

The Phoenix Ranch School

Parent /Student Handbook

2023-2024 Academic Year



The Phoenix Ranch School Mission Statement

The mission of Phoenix Ranch is to develop the unique abilities and potential of each child by offering an individualized, developmentally appropriate and enriched educational program. We believe deeply in providing a strong educational foundation for all children. It is during these younger years that essential skills are honed – cognitive, physical, social and emotional. Our main goals are to help children learn to:

- Think creatively and critically, ensuring strong problem-solving skills and “outside of the box” ideas.
- Understand their role in helping make their community and their world a better place.
- Feel confident to explore both their passions and the things that challenge them, growing their sense of independence each year.

*Accredited by
National Association for the Education of Young Children and the American Camp Association*

The Phoenix Ranch School and Camp

The Phoenix Ranch is a private independent school dedicated to academic excellence and the desire to meet the needs of each child. We have gathered a team of dedicated teachers with appropriate credentials who share our vision of education. The curriculum and textbooks observable in all classrooms reflect the standards established by the State of California. Each teacher is knowledgeable on grade level standards and is responsible for challenging students to exceed all benchmarks. In addition to an excellent faculty, and the commitment to California State Standards, the Phoenix mandates small group teaching as the primary tool of effective instruction. In each classroom, students are arranged in homogeneous and heterogeneous groups to facilitate the teacher in meeting individual needs.

All students enjoy the enrichment program that the Phoenix Ranch School offers. Spanish, music, technology, art, and physical education classes for students in preschool through sixth grade are part of the core curriculum. A qualified teacher conducts each program, using quality materials and supplies. Our campus is located at 4974 Cochran Street, Simi Valley. Our facility includes comfortable and well-equipped classrooms (incorporating computer technology), a technology lab, an art lab, a music room, a library, play equipment, basketball court, swimming pool, playing fields, outdoor lunch areas, and more.

Small group instruction within the classroom allows your child the necessary teacher interaction needed for success. Classroom size is 18:1. At times class size may increase by one or two students. In the event that we exceed our limit as defined, an aide will be assigned.

The Phoenix offers a myriad of programs to meet the needs of our students and families. Extended care hours assist working parents and summer day camps present families with wonderful options during times when school is out of session. The option to purchase lunch is available for all students in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade. After-school activities are abundant and include workshops and sports leagues, as well as participation in our school band or choir.

The Phoenix Ranch Camp is an outstanding program for children ages 5-11 years old. Well-supervised activities include go-karts, sports, archery, crafts, swimming and more. The American Camp Association accredits our summer camp.

Welcome to our school and camp!

Best regards,
Pat Aguilar
Elementary Principal

Parent/Student Handbook Table of Contents

General Information	Page
● Admission Information	4
● Athletics (Interscholastic League)...	4
● Attendance (Absence, Tardiness, Vacations)	4
● Birthday Celebrations in School.....	5
● Campus Visitation.....	5
● Campus Security	6
● Cell Phone Use (iPod, other personal belongings)	6
● Computer Use Rules / Technology Information	6
● Contact Information.....	7
● Emergencies and Evacuation (Fire Drills).....	7
● Extended Care.....	7
● Food from Home Policy.....	7
● Fundraising.....	7
● Gratuities.....	8
● Health and Safety (Illness, Injuries, Medications)	8
● Holidays.....	9
● Hours of School.....	9
● Library Information.....	9
● Lunch, Snacks, and Assigned Lunch Hours....	10
● Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child.....	10
● Parent Code of Conduct and Family Commitment	10
● Parking and Carpool Information.....	11
● Playground and Play Equipment Rules.....	11
● Recess Periods.....	11
● Release of Children to Adults Other Than Parents	11
● Release of Personal Information.....	12
● Standardized Testing Information.....	12
● Substance Abuse Policy.....	12
● Uniform Dress Code and Hygiene.....	12
Academic Information	
● Academic Code of Conduct.....	13
● Academic Probation.....	14
● Field Trips (Overnight Excursions).....	14
● Gradebook Wizard.....	14
● Grading Standard and Assessments	15
● Homework Policy.....	15
● Parent/School Communication and Conferences	16
● Textbooks.....	16
Appendix	
● Student Behavior Contract	17

Admission Information

Welcome to the Phoenix Ranch School Admission Process. The process begins with a personal tour and interview. Admission is based on age requirements or the successful completion of the previous grade (2.0 G.P.A. or higher; no behavior related concerns) and The Phoenix Ranch Placement Assessment.

Athletics

Our Purpose Statement: The Phoenix Ranch Athletic Program exists to provide our students an opportunity for participation in interscholastic athletics in an environment that encourages the achievement of athletic excellence. In addition, we promote core values that exemplify good sportsmanship and citizenship. Participating students and parents must sign sportsmanship and conduct agreements prior to play. **Core Values:** ▪ Teaching the fundamentals of the sport ▪ Competing with character ▪ Displaying sportsmanship and citizenship ▪ Achieving fitness and wellness through sport ▪ Promoting cooperation, respect, & teamwork.

