

MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Unity School has served the communities of Boca Raton, Delray Beach, Boynton Beach, Lake Worth and the surrounding areas since 1964.

The school operates under the policies of Unity of Delray Beach, Inc. Unity School is a church-related, independent, nonprofit school, and is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) and the Association of Independent Schools of Florida (AISF).

MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of Unity School is to empower children and inspire learning by educating the entire child: mind, body and spirit.

VISION STATEMENT

Unity School will empower children to be lifelong learners who are inspired to believe they have their own unique contribution to give and can be a powerful influence for bringing forth substantial and needed change throughout the world.

PHILOSOPHY

Education at Unity School is a process that encompasses all aspects of the child and is based upon the promotion of the individual worth and dignity of each child. Unity School's innovative approach to this process incorporates brain-based learning, the universal principles, and extensive family and parental involvement on and off campus.

1. Brain-Based Learning

The curriculum at Unity School was developed to meet the needs of a child's growing brain. Our administrators have done significant research on the brain. As a result, the day's schedule and lessons are based on when children are best able to receive information. "Brain gym" and "heart math" are used to ensure a positive connection between the brain, body and spirit. Homework is geared towards ensuring that the information "sticks." The nutritional program is centered on what a child needs to maintain healthy brain functions and supports activities like music, athletics and art, which are intentionally introduced at varying ages to maximize the child's benefit.

2. Universal Principles

The Law of Oneness

The One Presence and One Power active in the Universe is impartial Love. This Force is often called God, Infinite Intelligence, Lord, Creator, or Universal Mind. We are one with this Presence and Power.

The Law of Wisdom

Infinite Wisdom and Divine Guidance is within all of us.

The Law of Love

As we align with the power of love within, we transform ourselves and our world.

The Law of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a specific application of the Law of Love and is deeply transformative. Forgiveness heals and empowers us by bringing freedom from those perceptions that enslave and limit us.

The Law of Mind Action

Thought is creative. We can concentrate our energies together and make our dreams realities.

The Law of Equality

All life is an individualized expression of all that is good, and deserves love and respect.

The Law of Cause and Effect

As we sow, so shall we reap. Every thought feeling and action has a corresponding result. This law enables us to create and guide our own destiny.

The Law of Giving and Receiving

True giving is unconditional, done with no expectation, and blesses the giver as well as the receiver. True giving manifests love.

The Law of Attraction

Like attracts like. We attract into our lives that which we think, feel, and imagine.

3. Family & Parental Involvement

More than 300 independent research studies show that building parental involvement in education is the number one thing we can do to create a great school and improve student performance. Unity School provides a wealth of opportunities for parents and families to be involved in their child(ren)'s education from volunteering in the classroom to supporting the schools calendar of events. Our greatest asset is the dedication and involvement of our parents.

HISTORY

The foundation for Unity School began at the Unity Headquarters, Unity Village, in Missouri. There, Madame Elizabeth Caspari, who studied under the direction of Dr. Maria Montessori, conducted an experimental school and helped train teachers in the unique Montessori method and philosophy. Caspari's school was a great success.

As a result, Unity Montessori Preschool was founded in 1964 by Unity of Delray Beach Inc. in an effort to bring this same experiment here. Unity School is inter-denominational and respects the basic truth within all religions. Unity School has devoted an entire department, called Lessons in Living, to educate, nurture and embrace our students, staff, and families in the vision of love, wisdom and divine greatness that lies deep within each person. This philosophy is based on peace, love, acceptance, tolerance, compassion, non-violence and reverence for ourselves, the human family and all life on this planet. Children are inspired to believe they have their own unique contribution to give and they can be a powerful influence for bringing forth positive change in our society and our world. The Lessons in Living Department is a vital part of the Unity School curriculum and experience.

Investor and developer Warren Grimes, a member of Unity Church, donated the land and generously provided the funds to construct Unity School's initial buildings. Since 1964, Unity School's achievements have been led by our parents, a group of devoted individuals determined to ensure the best for their children. In 1984, former Head of School Maria Barber coined the phrase, "Unity School, where the child is our most important resource and an informed parent is our greatest asset." The truth of this statement is evident in the pioneering efforts that brought the opening of Unity School in 1964, the graduation of our first middle school class in 1991 and the building of the incredible ALEC (Advanced Learning & Enrichment Center) Building in 2001. The ALEC building houses an NBA quality gymnasium, television production studio, performance stage complete with lighting and sound, art studio, music studios, state of the art cafeteria and the Lessons in Living department.

The Unity School Handbook contains general information about policies, procedures, and programs. The Handbook cannot possibly cover every situation that may arise; therefore, some decisions or policies are at the discretion of the faculty and/or administration. Furthermore, under special circumstances, it may be appropriate for the administration to diverge from the established codes.

Each student and family is responsible for adhering to all policies as set forth by the School. This also pertains to information distributed throughout the year.

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

"When I want to be a child and play like a child, somebody tells me to grow up and act like an adult, and when I want to act like an adult, somebody else tells me to act my age."

-A Middle School Student

We know these children very well. At one time in our lives we were these children. We were more complex than anyone acknowledged. Educators and parents can only be sure of a few things about preadolescents:

- They worry all the time about little things and big things.
- Their bodies change rapidly and sometimes cause mood swings.
- They all need to talk, to argue, and to be heard but not indulged.
- They need their privacy as well as to belong to a group.
- They need to develop self-confidence, but we need to remember that they are vulnerable.
- They need to question authority and discipline.
- They doubt parent and school opinions while trying out their own.
- They might succumb to fads.
- They need more rest but are unwilling to go to bed.
- Their appetites increase tremendously.
- They view things as fair or unfair as it relates to their situation more often than before these years.
- They will manipulate for control of their lives at home and in school.
- They will experience intellectual, emotional, and social changes.

Our research of over 15 years indicates that children ages 10 - 14 need additional support and development (based on the cooperative learning model) in order to foster and develop divergent thinking and true retention of information.

At Unity School, learning factual information is blended with skill-building and practical application to help children not only to excel academically but also to develop responsibility, self-esteem, self-discipline, and commitment to others. This program for your child is based on current research from schools of excellence in the United States. Your child is part of an innovative, exciting, progressive program. We are confident your child is receiving the best in total education.

Parents and staff need to work together for the good of the program and your child. Together, with your sincere interest and concern, we will influence your child to reach his/her true potential. We are dedicated to the teaching profession and hope to positively influence your child during this *in-between* time.

Louis St-Laurent, Head of School

ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION

Unity School has an “open admission policy” of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, or national origin. In order to effectively evaluate the qualifications of each child for admission, we ask your cooperation in completing the following steps.

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

- New Students - Prospective parents must complete the following steps prior to acceptance:
 - Schedule a conference with the Head of School and provide copies of report cards and standardized test results. The Head of School will ascertain whether the student is a candidate for admission to Unity School. The Head of School will make every effort to show parents what is expected, what the curriculum and programs entail for each student, and how the school operates.
 - Complete an *Application for Admission* for each applicant. The terms and conditions of the *Application for Admission* shall continue in full force and effect.
 - Pay a nonrefundable application fee and testing fee.
 - If necessary, complete a waiting list application form. Waiting list forms will remain on file for fall admission.
 - Forward a *Student Release Form* from the present school to the Head of Unity School if a student is currently enrolled elsewhere. Current academic records and administrative and teacher recommendations must be submitted from the present school. New students entering the Seventh Grade must have all A's and B's.
 - Prospective students must achieve a score acceptable to Unity School on the *Entrance Examination*.
- Returning Students - In order to ascertain whether a student will experience success, Unity School reserves the right to evaluate any returning student.
 - Conditional Re-enrollment - Students may be accepted on a probationary basis (behavioral/academic). An agreement with parents/administration as to what is expected for the next school year will be discussed.

