



Parent/Student Handbook

2025-2026

Use or reproduction of this handbook and school directory for non-school purposes is strictly forbidden.

This handbook and directory are intended for the sole use of students, their parents, and the Helios School personnel for communicating within the Helios School community. The handbook contains copyrighted and proprietary information that cannot be used for any purpose other than resource and reference material within our community. Any prior versions of this handbook or policies previously published are superseded by those published in this handbook.

Use of the School Directory

The school directory may not be used as a basis for a general mailing list or to solicit parents and families for any purpose outside school business. Please contact the Head of School (408) 475-1024 with questions regarding use of the handbook or directory.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Helios School admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

To create a community that is welcoming and inclusive to individuals of all gender identities and expressions, we have made changes to the handbook to move towards gender-neutral pronouns.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome Message from Head of School

Dear Helios Families,

Helios is a proudly independent school. The founders wanted a place where their children could thrive, a school that would provide an engaging and imaginative education for gifted children and their families. Helios has grown from a handful of children in 2007 to 157 families and 170 students this year in our K-8 school.

The guiding principles that shaped the school in the early years have led to a vision, philosophy statement and an updated strategic plan that describe what we do and why, and how we work towards fulfilling our mission. We believe that gifted children thrive when they are provided with:

- a structured curriculum that capitalizes on asynchronous learning and intensities
- a strong SEL program that sets aside time to cultivate a sense of belonging
- a community of other gifted children, in a culture that delights in learning and discovery.

We look for children who love to dive deeply into topics and who can draw back, dive into another topic and make connections between all they are learning. We look for families who are confident that a hands-on, project-based curriculum, one that sets aside time for Social Emotional Learning, will be the foundation of life success.

Helios chooses to focus on the child's growth as a gifted individual, rather than external markers of achievement. Our goal is to develop the habits and skills our students need to be fulfilled. We have a curriculum that is keyed to state and national standards, but the real measure is a child's progress against themselves, and we strive to measure that with frequent, authentic assessments that give the students feedback and time to improve their learning. Our goal is for our children to grow into adolescents who know themselves and their values. Our aspiration for our graduates is that they can create their own life goals and know how to pursue them in the wider world. We have our students for only 9 years, but we hope what they learn here is carried forth into their whole lives.

Yours,

Ben Chant

Head of School

Helios School Philosophy

Our Mission:

To provide engaging and imaginative education that meets the unique intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted students and families and to empower authenticity through respect for self and others.

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Our Vision:

Helios School students develop...

- a life-long love of learning that is internally motivated and self-directed
- academic skills and self-discipline
- a positive sense of self
- and respect and empathy for others

...to thrive in and contribute to a dynamic, interconnected world.

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Our Philosophy Statement:

Helios serves gifted learners across the “giftedness” spectrum, including exceptionally gifted and profoundly gifted learners. Our understanding of giftedness is based on the definition developed by the Columbus Group (the leading researchers group in gifted education): “Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. The uniqueness of our learners renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.” Gifted learners often experience “asynchrony”-uneven emotional, intellectual and even physical development.

Our program is designed with the goal to educate the whole child, to instill a positive sense of one’s authentic self, and to provide safe space for our learners to express themselves and take intellectual risks, while developing respect and empathy for others. Because gifted learners may experience heightened sensory sensitivity and emotional intensity, we strive to integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) throughout the school’s academic curriculum and culture. We share the SEL program with members of the Helios community to promote deeper engagement with the program and with the goal of supporting the needs of our students, fostering youth voice, agency, and engagement.

Our culture is rooted in the shared value of authenticity. We strive for Helios to be a place where all community members can enjoy being their authentic selves. We believe authenticity comes from

understanding and accepting oneself and is the basis of self-respect; self-respect is the foundation of a productive and fulfilling life and is, along with empathy and kindness, the key to successful relationships.

Our theme-based curriculum is designed to promote the broadest search for knowledge and depth of understanding, while supporting the development of academic skills. Our educational program is designed to inspire discoveries through outdoor education, meaningful exploration and real-world connections, to meet our learners' need for a rigorous and generative education.

Helios seeks to meet the learners where they are, addressing their shifting social-emotional, intellectual and learning needs in a climate that grows and changes with them. Our educators have a deep understanding of giftedness and empathize with the challenges our learners face. They use a child-centered approach, giving credence to learners' ideas, thoughts and feelings. Our educators play a central role in creating an inspiring curriculum that encourages learners to grow and develop by empowering them to take initiative, think critically, collaborate and be accountable for the results. They are guided by principles of restorative justice to resolve conflicts and strengthen relationships in the community.

Helios recognizes the many inequities present in the world around us, and how these inequities create varied challenges for our students and families inside and outside the classroom. We also recognize that accessing specialized education for gifted students is a privilege that should be -- but unfortunately is not -- available to students of all communities and across socioeconomic classes. We seek to understand these inequities, and through our hiring, admissions and curriculum we aim to create a more inclusive, mutually caring community that celebrates our collective differences.

Basic School Information

Student School Hours

Morning Drop Off: 8:00am - 8:15am Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri

School Hours: 8:15am - 3:15pm Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri
8:15am - 12:30pm Thu

Afternoon Carline: 3:15pm - 3:30pm Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri
12:30pm - 12:45pm Thu

Children will be sent to Aftercare after carline is finished.

Aftercare hours: 3:30pm - 6:00pm Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri
12:45pm - 6:00pm Thu

Parking/Drop-Off:

8:00-8:15 am: Parents will drive through the gate at Kenney Court to the blacktop area behind the school and drop off their child with a staff person. The first car into the gate should pull up all the way to the gym; children will walk to their classroom (LS) or to morning movement (MS).

School Mailing Address:

Helios School
597 Central Ave
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Main phone line: 408-475-1024

School website: www.heliosschool.org

EIN/Tax ID #: 26-0753386

Helios School Parent Code of Conduct

Enrollment of a student at Helios School is deemed to be an agreement on the part of students and their parents or guardians to comply fully with all policies, rules, and regulations of the school. A positive and constructive relationship between the Helios School and parents of enrolled students, or other individuals interacting with the School and/or the Helios community by virtue of their relationship with a student, is essential to the School's educational objectives, mission, and operations. Helios reserves the right to suspend, expel, or otherwise remove, any student from the School or decline to offer re-enrollment to any student, if the School concludes, in its sole discretion, that the actions of that student's parents, or other individuals interacting with the School and/or the School community by virtue of their relationship with the student, impede the School's ability to meet its educational objectives or mission, disrupt School operations, are uncooperative, unreasonable, or unresponsive of the School, its administration, faculty, staff, or students, the School's philosophy, rules, regulations, policies and/or standards, or make it difficult to have a positive or constructive relationship with the parents or those other individuals interacting with the Helios School by virtue of their relationship with the student.

All parents/legal guardians are expected to:

1. Stay informed about the important events happening at the school.
2. Support the child's attendance at school events.
3. Ask questions for clarification and make thoughtful suggestions about the individual child's needs.
4. Foster a climate of trust and support at the school by communicating concerns openly and constructively to those closest to the problem.
5. Acknowledge the teachers as the educational experts/professionals - parents can provide key information, and the school has the final say in school-related educational decisions.
6. Strive to find common ground on which to maintain a mutually respectful relationship, even if there is not always agreement with every decision made by the school.

Staffing

<u>Administration</u>		
Head of School	Ben Chant	ben.chant@heliosschool.org
Assistant Head of School	Linda Zadik	linda.zadik@heliosschool.org
Dean of Faculty	Daniela Gunther	daniela.gunther@heliosschool.org
Dean of Students	Tiffany Nielsen	tiffany.nielsen@heliosschool.org
Director of Admissions	Kristi Meier	kristi.meier@heliosschool.org
Director of Technology	Ling Lam	ling.lam@heliosschool.org
Director of Finance/Operations	Hyonchu Bicoy	hyonchu.bicoy@heliosschool.org
Operations Manager	Crystal Heilmann	crystal.heilmann@heliosschool.org
Registrar	Polina Potanina	polina.potanina@heliosschool.org
Director of Development	Claude Grubair	claudio.grubair@heliosschool.org
Communications Lead	Melissa Keller	melissa.keller@heliosschool.org
SEL and Gifted Specialist	Anabel Jensen	anabel.jensen@heliosschool.org
Special Projects	Stephanie Pandya	stephanie.pandya@heliosschool.org

<u>Support Staff</u>		
Administrative Assistant	Lisa Harris	lisa.harris@heliosschool.org
Auxiliary Program Coordinator	Rebeca Flores	rebeca.flores@heliosschool.org
Admissions Coordinator	Mariella Castillo	mariella.castillo@heliosschool.org
Accountant	Jennifer Lin	jennifer.lin@heliosschool.org
School-Based Counselor	Mayu Adomi	mayu.adomi@heliosschool.org
Aftercare Staff	Aaron Martinez Casey Colopy Trinitea Fidis	aaron.martinez@heliosschool.org casey.colopy@heliosschool.org trinitea.fidis@heliosschool.org

Van Driver	Frank Sandoval	
Van Driver/Facilities	Aajon Johnson	aajon.johnson@heliosschool.org
High School Placement Counselor	Mike Orlando	mike.orlando@heliosschool.org

<u>Classroom Teachers</u>		
Hummingbirds (K)	Mizzy Hussain Yulia Ladd	mizzy.hussain@heliosschool.org yulia.ladd@heliosschool.org
Falcons (1st/2nd grade)	Nadine Mourad Dan McMackin	nadine.mourad@heliosschool.org dan.mcmackin@heliosschool.org
Primary Lead (K-2)	Shannon Diaz-Nguyen	shannon.diaz@heliosschool.org
Hawks (1st/2nd grade)	Emma Buckman Brittany Caine	emma.buckman@heliosschool.org brittany.caine@heliosschool.org
Jays (3rd/4th grade)	Madison Sindorf Freya Davis	madison.sindorf@heliosschool.org freya.davis@heliosschool.org
Ravens (3rd/4th grade)	Joanne Chang Kathy Prion	joanne.chang@heliosschool.org kathy.prion@heliosschool.org
Condors (5th/6th grade)	Amy Mendenhall Arden Simone	amy.mendenhall@heliosschool.org arden.simone@heliosschool.org
Ospreys (5th/6th grade)	Alyssa Carlson Kai Marks	alyssa@heliosschool.org kai.marks@heliosschool.org
Herons (7th/8th grade)	Jessie Caines Susan Cho	jessie.caines@heliosschool.org susan.cho@heliosschool.org
Egrets (7th/8th grade)	Mike Orlando Sylvia Major	mike.orlando@heliosschool.org sylvia.major@heliosschool.org
Middle School SEL	Jason Federmeyer	jason.federmeyer@heliosschool.org
Math Coordinator	Natasha Gelfand	natasha.gelfand@heliosschool.org
Math Specialists	Joshua Zucker Angel Altamirano Jr.	joshua.zucker@heliosschool.org angel.altamirano.jr@heliosschool.org
Fellow	Brianna Lehane	brianna.lehane@heliosschool.org
Fellow	Betty Zhang	betty.zhang@heliosschool.org

<u>Specialist Teachers</u>		
Art Teacher	Nor Raheem	nor.raheem@heliosschool.org
I-Lab Teachers	Rusty Hopewell Mario Nunéz	rusty.hopewell@heliosschool.org mario.nunez@heliosschool.org
Garden & Camping Coordinator	Karn Knight	karn.knight@heliosschool.org
Librarian	Elizabeth Wallace	librarian@heliosschool.org
Music Teacher & Wilderness Village Elder	Sean Keenan	sean.keenan@heliosschool.org
PE Teacher & Sports Manager	Kai Winterling	kai.winterling@heliosschool.org
Mindfulness Teacher	Melissa Bader Ryan	melissa.ryan@heliosschool.org
Theater Teacher	Brittany Caine	brittany.caine@heliosschool.org

FOUNDATIONS

Governance

Helios School is a nonprofit 501(c)3 California corporation governed by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for fiduciary and legal operations of the school. The Board of Trustees is also responsible for developing the school's mission and vision and ensuring that the school's mission is carried out by the Head of School. From time to time, the Board of Trustees may ask other parties to participate as members of the Board of Directors committees or task forces or attend Board meetings as guests in an advisory capacity.

The Head of School is responsible for executing the school's mission and vision and managing the school's day to day operations and ongoing growth and success. The Head of School is the chief academic and administrative officer of the School, and a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees.

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Strategic Plan Goals

In the winter of 2022 the Board of Trustees engaged in a collaborative process with all Helios stakeholders and updated the [strategic plan](#). Each year the Board of Trustees meets to establish specific Board goals for the following academic year and assess the status of the prior year's goals.

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Annual Fundraising: The Helios Fund

What is the Helios Fund?

