Promise Council process; however, should circumstances warrant in our judgement a change in procedures, we may adjust our approach or processes.**

At TREE Academy, Promise Councils are our way of addressing students who are not turning in their work, or whose behavior has become a cause for concern. The Promise Councils will employ restorative practices, and will be comprised of a member of the Human Development team, the teacher involved, and a teacher of the student's choosing, our School Counselor, and/or the Dean of Students may also be in attendance. In the case of academic concerns, the Promise Council will first seek to understand why a student hasn't completed the work on time, then consider supportive ways to assist the student with doing their work. They are designed to support the student in addressing the issue(s) at hand.

The Promise Council will then create an agreement with the student as to how and when the work will be completed and turned into the teacher(s). A summary of the meeting will be provided by the Human Development Team to the family. Any new agreements forged as a result of the Promise Council will be shared with the family, the student, all concerned faculty, the Human Development Team and the Dean of Students to confirm the new agreement or plan.

The agreement will involve a follow-up meeting a week or two later to see if the issues raised by the Promise Council have been adequately addressed by the student. In the rare event a student declines to meet his or her agreements forged in a Promise Council, the Council members will convey that to not only the Dean of Students, but the Director of School, and may result in further disciplinary action(s), including, but not limited to, Days of Reflection or expulsion.

It is our view that any student who declines to make a good faith effort to engage work with the Promise Council, and to act on the agreements made through that process, is, by their actions, indicating that they no longer wish to be at TREE. While our approach will work for most students, we also understand that no approach can, or will, work for every student. Should we discover in the course of a Promise Council process that a student is not making a good faith effort, we will work with the family to find a more suitable environment for the student other than at TREE.

#### INCOMPLETE AND UNSATISFACTORY WORK

Teachers will email any student who did not complete assigned work for that week. The email will identify the missing or incomplete assignments, and will be copied to the student's family, Human Development, and the Dean of Students. Should there be any special circumstances to consider as to why the student is late or behind in their work, the student and/or family can contact and confer with the teacher, making sure to include Human Development and the Dean of Students on any emails, noting any new understandings or plans made during those discussions regarding the student's work and when it will be completed.

Should, however, a student amass several missing or incomplete work assignments, a similar email will go out to the student, their family, Human Development, and the Dean of Students, and a Promise Council will be formed. Please bear in mind that all work

assigned at TREE is for the student's benefit and development, as well as to prepare them for the likely workloads to come, whether at college or in their careers.

## BEHAVIORAL - BASED PROMISE COUNCIL

A student referred to the Human Development Team more than one time for any behavioral reason, including disrupting a class, will initiate a Promise Council.

The Promise Council will work with the student to understand the cause(s) of the behavior(s), and then seek to forge a restorative path forward with the student, including whatever additional steps the Council thinks most helpful to the student and anyone else affected.

Depending on the severity of the behavior(s), and/or the outcomes of the Promise Council process, the Council will share its decisions and/or make recommendations to the administration. Although most students will likely enter a Promise Council with understandable concerns, they may discover that the Council members are all dedicated to finding a restorative path forward with the student. While certain behaviors may lead to a determination that the student can no longer continue at TREE, wherever possible, the emphasis of our Promise Councils will not be on rule-breaking, but rather on supporting a learning opportunity through which a student can grow. The Promise Council will address any relational harm done, making amends and renewing our TREE Promise to one another. School administration will rely extensively on the decisions reached and/or the recommendations made by our Promise Councils.

To give you a sense of how we are approaching the Promise Councils, here is an excerpt from our Promise Council guidelines, created and developed with our faculty and staff:

Roles of the Promise Council at TREE are to address both homework issues as well as behavioral issues. Their goal is to:

- Address the needs of those harmed (relational issues)
- Empower everyone involved to learn, grow and change
- Focus on harm done rather than solely on rule-breaking
- Invite and encourage accountability, or those behind on their work
- Seek to heal, and/or forge new agreements to move forward productively and responsibly
- Foster community building through the development of authentic relationships because we see relationships as central to building community
- Seek to recognize the root causes of behaviors in forging restorative agreements
- Use inclusive, collaborative processes to address and restore circumstances and/or make amends

Skills and Values we seek to develop through the Promise Council:

- Compassion
- Creativity
- Empathy

- Flexibility
- Honesty
- Listening
- Self-awareness
- Open-mindedness
- Patience
- Respect
- Responsibility/Accountability

## RESTORATIVE GUIDELINES TEACHING COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR

Depending on a given circumstance, we may vary our approach.

### 1. Communication and Check-in:

- Staff or students alert the Human Development team about an event that affects or harms the community. This includes, but is not limited to, lack of effort, failure to take responsibility, and consistent delinquent academic work.
- Human Development meets with all involved to understand behavior and reach an agreement.
- If immediate intervention is needed, students are given “Time For Time” - the first ten minutes of lunch with the Human Development team discussing the impact of behavior on others and themselves.
- The Human Development team follows-up with each person involved.

### 2. Promise Council

- If the Human Development team is alerted about recurring behavior, a Promise Council is called with the student, the Human Development team, and a staff member of the student's choice.
- In a Promise Council, TREE Promise is reviewed, harm done is summarized, student/teacher needs are discussed, and goal-oriented/time-based agreements are created to repair harm.
- The Human Development team sends a summary email to all stakeholders (family, teacher involved, teacher of student's choice, Dean of Students) so that the community is in alignment.
- The Human Development team monitors progress of agreements.

### 3. Family Meeting

- If insufficient progress is shown within the allotted time period, a family meeting is called with the student, family, Human Development team and Dean of Students.
- Prior to the meeting, the Dean of Students collects feedback from the student's teaching team.