- All Students - New parents (after acceptance) and returning parents must complete the following steps:
 - Complete and return the *Enrollment Agreement*. The terms and conditions of the *Enrollment Agreement* shall continue in full force and effect. The *Middle School Handbook* shall supplement this agreement.
 - Pay the registration/enrollment fee.
 - Return a current *Palm Beach County Medical Examination Form*, *Palm Beach County Immunization Form*, *Emergency Student Medical Form*, and other forms required by H.R.S., FCIS, Unity School, or any governmental agency. Children with communicable diseases are not eligible for enrollment. All immunizations must be current or a student will not be admitted to school after Labor Day.

REGISTRATION

- Registration for new students will commence in the month of February of each year in accordance with the school calendar. Applications for admission for fall enrollment begin in the preceding winter. Registration for all grades will continue until the maximum allowable class size is met. All class sizes will be held within fixed limits. Additional students will be placed on a waiting list.
- All in-house registration for returning students will be conducted during a specific time designated by the Head of School. A school notice in the FYI will inform parents of in-house registration dates.
- After in-house registration is over, one courtesy call will be made to a parent of each Unity School student who has not registered on time, to ascertain intentions concerning re-registration. If a parent cannot be reached, a student will remain on the registered list on a hold status for one week from the date of the courtesy call week.
- All students who miss the in-house registration deadline will be considered new students and placed on the waiting list. However, at the sole discretion of the Head of School, a decision may be made to place those students at the top of the waiting list.
- The *Enrollment Agreement* details a policy concerning withdrawal from the School. The School will enforce any resulting tuition obligations.

ADMISSION GUIDELINES

- The *Application for Admission* cannot be processed until all forms have been completed and all materials have been received and reviewed.
- Children who have previously attended the School will be given preference of placement and every effort will be made to enroll siblings. Teachers' children are given first priority to openings, but each child must complete the admissions requirements for enrollment.
- The Head of School will not convince any parent to withdraw a child from another school and cannot register any student who is under contract with another school unless a release form is received from the prior school.

- Any student who shows evidence of behavior problems will not be accepted for admission unless the Head of School, at his/her sole discretion, believes the student will not adversely affect the teacher or other classmates.
- Administration of the *Entrance Examination* and the score attained thereon may in no way be construed as a warranty or representation by the School that a student is capable of attaining any given level of achievement while enrolled in the School. Such examination is for the internal administrative and sole use of the School in the admissions process. Satisfactory scores on tests recently administered elsewhere and provided by parents may not be deemed sufficient and acceptable. If a student does not achieve a passing score on the *Entrance Examination*, the Head of School may reject the *Application for Admission* and deny the student admission to the School.
- Unity School may deny admission to students whose parents demonstrate a negative attitude toward the School's philosophies and/or an unwillingness to work with any teacher, parent, staff member, or the Head of School.
- Unity School is not equipped to serve students with learning disabilities. Any exceptions will be determined at the Head of School's sole discretion.

ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

The School will make a decision concerning an *Application for Admission* within a reasonable time. If a student is accepted for enrollment, the parents and the School will enter into an *Enrollment Agreement*. However, if no *Enrollment Agreement* is executed, a student will not be enrolled.

Approval of a student's *Application for Admission* alone does not mean that all conditions of enrollment have been agreed to or satisfied and, therefore, does not guarantee the student's enrollment in the School. Again, this Handbook supplements the *Enrollment Agreement* and both shall be binding upon the School, parents, and students.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Unity Middle School includes Grades 6-8. The focus of these grades is on a strong academic and enrichment program that prepares all students for success at the high school level. It is designed according to ongoing evaluation of current research on the middle school student and is in cooperation with high school programs in Palm Beach County.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY

The academic courses emphasize the development and integration of study skills in all content areas. Students are required to take language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition to core subjects, students are also required to take Spanish, study skills, band, leadership, computer/research, and physical education. High school math and Spanish courses are offered to advanced students.

ELECTIVES

A variety of electives are offered, including courses such as art, music, and TV production. Opportunities are available for students to participate in programs, contests, and competitions through various classes and organizations.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

After-school study sessions are available on designated days according to the scheduling of teachers from Monday through Thursday. Any student who does not maintain a "C" average in a core subject is required to attend these sessions for that particular subject. This student may not participate in an extracurricular activity unless released by the "content teacher". A teacher may also require attendance if a student's achievement varies significantly from the rest of the class.

SCHOOL POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (HONOR SOCIETY / HONOR ROLL)

Unity Middle School recognizes all honor students on a trimester basis. A Certificate of Achievement is mailed home at the end of the marking period. Requirements for Honor Roll are grade averages of 3.5 or higher with no grade lower than B-. A student must maintain all A's with no academic detentions in order to achieve Honor Society.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Academic probation results if a grade average falls below "C" on the grade report. Students on academic probation will be evaluated and given an opportunity to improve grades. Study sessions will be required. Academic probation disqualifies students from participating in after-school or school-sponsored activities until the student is withdrawn from academic probation. Exception: If the student's non-participation will adversely affect a team activity.

ACADEMIC TUTORING

In order for a middle school student to work with a school sanctioned tutor on campus during the school day, the student must have been identified through testing as having special needs. The tutoring may only occur through a pass/fail class or study skills class with administrative approval. All other tutoring is generally done after school at an additional cost to parents.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to participate in supervised after-school activities such as sports, study groups, clubs, extracurricular activities, etc. Any students who are absent during the day may not participate in any after-school activity that day without specific permission from the Assistant Head of School or Head of School.

ATHLETICS

Intramural Varsity/Junior Varsity sports are offered to 5th-8th Grade students. The School generally competes in the areas of flag football, soccer, basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, and tennis. Other sports may be offered. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the team coach in advance if he/she is unable to attend a practice or game. Athletes and parents are required to abide by the rules and procedures outlined for sports. Students on some teams are required to purchase uniforms and/or equipment. There is a registration fee for competitive sports. Parents may call the P.E. Department regarding possible cancellations due to inclement weather. All student spectators must be supervised by an adult at games.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken daily by your child's homeroom teacher.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

- All absences require a written explanation from a parent and are kept on file. Whether excused or unexcused, students entering school after the bell has rung will be marked tardy. Any student arriving 1½ hours late in the morning or leaving 1½ hours early in the afternoon will be marked as absent for a half-day.

- Students with an excused absence are given one extra day per absence to complete class assignments, tests, and homework. In unusual circumstances, an extension may be permitted, or tests may be rescheduled at the teacher's convenience.

- Excused Absence

Absences due to illness, medical reason, family emergency, or a special situation approved in advance by the Head of School or Assistant Head of School are considered excused.

- Unexcused Absence

Absences not considered excused, as stated above, are ones such as vacations and appointments. Since some classes rely heavily on class participation, unexcused absences may adversely affect a student's grade. All homework and tests are due on the day the student returns.