At Helios School, we are committed to providing a challenging education that goes beyond traditional classroom settings. Like all independent schools, we rely on two primary sources of revenue: tuition and philanthropic contributions. While tuition covers the basics, your generosity through the Helios Fund provides the resources that make Helios truly exceptional. Our unique approach focuses on the potential of our gifted students, nurturing their intellectual curiosity and creative spirit. Your support will directly impact the lives of our students and help us maintain our position as the leading institution for gifted education in the Bay Area.

We recognize that for many Helios children, a gifted school is **a need**, not a luxury, and for many families the Helios tuition to meet this need represents a significant financial sacrifice. We are deeply appreciative of all donations given. **We ask first and foremost that each family give an amount that is meaningful to them, and if offered by their employer, to secure employer matching for your gift.**

Helios is a non-profit organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3. As such, your donation may be tax deductible. Our tax identification number is 26-0753386. Please consult with your tax advisor regarding the deductibility of your gift. The school's financial year runs July 1 to June 30, echoing our academic/enrollment year, but spanning two calendar years.

Curricular and Pedagogical Approach

We are deliberately doing something different at Helios. We are an independent school teaching in an independent way. We are a school for gifted children that strives to teach a progressive, project-based curriculum. This is a strong pedagogy for all children, but we believe it liberates gifted children by feeding and developing their drive to discover and learn, in a curricular space that has room for their asynchronous learning and intensities.

During the early years of the school, guiding principles were written down to guide the school as it evolved. You can see these principles woven into the semester-long themes the students undertake. To make these guiding principles a reality, the school developed the Helios Learner Outcomes. These expressed what it was we were teaching towards, allowing us to measure progress. The Helios Learner Outcomes have continued to be refined as needed.

Helios Guiding Principles

The **Helios Guiding Principles** are the foundation for how we think about program design and curriculum for gifted children. The principles were inspired by Expeditionary Learning, Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, and incorporate the administrators and faculty's experience in progressive education and project-based learning.

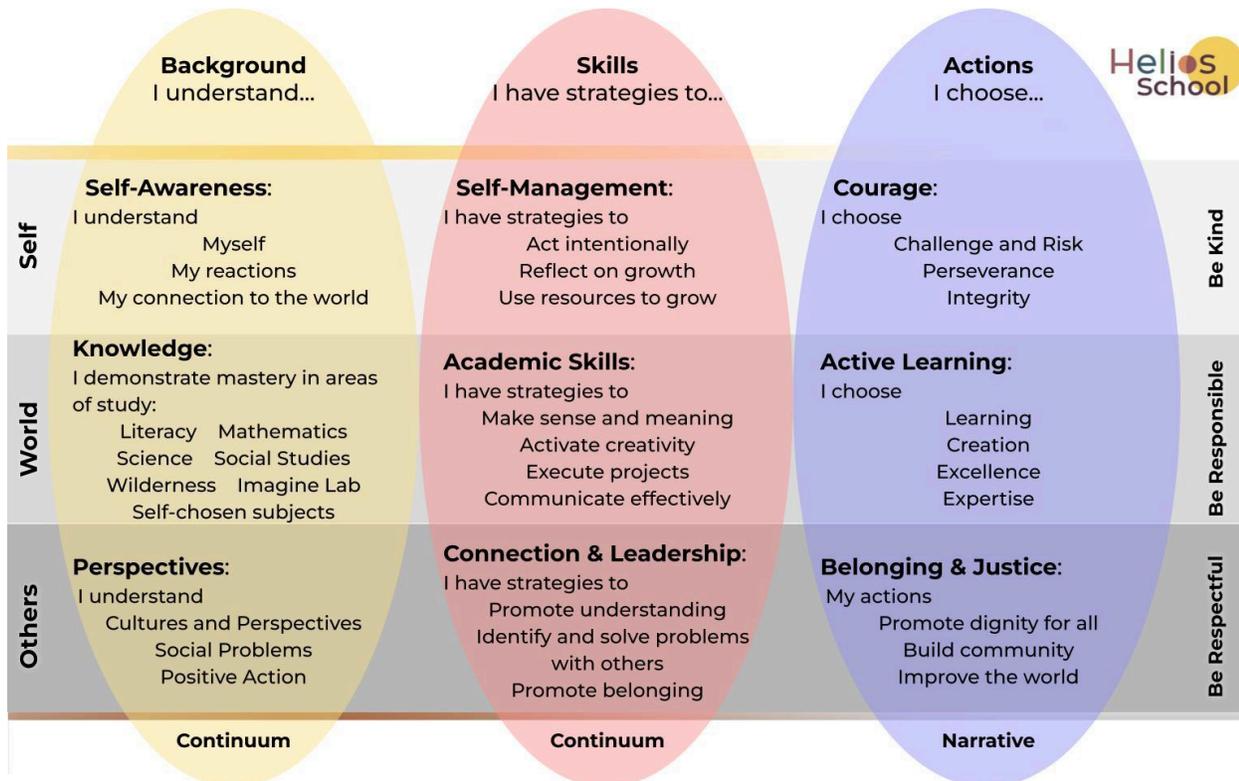
School is a place for ...

<p>Self-Discovery Learn about yourself</p> <p>Explore your values</p>	<p>Success and Failure Experience success</p> <p>Experience failure</p> <p>Reflect on and learn from mistakes, successes, and overcoming fears</p>	<p>Valuing the Natural World Experience the natural world and come to value it</p> <p>Learn about recurring cycles and cause and effect</p> <p>Learn to care for the natural environment</p>
<p>Excellence and Rigor Persist, imagine, question, strive for high quality, and achieve great things</p> <p>Take initiative, think critically, problem solve, make decisions, and be accountable for the results</p> <p>Be whole-heartedly involved in everything you do</p>	<p>The Having of Wonderful Ideas Think deeply about, formulate, reflect on, and make sense of complex ideas</p> <p>See that others value your thoughts</p>	<p>Responsibility for Learning Become responsible for directing your own learning</p> <p>Become responsible for participating in the group's learning</p>
<p>Empathy and Perspective Appreciate others' values, perspectives, and motivations</p> <p>Take others' point of view into consideration even when it conflicts with your own</p>	<p>Collaboration and Community Take responsibility for working together smoothly and productively as a group</p>	<p>Respect and Kindness Develop relationships with yourself, others, and the world at large</p> <p>Learn in small, trusted groups</p> <p>Serve the larger community through meaningful projects</p>

Helios Learner Outcomes

The Helios Learner Outcomes (HLOs) describe the personal growth that Helios supports and expects from students during their time at the school. The HLOs are used for discussion and reflection with students and parents and form the backbone of the Internal Progress Reports. These are in essence the standards by which we measure the children’s progress across all aspects of their life in school, not just academic. The matrix considers the child’s learning in relation to the world and to whether they have the understanding and skills to put their ideas into action.

Helios Learner Outcomes - Brief Overview



Helios Learner Outcomes - Full

<p>Self-Awareness <i>I understand myself, my reactions, and my connection to the world.</i></p> <p>I recognize my own emotions, thoughts, beliefs, biases, motivations, needs, strengths and weaknesses. I understand the connection between my thoughts, feelings, biases, and behaviors and how this connection influences my choices. I understand my interconnectedness with, and impact on, my physical, social, and natural environment.</p>	<p>Self-Management <i>I have strategies to act intentionally, reflect on growth, and use resources to grow.</i></p> <p>I have strategies to manage my emotions, responses, time, and tasks. I focus on my own growth, rather than achievement. I have the skills to use experience, feedback, teaching, and other resources for my own growth.</p>	<p>Courage <i>I choose challenge and risk, perseverance, and integrity.</i></p> <p>I approach academic, social, emotional, and physical risks and challenges with courage, forethought and deliberation. I demonstrate grit and resilience. I act with honesty and integrity in challenging situations, staying true to my personal values and bringing injustice to light.</p>
<p>Knowledge <i>I demonstrate mastery in areas of study.</i></p> <p>Areas of study at Helios include literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, wilderness/nature, Imagine Lab, PE, and self-chosen subjects like Passion Projects or Specials.</p>	<p>Academic Skills <i>I have strategies to make sense and meaning, activate creativity, execute projects, and communicate effectively.</i></p> <p>I explore, inquire, observe, make connections, find patterns, synthesize, and think critically. I imagine, innovate, and invent. I recognize problems in the world, break them down, and create new solutions. I communicate effectively through writing, speaking, and presentations to various audiences for various purposes.</p>	<p>Active Learning <i>I choose learning, creation, excellence, and expertise.</i></p> <p>I seek out and take ownership for learning, motivated by curiosity. I create stories and artwork, build devices and objects, and complete projects. I pursue excellence through craftsmanship, self discipline, and flexibility. I learn deeply from experts and experience, and then apply my expertise independently, as part of a team, and by teaching others.</p>
<p>Cultural Literacy (Perspectives) <i>I understand various cultures and perspectives, social problems, and positive action.</i></p> <p>I understand the perspectives, values, identities, and traditions of myself and a wide range of other individuals and communities. I understand social problems in the past and present from multiple perspectives. I recognize the value of exchanging thoughts, feelings, and ideas with others; of problem-solving and positive action in communities, historically and for the future.</p>	<p>Connection <i>I have strategies to promote understanding, identify and solve problems with others, and promote belonging.</i></p> <p>I can effectively exchange feelings, perspectives, and ideas with others, engage in uncomfortable conversations, and challenge assumptions. I can recognize and draw attention to problems, and strategize with others to meet the needs of everyone. I have strategies to form or join a group, include others, and maintain the group so that everyone has an equal voice.</p>	<p>Belonging & Justice <i>My actions promote dignity for all, build community, and improve the world.</i></p> <p>I act with a strong sense of fairness and respect for the dignity of the human and non-human world. I participate in, contribute to, and enhance others' sense of belonging in the community. I act as an agent of positive change in my community and the world.</p>

Theme and Project-Based Learning

Helios School teachers are encouraged to be attuned to the interests of the children and help them discover and explore problems that make learning relevant and engaging. Teachers plan, create and implement units and lessons that are aligned with State and Common Core Standards, Best Practices in Gifted Education and learner interests, and that reflect students' Individual Learning Plans aimed at Helios Learner Outcomes. These units and lessons may use published materials or materials of teachers' and their students' devising in order to promote skill development and conceptual understanding. Using themes, the teachers engage the children in a variety of case studies and units of study including projects and activities that may vary in their length and complexity. We provide direct instruction, which is integrated into the theme as much as possible, and is assessed to promote skill acquisition is progressing appropriately.

The asynchrony that is so much a part of how gifted children learn is factored into the lessons and teaching. We respect and honor each child's personal learning rhythm and carefully consider all aspects of the individual in determining expectations. Our goal is to offer engaging learning experiences to provide a variety of stimuli and accommodate a wide range of learning styles. Time spent out of school on fieldwork and other extensions beyond the classroom are an integral part of the curriculum and Helios experience.

At Helios, the approach to the curriculum and student learning is based on the understanding that students learn best when they are active participants in the learning process and not passive receivers of information.

Social and Emotional Learning

“SEL” in Our Community

SEL is an important aspect of the Helios curriculum and our learning community. SEL opportunities arise in every moment of everyday life and are not confined to isolated lessons. We have a K-8 curriculum that uses research and lessons adapted from a number of effective programs.

As a result of social and emotional learning, we strive for Helios students to:

- Develop an awareness, understanding, and acceptance of self and others
- Develop interpersonal skills in order to interact and communicate with others effectively
- Recognize and understand what others are feeling, develop perspective-taking skills, and appreciate and interact positively with diverse groups
- Participate in activities and projects designed to promote personal responsibility and service
- Develop and use personal leadership skills
- Use appropriate criteria for resolving conflicts and ethical dilemmas
- Create and sustain a learning environment in which all students feel safe and supported

These essential life-long skills are integrated more successfully by the student if reinforced at home and school. We encourage your participation in this effort, and opportunities to learn about the curriculum are provided during ongoing parent education sessions.

Math

Each Helios math class for students in grades K-8 serves students of a variety of ages who are all ready to learn the same grade level of math, as determined by assessment in the fall. Each class covers one year of a typical curriculum - Level 3 is third grade math, Level 5 is fifth grade math, etc. A published curriculum appropriate for gifted learners, or an appropriate teacher-created alternative, is taught Monday - Thursday. Classes are typically paired for Math Circle on Fridays. Teachers are invited to challenge students by offering above-level instruction and work as appropriate; it is not uncommon for students to compact the math curriculum by at least one year during the K-6 levels.

Math Circles are collaborative problem-solving Specials which seek to allow students to move beyond the concrete-pictorial-abstract levels of classroom mathematics into the *generalize - explain/prove - inquire levels* that characterize the work of a mathematician.