- In family meetings, harm done and steps taken to heal are summarized, school needs are communicated, and a direct action plan is agreed upon to ensure resolution.
- The Dean of Students determines if three days of reflection are needed on a case-by-case basis.
- Dean of Students and the Human Development team monitor progress of direct action plan

#### 4. Director of School Meeting

- If insufficient progress is shown after the assigned Days of Reflection, based on the recommendations of the Human Development team and Dean of Students, Director of School meeting is called with the family, Human Development team and Dean of Students.
- In the Director of School meeting, discussion is centered around the question, *“Is TREE the right environment for the student, and is the community able to meet the student’s needs?”*
- The Director of School, the Human Development team and the Dean of Students consider any new information presented in appeal and determine student’s standing in the community.
- When all parties agree to give the student another opportunity to be a part of the community, non-negotiable expectations are created within an allotted time frame.
- If expectations are not met, then it is at the discretion of the Director of School to disinvite the student at any point and determine if the semester can be completed at TREE.
- If a path forward at TREE is not found, TREE will support a smooth transition for the student to the best of its capacity.

As the African proverb reminds us, it takes a village to raise a child. With your support, we will continue to offer our best understanding and efforts to support and guide students to grow and develop their innate gifts in light of the TREE Promise.

Should a student be experiencing a particularly stressful day for any reason, we may call their family to come and pick them up from school as a supportive step.

Some behaviors may compel us to take immediate action that may include a variety of procedures including requiring days of reflection, or dismissal from TREE.

Should a student be asked to leave TREE in September, TREE will refund the full amount of the tuition paid by the parent, not including the Chromebook fee. Should a student be asked to leave TREE in any subsequent months through May, the family will not be refunded any portion of tuition, but will be responsible for the entire amount.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF RULE BREAKING

TREE Academy honors its consequences. The school may choose to use the following consequences for breaking any of the school rules may include: school/community service,

academic assignments, family conferences, loss of privileges (school trips, sports, dances, etc), Days of Reflection, or dismissal from TREE Academy. Long-term or repeated behavioral problems may result in the student no longer being able to continue at TREE.

## DAYS OF REFLECTION

A student may be asked to take up to 5 days away from school, and tasked to write an extended reflection on why they have been assigned Days of Reflection. Their good faith efforts will signal their desire to return to TREE and abide by their TREE Promise. Should a student decline to fulfill the Days of Reflection tasks assigned them, or not show a good faith effort to complete the task(s), they will not be readmitted to school.

## DISMISSAL

We will never take this step without serious and thoughtful consideration. There are, however, several behaviors that may lead to a student not being able to continue at TREE. These include, but are not limited to: drug/alcohol use of any kind on campus; violence or threats of violence on or off campus; a pattern of cruelty or ridicule towards others; instances of academic dishonesty, including making misleading statements, or statements that are less than the whole truth.

Please be aware that there is no requirement that the school proceed from milder to heavier consequences. A student and family may not receive a warning before Days of Reflection are assigned, or other consequences imposed. Final decisions regarding consequences are within the sole discretion of the school administration.

## ACADEMIC COUNSELING / PROBATION

We make every effort to keep families informed of their child's progress in school. If a student is having difficulty academically, we may request a family conference. In the case of chronic incomplete and/or unsatisfactory work, the student may be put on academic probation, requiring weekly monitoring by both teachers and families. Individual contracts are sometimes made with students to aid them in handling their challenges, and referrals to outside tutors may be recommended and/or required. Probationary status is reviewed periodically, at the end of each semester.

Any student who fails to earn credit in any class (for reasons of not doing the work at a minimum level for credit, or too many absences) must show satisfactory progress before advancing to the next level. A student whose failure results from a medically documented condition may be exempt from this requirement, although those decisions are also subject to minimum academic hours and course requirements for credit.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY

If students do not maintain satisfactory progress in their courses, or are behind in their assignments, they will become ineligible to participate in various extracurricular

activities, including participating in team sports activities and competitions. Our goal is to assist each student in their efforts to be successful at everything they do at school.

#### INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS / MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Because interpersonal difficulties and misunderstandings are an inevitable part of life, we look to the families involved to proactively contact each other—independently of TREE—in order to work together to address the situation in as positive and mutually supportive way as possible.

Our approach at TREE will be to facilitate and/or mediate student dialogues when conflicts arise on campus, but we are not a substitute for the initiative and good will of our families.

Should your student experience difficulties of a kind that makes you feel uncomfortable approaching another family, you may contact our Human Development team. Depending on the situation, they may be able to offer you some general guidance or recommendations, or point you to a community resource that may be of assistance. The Human Development team cannot, however, provide any private family counseling.

**In all cases, it is ultimately the responsibility of the families involved to forge the best possible way forward on behalf of our students' best interests and growth.**

#### TREE ACADEMY EDUCATION

TREE Academy is committed to an array of educational “best practices,” teaching methodologies, pedagogy, new approaches to learning, as well as tried and true approaches. We focus on students gaining conceptual understanding and knowledge rather than simply repeating wrote information or memorizing facts. That said, there is always a need to commit to memory facts about any subject if one is to become knowledgeable and conversant in it, and so we do require an appropriate amount of subject information to be memorized.

As an overall approach to education, we encourage students to share their thinking and opinions, to question information and form their own ideas. We guide students towards arriving at their own understanding by evaluating information for themselves. We use several approaches for instruction, which include but are not limited to the following:

#### INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

##### *Inquiry Based Learning:*

Instruction motivated by questions that have engaged the interest and active curiosity of the students. Teachers act as facilitators to learning rather than sources of knowledge. Students work together to investigate, solve problems, and develop understanding. (Used in science, social studies, math, and humanities.)