Students may not have more than 10 unexcused absences in a trimester for any class. If unexcused absences exceed that number, a passing grade may not be issued.

A parental note stating the date and reason for the absence must be given to the homeroom teacher immediately upon the student's return. If the note is not turned in by the end of the week, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. Any notes not received by this deadline will not be accepted. A doctor's note may be re-requested for extended absences.

Illness

Please use the following guidelines before your child returns to school:

- *Fever / Vomiting / Diarrhea*: Students must be free of all symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.
- *Infectious Illness*: Symptoms must disappear before returning to school. A written statement from a doctor may be required stating that the illness has subsided and is no longer infectious.
- *Antibiotics*: A child must be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school.
- *Head lice*: If head lice are discovered, the student must be dismissed from school and may not return until treatment has been administered, and he/she has been re-examined and deemed lice-free by school administration before returning to the classroom.

Prolonged Absences

Tutoring may be recommended for students with prolonged absences as the teachers are not responsible for makeup of instruction.

Appointments and Vacations

Parents are requested to plan appointments and vacations for students in accordance with school hours and the school calendar. An initial orthodontic application or final orthodontic appointment is considered excused. Other dental/orthodontic appointments are recorded as unexcused. Parents must pick up their child at the school office if a student must leave during the school day. A note must be turned in to the homeroom teacher at the beginning of that day stating date, time, and reason for dismissal. If a parent would like to obtain a child's class and homework assignments in advance, the teachers must be notified one week in advance.

Missed Homework Due to Illness

Students will generally have an extra day to make up class and homework assignments. Teacher discretion will be utilized if extra time is needed. Tests will be made up upon the student's return or at the teacher's convenience. If a parent would like to obtain a child's class and homework assignments, the teachers must be notified by phone or email by 10:00 a.m.

Tardiness

Tardies are recorded. Three tardies to a particular class in one marking period will result in a detention. Excessive tardies to school/class will result in a conference with the student and his/her parents. Students arriving late for class will adversely affect their participation grade. Students arriving on campus after 8:20 a.m. will be marked tardy by the teacher, and the student must report to the office with a parent for a pass in order to be admitted to class.

Class Trips

Each year, specific class field trips are organized that enrich the program at Unity School. These class trips are specifically designed for particular age or grade levels. All trips are organized at the beginning of the year. Class trips may involve a nonrefundable fee.

Misbehavior during a field trip or grade class trip may result in a detention, suspension, or expulsion. Any child who is dismissed from a program must be picked up immediately by his/her parent at their own expense. In this instance, program fees will not be refunded.

If a student chooses not to attend a class field trip (based on prior administrative approval), the student will be required to complete special assignments relating to that trip.

Students who become ill when on a class trip must be picked up immediately by parents. Refunds, if any, will be determined by the sponsoring program.

All middle school fundraising activities for class trips must be approved by the administration and are conducted only when parental support is present. *Personal sales (i.e. candy, toys, fad items) are not permitted. Distribution through the school of information on non-Unity fundraisers is also not permitted.* Funds raised can only be applied to help defray the specified cost of class trips. If funds are raised for class trips, but the student does not attend the class trip, or if a student raises funds in excess of the specified cost, those funds can be applied to a future class trip, a sibling's class trip account, or are redirected into a general Middle School Scholarship Fund. In order to be eligible to benefit from fundraising, students must follow established guidelines and procedures for each event. In all cases, the student's family must also support a schoolwide fundraiser that benefits Unity School.

CLEAN UP

All students are responsible for maintaining a clean school which involves keeping the facility in proper order, as found in the morning upon arrival. The hallways, walkways, playgrounds, picnic areas, cafeteria, gymnasium, classrooms, Middle School kitchen, locker rooms, and restrooms fall under this category.

CLINIC

The Pam Walker Health Clinic is staffed daily by Registered Nurses. Any special concerns about a child's health (e.g. frequent headaches, severe allergies, new onset illness) may be conveyed directly to these nurses and will remain confidential.

In compliance with Palm Beach County School Board directives, all medications (including over the counter medications) brought to school to be administered must be submitted with a completed *Physician Authorization for Student Medication* form. This form is only available through your Pediatrician/Health Care Provider. One form is required for each medication and for each child. All medication must be turned in to the school office in a resealable plastic bag.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The purpose of community service is to broaden a student's experience and awareness of our community's needs. Students may earn a maximum of 50% of the required hours throughout the school year at Unity School. All students are expected to contribute community/school service hours as part of the Unity Middle School program:

- Grade 6: 10 hours
- Grade 7: 15 hours
- Grade 8: 20 hours

Service hours may be obtained through not-for-profit entities or organizations and must be signed by a non-parental supervisor. Hours may also be earned through the Margaux's Miracles Foundation. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the Head of School.

Parents and students will sign a contract regarding community service hours. Accumulated hours will be recorded on the student's grade reports and noted as Pass/Fail. The required hours must be completed to earn a pass. Calendar deadline for completed hours must be observed.

ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

1. **Purpose.** The goal of Unity School is to ensure a safe, secure, civil and respectful learning environment for all students and school employees. Bullying or harassment, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. It is important to change the social climate of schools and the social norms with regard to bullying and harassment. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment -- teachers, administrators, other non-teaching staff, parents or legal guardians, and students. The purpose of this policy is to assist the School in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying or harassment.
2. **General Applicability of Policy.** This policy applies not only to students or school employees who directly engage in an act of bullying or harassment, but also to students or school employees who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's or employee's act of bullying and harassment. The misuse of technology including, but not limited to, teasing, intimidating, defaming, threatening, or terrorizing another student, teacher, administrator, volunteer or other employee of the school district by sending or posting e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings, including blogs, also may constitute an act of bullying or harassment regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off school property and/or with or without the use of school resources. This policy applies to any students or school employees whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying or harassment that interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the Unity School or the safety or welfare of the student, other students, or employees.
3. **Statement of Policy.** The School prohibits bullying and harassment of any type of students or school employees, by either a student or a group of students, a school volunteer or visitor, or a school employee. Bullying and harassment are expressly prohibited on school property or at school-related functions.
 - a. No teacher, administrator, volunteer or other school employee shall permit, condone or tolerate bullying and harassment.
 - b. The apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied or harassed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
 - c. Reprisal or retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying or harassment is prohibited.
 - d. False accusations or reports of bullying or harassment against another student are prohibited.
 - e. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, or false reporting of bullying and harassment, or permits, condones or tolerates bullying and harassment shall be subject to discipline for that act in accordance with school policies.
 - f. The school will act to investigate all complaints of bullying or harassment and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.
 - g. The submission of good faith complaints or reports of bullying or harassment will not affect the reporter's future employment, grades or work assignments, or educational or work environment.

4. **Definitions.**

- a. *Bullying* means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or school employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:
 - i. Teasing
 - ii. Social exclusion
 - iii. Threat
 - iv. Intimidation
 - v. Stalking
 - vi. Physical violence
 - vii. Theft
 - viii. Sexual, religious, or racial/ethnic harassment
 - ix. Public humiliation
 - x. Damaging or Destruction of property
 - xi. Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property
 - xii. Cyberbullying, as defined herein.
 - xiii. Cyber-stalking as defined herein.
- b. *Cyberbullying* means the use of electronic communication or technology devices, to include but not be limited to, e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, social websites (e. g. MySpace, Facebook, etc.), internet chat rooms, internet postings, digital pictures or images, and defamatory websites to engage in acts of bullying or harassment regardless of whether such acts are committed on or off school district property and /or with or without the use of school district resources. For off-campus conduct, the School shall be responsive in cases where the off-campus conduct causes, or threatens to cause, a substantial disruption at school or interference with the rights of students to be safe and secure.