A math curriculum appropriate for gifted learners has the following characteristics:

- **Teaches through problem solving** to engage the student in active learning.
- **Paced and sequenced for depth and complexity.** Fewer topics per grade level at greater depth naturally accelerates students over time and emphasizes mastery of each concept before moving on.
- **Emphasizes making meaning.** Develops good thinkers, problem solvers, and communicators. Teaches WHY before HOW - conceptual understanding before memorization of procedures.
- **Actively uses "multiple representations."** Emphasizes precise mathematical communication and connections between pictures, words, and numbers. Uses the Concrete → Pictorial → Abstract approach: sees manipulatives and "acting out the math" as essential tools for understanding new concepts. Explicitly teaches effective pictorial techniques (such as bar models). "Multiple representations" may also refer to different algebraic expressions for the same quantity.
- **Emphasizes mathematical flexibility; limited repetition.** Embeds mental math strategies in the curriculum as part of flexible thinking about numbers, not just for quick calculation. Offers non-routine problems that require deeper understanding of mathematics.

In Levels K-6, Helios uses Math In Focus, a Singapore Mathematics curriculum, with appropriate supplements from other curricula. After Level 6, students move into the Art of Problem Solving series for Pre-Algebra through Precalculus. A guided, individually-paced option may be available for students who are not well-served in the group classroom.

Staff Planning Time (Professional Development)

We have scheduled days throughout the year for teacher planning, reflection, collaboration and professional development (check the school calendar for the specific days on which there will not be classes for students or there will be only morning classes). Every Thursday, students are dismissed at 12:30 so teachers and staff can meet on a weekly basis.

EXPECTATIONS

Communication

Helios School is committed to regular, helpful communication with parents and other staff members regarding children's behavior and all-around progress.

Weekly Parent Newsletters

The Parent Newsletter will be emailed out every Friday by the Communications Lead (communications@heliosschool.org).

Computer Network and Electronic Files

Helios uses Gmail as its primary means of communication. As such, please ensure you check your Helios inbox regularly, or forward Helios emails to a personal inbox. Email addresses and passwords for Helios Gmail have been created for all staff, parents and students. Student records can be found on the Google Drive associated with the parents' Helios Google account. The Director of Technology maintains the Helios Gmail domain and can assist when questions or issues arise.

Master Calendar

The Administrative Assistant and Communications Lead maintain a master school calendar. The school calendar is located in your Gmail Calendar and Parent Portal, and holds pertinent information for the Helios School teacher and student community. Please note that unless you are signed into your Helios account, you will experience difficulty finding the calendar and documents in your Google Drive. Please check to see that you are signed into your Helios account when accessing the Helios Google Calendar. If you are still having issues, please contact the Director of Technology.

Veracross

The school uses Veracross (VC) as its student information system, which is integrated with the VC Parent Portal. The Parent Portal is meant to be a one-stop-shop for all your student and family needs pertaining to the school.

To access Parent Portal, go to <https://portals.veracross.com/heliosschool/parent>. Helios School has Google Single-Sign-On enabled for Veracross. You will use your Helios credentials to sign into Veracross services (Portals, Magnus Health).

- Enter the email associated with your Veracross user account (your Helios email)
- Once entered, a second window will appear with a familiar Google login screen
- Please pick the school account (not personal Gmail)

Now, whenever you navigate to a Veracross page while logged into Google (with your school account), the login page will send you directly to VC Parent Portal, bypassing the need to enter a password. For questions or assistance with Veracross please contact the [Registrar's](#) office.

Parent Contact Information

New parents, returning families and teachers are included in the Helios Community Google group. There are multiple email groups that Helios community members have available to use as appropriate. Group emails are moderated.

- Parents and Staff: parentsandstaff@heliosschool.org - To be used only by school staff for sharing school information
- Chat: chat@heliosschool.org - To be used to ask questions to the community, share resources/ideas, etc. This distribution is opt-out; if you'd like to remove yourself please email communications@heliosschool.org

If a parent would like to arrange a social event (e.g. birthday party) with fellow grade-band parents, we encourage them to use the grade-band WhatsApp groups set up by HCA.

Additionally, there is a Parent/Student directory that is shared with all parents on the [Veracross Parent Portal](#). This directory contains student names, parent names, and parent email, phone, and address information. It holds the information only for those families who have elected to provide it (via the disclosure form in the enrollment form). As a reminder, this directory may not be used as a basis for a general mailing list or to solicit parents and families for any purpose outside school business.

Please observe generally understood email/social networking etiquette rules when you are online. The group is designed to be a tool for positive communication and support of the program.

Teacher Communication

Helios School is committed to teaming honestly and positively with parents regarding children's behavior and all-around progress. In keeping with our community's SEL (Social Emotional Learning) principles of direct, fair, and empathetic communication, we ask that you bear in mind the following tips:

Direct and Positive Communication

Please communicate first with your child's teaching team. This teaching team includes both homeroom teachers, Math, and Literacy. For Specials, Aftercare, and After School Clubs, reach out to the Dean of Faculty.

Communication During Pick-up and Drop-off

The teachers' primary function during carline and pick-up and drop-off is to assist with smooth transitions into and out of the classroom. Important information, updates on students, or requests to meet are best arranged by email or office hours rather than during pick-up and drop-off.

Email Communication

Email communication should be reserved for clarification of information or quick facts, not for discussions - please arrange a meeting for these. For time-sensitive matters, please call the school front desk at (408) 475-1024. Do not rely on email for a response from a teacher during the school day. Teachers make an effort to return emails and telephone calls by the end of the following school day. For topics that require more discussion, see the information below.

Meetings/Conferences

If you have an issue or concern that requires in person conversation, email your child's teaching team and request an appointment. All homerooms have weekly office hours, as does the Head of School.

We have found that meetings work best when parents are specific about their concerns, and understand that teachers genuinely want all the children to succeed. Both parents and teachers are expected to be willing to listen and be open to constructive observations.

A follow up email may be needed after the meeting to confirm any goals set during the meeting. The Dean of Students attends any appropriate meetings and will coordinate any follow up needed. The School will involve relevant parties as needed, including but not limited to: the Assistant Head of School, Head of School, outside resources, etc.

Administrative Staff Communication

Communicating with the Head of School

The Head of School strives to be available to meet with parents about any issue and has a genuine "open door" policy. He has office hours that can be booked through the link on the signature on his email, and a direct email will work as well.

Areas in which the Head of School can help:

- Policy or general school concerns
- Parent concerns that were not resolved by your child's teachers or the Deans or Assistant Head
- Personnel issues that require Head of School support

Areas in which the Assistant Head of School can help:

- Curriculum
- Scheduling
- Pedagogy
- Interpreting MAP testing scores

Areas in which the Director of Finance/Operations can help:

- Billing inquiries
- Credits/reimbursements
- Facilities (space usage, maintenance)

Areas in which the Registrar can help:

- Student records (sharing progress reports, transcript requests)
- Student information system Veracross
- Accessing MAP test scores
- Medical records
- Change of Address

Areas in which the Dean of Students can help:

- Coordinating efforts with the SEL & Gifted Specialist and the School-based Counselors
- Student support (Student Support Team, providing direct support, accommodations)
- SEL curriculum and relevant Professional Development for staff

- Parent education coordinator
- Literacy Curriculum, Circles, and Placement (including standardized assessment)

Areas in which the Communications Lead can help:

- Communication (email distributions, newsletter, parent website, events)
- Marketing (website, social media, promotional materials)

Areas in which the Auxiliary Programs Coordinator can help:

- Aftercare & After School Clubs
- Summer camps

Areas in which the Math Curriculum Coordinator can help:

- Math Curriculum
- Math Placement, including standardized assessment

Areas in which the Director of Admissions can help:

- Admissions volunteers (tours, information sessions, workshops)
- Sibling/new student applications
- Student contracts
- Financial Aid

Areas in which the Director of Technology can help:

- Issues with access or passwords
- Any issues with Google Apps, Helios email, or 3rd party apps
- Issues about appropriate use or misuse of technology
- Any classroom technology issues or needs, including school provided laptops
- Event technology set-up and take down

Areas in which the Administrative Assistant can help:

- Time-sensitive messages
- School Calendar
- Hot Lunch
- Attendance
- First Aid

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is central to our curriculum. Learning extends beyond Helios walls; it connects our students to the world. Fieldwork is deeply woven into each teacher’s curriculum. It is designed to provoke, deepen, support and widen the themes as they unfold. **Attendance is expected** on fieldwork as much as it is in the classroom. The ‘field’ may be a forest, a theater, the ocean, a science lab, a courtroom, a museum, etc.

These adventures promote growth in intellect and character. Students who become comfortable taking risks out-of-doors often gain the confidence to take bigger risks in the classroom. More in-depth learning opportunities take place on these trips.

Overnight Trips

Each fall and spring 1st-8th graders will go on overnight camping trips. They will last 1-5 days, depending on the class. Our youngest learners, Kindergarteners, do an overnight trip on campus in the Spring. There are additional overnight trips during the school year in the middle school. Overnight trips are an important part of the learning at Helios. They allow our community to develop positive cultures at the beginning of the year and to reflect and find closure at the end of the year.

Permissions & Waivers

The **Annual Field Trip Permission** you sign with your enrollment packet covers **all classroom day trips and the scheduled fall and spring camping trips** described above. Once that form is on file, no additional paperwork is needed for these routine or calendar-based experiences—you will simply receive an email or Parent Portal notice with the itinerary, transportation plan, and chaperone list ahead of each trip.

Occasionally we schedule **special adventures beyond our regular fieldwork**—for example, a rock-climbing day at Castle Rock State Park, an additional overnight backpacking trip, or a trip out of the area. Because these outings either add nights beyond our fall and spring campouts **or** involve specialized gear and outside providers, they require a separate **Supplemental Trip Permission**. When such a trip is offered, you’ll receive a packet detailing the itinerary and packing list, and depending on the activity, **additional health forms or vendor waivers may be required**. Any required Supplemental Trip Permission Forms must be completed before departure; **students without a signed overnight form will remain on campus that day**.

Note: This handbook summary does not replace the full legal language in the Field Trip Permission Enrollment Form or any trip-specific forms. Please read those documents carefully each year.

Fieldwork Transportation

Helios coordinates ground transportation for fieldwork trips using school or rental vans and parent volunteer drivers. Parents may drive their own children in their own vehicles on a fieldwork trip but cannot drive other children unless volunteer driver documents are submitted to Helios with proof of TB Risk Assessment, insurance, and valid driver’s license to the Registrar,, and LiveScan background check to the Director of Operations. This process takes at least 5-7 business days. Information on how to do this is available on the Parent Information section of the parent portal.

Costs and Participation

The cost of fieldwork is included in tuition. Depending upon the nature and intent of the trips, parent chaperones are organized for day trips. To promote group bonding and student independence, the number of chaperones on overnight trips is limited. The school will pay for the attendance of required chaperone parents on the fieldwork trip. Here are the requirements for parent participation for events:

- To be able to drive your personal vehicle (with your own child(ren) only) - submit your insurance information and a copy of your driver's license at least two weeks before the event. To drive other children, you must complete a TB Clearance and LiveScan background check in addition to providing the required documents. The requirements are explained above in the 'Fieldwork Transportation' section and in the Volunteer Requirements section of the parent portal.
- To be able to chaperone or be on an overnight excursion you must complete a TB Clearance and LiveScan background check. Once you are cleared through LiveScan, you do not need to be cleared again while your child is at Helios.

Assessments

Classroom Assessment

Teachers use many different methods to assess students' learning both during and at the end of units. These methods might include discussions, written work, project drafts, completed projects, and tests or quizzes, among others. Students are encouraged to continue improving their work beyond the minimum requirements to develop and demonstrate their skills as much as they can in the time available.

When a student does not fully master an area of study during a given unit, staff offer additional practice and outside resources for students to continue learning on their own, and offer additional opportunities to show mastery later in the semester or year.

Placement Assessment

All students are assessed for math group placement at the beginning of the school year. This process may involve a variety of observations, tests, and tasks designed to understand what students are ready to learn. The placement of students in early September is intended to be final for the year; after this point, teachers differentiate within their group to offer above- and below- level instruction and work as needed. Occasionally, teachers will suggest that a student is ready to move up a math level mid-year. When necessary, this occurs in January and in accordance with the "Changes in Student Placement" process described below. Groups within the Kindergarten room are fluid and may change throughout the year without notice.

K-2 students are also assessed for literacy group placement within their homeroom. These groups formally teach foundational reading and writing skills, and are phased out as students master these skills. Literacy groups are stable, but may change throughout the year as staff observe student growth. Assessment may include the MAP Fluency test (see below), assessments connected to published curricula, observations on classroom tasks, or other demonstrations of student level.

Reading comprehension, written expression, speaking and listening, and most grammar and mechanics skills are taught through direct instruction within the theme. Students are assessed on a K-12 language arts continuum and fluidly grouped with other students who need to develop the same skills during these mini lessons.

NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP Assessment)

NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress - MAP - form our standardized testing suite. Teachers use the results to learn about a student's academic needs to adapt class work, monitor student growth, and communicate with parents and the outside world about students' academic level. It is important to recognize that Helios does not make any final decisions based on the results of these tests alone; rather, they are one part of a comprehensive set of observations used to understand a student.