Attendance (Absence, Tardiness, Vacations)

Consistent attendance at school is one of the most important ways to maintain student achievement. Research shows that there is a direct correlation between attendance, performance, and retention of learning. When students miss class time, they miss the intellectual dynamic and opportunity to test their ideas against those of their peers and teachers.

Excused Absence: According to the California Education Code Section 48205, reasons for a student being excused from school include illness, medical appointments and observance of religious holidays or ceremonies. Students with excused absences will be provided class work or summary sheets of teaching conducted on the student's missed day(s). A student who has missed school due to an excused absence will test and submit all necessary missed work within 3 days of return. Students who miss 3 or more days must present a doctor's note upon return, stating the reason for the illness and that the child is well enough to return to school.

Unexcused Absence: Absences due to family vacation or elected time off from school are designated as "unexcused." Students may be given books and guidance on reading, as well as information on big assignments and due dates before an unexcused absence. When a child returns from a vacation or unexcused absence, he or she is given 72 hours (3 school days) to turn in all missed work or take any missed tests. The teacher and the child will arrange a testing schedule so that not all tests or assignments occur or become due on the first day back. New class work and homework requirements will continue.

Children who are absent more than 8 days in any trimester will receive a reminder and a parent meeting will be arranged with the parent, teacher, and principal. Students who miss more than 27 days (15% of the school year), are in jeopardy of retention. Reminders will be sent each trimester and a parent meeting arranged.

Reporting Absence: If a child is ill and cannot attend school, parents will call the office by 8:30 A.M., to report the absence. If a child is absent 3 or more days, due to illness, a doctor's note declaring the child to be in good health and able to return to school is required. In the event that a child has been sent home with a lice infestation, a parent or guardian must bring the child to the office, after treatment and removal of lice and nits before readmission to school. Information on lice treatments is available in the office.

Tardiness: Tardiness at the Phoenix Ranch School is defined as a student who arrives any time after 8:30 A.M. Students may go directly to their classes between 8:30-8:40 A.M. and will be marked tardy. At 8:40 A.M. students not present are marked absent, and students must be admitted to school through the office. Parents will come directly to the office after 8:40 with their child, and sign them in. The office will give the child a "late admit slip" which will accompany the child to the classroom. If you know you are going to be late, please call the office in advance.

Vacations: Payment is required through any absence for enrollment to be continued. See Unexcused Absence (above) for more information regarding vacations during the school year.

Birthday Celebrations at School

The Phoenix Ranch School invites parents to bring a snack to share with classmates during morning recess or at the end of the day (2:30 P.M.)*. All items must be store-bought (bakery or grocery store). We appreciate any paper plates or napkins you send, as well as serving and eating utensils, if necessary. Parents may come to lead the song and serve the snack, if desired (for about 10-15 min.). Small party favors are allowed. Actors (Spiderman, etc.) or other teachers (karate, etc.) are not allowed at these celebrations.

**Upon occasion, parents prefer to provide pizza or lunch for the class and celebrate at that time. To do so please communicate with your child's teacher, check on lunch time for your grade level, and work with local caterers to deliver on time. Again, no homemade food items are allowed. All items must be made in a store or restaurant. Teachers enjoy their personal break when their students are at lunch, so your child's teacher may not attend a lunchtime celebration. Parents may select one time for a celebration, not recess and lunch.*

Suggestions for birthday snack: Lightly-iced mini cupcakes (most store bakeries will prepare cupcakes to your specifications, such as light icing), donut holes, fruit, cookies or crackers, etc. No candy please. We do not allow lit candles, due to safety precautions.

Campus Visitation (Visitors on Campus)

For the safety of our children, The Phoenix operates as a closed campus. Parents and other visitors are welcome on the campus when assisting teachers or staff with planned school projects and scheduled classroom activities. All visitors must visit the office and obtain a visitor's badge, before entering the campus. Classroom volunteers are arranged with the teacher prior to attendance. Each class may have one parent volunteer per day. A parent may volunteer twice each week not to exceed 2 hours per week. Volunteers must sign-in in the office, wear the assigned Visitor's Badge,

and sign-out when leaving. Additional volunteers may be requested on class field trips and on special occasions.

Campus Security (Gate Codes, and C.C.T.V.)

Each day designated employees welcome students in Carpool from 8:00-8:30 and cover check-out carpool from 2:45-3:15 daily. We have staff who are Guard Card certified. Gate Codes are required to enter the campus. The code changes once or twice each year or more often if deemed necessary by administration. Parents receive the security code from the office. Campus security is also provided by closed-circuit cameras placed at many outdoor locations. Monitors are in several areas around campus for surveillance purposes by key personnel.