The School recognizes that cyberbullying can be particularly devastating to young people because:

- i. Cyber bullying is often engaged in off-campus, but the harmful impact is felt at school.
- ii. Cyberbullying permits an individual to easily hide behind the anonymity that the Internet and other technology devices provide;
- iii. Cyberbullying provides a means for perpetrators to spread their harmful and hurtful messages to a wide audience with remarkable speed;
- iv. Cyberbullying does not require individuals to own their own action, as it is usually very difficult to identify cyberbullies because of screen names, so they do not fear being punished for their actions; and

- v. The reflection time that once existed between the planning of a prank - or a serious stunt - and its commission is all but erased when it comes to cyberbullying activity.
- c. *Cyberstalking* means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.
- d. *Harassment* means any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written or verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that
 - i. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
 - ii. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits;
 - iii. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; or
 - iv. Amounts to cyberbullying as defined herein.
- e. *Bullying and Harassment also encompass*
 - i. Any act of retaliation by a student or school employee against another student or school employee who alleges, asserts or reports a violation of this policy or participates in the investigation of a bullying or harassment complaint. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
 - ii. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - A. Incitement or coercion;
 - B. Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of Unity School;
 - C. Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment; or
 - D. Cyberstalking as defined herein;
 - iii. Unwanted harm towards a student in regard to his/her actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including but not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression and/or identity, physical attributes, physical, mental or educational ability or disability, ancestry, socio-economic background, political beliefs, linguistic preferences, or familial status.
- f. *Immediately* means as soon as reasonably possible but within 24 hours or the next school day.
- g. *On school property or at school-related functions* means all school buildings, school grounds, and school property and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicle approved for Unity School purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises or events, and all school related functions, school-sponsored activities, events or trips. School property also may mean a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities or events. While prohibiting bullying and harassment at these locations and events, the school does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability for incidences at these locations and events.

5. *Expected Behaviors On School Property or At School Related Functions.*

Unity School expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment. In addition to conducting themselves in a professional manner with supervisors, colleagues, and students, school administrators, teachers, staff, and volunteers will treat others with civility and respect, and will refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment. Unity School finds that bullying and harassment, in an active or passive form, of any student or school employee is prohibited:

- a. During any school related education program, function or activity conducted by the School;
- b. During any school-related or school-sponsored program, function or activity;
- c. While on school property as defined by this policy; or
- d. Through the use of any electronic device, computer, or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of Unity School. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary actions.

Unity School believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), staff and community members, producing an atmosphere that encourages pupils to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school district property on the part of students, school staff and community members.

All administrators, faculty, and staff, in collaboration with parents, students, and community members, will incorporate systemic methods for student and staff recognition through positive reinforcement for good conduct, conforming to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior, respecting the person, property, and rights of others, obeying constituted authority, responding to those who hold that authority, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success, as seen in the required school plan to address positive school culture and behavior.

Students are encouraged to support other students who walk away from acts of bullying and harassment when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, and report such acts to the School Principal or his/her designee.

Students are required to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to the educational, support and administrative staff.

6. *Consequences for Prohibited Conduct, False Reporting and Reprisal or Retaliation.*

- a. *Act of Bullying or Harassment.* Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the

facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action. For the commission of an act of bullying or harassment, the following consequences shall be applicable:

- i. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.
 - ii. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment shall be determined in accordance with Unity School's policies.
 - iii. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the Head of School after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.
- b. *False Reporting.* The consequences for a student or employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of an act of bullying or harassment shall be as follows:
 - i. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.
 - ii. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of bullying or harassment shall be determined in accordance with Unity School policies, procedures and agreements.
- c. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the Head of School after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act.
- d. *Reprisal or Retaliation.* Unity School will discipline and take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, or other employee of the school who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying and harassment or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying or harassment.
 - i. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student, teacher, school administrator or school volunteer who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Head of School or his or her designee after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act.
 - ii. Any student found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.
 - iii. Any school teacher or school administrator found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment.
 - iv. Any school volunteer found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

7. ***Reporting of Prohibited Acts.*** The Head of School or designee by the Head of School shall be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy.
- Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or harassment, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying or harassment shall report the alleged acts immediately to the Head of School or designee.
 - All school employees who receive a report of, observe, or have other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying or harassment shall inform the Head of School or designee immediately.
 - A student, parent or guardian, volunteers or visitors may report bullying or harassment incidents anonymously, on a designated complaint form, or in-person to the Principal or designee. However, the student may make a report of bullying or harassment to any school employee. The school employee will assist the student in reporting to the Principal or designee.
 - Any written or oral reporting of an act of bullying or harassment shall be considered an official means of reporting such acts.

8. ***Investigation of Complaints.***

- The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act.
- The Head of School or designee will begin a prompt investigation of the reported incident, but such investigation shall be commenced no later than the next school day. The person initiating the investigation may not be the accused perpetrator or victim. The maximum of 10 school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps.
- Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses shall be conducted privately, separately and shall be confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will be the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.
- The investigating party shall collect and evaluate the following facts including but not limited to:
 - Description of incident(s) including the nature of the behavior;
 - Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred;
 - How often the conduct occurred;
 - Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
 - The relationship between the parties involved;
 - The characteristics of parties involved, i. e. grade, age, etc.
 - The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying or harassing behavior;
 - Where the alleged incident(s) occurred;
 - Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment;
 - Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power as a result of the reported incident; and
 - The date, time and method in which parents or legal guardians of all parties involved were contacted.
- Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy shall require a determination based on all facts and surrounding circumstances and shall include:

- i. Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior; and
- f. The Head of School or designee will make a determination whether or not the reported act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of Unity School. If the situation could possibly fall outside the domain of the School, the Head of School or designee will consult with counsel to determine if the alleged act should be managed as a criminal act.
- g. If the Head of School or designee is directly and personally involved with a complaint or is closely related to a party to the complaint, then the CFO of Unity of Delray Beach, Inc. shall be asked to conduct the investigation.

9. *Notification to Parents or Guardians.*

- a. The Head of School or designee shall promptly report to the parents or legal guardians of a student who has been reported as a victim of bullying and/or harassment, and the custodial parent(s) or legal guardians of the perpetrator of the alleged acts of bullying and/or harassment. Such notification shall occur on the same day an investigation has been initiated, and may be made by telephone, writing, or personal conference
- b. The frequency of notification will be dependent on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident.

10. *Publication, Training and Education.*

- a. At the beginning of each school year, the Head of School or designee shall inform school staff, parents/guardians, and students of Unity School's policy prohibiting bullying or harassment, the effects of bullying and other applicable initiatives to prevent such conduct.
- b. This policy shall be referenced in Unity School's employee and student handbooks, and other means as determined by the Head of School.
- c. The School may implement programs and other initiatives to prevent bullying or harassment and to respond to bullying and harassment in a manner that does not stigmatize the victim.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE RULES

Campus behavior and discipline guidelines have been established by the administration and the staff of Unity School. Classroom rules are established by the staff and students. They will be revised, as needed, at the discretion of the administration. Students are expected to behave respectfully and courteously toward fellow students, staff members, and visitors at all times.