These computerized tests are generally given three times per year, in August, December, and May. MAP assessments are aligned to Common Core standards, and provide detailed, actionable data about where each child is on their unique learning path. They are particularly appropriate for our students because they are adaptive across grade levels rather than grade-level standard specific. Test results are generally provided to parents in October, January, and June, for discussion at parent-teacher conferences.

Students take the following tests:

- MAP Reading 2-5 or Reading 6+ is given to all students grades 1-8 at all three times.**
- MAP Math 2-5, Math 6+, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, or Geometry is given to all students grades 1-8 at all three times. Reading is prioritized over Math for first graders taking the test for the first time in the fall. All students have access to Text-To-Speech for the math portion of the test.**
- MAP Language 2-12 is given to middle school students grades 5-8 in August to inform whole-class grammar instruction.
- MAP Fluency will be given to all students K-2 and selected students in higher grades in fall 2021. Students who are still learning to read may also take MAP Fluency in December and May.

***All students take the MAP test in the fall. Students who meet specific criteria for reaching a test ceiling will be offered an alternative testing experience. Families may choose between the alternate test, MAP, or opting out of testing entirely. See the Registrar for details.*

If an individual student requires regular classroom accommodations, they will be allowed for testing if it is determined in advance, consistent with the School's Policy on Reasonable Accommodations, that they are warranted. Such accommodations will be noted when assessment results are reported and noted in student records to ensure consistency between testing events. Helios holds high standards of ethics and believes that re-testing in a different situation (i.e. one-on-one or in a small group, or in an alternative location) does not provide a fair comparison with more standardized testing and is often not a good indicator of a student's abilities.

When teachers do not feel that the MAP assessment(s) accurately reflect a student's level or progress, they will communicate with parents via conferences and share results with appropriate administrators to ensure student support. Once a student has finished testing, they will not be re-tested during the same time frame due to poor performance or for any other reason, unless the professional staff feel it beneficial. If test results are substantially different from daily observations of a student's level, teachers will use observation and other methods with the goal that students are receiving instruction appropriate to their learning level.

No test preparation is necessary. On test days (and every day) students should come to school well-rested and having eaten a nutritious breakfast.

Changes in a Student's Academic Placement

The nature of Helios creates opportunities for students to move among homeroom or academic groupings in a fluid manner based on their changing academic and social needs. To help provide that these changes are made in a thoughtful, intentional manner, the process requires an evaluation from many perspectives. Consideration for a change may be initiated by a student, teacher, or parent. After a thorough review, Helios staff will make a final decision and communicate this to the stakeholder requesting the change.

Progress Reports

Helios students do not receive letter grades. Progress Reports are designed to be a "snapshot" of where the teacher sees your child as indicated by a measured continuum of skills, individual narratives, or both. Progress Reports are designed to promote communication and understanding in

support of your child and to assist parents and teachers in working together. Progress reports are shared with parents at semester breaks in January and June and become part of your child's permanent record.

External progress reports contain information about your child's mastery of areas of study, and are shared with other schools when a child leaves Helios. Internal progress reports contain information about a child's social-emotional development and are NOT shared with other schools without the student's parent/guardian consent. Past progress reports are available to parents on Google Drive or within the parent portal of Veracross.

Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

At Helios School, a learning plan is designed and implemented for each child. The ILP is intended to be the primary document for communication between the parents, student, and teachers regarding students' interests, social, emotional, intellectual, and academic goals and progress. The ILP is a fluid, collaborative, and evolving document to which families have continual, secure access and will not be forwarded to receiving schools when students leave Helios. ILPs are available to parents on Veracross under the Report Cards tab.

The ILP relies on parent and teacher observations and formal as well as informal assessments. Students' participation in designing the ILP increases as they better know and understand themselves as individual learners, as well as community members, and gain awareness of their strengths and challenges.

In the first six weeks of school, each teacher engages in a strengths and needs assessment process with all students. This information along with the parent ILP questionnaire is incorporated into the ILP and is discussed at the conference in October. Individual student goals are identified at this conference. Middle school students are required to participate in the ILP conference. New students will have an initial ILP meeting before the first day of school.

Parent Conferences

Parent-teacher (and student, for 5th-8th grade) conferences are held three times each year, the first one being an ILP conference. Conference days are on the published school year calendar. The school has an early dismissal of 12:30 pm on days when conferences are scheduled in order to allow teachers to give their full attention to parent questions and concerns.

Student-Led Conferences

Student-Led conferences, held once a year, not only tell you how your child is doing in school, but they help your child take responsibility for and articulate their own learning. These conferences provide an occasion for students to reflect on their progress, set goals for future work, and make a public presentation to the most important people in their lives. Your child will lead their own conference and present their own learning to you. Students prepare for these conferences by choosing work that best represents their learning. Students will prepare for Student-Led Conferences in class, then present to families.

Attendance

Punctual arrival at school and consistent presence in classes and activities assists your child in gaining confidence, developing social connections, and growing independence. Parents are the best role models for children and show respect for others by having their children arrive at school on time and ready to learn. Tardies and absences are recorded daily, become part of your child's permanent record, and will be included on external report cards. Tardiness impacts the effectiveness of your child's education and disrupts the education of other students in the classroom. Unlike public schools in which we would be required under California Truancy Laws to report tardiness to the Department of Education, we rely on your commitment to your child's education to have them arrive on time. In the case of chronic tardiness, the parents and student will meet with the Head of School to develop a plan for on-time arrival.

Early Releases

These are discouraged except in the case of a child's illness. If you need to pick up your child during the school day, please notify the teacher and [Administrative Assistant](#) in advance so they can plan for the early dismissal of your child. If your child is picked up early, parents must sign the student out with the Administrative Assistant at the front desk.

Early Release for Middle Schoolers

Authorized check out for Middle School Students is allowed once the self check out form has been filled out and returned to the front desk. The school's [Administrative Assistant](#) can provide the form to parents on request. Students are to sign out at the front desk at dismissal and are expected to walk or bike home promptly. Students cannot wait outside on school or church property or re-enter, unless there's an emergency. .

Absences and School Notification

We are required by the California Education Code to track all absences and late arrivals. If a student is ill or will not be in school for any reason, parents are asked to notify the [Administrative Assistant](#) and homeroom teacher no later than 8:15am on each day the child is absent. If a student arrives at school after 8:15am, students will need to sign in at the front desk. Students are marked as an unexcused absence if they are not signed in, or the front desk is not notified by email from the parents. The school will then follow up with the families.

Extended Absence

Consistent class attendance is important for your child's academic and social growth. Helios families are expected to build their vacation schedules around the school calendar.

Occasionally, parents choose to take advantage of school-year opportunities for educational travel or other meaningful family experiences. During such an extended trip, the family is responsible for the education of the student and may use resources online that align to the current theme. Please contact and collaborate with your child's teacher on a project or other activity for the student that would support them in not falling behind. While Helios teachers will work to be supportive, they are ultimately not responsible for lesson plans for the time away. So much of what we do at school is collaborative that it is impossible to recreate for a single child working remotely.

Pick-Up Information

Parents will be asked to identify all other adults (e.g., grandparents, babysitters, family friends) who have permission to collect their child at dismissal. This information will be collected from the enrollment form and is accessible to staff as soon the list is completed. In all cases, please alert any adult that is not a parent collecting your child that they may be asked to show ID if we do not recognize them. Under no circumstances will a child be released to an adult who is not on your official “pick-up” list without prior arrangement with the school.

If there are any changes to students’ dismissal plans, parents should contact the school via phone 408 475 1024 or email frontdesk@heliosschool.org with update instructions

If your child is going home with another Helios student (i.e., for a playdate), please inform the Front desk (frontdesk@heliosschool.org) and teacher(s).

Ride Share Policy

Helios School understands that parents have many options for how to transport children to and from school each day. The School is not responsible for any decisions parents make regarding the transportation of children to and from school, including the use of professional car service or rideshare companies.

The School does not knowingly release students to Car Services that prohibit minors from riding without an adult but does permit the use of Car Services that specifically promote rides for minors, such as Kango, Zum, HopSkipDrive, and Uber (which offers services to students who are 13 and older).

If parents agree to allow their children to be dropped off and/or picked up at the School by a Car Service that provides transportation for minors, parents must complete the Car Services Authorization Form available on the parent portal. This form expressly acknowledges that the School and its employees have no responsibility for the parents’ decision and no responsibility for and will not screen, monitor, or otherwise review or assess the safety of these Car Services or any Car Service driver or vehicle in any way whatsoever. Parents agree that they are responsible for reviewing the terms of use for the Car Services that they opt to use.

School Transport and Care Services

Helios Van Service

Helios has vans that bring students to and from school, serving the areas that indicate enough need; in the past the routes have serviced the Palo Alto and Los Altos areas. Parents may sign up for an additional fee for the entirety of the year depending on availability. After payment, students may ride the vans as frequently or infrequently as needed.

Students who are not signed up for the entire year may ride the van as needed at a specified daily rate if space is available - see the parent portal for route and cost details. Please contact the Administrative Assistant and the Operations Manager to ensure there is space and to secure a spot for the day.

Aftercare

Helios offers aftercare daily until 6:00 pm. Parents can sign up on a yearly or daily drop-in basis for an additional fee. When drop-in is required, parents are encouraged to email the homeroom teachers to inform the school before the end of the school day. Students not picked up by 3:30 pm (12:45 pm Thursday), will automatically be signed in to Helios Aftercare. **All students remaining on campus after the school day ends must be signed into aftercare.** Students attending a club will be signed in but not charged if they are picked up promptly after the club ends.

All students in aftercare and clubs are signed in, and parents will go to aftercare to pick up their children.

Aftercare Rates

- **Annual:** Prepay for full-time aftercare for the entire school year on the first day of school. This will cover your child's aftercare fees every school day until 6:00 pm.
- **Daily Fee:** If you do not anticipate needing regular after-school care for your child, we offer drop-in care. Charges begin at 3:45 pm (1:00 pm Thursday), and children must be picked up by 6:00 pm. *Note: On early-dismissal days charges begin at 1:00 pm.*
- See the parent portal for rates for the school year.

To sign up for yearly Aftercare, please follow the instructions provided at the start of the year. This year we are using the CampSite platform.

After-School Clubs

After-school clubs are extracurricular classes that are offered to Helios students for an additional fee. Signups and club information may be found on the parent portal. We try to offer a variety of types of classes to expand interest and involvement in areas like art, physical activity, writing, and problem-solving skills (via clubs like chess and coding). If students are in aftercare before or after the club, aftercare fees apply.

Children should be picked up at the end of the club from aftercare. If your child is not picked up at the end of the club, aftercare fees will apply.

Safety at Helios

Traffic, Parking and Safety Regulations

Helios School is a tenant of the Saint Martin Parish. As such, we are bound to follow all posted traffic directions, parking information, carpool procedures and speed/traffic flow notices as posted on the campus.

Helios parents and visitors may park in the front parking lot, the side streets, or overflow parking in the St. Martin's parish lot across the street on Central Ave. Some parking spaces directly outside of the Cottrell Center (St. Martin's offices) are reserved specifically for St. Martin's staff. No parking is allowed in the back parking lot/blacktop area, unless there's a special event.

Walkways

All members of the Helios School community are asked to follow posted notices within the Helios campus regarding using campus facilities. Please exercise extreme caution when driving through campus and be aware of pedestrians/small children in crosswalks, parking areas, and playground asphalt.

Emergency Preparedness: Fire, Evacuation, Earthquake and Emergencies

The primary goal of emergency preparedness is to ensure physical safety of all students and staff. Emergency drills (fire, earthquake, shelter-in-place, lockdown) are practiced with teachers and children. Helios School works in conjunction with the local law enforcement and fire department to practice and enforce all health and safety procedures consistent with the campus' policies on fire, earthquake, evacuation and emergency procedures. Emergency kit information and requests are sent home by the teachers and it's important that all items be brought to school prior to your child attending Helios.

School Closures and Cancellations

Emergency dismissals from school because of storms, power failures, or other emergency situations, occur rarely, and decisions are always based on the safety of students. An emergency alert will be sent to all parents in the case of an emergency.

Emergency Contact Information

It is vital that all parents complete emergency contact and medical information for each student IN ADVANCE of the start of each school year, as this is a condition of enrollment. Parents must provide accurate home and work phone numbers and relevant medical information before their child reports for the first day of the school year.

Failure to provide this information will result in your child being sent home until the emergency contact and immunization/relevant medical records are provided. As medical and contact changes occur during the year, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure information held in the school office is up to date.

Visitors to School

All visitors to the school must sign in at the front desk and receive a visitor pass. Please alert the Administrative Assistant of any expected visitors. In order to minimize disruption in the classroom, please obtain permission from the classroom teacher before inviting any visitors – including extended family members – to Helios to join classes or other school events not open to the general public. This particularly applies to external professionals working with families and children (e.g., therapists, psychologists) who should coordinate the visits through the Dean of Students. Any external person visiting Helios will be required to follow school policies and procedures. Visitors are required to check out with the front office upon leaving the school.

Health Guidelines

Over the Counter (OTC) and Prescription (Rx) Medications

California Education Code Section 49423 requires a written authorization statement to be on file for any medication administered during the school day. The statement must be signed by the parent/guardian indicating a desire that the designated school personnel assist the student with medication administration. A change from previous years, Helios School requires that parents fill out the Medication form for both prescription and OTC medications.

- Fill out the Medication form for each medication your child needs, whether prescription or OTC.
- For prescription medications, also bring a signed doctor's note.
- Deliver prescription or OTC medication to the homeroom teacher or front desk in a zip-lock bag. The bag must contain the medication in its original packaging and the applicable Medication form.
- All medication must be stored at the front desk or with the homeroom teacher, not with the student.
- Helios will not administer any medication to students that has not been provided to the school by the parent or guardian.

A log of dates and times of all medications administered to children will be kept.

It is important that we are informed if your child is taking any prescription medication at home. In any emergency situation, paramedics will immediately ask school personnel if your child is taking any Rx or other medicines. Failure to inform the school regarding your child's medical information could lead to unanticipated reactions between medications administered in emergency situations, or unexplained and possibly harmful side-effects of drug interactions and combinations.

Parents are responsible for informing the Registrar immediately of any changes to a child's Rx medications, change of doctor, and/or change of medical insurance.

When Your Child is Sick at Home

Students should go home, or stay home, if they display any of the following symptoms:

- Too ill to participate in the usual classroom activities. For instance, a child shows unusual tiredness or apathy, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, continuous crying or anger/irritability, or difficulty breathing;

- Fever of 100°F or higher within the last 24 hours;
- Symptoms of more severe or contagious illness within the last 24 hours. For instance, diarrhea, vomiting, body rash, sore throat with swollen glands, mucus or pus draining from the eye, pinkeye;
- Known contagious illness (e.g., mumps, measles, chicken pox, rubella, strep, flu, pneumonia, COVID-19).

The student's temperature must remain under 100°F degrees without the use of fever-controlling medication for 24 hours before they may return to school.

The School is required by law to report to the local Health Office the presence or suspected presence of specified communicable diseases. The School must also exclude from school any student affected with a disease that is presumably communicable until the student's doctor has given written permission for the student to return to school or until the expiration of the prescribed period of isolation for that particular disease.

The School will require that a student who is suspected to have a communicable disease is immediately picked up by a parent, guardian, or other authorized individual and taken home. The school may choose to inform the school community that someone in the school community, without disclosing that person's identity, has been diagnosed with the communicable disease and recommend the parents/guardians speak to their doctor if they have any concerns about exposure.

Please notify the [Administrative Assistant](#) at once if your child has a contagious illness so that other parents can be informed early and watch for symptoms. Your family will remain anonymous in such notifications. The staff may use discretion in accepting a child at morning drop-off who shows signs of illness.

The School may initiate preventive health measures (e.g. masking, school closure) if warranted.

When Your Child is Sick at School

Sick children will be removed from their classroom and placed in a comfortable location with a staff member. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if they become ill during the day. If we are unable to reach a parent within 30 minutes of a child being declared ill, we may contact someone from your emergency pick-up list.

Daily Life of the School

Pets

Families and students are asked not to bring pets to school unless given specific permission by administration.

Comfort Items

Gifted children are sometimes extremely sensitive and may need transition comfort items – like blankets and soft, cuddly friends - at school. Please talk directly to your class teacher(s) about the best way to handle bringing comfort items to school.

Supplies

The school provides necessary supplies including notebooks, pencils, folders, and pens. Please send your child to school with a backpack, lunch (or hot lunch order), snack, and water bottle every day.

Cell Phones, Electronic Gadgets, and Handheld Games

Students are strongly discouraged from bringing these items to school as Helios cannot be responsible for any items being lost or stolen. If students must bring a phone to school, it must remain turned off and out of sight in a backpack. If students need to make a call during the day, they should get the teacher's permission and go to the front desk or office to make the call. They can use the school's phone.

Money

Students should never bring money to school unless specifically requested by a class teacher for an in-school project (e.g., identifying state quarters, etc.) or expenses associated with a field trip or other learning experience.

Lost and Found

Lost and found is a perennial challenge at Helios! Please **WRITE YOUR CHILD'S NAME IN PERMANENT INK** on all outer garments (hats, jackets) and personal items (water bottles, lunch boxes) to ensure that your children can locate their items in the lost and found!

Lost and Found is located outside the front door by aftercare. Parents may check the clothes rack and box at drop-off and pick-up. At the end of each month, parents are asked to go through lost and found and remove their child's items. Items left over will be donated

Birthdays

Students' Birthdays in School

Birthdays are very important milestones in young children's lives. Teachers and classmates will honor the birthday child with appreciation in class.

Students' Birthdays and Social Gatherings Out of School

We are a small community, and we cultivate inclusiveness and empathy. Please do not bring invitations to school, as this can lead to hurt feelings. Include the entire class whenever possible.

Teachers' Birthdays

Teachers will celebrate their birthdays in each classroom in the same manner as the students. How each class decides at the start of the year to honor each member of their group will determine how birthdays are celebrated for every member of that class during school time.

Sharing Culture & Cultural Celebrations at Helios

Here at Helios, we are proud of the many different cultures represented within our community. We are diverse and know we have so much to learn from each other. Sharing important cultural celebrations and traditions with each other is a natural way to foster meaningful discussion, broaden our perspectives, and increase mutual respect. If there is a cultural tradition or holiday that you would like to share at school, please choose one of the following options:

Community Meeting is held every Friday from 8:30-9:00 am. Parents are welcome to join in-person. Students may schedule time (about 4-5 minutes) to share a holiday or tradition that is meaningful to them - this could include:

- A brief oral description of the holiday or tradition in the children's words
- Song/dance performance
- Display/wear cultural clothing
- Bringing an item(s) to show

Interested parties should email our [community meeting coordinator](#) with a desired date and details **at least two weeks in advance**.

The Weekly Helios Newsletter typically goes out every Friday. If your student would like, they can submit a writeup of the holiday or tradition (< 250 words) along with 2-3 pictures, if desired, for the newsletter. Please send content to the Communications Lead *by Thursday of the newsletter week*.

For bigger or more involved ideas, The Helios Community Association hosts an **International Night**. Please reach out to the HCA with proposed details and they will connect you with the planning committee.

Classroom Audiences can be arranged for smaller, more hands-on cultural experiences. Parents and students are invited to schedule a time with their homeroom teachers *at least two weeks in advance*. This time could include:

- Presentations or performances
- Crafts, games, stories, music
- Food (no nuts, sweets ok in moderation!)
- Cultural items to show

Any supplies for crafts, etc. are provided by the host of the event. In addition, please share event needs (screen for presentation, space for performance or food, etc.) ahead of time.

Food at Helios

No Nuts at Helios

We ask that parents **do not** pack nuts or nut-containing items for children in lunches or as snacks. Many children, teachers, and parents have severe and sometimes fatal allergies and **nuts are not allowed on the premises.**

Nuts are defined as peanuts (a legume) as well as tree nuts which include (but are not limited to): almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, pine nuts and walnuts.

Lunch at Helios

Children may bring their own lunches, snacks and drinks to school, or may choose to enroll in the Helios Hot Lunch Program (described below).

If your child chooses to bring their own lunch, please ensure that it follows Helios' no nuts policy and does not require reheating. **Because our staff members must supervise students during lunch, they are not able to assist children in heating food at lunchtime.** If your child prefers a hot lunch, please order from the hot lunch vendor.

Children are not allowed to share their snacks and lunches with other children as this could lead to unforeseen allergic reactions.

Lunchtime behavior expectations are guided by our school's values of respect, responsibility, and kindness. Students are asked to use good table manners, eat slowly and purposefully, and clean up after themselves when they have finished eating.

Hot Lunch Program

Helios works with the hot lunch vendor [Choice Lunch](#) to provide healthy, organic, and local options (when available) to sustain Helios children through their busy days. The vendor is particularly attentive to food allergies, and common allergen information is provided on the menu items every day, such as dairy, egg, and gluten, and vegan and vegetarian options. Everything ordered through Choice Lunch is nut-free. Further information and instructions for ordering can be found on the parent portal. Payments are made online, directly to the lunch vendor, and any changes to lunches must be made directly with the vendor within their guidelines. Helios is not responsible for monitoring these changes.

Parent Participation

Parent volunteers are essential to the life of our school and we encourage all parents to take advantage of volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

Helios Community Association (HCA)

The HCA seeks to create a community that is supportive of the school, the staff, and the parents, for the ultimate benefit of the students. We foster a culture of support, caring, inclusiveness, open dialogue, appreciation, and fun.

The HCA accomplishes this by:

- Organizing celebrations, social gatherings, fun activities, and enrichment opportunities for all community members
- Facilitating communication across families, through room parents and chat groups each grade
- Supporting our teachers and staff through special events and staff gifts (around holidays and end-of-year)

At Helios, we value the interactions of our community as a vital part of the educational environment. All Helios staff, parents, and students are automatically members of the Helios Community Association.

HCA dues are optional and collected annually. These dues help support community building efforts for all families and provide gifts for staff members at the end of each semester.

WhatsApp Groups

To foster communication and community, the HCA organizes groups on WhatsApp for each grade band as well as around certain events or topics.

These groups are intended for conversations such as:

- Reminding families of upcoming events
- Offering a place for families to ask questions
- Sharing resources
- Collaborate on planning events
- Building community, organizing playdates, etc.

We ask that parents do not use our school groups as a forum to:

- Discuss conflicts, whether with staff or other students
- Debate school policy
- Discuss politics or other sensitive topics

It is important that the HCA WhatsApp groups remain a place that all parents can comfortably participate. Please bring concerns about controversial topics to staff members, school administrators, or alternative discussion forums.

The groups are optional (but encouraged!) and run by HCA; all official communication from teachers and staff will be sent via email.

Volunteering

Helios encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time, knowledge and abilities with students. We require school volunteers to be screened and authorized to volunteer prior to starting. Those who may be in contact with students must complete a LiveScan background check through a third-party service provider and a tuberculosis risk assessment through a medical service provider prior to volunteering. It usually takes 3 to 7 days for the LiveScan clearance to be received from the LiveScan service provider.

Parent Volunteers on Fieldwork Trips

Parents may accompany classes on fieldwork trips, as determined appropriate by the teachers and Head of School. All parents accompanying fieldwork trips must have obtained a background check and received clearance prior to leaving for the trip.

Parents wishing to drive children on fieldwork or camping must provide proof of insurance, valid driver's license and TB test or Risk Assessment to the Registrar, and have completed a LiveScan background check (results will be sent directly to the Director of Finance/Operations).

Classroom Volunteers

Parents and other individuals who volunteer in the classroom or who have other direct student contact are expected to maintain professional standards of conduct and confidentiality. It is especially important that classroom volunteers do not discuss specific student performance and behavior with other parents. Questions and concerns regarding individual students and situations are to be directed to the teachers only.

Type of Volunteer	Requirements
Classroom volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LiveScan background check• TB risk assessment or proof of negative TB test every 4 years
Fieldwork and/or Camping volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LiveScan background check• TB risk assessment or proof of negative TB test every 4 years
Parent driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LiveScan background check• Submit DL and proof of insurance• TB risk assessment or proof of negative TB test every 4 years

Parent Survey

We survey our parent body periodically during the school year about many aspects of the program and parent needs. The results of the survey are shared with the school's Board, teachers, and staff, as appropriate, in a format that protects confidentiality of respondents. We encourage parents to approach the survey as a place to make constructive, helpful suggestions and to communicate needs and interests for programs. We value and encourage your timely and full participation.

POLICY

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

Helios School provides reasonable accommodations to its policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to afford the School's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and/or accommodations to applicants and current students with disabilities.

Requests for Reasonable Accommodation

Parents/legal guardians or students who wish to request a reasonable accommodation, may do so by making an oral or written request to the Dean of Students. The request should identify the desired accommodation(s).

Reasonable Documentation

After receiving a request for a reasonable accommodation, the School may require that the parents and/or student provide additional information, such as reasonable documentation of the existence of a disability from the student's health care provider or other documentation that supports the need for accommodation.

Discussion with Parents and Student

After receiving a request for reasonable accommodation and, if required, reasonable documentation, the School will arrange for a discussion with the parents and/or student to identify and discuss in good faith potential reasonable accommodations.

Case-by-Case Determination

The School determines, in its sole discretion, whether reasonable accommodation(s) can be made, and the type of accommodation(s) to provide. In exercising its discretion, the School considers input and information provided by the parents and/or student.

The School will not provide accommodation(s) that would pose an undue burden upon the School; that would endanger the health or safety of others; or that would fundamentally alter the nature of the School's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations.

Written Response

The School will provide a response to a request for a reasonable accommodation in writing.