An infraction of the policies below will warrant disciplinary action from either a staff member, according to the directives of the administration, from the Assistant Head of School, or from the Head of School. Parents are expected to work closely with the staff and administration in order to help the student modify his/her behavior.

As representatives of Unity Middle School, students must:

- Demonstrate respect for themselves and others through their use of words and actions.
- Refrain from public display of affection which is considered inappropriate and is not permitted on campus.
- Demonstrate respect for property.
- Refrain from chewing gum on campus.
- Use proper language.
- Clean up after themselves.
- Refrain from any behavior or from bringing in any objects that could result in injury to themselves or others.
- Refrain from possession or use of tobacco and/or intoxicating substances (such as alcohol, vaping, smoking or drugs). This is forbidden and will result in immediate expulsion.
- Refrain from bringing personal games, collectibles, electronic devices, and toys. They are not permitted on campus or field trips without a teacher's permission.
- Cell phones are not allowed on campus during school hours. Cell phones must be handed to the Middle School Assistant in the morning and may be picked up at dismissal.
- Demonstrate appropriate use of technological and computer equipment as detailed in the Acceptable Use Policy.

Disciplinary Action

Discipline may be in the form of detention, work duty, suspension, or expulsion for the reasons described both here and in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

Classroom Misconduct

Misbehavior will adversely affect a student's participation grade and may warrant other disciplinary action.

Property Damage

Students are responsible for the cleaning, repair, or replacement of damaged property.

Field Trips

Students are expected to use appropriate social manners and conduct on all field trips. Any disciplinary action may prevent the student from attending the next scheduled field trip. This restriction is considered an "in-house suspension". Under *no* circumstances is a student permitted to behave in any way that might possibly distract a driver. If a student interferes with a driver's concentration, detentions will be issued. Each driver assumes a great deal of responsibility in transportation, and as always, safety is our primary concern. Other forms of discipline may be imposed, depending upon the circumstances.

Forms of Discipline

Detention

- Detention may be given or recommended by any staff member according to the discipline rules. A staff member may also assign a detention for offenses which might contribute to an unsafe situation.
- Detention generally is scheduled in the morning from 7:30 to 8 AM in a designated room with a supervisor.
- Behavioral detentions will be as follows per trimester:
 - First Offense: detention
 - Second Offense: detention
 - Third Offense: suspension from school
- A fee of \$15.00 is charged for each detention, which should be paid by the student. This fee pays for the staff member's supervision and will be billed automatically to the family's account.
- Parents will be given 24 hours notice prior to the detention date. Students are required to attend the detention on the assigned date.
- Any student who fails to report to an assigned detention will receive an additional detention. If the student fails to report a second time, he or she will be suspended.

Behavioral Probation

Children in middle school may be placed on behavioral probation if improper behavior is exhibited on a regular basis. At the discretion of the administration, a student on behavioral probation may not be permitted to participate in any afterschool activities until the student is withdrawn from behavioral probation.

Suspension

Misconduct by a student, as set forth below, may result in a period of suspension, the length of which will be at the sole discretion of the administration. A student, under suspension, may not participate in any school activities. Parents are responsible for picking up a student's class work and homework assignments during the period of suspension. The student is responsible for completing all assignments in a timely manner during a suspension period. This is mandatory so the student does not fall behind in his/her work. However, participation grades will be affected.

Suspension may be given to a student by the School for the following:

- Physical harm in any form
- Defiance toward school officials
- Profanity or vulgar language
- Destruction of school property
- Stealing
- Falsifying a signature
- Disturbances that infringe upon the rights of other students or teachers
- Starting a fight by dangerous talk or threats to a fellow student
- Any of the above actions on a bus or on field trips
- Repeated unexcused absences
- Continued violation of school policies or procedures
- Unauthorized leave of school campus
- Cheating

Expulsion

For the reasons outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*, a student may be expelled from Unity School for the remainder of a school year at the sole discretion of the Head of School. No advance notice to the parents is required for the expulsion of a student.

All incidents concerning discipline are looked at on an individual basis. Administration will speak with students, faculty and staff to determine the appropriate consequence once all information has been gathered. This book provides guidelines but the administration has discretion when handling an issue. At the discretion of the administration, a student may be suspended or expelled for any reason deemed appropriate.

Conditional Re-enrollment

Any student, 6th - 8th Grade, may be permitted to re-enroll on a conditional basis (i.e. behavioral/academic). An agreement between parents and the administration outlining what is expected for the following school year will be required.

Cheating

Giving or receiving help on an assignment or test without the teacher's approval will be considered cheating. No credit will be given for that assignment for either student. The appropriate administrator will be notified, and a report will be made to a parent or guardian. Additional disciplinary action may be warranted.

CONFERENCES

Conference days are held twice during the school year. When possible, conference times are scheduled according to parental preference. Deadlines must be observed for requesting either a specific time or a time change. Parents not attending their scheduled conference will receive their child's grade report the following day by mail.

Special conferences may be scheduled by any staff member or requested by the parents throughout the school year.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal is at 3:15 p.m. Students must leave the school campus immediately unless they are attending an after-school activity or study session (Monday - Thursday). Any student who is not picked up after the designated release time of an after-school program or activity must report to Aftercare if available. If Aftercare is not available, the parent will be charged \$9.00 for each 5 minute increment past that time.

Parents must pick up their child at the School Office if a student must leave during the school day. The parent/guardian must sign out the student in the appropriate book in the front office before the student leaves the campus.

WALKING HOME

If you live close to school and would like your Middle School student to walk home after dismissal, please come to the office and speak to the Head of School. Your child will then be placed on the Walker's List.

Any other arrangements will be handled on an individual basis by the Head of School.

DRESS CODE

A student's attire is a reflection of his/her self image as well as a reflection of the School. Appropriate attire is expected on all occasions. Uniforms are to be purchased from Dennis Uniforms.

Uniforms are required Monday through Friday. The specific uniform guidelines are published each year. The following dress code policy applies to all Middle School students:

General Dress Code Guidelines:

- Student's appearance should not detract from the school's academic environment or call undue attention to the student.
- Students must maintain good personal hygiene and cleanliness.
- Hair should be well groomed. Trendy/unnatural hair colors are not acceptable. Students may not be permitted in class until the color is corrected.
- Students are expected to dress according to weather conditions.
- Clothes must be wrinkle-free and clean.
- Clothes must be in good repair (no rips, holes, or unraveling seams).

- Tight fitting clothing is not permitted. The straps on tops may not be narrower than 3 fingers in width.
- Undergarments may never be visible (e.g. boxer shorts, bras, etc.).
- Outside shirts must have squared bottoms (no tails).
- Shirts with profanity, put-downs, sexual connotations, or advertisements for cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs are not permitted.
- Shirt/nail polish colors can match holiday theme, as designated by the administration.
- Tops must meet bottoms. Students' midriff or center area must remain covered and may not exhibit skin.
- Pants must fall straight and ungathered with length approximately one inch above the heels.
- Footwear is required and must be fastened at all times. Shoes must have a secure back and closed toe. Girls' shoes must be flats. No heels may be worn unless there is a special ceremony or performance. Sandals or open shoes are not permitted.
- Sneakers may be any color; the only exception is that the predominant color cannot be neon. No neon laces are permitted. High tops are permitted. There can be no wheels, no lights and no Croc shoes.
Sneakers must be laced. No neon laces.
- Hats, sunglasses, and scarves may be worn to school, but they may not be worn in the classroom.
- A French manicure, pale pink, pale peach, or clear nail polish is allowed.
- Earrings may be worn only in the ears. Hoop earrings may not be larger than a quarter. Dangly earrings may not go below the chin. Boys may wear "post" earrings only.
- Body piercing and tattoos are not permitted.

Dress Policy (Boys)

- Hair must be shorter than the shirt collar.
- Shirts must have sleeves (e.g. no sleeveless sports jerseys).

Dress Policy (Girls)

- Dresses, skirts, skorts, and shorts must be 3 inches above the knee (used to say at fingertips)
- Leggings are not permitted unless they are covered by a skirt, skort, or extra long shirt.
- Jewelry distracting from the uniforms is not permitted.
- Shirts must have sleeves (e.g. no sleeveless sports jerseys).

Uniform Dress Policy: *See Uniform Dress Code on the last page of this Handbook.*

Field Trip/Dance/Special Events Dress Policy:

Boys

- Collared shirt
- Pants (*no jeans*)
- Dress shoes - black or brown
(*no sneakers*)

Girls

- Skirt (*wear belt if loops are visible*)
- Dress/skirt (*fingertip length*)
- Dress pants
- Dress shoes/dress sandals only
(*must have a secure back - no sneakers*)

Certain occasions may require exceptions to this dress code. In those events, students will be notified in writing by the administration and/or staff.

Band and Choral Dress Policy

There is a uniform requirement for performances that is outlined by the Band and Choral Directors. A band concert dress violation will adversely affect the student's band/chorus grade.

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Consequences for Dress Code Violations

- First violation discussion with the student
- Second violation communication with parent
- Repeated violations will warrant a detention or additional consequence.

Appropriate attire and/or appearance may be evaluated at the discretion of the administration and staff.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of bad weather or local emergencies that develop during non-school hours, parents need to check the school information number, (561) 276-0607. In the event the information is not available on this phone line, efforts will be made to activate the class emergency phone tree.

In the event of bad weather or local emergencies that develop during school hours, parents should not interrupt classroom procedures and should not go directly to the classroom. All routine communications and emergencies should be directed to the School Office.

In the event of a student accident or illness, every attempt will be made to contact the parents. However, if contact cannot be made within a reasonable time (depending upon the nature of the accident), the school reserves the right to obtain proper medical attention for the student. The *Enrollment Agreement* discusses the agreed-upon procedure for obtaining necessary and immediate medical and/or surgical services for the student.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are arranged by the supervising teacher(s). Teachers and chaperones have complete authority during the trip. Some trips require additional support from parents to drive and perform other services.

A current *Emergency Student Medical Form* must be on file prior to any field trip.

A *Field Trip Authorization & Release* form must be signed by the parent(s) and returned by the indicated deadline.

Any student not complying with the rules of behavior set forth in this handbook or in the *Field Trip Authorization & Release* form will not be permitted to attend the next field trip.

Field trips may require nonrefundable fees.

Field Trip Chaperone Guidelines:

- The vehicle used for transportation for the field trip should be able to accommodate a minimum of three students.
- A valid driver's license and proof of insurance must be on file in the school office prior to all field trips.
- Cell phones are required for each vehicle. Cell phone numbers must be on file in the school office and with the field trip supervisor. ***Cell phone may not be used when driving. They are for emergency use only.***
- Chaperones will receive the following:
 - A map that outlines the approved route to be taken
 - *Emergency Student Medical Forms* for the students they are transporting
 - The name, address, and phone number of the field trip destination
 - A list of all students they are transporting
 - Any emergency medication required by a student
 - A list of additional field trip rules if necessary
- Speed limits must be adhered to at all times.
- Seat belts must be worn at all times by students and drivers. Students must not engage in any behavior that would be distracting to the driver.
- No child under the age of 12 should be allowed to ride in the front seat if there is a passenger's side airbag. *The child of a parent driver may sit in the front seat at the discretion of the parent.*
- Efforts should be made to travel in a "buddy system" with at least one other car.
- Chaperones are under the supervision and direction of the trip supervisor and must follow all policies, rules, regulations, and restrictions as outlined in the field trip rules.
- **No unscheduled stops are allowed unless approved by the trip supervisor or in an emergency.**
- Students must adhere to all school discipline/safety rules and policies. Any chaperone may notify the supervising teacher that a student is in violation of discipline rules.
- Courteous behavior by the students is expected at all times. Any violation of this rule may result in a detention, suspension, or withdrawal from the field trip.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited during the entire field trip.
- Cigarette smoking is not permitted.
- There will be no unauthorized passengers permitted on field trips.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

Any student who is taking a class designated as an advanced placement course will have that particular *GPA* properly weighted.

The Eighth Grade valedictorian and salutatorian are chosen from among the students who have the highest GPA's and who have maintained a 3.5 minimum average through the Seventh Grade and the first three quarters of the Eighth Grade year. For the determination of the grade point average (GPA), the three trimesters of seventh grade and the first trimester of eighth grade will be used. These students must have attended Unity School at least from the beginning of the Seventh through Eighth Grade. Teacher recommendations may also be a part of the process.

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GRADING SYSTEM

The Unity School grading scale is as follows:

A+	98 -100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	94 - 97	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66
A-	90 - 93	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63
						F	Below 60

Grading criteria for core classes is based on homework, class work, participation, quizzes, and tests. Grading criteria for support classes may be different since participation plays a more significant role, and homework is not always required. Some support classes are graded as pass/fail.

The teacher has the final decision on grades according to basic criteria. Grades can only be changed by teacher decision.

There are certain penalties that will be invoked during the following situations:

- Paper without a name: -5 points
- Talking during test (first offense): -5 points
- Talking during test (second offense): 0% for grade
- Cheating (disciplinary referral to administration): 0% for grade
- Giving homework/test answers to another student to copy is considered cheating by both students: 0% grade for each participant
- Plagiarism is considered cheating and will adversely affect a student's grade.

HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Unity School students are prepared for acceptance in all area public and private schools. General information is provided in the fall of the Eighth Grade. Parents should be aware of the various high school admission requirements and application deadline dates.

HOMEROOM

During Homeroom:

- Attendance is taken
- Information is disseminated
- Lunch orders are taken
- Dress code is checked

HOMEWORK

Every student must assume full responsibility for copying down all homework assignments and completing them. All students are provided with a daily planner to record these assignments.

Assignments are posted on the Unity School website as a backup only. Students should get their assignments primarily from the classroom teacher.

Academic detention is administered for three late homework assignments and each additional late assignment.

- Assignment late one day: -10 points
- Assignment late two days: -20 points
- Assignment late three days: -zero credit

Whenever students are absent, they are responsible for obtaining their assignments from a classmate or the school website. Worksheets will be distributed by teachers upon their return. When absent, your child will have access to most books at home. Work may be sent to the office for pick up if teachers are notified before noon.