Academic Policies

Class Placement Requests

Parent requests for class placement based on teacher preference and/or student friendships are listened to carefully. The decision is the School's, however, and final decisions are made taking into account the composition of the whole class.

Helios Property

Computers and iPads, other textbook materials (e.g., for math), and reusable classroom materials are on loan only to the students (exception: lit circle books). They must be returned at the end of the school year, or before any student exits Helios. If property is lost or damaged beyond use, it is the responsibility of the student's family to pay to Helios the cost of a replacement, as determined by Helios School.

Homework

Our goals for homework are to help students refine time management and organizational skills and to prepare them for their next educational steps, which may hold different challenges than those of the Helios classroom.

Homework is not a routine expectation for the younger grades (K-2). Unfinished classwork may be sent home if needed. Occasionally, class projects may have a component to be completed at home. Most math levels have optional homework and mandatory math homework begins in Level 6. Beginning in 3rd grade, students will have weekly assignments for their literacy circles.

As students move into higher grade levels, they can expect a greater quantity and complexity of homework. Teachers work to scaffold tasks to help students manage these more complex assignments. While teachers aim for consistency of assignments and workload for students, because of the nonlinear and responsive nature of our themed curriculum, students' homework load may have "peaks and valleys" over the course of a semester.

Rewards

The School's position is to focus on internal motivation not external rewards and so we don't routinely reward students with prizes or incentives when they succeed. Research – and our experience – clearly show that when you reward children for success, it blunts their natural curiosity. We offer encouragement and a culture that fosters and celebrates student learning, growth and personal accomplishments. We use rubrics that provide specific feedback for students to understand criteria for mastery.

Controversial Issues in the Curriculum

Complex ideas and problems with no simple answers are often at the heart of the work we do at school. Our goal is to have students engage with these concepts at an age-appropriate level, develop the habit of looking at ideas from different viewpoints and discuss them thoughtfully. An ability to engage in civil discourse will support the Helios Learner Outcomes. Returning to our motto of Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Kind is the touchstone in these discussions.

Additional Student Evaluation Information

If students have completed a psychological and/or educational evaluation that is relevant to their learning, we request that parents provide the School with information in these reports relevant to the student's learning, including recommendations that are made regarding academic support. This information is needed so that the School can understand how best to support a student with regard to their participation in Helios' program.

To the extent accommodations are requested, the School will follow its Policy on Reasonable Accommodations set forth in this Handbook. This information will be treated as confidential to the extent practicable. It is held by the Dean of Students and will be shared only with the professional staff who have a need to know.

Referrals

Based on classroom observation and experience with the child at Helios, Helios School may recommend additional professional evaluations or assessments to find out more information on how best to teach the student, or to support a parents' request for learning accommodations for a student. These evaluations or assessments are at the parents' expense.

Tutoring and Other Services

Helios School full-time staff will not offer tutoring or services outside of their teaching responsibilities to families nor students enrolled in the program. Tutoring currently enrolled students may lead to conflicts of interest for all parties. In addition, other services commonly offered by professional educators such as birthday party organizing, babysitting or any other activity, which involves a financial transaction, is not permitted. Helios staff may hold school sponsored Math Circles, Workshops, and other Aftercare classes as deemed necessary by the Head of School.

On-site Tutors

Due to the school's security protocols, parents must request approval for all on-site tutoring. Due to space constraints, we strongly encourage parents to seek off-site tutoring arrangements, as we will not be able to accommodate most on-site tutoring requests. All on-site tutors will need to provide the following documentation to the Operations Manager before they are allowed to work with students on campus:

- Submission of Live Scan
- Proof of negative TB (within 4 years)
- Certificate of liability insurance naming Helios as additional insured for \$1,000,000

We will also require parents and the tutor to sign agreements with the School, which include waivers of liability, prior to the tutor's use of the School's facilities.

Student Progress Documentation and Student Records

Access to Student Records

Any parent, except one who has had his or her parental rights removed, has the right to access his or her child's student records. Parent requests for records should be responded to as quickly as possible. Once the student turns 18, the parents' rights are transferred to the student and the student

must request the records.

Procedure for Requesting Student Records and Transcripts

All requests to review or receive copies of your child's student records must be directed to the Registrar, preferably via email or written request. If you need copies of your child's records, please send an email or provide a written request to the Registrar. If you are leaving Helios School and you need recommendations from your child's class teachers regarding future placement, or any other type of school transcript, forms may be dropped at the front office or emails directed to the Director of Admissions, who will ensure recommendations are sent out in a timely manner. Do not ask classroom teachers to send out transcripts directly.

Circumstances where Parent/ Student Access to Student Records May be Restricted

Where a student has failed to return loaned School property or willfully damaged School property, the parent and student must be notified of the unreturned or damaged property. The parent and student will be offered an opportunity to return the property, pay for the damage or, in lieu of payment, the student may perform community service. If these efforts fail, the School may notify the parent/ student that the School will withhold the ILP reports, progress reports, transcripts, and diplomas of the student from the parent and student until the issue is resolved.

Disclosure of Student Records to Third Parties

Parents of students under 18, and students 18 and over, may provide written consent to third parties to access student records as follows:

The written consent must specify the records to be released, the purpose(s) of record release, and the party to whom the records may be released.

Written consent is not required to disclose pupil records in the following circumstances:

- School officials and employees may access pupil records when there is a legitimate educational interest or as necessary as part of their job duties.
- Information contained in pupil records may be released to state and local officials or agencies to the extent that the information is required to be reported pursuant to state law.
- Information contained in pupil records may be released to appropriate persons in connection with an emergency if the knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of a pupil or other persons.
- Information contained in pupil records may be released to officials and employees of private schools or school systems where the pupil is enrolled or intends to enroll.
- Pupil records may be released to those authorized in compliance with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena or as otherwise required by law.

Helios-Affiliated Teams and Clubs

What are Helios affiliated teams and clubs?

Families may need to be aligned with a school in order to take part in some of the local educational programs and competitions, e.g. First Lego League or Nature Bowl. A Helios affiliated club would be non-competitive – a service learning club for example.

Because these programs support community building among students and adults, and introduce the idea of teamwork and competition, Helios permits parents to use the school's name for such programs. These programs primarily take place off-campus, although some meeting time on campus may be helpful. These teams are distinct from the school's athletic and math teams.

Organization of Helios affiliated teams and clubs:

Procedure:

1. Parents identify a competition or organization they are interested in having their children join.
2. Parents consult with the Assistant Head for approval. Criteria for approval will include an understanding that:
 - a. the school's daily routine and curriculum are a priority
 - b. the program should be mission-aligned
 - c. the parents will provide any financial, supervisory or logistical resources needed
 - d. participation can take place after the academic school day has ended
3. Parents leading the team or club complete all of the school's volunteer background checks (TB test, Livescan, and if driving – license and insurance.)
4. Parents consult with school about any space needs. Helios will attempt to offer space, however, afterschool clubs and programs have priority for space use. Storage for any equipment must be offsite.
5. The nature of some of these programs will mean that there are a limited number of spots. All efforts should be made to be inclusive, and if a team is full, to support the formation of other teams.

Learning Culture and Environment

Motto: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Kind

Expectations for Student Conduct

Helios Staff is committed to promoting a safe environment in which students can learn. The school describes expectations and ideals for student behavior, rather than articulating an exhaustive and ever-changing list of rules. The school's goal is to support students' journeys to compassionate, responsible adulthood in which they come to understand and embody the concept of respect: respect for the self, for others, for the school materials, and environment. To that end, each year in their classroom, students work with teachers to express the understood norms of school and classroom behavioral expectations, flowing from the school's motto of Be Responsible, Be Respectful. Be Kind. Student behavior ties into safety, as an individual student's words, actions, and behaviors may cause other students to feel unsafe at school.

A student's enrollment is contingent upon the student's compliance with Helios' rules, satisfactory behavior, and academic performance. Helios reserves the right to suspend, dismiss, or otherwise discipline a student if, in the sole discretion of the Head of School, the student's progress, conduct or influence is not in keeping with the School's standards and values. Students may also be sent home early from school trips if they are not meeting Helios' behavioral expectations.

Violations of School rules or policies, as well as engaging in inappropriate and unacceptable behavior, may result in discipline, including and up to suspension and/or expulsion, at the sole determination of the school. Inappropriate and unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Leaving campus without permission;
- Using profanity;
- Misuse of the School's technology resources;
- Personal electronic device usage during the school day, without staff permission;
- Bullying of others. A detailed definition of bullying can be found in this Handbook under the "Policy Against Bullying" section;
- Racial, religious, ethnic, or sexual/sexual orientation slurs made towards another Student, School employee, or parent, or any other violation of the School's anti-harassment policy;
- Use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, illegal substances, drug paraphernalia, or prescription drugs not specifically prescribed for the student on campus or at any school function;
- Cheating or plagiarism as defined in this Handbook's Academic Integrity Section;
- The destruction or defacement of School property;
- Stealing;
- Use or possession of any dangerous weapon, knife, firearm, fireworks, or explosives;
- Disrespectful behavior or language towards any members of the School community;
- Dishonesty;
- Physical or threatened violence;
- Entering portions of the campus that are either locked or out of bounds to students without express permission of school authorities including entering School grounds during non-operational hours without permission;
- Violation of School rules or policies;
- Behavior which brings disrepute to the School;

Student Behavior at Non-Academic School Functions

There are events, such as at school picnics, parties, and family camping trips, when students come together with both school staff and their families. These are a special time for community members and a great opportunity to celebrate the values of the school and one another.

While the school staff is ordinarily present at these events, these parties and picnics are not academic functions. Even if they occur on campus, primary supervision for children at these events lies with the parent, or responsible adult, who brought that child to the school event. This is to ensure the safety of all present children. This includes not only Helios students but also non-enrolled siblings and friends, and Helios alumni.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that the children under their care at these non-academic functions are not only playing and interacting safely, but also modeling and abiding by the values of the Helios community: respect, responsibility, and kindness. Good manners and language should be encouraged, and behaviors such as rough play, hitting, or exclusion of other children should not be tolerated, just as they would not be during the ordinary school day.

Parents should be aware of the conduct of children under their supervision at these non-academic school events, correct and support these children if necessary, and remove them if they continue to have trouble with their behavior. School staff who notice children repeatedly violating school agreements may ask the adult who brought that child to take them home early from the event.

Student Search Policy

Lockers, cubbies, and desks are the property of Helios School and subject to search at any time. Students should not have any expectation of privacy in the use or storage of belongings in these locations.

Helios School may also search Students' property, including backpacks or outer clothing, such as pockets, if the School has reasonable cause to believe that a Student has violated any School expectations for behavior. In the case of reports that a Student has engaged in conduct which threatens the safety of the School and its Students, the School may confiscate Student's personal property and turn it over to law enforcement.

Clothing/Dress Code Policy

Students should come to school dressed for learning. Children should wear comfortable and washable clothing that will enable them to participate freely at school. Clothing should be appropriate for the expected weather and activities of the day. Practical clothing and sturdy closed-toe shoes are recommended.

As a general rule, clothing should be in alignment with our school's core values of respect, responsibility, and kindness. Avoid clothing that depicts lewd, sexually explicit, violent or drug-related topics, as well as clothing that is offensive or hurtful to any group of people. Clothing should be appropriately fitting - not overly large or small, so that the child is comfortable and the body is appropriately covered. A student may be asked to change an article of clothing if it distracts from the learning environment or is not suited to the weather. If a replacement article of clothing is not available, Helios will request that a parent come to provide some.

Religion

Helios School encourages all students, parents and staff members to appreciate and respect each other's views on religion. The school's approach to religion is academic, not devotional.

Student Expression of Religious Belief

The School is respectful of all families' religious beliefs.

Reasonable efforts shall be made to be sensitive to the religious observances of students so that the required school work, including tests, does not provide undue hardships to students, provided that the regular and normal expectancy of school programs may be met. Students are responsible for notifying school officials in advance and arranging for make-up work, extensions on assignments, or alternate testing arrangements.

Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention Policy

Helios is committed to maintaining a working and educational environment that is free of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. This may include behavior that occurs off-campus or via social media, or other electronic communications, that impacts or affects the School community.

Harassment

This policy prohibits harassment based on actual or perceived sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law ("Protected Classifications"), as applicable, or association with an individual who has an actual or perceived protected classification. This policy prohibits both harassment by students and parents/guardians towards students and employees, and harassment by others in the community towards students and employees. Harassing conduct by students and/or parents/guardians will result in appropriate corrective action, and corrective action includes discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from school. Harassment of students by employees will result in appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of employment, and is addressed in a separate policy in the Employee Handbook.

Examples of Harassment

Harassment can take many forms, and may include verbal, physical or visual conduct.