INFORMATION PACKET

Before the school year commences, families will receive an information packet containing the following items:

- Information Bulletin - notifies families of various events occurring at the beginning of the school year.
- Class Assignment - notifies students of homeroom assignment for the school year.
- Calendar of Holidays and Highlights - an official school calendar will be available.
- Maps of School Campus are available online.
- "Safe Not Sorry" Program - requires parents to provide information to the school concerning who is permitted to pick up students.
- Parking Decals - parents are required to display the School decal on the passenger's front window. The decal evidences parents' participation in the "Safe Not Sorry" Program.
- *Emergency Student Medical Form* - must be filled out by parents and returned by the first day of school.

KITCHEN FACILITIES

- The middle school kitchen is available for middle school student use. All student lunches must be in Ziploc/paper bags with the student's name written on them. Students must assume responsibility for keeping the room clean. Neglect of the kitchen facilities will result in the temporary/permanent loss of this privilege. Students are required to provide their own eating utensils and paper products for their lunches. Students are not permitted to use the appliances without permission and supervision.
- Lunches may be purchased from school or brought from home.
- All ordered lunches will be charged to the student's school account.
- Parents may not deliver lunches to students during the day.
- Special theme lunches are planned throughout the school year.

LESSONS IN LIVING/LEADERSHIP

The aim of the Lessons in Living Program is to foster character development and growth. It is an interdisciplinary approach designed for all children. By assisting children as they acquire self-acceptance and self-confidence, the program encourages them to have a concern for others who share our world.

Some special programs that are promoted throughout the school year include:

Community Service	Conflict Resolution	Earth Day
Emotional IQ	Heart Math	Mediation
Peace Day	Peace Education	Recycling

LOCKERS

- Each student is required to provide combination locks for Middle School lockers. Each student is responsible for the condition of the locker area and lockers throughout the school year. Lockers must be cleaned periodically. Failure to keep the areas clean may result in the locker room privilege being revoked.
- The school staff has the right to "search and seizure" with regards to a student and his/her locker and possessions.
- Entering another student's locker is considered a serious offense. Taking books, lunches, or other possessions without permission is theft. Abuse of another student's property or school property is vandalism.
- It is strongly recommended that all valuables and unnecessary money be left at home.
- In addition to their regular lockers, students are also assigned PE and band lockers.

PARTICIPATION CONSENT

By executing the *Enrollment Agreement*, parents consent to a student's participation in all Unity School activities on campus and off-site, to include field trips, extracurricular sports activities, and public relations projects in which a student may choose to engage.

Parents are responsible for advising the school of any physical or medical condition a student may have which would, in any manner, impair a student's full participation in physical education or sports activities.

GRADE REPORTS

Middle School student grades are available online at PowerSchool, an online grade recording program. Parents may review these grades throughout each trimester. Each student receives grade reports at the end of each trimester.

Grade reports and other school records will not be released until all student charges and fees are paid, all library books are returned, and all miscellaneous obligations are fulfilled.

SAFE NOT SORRY PROGRAM

The program requires parents to identify in writing those people permitted to pick up their children after school. The school will rely upon the information given on the form in releasing students for pick up. This is filled out during the time the parent is enrolling the child in our RenWeb system. Any updates to this information must also be provided in writing.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

The yearly schedule of classes is distributed at the beginning of the school year.

School Day: Homeroom 8:10 a.m.

Tardy 8:20 a.m.

Dismissal 3:15 p.m.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships for tuition and class trips are available on a limited basis. Guidelines are available from the Head of School.

SCHOOL GROUNDS

- Middle school students are not permitted on campus after school unless assigned to a specific activity.
- Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times.
- Smoking and pets are prohibited on campus.

SNACKS

Nutritious snacks are permitted for morning snack time. Refer to Wellness Policy.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Traditional events are held throughout the year at Unity School. In addition, students attend field trips and are encouraged to participate in contests and competitions through various classes or programs. Appropriate dress and conduct are expected of each student at all events.

STUDENTS ACCOUNTS

All accounts must be current by the end of the school year. If a family account has a past due balance, student records/grade reports will be held in the Accounting Office and will be unavailable for parent review. The Accounting Office will not accept postdated checks. Records cannot be forwarded until all accounts are current.

Tuition for each year will be invoiced in June/July. Discounted prepaid tuition is due in full by July 15th. All prepaid accounts, which are unpaid as of July 30th will automatically be converted to the monthly payment plan, and the discount will be set aside. If you are out of town during the summer, make arrangements in advance with the Accounting Office.

Library Book Fees: In the event that a text or library book is lost or damaged, the replacement costs will include the cost of the book plus a handling fee, which is nonrefundable. These fees will be billed to the student's account after a period of one month.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Student Government is composed of representatives from all three Middle School grades who have been elected by their classmates.

SUPPLIES (NOT COVERED BY REGISTRATION FEE)

Each student is responsible for his/her own pencils, paper, notebooks, and personal supplies throughout the year. These supplies must be replenished as needed. Student supply lists are mailed each summer, and teachers will notify students of any additional supplies needed.

TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

The only way the school can help your child is through joint cooperation aimed toward common individual and group goals. This can be achieved if parents are informed and objective and teachers are fair and knowledgeable.

Middle school staff members meet weekly to discuss each student's progress, programs, enrichment activities, and other considerations.

School activities and on-going events are announced through:

- The school calendar
- The weekly FYI online
- The weekly "Notes from the Middle School" are emailed weekly.
- Homeroom announcements
- The Unity School website - www.unityschool.com

TELEPHONES and SMART WATCHES

The school telephone is for use by school personnel only, unless needed for notification of illness or if an emergency exists. Cell phones are not permitted for use during school hours and are collected during home room. If a cell phone is seen or heard during school hours, the cell phone will be taken from the student and a detention will be issued. A parent must retrieve the phone from the school office. The school holds itself harmless to any damage or theft of a cell phone on campus.

SmartWatches (Apple, Samsung, Fitbit Versa etc...) are not permitted to be worn in school. These watches, being connected to Smartphones, can be a distraction during class. Therefore they are not permitted. Students may turn their Smartwatches in with their phones in homeroom which can be picked up at the end of the day. Any student seen wearing or having a Smartwatch during the school day will receive a behavioral detention.

FAX communication is not allowed for any reason relating to a student's homework, field trips, and other reasons.

TESTING

All middle school students are given midyear assessments in December and finals in May. Each spring a national standardized test is also administered.

TRANSPORTATION

Families will furnish their own transportation to and from school. The school will help, if possible, in arranging car pools, but responsibility for transportation rests with the parents. This policy also applies to class trips and to all overnight class trips. For class trips, parents are responsible for the timely transportation of their child to and from the designated departure point.

USE OF INFORMATION

Any and all information provided in the *Application for Admission* and in the *Enrollment Agreement* may be used by the school for any purpose. All parents are required to keep information current as set forth in the *Application for Admission* and *Enrollment Agreement*,

especially telephone numbers and home and business addresses. Parents must notify Unity School *immediately* of any changes in information.