- Verbal, written, and visual harassment includes: making disparaging statements, telling jokes, using epithets, slurs, stereotypes, insults, or labels based on an individual's Protected Classification(s), threats of physical harm or statements designed to intimidate, abuse or humiliate another, whether communicated verbally, in writing, electronically or in posters, cartoons, drawings or gestures. This may include comments on appearance including dress or physical features, or dress consistent with gender identification, or stories and jokes, focusing on race, national origin, religion or other Protected Classifications identified below in this policy.
- Physical harassment includes: intimidating conduct, such as touching of a person or a person's property, hazing, assault, grabbing, stalking or blocking or impeding a person's

movement.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

California Education Code section 212.5 defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions:

- Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or a condition of an individual's employment, academic status, or progress.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of employment or academic decisions affecting the individual.
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the educational institution.
- Sexually harassing conduct can occur between students of the same or different gender.
- Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
 - Unwelcome verbal or written conduct, including by notes, letters, e-mails, text messages, social media postings, such as suggestive comments, derogatory comments, sexual innuendos, slurs, or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments, pestering for dates, making threats, spreading rumors about or rating others as to sexual activity or performance.
 - Unwelcome visual conduct such as displays of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, posters, written material, cartoons, or drawings, graffiti of a sexual nature, or use of obscene gestures or leering.
 - Unwelcome physical conduct such as unwanted touching, pinching, kissing, patting, hugging, blocking of normal movement, assault, or interference with work or study directed at an individual because of the individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.
 - Threats and demands or pressure to submit to sexual requests in order to keep academic standing or to avoid other loss, and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors.

Complaint Procedure

Students and parents who believe that they have experienced, witnessed, or have relevant information about harassment should immediately report the matter to the School, either orally or in writing. Students and parents may report the matter to the Head of School or their teacher. Alternatively, students and parents may choose to report harassment or retaliation to any other employee of the school with whom they are comfortable, such as a counselor, all of whom must report the matter to the Head of School under this policy. While the school does not limit the time frame for reporting, immediate reporting is important as the school may not be able to investigate as thoroughly or consider all corrective actions the longer the time that has passed between the alleged misconduct and the report.

Interim Measures

Helios may provide appropriate interim support and reasonable protective measures, if and as needed

based on the particular circumstances, to protect against further acts of harassment or acts of retaliation, to provide a safe educational environment, and/or to protect the integrity of an investigation. The School will, in its sole judgment and discretion, determine the necessity and scope of any interim measures.

Investigation Process

Upon receipt of a report of alleged harassment and any related initial inquiries, the School may request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, to determine whether the oral report or written complaint alleges a potential violation of this policy. To request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, the Head of School, or their designee, may meet with the individual(s) who made the report and/or that was reportedly subjected to conduct that violates this policy.

If the School has determined that the report pertains to behavior that may be in violation of this policy, the School will undertake an investigation related to the reported conduct. Any investigation may be conducted by designated school personnel or by an outside investigator, in the School's sole discretion.

Students and parents are expected to cooperate in any investigation as needed. Any individual who is interviewed during the course of an investigation is prohibited from discussing the substance of the interview, except as otherwise directed by the investigator or the Head of School, as necessary in relation to any administrative or legal proceedings or as otherwise required by law. Any individual who discusses the content of an investigatory interview or who otherwise fails to cooperate with the investigation may be subject to corrective action.

Confidentiality

Reports of harassment will be kept confidential, except as needed to conduct an investigation, to take interim measures, to take corrective action, to conduct ongoing monitoring, or as necessary in relation to any administrative or legal proceedings or as otherwise required by law.

Discrimination

Discrimination is treating an individual differently because of the individual's actual or perceived membership in a Protected Classification as defined in this policy, by taking an adverse action against or denying a benefit to that individual. Students or parents who believe they have experienced, witnessed, or are otherwise aware of discrimination by the school, should immediately report the matter using the same complaint procedure provided for in this policy under the above section on harassment and the above sections on interim measures, investigation and confidentiality for harassment reports, will also apply to reports of discrimination.

No Retaliation

Helios prohibits retaliatory behavior against anyone who complains in good faith or participates in the complaint and/or investigation process pursuant to this policy, regardless of the outcome of the investigation. Retaliation constitutes a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary or other corrective action. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, taking sides against an individual, spreading rumors about or shunning or avoiding an individual, or making real or implied threats of intimidation towards an individual, because that individual reported harassment or discrimination or participated in an investigation related to a report of harassment or discrimination.

Policy Against Bullying

Helios believes that all students should have a safe and inclusive school environment. Bullying is wholly inconsistent with the values and principles of the School and is not tolerated.

This policy covers conduct that occurs both on and off of School campus, and includes use of technology that is not owned by the School. This policy applies to all students and prohibits other students, and any other member of the School community, including teachers, staff, parents, and volunteers from engaging in conduct towards students that is prohibited under this policy.

Prohibited Conduct

We refer to the APA's definition of bullying as a basis of our policy: *"Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words, or more subtle actions."*

Scope

This includes physical or verbal act or conduct, communications made in writing or electronically (including, but not limited to, e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, online games, chat rooms, and posting on a social network), directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to that student or those students' person or property;
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health;
- Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance; or
- Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the School.

Reporting

Students are expected to immediately report any incidents or suspected incidents of bullying that they observe, become aware of, or experience to any teacher, advisor, or administrator. Other School community members who observe or become aware of incidents or suspected incidents of bullying towards a student are expected to immediately report the incident(s) to any teacher, advisor, or administrator.

Handling Reports

After the School receives a report, or otherwise learns, of an incident or suspected incident of bullying towards a student, the Head of School or designee will determine the appropriate course of action. The School may determine that an investigation is necessary and if so, will conduct the investigation in a manner the School deems appropriate, in its sole discretion.

Students and parents are expected to fully cooperate in the School's handling of bullying reports, including in any investigation. Students and parents are prohibited from withholding material information or providing false information. Any student or parent who fails to cooperate fully, withholds

material information, or provides false information, may be subject to disciplinary, corrective, remedial, or other action consistent with the nature of the individual's relationship to the School.

Confidentiality

The School will make reasonable efforts to protect the privacy and confidentiality of any students who report or share information regarding incidents or suspected incidents of bullying.

Interim Supportive and Protective Measures

The School, in its sole discretion, will implement appropriate interim supportive and protective measures. The School will determine the necessity, scope, and duration of any interim supportive or protective measures implemented.

Disciplinary, Corrective, and Remedial Action

Any student determined by the School to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Any violation of this policy by a parent/guardian will also be considered a violation of the School's parent/guardian behavior expectations, and may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal of the offending parent/guardian's child(ren).

Other School community members who are determined by the School to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary, corrective, remedial, or other action, in the School's sole discretion, consistent with the nature of the individual's relationship to the School.

Retaliation

The School prohibits retaliation against students or employees who report incidents or suspected incidents of bullying in good faith or who participate in the School's handling of such bullying reports, including in any investigation.

Academic Integrity

We believe that academic integrity is founded on a student's respect for self and others, confidence that their authentic self should be celebrated, and trust that our expectations are achievable. Students' work should be their own; references should be cited, and any assistance from other people or digital tools should be acknowledged in an age-appropriate way.

Academic dishonesty mainly involves two distinct but related forms: plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism involves claiming the work of another as one's own. Students must carefully document the sources of their information and distinguish between their ideas and the ideas of others. Presenting either the language or the ideas of another as one's own is plagiarism. Unless otherwise directed (such as with group projects), any work submitted by a student is to be the original work of that student. Obtaining or attempting to obtain, or aiding another to obtain, credit for work by dishonest or deceptive means constitutes a violation of this policy.

Using Artificial intelligence ("AI") without authorization can constitute academic misconduct in some circumstances. Students may only use AI technology tools for school assignments and work when approved by their teacher. Any other submission of work that uses or is aided by unauthorized or uncited AI technology represented as one's own work is considered a violation of this policy.

Cheating includes copying from another student, whether on a test, quiz, homework assignment, or any other student work, as well as allowing another student to do so from one's own work. Unauthorized use of notes, books, internet resources or other aids, or giving out information about tests or quizzes to other students, are also examples of cheating.

Parents may monitor students' work efforts and provide appropriate assistance but should take care not to complete students' work for them.

Students engaging in either activity may be asked to redo their assignment, receive no credit, or may be subject to other discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Parents will be notified when students are found to have violated this policy.

Problems with academic integrity are treated as Student conduct issues.

Conflict Resolution Discipline Policy

Helios School staff develop the classroom constitution with students. Promoting a safe emotional, physical and intellectual environment has been of paramount importance since the school's inception. Promoting a safe learning environment is fundamental to Helios School.

The School also works to resolve conflicts when appropriate, in the School's sole discretion, by implementing restorative practices, which emphasize bringing together everyone affected by wrongdoing to address needs and responsibilities, and to heal the relationships to the extent possible. Restorative practices are not solely a conflict resolution process to employ after some harm has occurred; it is also a proactive strategy to create a culture of connectivity where all members of the school feel valued and thrive. It shifts the energy away from exclusionary discipline practices to support healing and accountability.

It is the intent of the Helios School Discipline Policy to assist students when appropriate in gaining a greater understanding of themselves and to learn skills for problem-solving and conflict resolution.

Students are respected participants in helping to develop the standards for interpersonal behavior and conduct in the school community. At the same time, Students are held responsible for their own behaviors and are expected to contribute to a safe and productive learning environment. The School will generally not employ conflict resolution methods in situations including, but not limited to: reports involving serious misconduct, as determined in the sole discretion of the School, student violence or threats of violence, and sexual harassment. Conflict resolution procedures do not supplant the authority of the School to act to prevent violence, ensure campus safety, maintain order, and discipline students.

While we understand that families have different standards for acceptable language and physical behavior, we expect the students to maintain the Helios agreements while at school, at school-sponsored functions and activities, and the after school programs. Helios School staff members are expected to be positive role models as are parents and other adults active as volunteers and other activities sponsored by and offered within the structure of Helios School.

Violations of School policies and conduct expectations will result in behavioral interventions and disciplinary action, as the School deems appropriate, in its sole discretion. If a student is involved in a repeated or serious behavioral issue or violation of policies or conduct expectations, families will be notified. The Head of School has the authority to expel a child and will determine out-of-school

suspensions and expulsions, as necessary.

Drug, Alcohol, Smoking, Vaping and Related Substances Policy

Drug and Alcohol Use

Possession and/or use of illegal drugs and/or alcohol on campus, or attending school or class, including School activities, under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol, is absolutely forbidden and will result in immediate discipline up to and including expulsion.

Illegal drugs include prescription drugs without a valid prescription and the use of prescription drugs not in compliance with a valid prescription. Illegal drugs also include marijuana and any other cannabis product, which may not be possessed, used or cultivated in or near schools.

A student that the School has reasonable cause to believe to be selling or providing any illegal drugs or alcohol to other students – either on or off campus – may be subject to immediate discipline up to and including expulsion.

If the School has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, it may require that that student to submit to a drug and/or alcohol screening test. “Reasonable Suspicion” shall mean a belief based upon facts gathered from the totality of the circumstances that would cause a reasonable faculty member, administrator, or other employee to suspect that the student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Parents will be required to pay for any fees associated with alcohol or drug testing. A failure to permit the School to receive information as to whether the student passed or failed a drug and/or alcohol test may be treated as a failure to comply with a drug and/or alcohol testing requirement.

Smoking/Vaping and Related Substances

Helios School maintains a smoke-free environment. This restriction applies not only in the building but to all of the property around the building including the parking lot and playground. Federal and state law prohibit individuals under the age of 21 from smoking/vaping. Students are prohibited from smoking, vaping, or using any nicotine-based products while at School or School-sponsored events, including School-sponsored events off-campus. Chaperones must follow this policy while on field trips.

Any failure to abide with the School’s Drug, Alcohol, Smoking, Vaping and Related Substances Policy will result in discipline up to and including expulsion.

Technology and Social Media Policy

Personal Electronics

Cellphones, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets or any personal electronics without permission may not be used in school and should be turned off during school hours.

- If a student uses a personal technology device during school hours, the teacher/admin will keep it and return it at the end of the day to the parent.
- The school is not responsible for any loss or damage to the device.
- If students are using an Apple watch or other smartwatch it must be set to airplane or school

- mode during school hours.
- Students may use the phone at the front desk if they need to call a parent.

Technology and Internet Use

Each student will sign the Helios School Technology Contract at the beginning of the school year before being allowed to use any technology. Students must comply with the Helios School Technology Contract that they have signed and returned to the Director of Technology. When students are using Helios School computers, they will generally be under direct teacher supervision. Network filters are applied to all student computers to filter out inappropriate content. These filters are monitored by the Director of Technology. The School has a right to monitor and review the use of all its electronic communications resources of any kind. Students have no right to privacy in their use of those resources in any way.

Helios' standards of conduct and policies apply to use of the school's electronic communications resources. Students may not use the School's electronic technology resources, including email accounts, licenses, computers or networks, for purposes such as the following:

- To send messages using abusive, or otherwise objectionable language.
- To visit and post information and/or messages on social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X.
- To access or use chat rooms.
- To harass or bully another person.
- To knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- To play music or watch videos, unless approved by staff.
- To play games or enter contests, advertising, political lobbying, or personal commercial activities including online purchasing on sites such as Amazon, eBay, or Craigslist.
- To post, send or download copyrighted material without permission. Users are to respect the rights of and the intellectual property of others in accordance with state and federal copyright laws. Transferring copyrighted material to or from school computers without the expressed permission of the owner is a violation of Federal Law.
- To post inappropriate text files or files dangerous to the integrity of any network.
- To circumvent security measures on School or remote computers or networks (hacking).
- To attempt to gain access to another's resources, programs, or data.
- To falsify one's identity to others.
- To engage in the unauthorized exploration of the school's network or to change any installed software of the school.
- To disclose personal information, such as address, phone number or age, the school system to third parties unless the student has parental consent.
- To communicate any credit card number, bank account number, or any other financial information.
- To agree to meet with someone the student has met online.
- To engage in any illegal activity.
- To access violent content or material that is sexual in nature.
- To post chain letters or engage in "spamming." Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.

Students must promptly disclose to their teacher or staff any message they receive using the School's electronic resources that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable. Also, if a student mistakenly accesses inappropriate information using the school's electronic resources, the student should immediately inform the teacher or an administrator.

The entire community suffers when computer systems are disrupted. Students agree to refrain from vandalism, including the following: attempting to access the files or folders of others or to bypass the security software; revealing passwords to others; unauthorized installation, removal, or copying of any software or data files; modifying or circumventing any computer software or network settings; or changing any hardware connections or cabling.

Students are expected to respect others' privacy and not use another person's account or password, even with that person's consent. Students must also not disclose or allow others to use their passwords.

Students are expected to report any misuse of the system to an appropriate staff member.

If parents ever use the School's electronic communications resources, they are considered bound by this policy as well.

Social Media Policy

This policy applies to all Helios students in their use of the Internet, social media, and electronic communications, regardless of whether that use is through devices and resources of the School or any other devices or resources.

In general, students are expected to use good and ethical judgment in their use of the Internet and social media, and in their electronic communications generally. In addition, the following particular rules apply to Helios students.

To the extent a student's Internet, social media, and electronic communications use anywhere and in any context affects other Helios students or employees, Helios families, or their participation in the community through work, education, or otherwise, the student is required to follow school rules, including, but not limited to, the provisions of this policy, the School's Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention Policy. If a student's social media use creates a substantial disruption at the School or materially interferes with School activities, that reasonably leads the School to foresee such disruption or interference, or which interferes with the rights of students, employees, or School families, the School may take disciplinary action against the student.

The following rules apply to all students' use of Internet, social media, or electronic communications, regardless of whether that use is through devices and resources of the School or any personal devices or resources:

- **No Unlawful or Prohibited Harassment or Threats:** Students cannot post statements, photographs, video, or audio that violates the School's Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention Policy or could be reasonably viewed as threatening conduct. Examples of threatening conduct include posting material that would make a reasonable person afraid for their safety or the safety of their family.
- **No Bullying of Fellow Students:** Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct that violates the School's Policy Against Bullying.
- **No Inaccurate or Defamatory Statements:** Students must never communicate any information or rumors that they know to be false about fellow students, faculty, or employees of the School, or anyone. Students must strive for accuracy in any communication, be it a blog entry, post, or comment. Students should include a link to sources of information. If students make a mistake, they should correct the information, or retract it promptly.

- **Do Not Infringe Others' Rights or Privacy:** Students must not disclose information that may violate student, School family, or employee rights. For example, students must not disclose another individual's social security number, medical information or financial information in a manner that violates that person's privacy rights.

If a student would like to keep their personal life separate from school life, Helios recommends using privacy settings to restrict personal information on public sites. Also, students should consider whom they invite or accept to join their social network, as those individuals will have access to their profile, photographs, etc. Even if a student has private settings, those whom the student invites into their network can easily print, save, cut, paste, modify or publish anything the student posts. As a general matter, students should consider that their online reputation may follow them into their future academic, personal, and professional life. Material can be archived on the Internet even after you remove it, and search engines can turn up posts many years after they are created. For all these reasons, students are well served to use discretion and good judgment in their online posting and activity.

The School asks faculty and staff to not "friend" or communicate with current Helios students via public social networking sites. So as not to put our faculty and staff into an uncomfortable situation, we ask that students not "friend" or attempt to add our faculty and staff to their social media.

Consent to Record

Recording of open events

Community members are permitted to record at events such as Community Meeting, artistic performances and Celebrations of Learning.

Unauthorized Recordings by adults and students

Community members are prohibited from recording audio, video or still images of or conversations with employees without express authorization from the Head of School. Students and adults who record or capture video, audio, or still images of class sessions without prior approval, including distance learning classes, shall be in violation of this policy and may be subject to discipline.

Students and adults who have been authorized to record classes may not distribute, publish, post, or share class recordings unless written authorization is obtained from the Head of School for the distribution of the recording.

Media Policy

As a member of the Helios community, parents are asked to think carefully about any photos or films shared within or outside of the school community or published on social media. To the extent that photos or films include other Helios students, parents are responsible for obtaining the consent of the relevant parents or guardians of the affected students before sharing or publishing such photos or films.

For clarity, regardless of any consents received, under no circumstance may parents use photos or films of Helios School or any of its students (or the names of any of its students) other than for personal use. Any use for commercial purposes or other purposes that would suggest or imply that Helios School authorizes, endorses or supports such use is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of the Helios Board of Trustees in each instance. If parents would like to seek the Board's consent, please send your request to boardoftrustees@heliosschool.org.

Compliance with this Media Policy is a condition of your child's initial and ongoing enrollment at Helios School. Helios School is not liable for the acts or omissions of third parties that violate, or that are alleged by any party to violate, this Media Policy or applicable privacy or related rights.

Student Safety and Health

Immunizations

California's Health and Safety Code sections 120335 and 120375 require students to be immunized from many communicable diseases in order to enroll in school. Immunization records, or a valid medical exemption, must be provided for the following diseases: (1) Diphtheria (2) Haemophilus influenzae type b (3) Measles (4) Mumps (5) Pertussis (whooping cough) (6) Poliomyelitis (7) Rubella (8) Tetanus (9) Hepatitis B (10) Varicella (chickenpox) or (11) Any other disease deemed appropriate by the local Health Department.

In order to comply with the requirements of the law, Helios School requires that all students must have a current official California Immunization Record (signed, dated and stamped) or immunization exemption form, on file with the school on or before the first day of enrollment. Only medical exemptions will be accepted. Medical exemptions on or after January 1, 2021, may only be issued by the California Department of Public Health ("CDPH") through the California Immunization Registry Medical Exemption website.

A student may be conditionally admitted if the student is scheduled to be fully immunized within the time limits set by the California Health and Safety Code. (Health & Saf. Code § 120340.)

Immunizations Records constitute private medical information and will not be shared without written parental consent (or the student if 18 or over) except that the school retains the right to share information as needed with local health officials in case of exposure to a communicable disease or as otherwise required by law.

If you have completed the Waiver of Immunizations for your child and there is a verified (by the Department of Health) outbreak of a contagious illness from which your child has not been immunized, you may be required to keep your child home from school until the Department of Health has confirmed that the risk of contagion has lapsed.

Additional COVID Restrictions

A child with fever and Covid symptoms should take a COVID test as soon as possible before returning to school. If a student exhibits COVID symptoms while at school, they will be asked to self-administer an antigen test.

Food and Environmental Allergies

It is vital that parents complete and return any and all documentation to the school (medical forms) regarding food or other allergies, and alert us to any additional information that may be relevant to supporting students with allergies. If your child requires an Epi-Pen, please provide two to the School clearly labeled with their name. Parents must ensure that the Epi-Pen does not expire prior to the end of the school year. One will be kept in the classroom, and another at the front desk.

Helios School has a "No Nuts on the Premises" policy that will be strictly enforced. Nuts are defined as peanuts (a legume) as well as tree nuts which include (but are not limited to): almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia, pecans, pistachios, pine nuts and walnuts.

Incident Reporting: Minor and Major

Every reasonable precaution shall be taken to protect the safety of all students, employees, visitors, and others present on school property or at school-sponsored events.

Minor accidents such as small wounds and abrasions will be treated at school. Parents will be notified on a case by case basis. Major accidents such as sprains, breaks, large cuts requiring stitches, or any significant bump or injury to the head will be logged as an official Incident Report and kept on file. In the case of a major accident, the parent(s) will be informed by phone as soon as is practical as the priority will be to call emergency services and/or attend to the child's physical condition. If parents cannot be reached within 15 minutes, the emergency contacts on file will be called.

Sunscreen and Hydration

On sunny days, children should arrive at school already sun-screened. Please be sure to complete the OTC Medication Authorization Form (included in the enrollment form) to allow Helios staff to provide sunscreen to your child. A hat, and protective clothing are the best preventative of sunburn, and young children should be encouraged to wear hats outside. Children must bring labeled water bottles to school. Do not send glass water bottles or containers to school.

Head Lice

If a child is diagnosed with live head lice, they will be sent home early to be treated appropriately. The child may return to school after treatment has begun. Upon return to school, the child will be checked by staff to determine if additional treatment is required. Please immediately notify the School if your child is diagnosed with head lice outside of School.

Violent Themes

It is our goal to help children learn non-aggressive methods of resolving conflict. Acting out violent or aggressive solutions contradicts this model and can be intimidating. Children who have violent-themed toys, lunch boxes or other personal items, or wear T-shirts or clothing with aggressive themes or inappropriate language will be asked to change out these items and not bring them back to school. Teachers will use conversation tools and techniques based on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) principles to discuss these issues fully with the child or class as deemed necessary.

Weapons

No student, staff member, or visitor may possess or use a weapon when in a school location or setting. We define weapons as anything that is designed or used to inflict harm or intimidate. Knives, guns and other weapons — real or toys — are not allowed. In some cases, school community members may create or share something weapon-like, such as a medieval sword, for academic purposes only, with prior approval of their teacher and/or the Head of School. Anyone who fails to comply with this policy will be required to turn in the weapon, which will be held by the Head of School, to be returned to parents at the end of the day.

Helios School does not support free play with weapons, whether real or toys.

Weapons play or replicas may be allowed at school under specific conditions:

- Weapon props may be used as part of scripted theater work under the supervision of the drama teacher. In this case, parents and homeroom teachers of the child will be notified, and the prop will be stored safely between classes. Generally speaking, scripts will be chosen that do not emphasize modern weaponry (guns or bombs) or hurting others with weapons.
- Safety-tested play weapons such as swords and light-sabers may be used for weapons play during supervised activities such as LARP classes or afterschool clubs. These activities include specific training on safe use of the toys and rules for the play, and include weapon checks by a qualified instructor. These activities will not include any weapons that actually fire projectiles during play. Such play weapons must be securely stored until the class or club; if they are out at another time of day, they can be held by any staff member until the class begins.
- Imagine Lab projects that are weapon replicas will not generally be allowed, but may be permitted under unusual circumstances approved by both the I-Lab instructor and either the Assistant Head of School, or the Head of School. For the purposes of this rule, a weapon is defined as “something found on a battlefield.”

In accordance with state and federal laws, we have a no gun policy. This includes any simulated firearm made of any material which is a replica, facsimile, or toy version of a firearm as well as any object concealed under clothing and portrayed as a firearm. Gun replicas will never be permitted under the exceptions listed above.

Students are discouraged from weapons play during free play times, even if the item itself is safe. We have learned that some students find any free weapons play to be threatening or overwhelming, or that it increases a feeling of needing to guard against others in the community. This does not contribute to the culture that we strive for at Helios.

Solicitation

Outside groups must obtain prior written permission from the Head of School to distribute brochures/materials or to sell goods and services on the Helios School campus.

Custody Arrangements and Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

The School presumes that both parents/guardians have equal rights regarding their child, including, but not limited to, picking the student up after school or otherwise removing the student from school, accessing student records, participating in school activities, or visiting the School.

When a court order restricts a parent’s access to the child or to their student information, a parent/guardian shall provide a copy of the certified court order to the Head of School upon enrollment or upon a change in circumstances.

For those families who have court-ordered child custody arrangements, the School requires a certified copy of the court order. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known. If there is a court order specifying that no information be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the most current court order. Furthermore, in the absence of a court order to the contrary, the School will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other School-related information regarding their child upon request.

Parents' Requests for Statements Regarding Custody or Divorce Proceedings

The Helios School is committed to working collaboratively with parents. Open, candid communications between parents, faculty, and staff are simply essential.

As a result, the School will not become entangled in disputes between parents. Parents are not permitted to ask school employees for statements (such as a letter, declaration, or affidavit) in support, or in opposition to, divorce or custody proceedings, and school employees are not permitted to provide such statements.

When custody arrangements or disputes among the parents regarding the child's educational experience impede the School's ability to maintain a positive and constructive relationship with the parents, the school may terminate the student's enrollment or ban one or both parents from entering School property or participating in School-sponsored events.