TUITION AND CHARGES

- Tuition payments are due in accordance with the *Enrollment Agreement*.
- Except as set forth in the *Enrollment Agreement*, there shall be no reduction or abatement of the full annual tuition or other charges by reason of absence, withdrawal, suspension, or dismissal of a student. Any payment of tuition or other charges, once made, is totally nonrefundable, except as set forth in the *Enrollment Agreement*.
- Payments for tuition and other charges must be on time. A good payment record is required to register for the following year. A late fee is assessed for all overdue accounts. Families with accounts overdue more than once during the year may be directed to prepay tuition for the following year without the option of the payment plan. Student records and/or grade reports may be withheld if student accounts are in arrears.
- A *Tuition and Fee Schedule* and a list of miscellaneous charges are included with the *Enrollment Agreement*. Financial assistance from the school is available on a limited basis, determined solely by the need of the student and the available resources of the school. For further information, contact the Head of School.
- Students may bring lunch each day, or they may order in the morning from a variety of nutritious lunches at the school. Lunch and a beverage are available at a reasonable cost which will be billed to a student's account on a monthly basis.
- Other charges may include, but are not limited to, music fees, book replacement fees, detention fees, and lost library book charges, will also be billed to a student's account on a monthly basis.
- The *Middle School Activity Fee* covers various activity costs such as: local field trips and transportation, special luncheons, dances, DJs and decorations, teacher birthdays, Teacher Appreciation Breakfast, and gifts.
- Class Trip/Field Trip fees are due per printed deadlines. A \$10 service charge will be billed if not submitted by the due date.
- If a parent fails to make any payment of tuition or miscellaneous charges as set forth in the *Enrollment Agreement*, a parent will be considered in default. If default occurs, Unity School may exercise any and all remedies set forth in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

GENERAL INFORMATION

FYI (FOR YOUR INFORMATION) & NOTES FROM THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

All parents should read these weekly communiqués to keep informed about all activities, programs, committee meetings, and other important news from the school. They are posted on the Unity website, as well as emailed to the email address provided by the parent, each Friday.

FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

The Unity School Office of Development and Events coordinates the school's fundraising programs. The Unity School Endowment Fund, Inc., a 501(c)3, tax exempt, nonprofit corporation generates funds that support both operating costs as well as programming and capital improvements. Programming enhancements might include an expanded fine arts program (orchestra, theater, drama production, and art), additional technology resources, as well as additional Lessons in Living programming.

Every family is expected to make an annual meaningful gift to Unity School's Annual Giving Fund. "Meaningful" is defined as commensurate with your family's financial ability. Contributions to the Annual Giving Fund are necessary to bridge the gap between tuition and the full cost of educating each child and maintaining the school's high quality programming and facilities. A detailed brochure is mailed each year to inform parents of the school's funding needs for Annual Giving.

A series of fundraising special events initiatives also occurs throughout the year. Families are asked to participate as much as possible. Unity School's fundraising endeavors are successful because our families allow them to be. We thank you in advance for your support.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found is located in the School Office. Items not picked up are discarded or given away *each Friday*. Make sure your child checks this area for missing items prior to the end of the week. Items left on campus overnight will warrant a work detail.

PARENT CONCERN PROCEDURE

All classroom concerns should initially be discussed with a child's teacher. A teacher may be contacted by calling the school office and then dialing the teacher's extension.

The school discourages parents and students from calling teachers at home unless an emergency situation exists. A parent should exercise reason and consideration in calling a teacher at home. The Director of the Middle School or the Assistant Head of School and then the Head of School may be called at the school office if prior efforts have not resulted in a positive solution to a parent's concern.

PARENT SUPPORT

Parent involvement with activities and events is encouraged. Parents are expected to support the school's philosophy of promoting student growth and independence. The following parent groups offer many opportunities to get involved and are a vital component to our School community.

The Room Parent Organization consists of a “Head Room Parent” (selected by the Head of School) and assistant parents from each grade level (selected by teachers and administrators). In addition, there is a Middle School Parent Coordinator to assist with activities. Monthly Room Parent meetings are held throughout the school year.

The Unity School Endowment Fund, Inc. is a separate nonprofit corporation organized to identify funding to be raised specifically for the School. All fundraising at Unity School is accomplished through general campaigns, fundraisers, foundation, corporate, and community support. The focus of all fundraising is to provide supplemental funds for educational equipment, student enrichment, special student activities, faculty benefits, capital improvements, scholarships, special programs, or as deemed necessary by the Head of School. Once a year, a notice is sent to all families describing the positions and qualifications for those positions open on the Endowment Board.

Unity School Service Organization (USSO)

The USSO works closely with the Office of Development to support the School by implementing school-wide service and fundraising projects. There are two USSO Open Houses each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. All parents are encouraged to attend these meetings to support the efforts of this important group. All families are members of the USSO. Elections are held annually for the USSO Board.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL TIPS

As a parent of a middle school child, you may someday benefit from the following tips:

- Move with your child's energy instead of fighting it. Choose your issues, conflicts, and battles carefully (e.g. Do not "lose it" all over your child's room).
- Evaluate your reactions to situations involving your child. It is time to trust all you have done in preparation for this transition. Allow your child to grow into the adult he or she is capable of being without losing the values and disciplines you established a long time ago.
- Do not measure your child in strictly academic terms. Sometimes academic success is not as important as the other lessons your child needs to learn during this time, such as trying something different, dealing with varying teacher expectations, or cooperating with different types of people.
- Students need to reach *their own* aspirations, not those of their parents.
- Treasure your child's ability to talk with and to communicate comfortably with other adults.
- Students need to show respect for others as they learn to control their feelings or opinions. They must learn not to hurt or humiliate another person. This one factor directly relates to future success for your child.
- Learn all you can about the developmental aspects of this age group, and enjoy your child.
- Develop a respectful relationship with your child's teachers, the Middle School Director, the Assistant Heads of School and the Head of School. This directly relates to school success and happiness.
- Encourage your child to fight his/her own battles and to speak with teachers about concerns. Do not enable your child to be dependent upon your assistance. Do not underestimate your child's ability to be responsible and to exhibit commitment to express his/her thoughts.
- Monitor your child's whereabouts and set clear limits (e.g. places, times, etc.)
- Monitor your child's computer use for appropriateness.

Reading material on teenage issues is available in the school library.

MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIFORM DRESS CODE

GIRLS AND BOYS:

Shorts	khaki (blended or cotton)
Pants	khaki (blended or cotton)
Short-sleeved knit shirt	light gray, hunter green, royal blue (w/school name)
Long-sleeved knit shirt	navy, hunter green (w/ school name)
Crew sweatshirt	navy (w/ school logo)
Zippered sweat shirt	navy (w/ school logo), or plain navy, grey or black
Sweat pants	navy
Belt	khaki or brown
Socks	white, navy, khaki, black (if worn—not required)
Shoes	Footwear is required and must be fastened at all times. Shoes must have a secure back and closed toe. Girls' shoes must be flats. No heels may be worn unless there is a special ceremony or performance. Sandals or open shoes are not permitted. Sneakers may be any color; the only exception is that the predominant color cannot be neon. Neon laces not permitted. High tops are permitted. There can be no wheels, no lights and no Croc shoes. Sneakers must be laced.

GIRLS (*only*)

Wrap, Skirt, or Skort	khaki
Hair Accessories	navy, white, khaki, or match with shirt color

Belt must be worn only if belt loops are visible.

Shirt may be un-tucked if “slits” on side.

P.E. (*Boys and Girls*)

Grades 5-8 are required to wear P.E. uniforms

Note: Only “non-marking” sneakers will be permitted for all indoor sports.

All uniforms must be purchased through:

DENNIS Store
7602 NW 6th Avenue
Boca Raton, FL 33487

www.dennisuniform.com

561.226.9803

A Recycled Uniform Sale will also take place on campus monthly. Check the School Calendar and FYI for details.