Cell Phones Policy (Items from Home)

An electronic device is defined as any mechanical or electrical contrivance that is capable of playing, recording, storing, or transmitting sounds, images, or data, including but not limited to cell phones or smart watches. **These devices may not be brought to school.** Students experiencing an emergency may come to the office and request emergency phone use. Cell phones, iPods, or other electronic devices found on students will be confiscated and returned to a parent or guardian only. Devices not recovered after 30 days will be donated to a local charity. The Phoenix is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items brought from home. Use of a cell phone includes but is not limited to the receiving and transmission of voice messages, text messages, photographic images, or playing of games. The policy restrictions apply during field trips or at any time the school or its agents are acting in “loco parentis.”

Computer Use Rules / Technology Information

Phoenix Ranch School has computers located in the Technology Lab and in all classrooms. Computer access to the internet has been inhibited with a filter program. Computers designated for school use may not be used for any other purpose. Therefore no game downloads, Facebook, or other apps may be uploaded to the school computer.

The “Smooth Wall” filter limits internet access to inappropriate material. However, all students will be responsible and follow guidelines set forth by the school. Computer use rules will be reviewed by each classroom teacher.

1. Students may only use the Internet for relevant research, as designated by the teacher, and may at no time browse or search the web for personal interest.
2. No student may use social programs (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)
3. Students may not take pictures or make recordings of other students, teachers or staff.
4. No food or drink is allowed near computers.
5. A teacher must be present for student use.
6. All equipment including computers, printers, scanners, headphones, monitors, televisions, etc. must be handled with utmost care. These are expensive pieces of equipment and costly to repair.
7. Tampering with the computer hardware (monitors, mouse, CPU, etc.), software, or cabling is not permitted.

8. Software may not be brought from home or anywhere outside the school and used in school computers.
9. Students will be trained on Google Classroom to access homework and to write and send documents (essays, assignments, etc.).

Contact Information

Main Office Number (School or Camp): (805) 527-7764.

All staff and faculty can be reached through email by using first initial and last name followed by phoenixranch.org. Example: paguilar@phoenixranch.org.

Emergencies, Evacuation (Fire Drill Information), and Lock Down

In the event of earthquake, fire, power failure, or other emergency, The Phoenix Ranch School is prepared as follows: Fire drills, earthquake drills, and lockdown drills are conducted monthly. If evacuation becomes necessary, we will walk or transport students in hired vehicles or private cars to Simi Valley High School (Cochran/Stow) or as directed by emergency services. The Great Shakeout provides another opportunity each year to review our procedures. Our Brightwheel app allows the School to contact parents in the event of any emergency and is also used for general announcements via your registered phone numbers.

Extended Care (*Early/Late Care and Program for Students in TK-6th Grade*)

Morning care is offered from 7:00-8:30 AM and afternoon care from 3:15-6:00 PM. Morning care occurs in assigned classrooms. At 8:00 A.M. students are released to supervised outdoor play wherein most faculty members are present. Afternoon extended care (called “Club”) is a recreation program that includes a study hall period for homework. Parents may use morning care as needed at no additional cost during the school year. Afternoon extended care requires an additional monthly fee.

Food from Home Policy

All food and snacks brought from home for parties or special events must be prepared in licensed commercial kitchens. The Ventura County Health Department considers a school a commercial enterprise and as such, we cannot serve homemade foods, pastries, desserts, etc. All foods brought to the school must be cooked in a commercial kitchen, licensed by the Ventura County Health Department. Therefore, all donated foods for parties, etc. must be purchased from a commercial restaurant, market, or bakery.

Fundraising

Phoenix Ranch participates in two fundraising events each school year. Under no circumstances should students or families sell door-to-door or to strangers. We thank you for your support and purchases within your circle of family and friends. Participation is completely voluntary. The

Phoenix Ranch Parent Association uses monies collected through fundraisers for large projects that enhance our school and campus. Occasionally, we assist in fundraising for St. Jude's hospital or to help in the event of a national catastrophe (for flood or fire victims, etc.). All raised funds go directly to the charity.

Gratuities

No gratuities or expensive gifts may be given to faculty, staff, or camp counselors.

Health and Safety (Illness, Injuries, Medications)

Many of our teachers and all directors are certified in CPR and First Aid. In the event of an emergency, a parent will be called. If the parent does not respond within one hour, the student will be transferred to a local medical facility for emergency treatment, and if life threatening, 911 will be called immediately.

Dispensed Medication at School/Administered by School Staff

All medicines to be administered by school staff must be accompanied by a doctor's prescription with written directions from the parent. As per state regulations, we may not administer any "over-the-counter" medication (such as Tylenol or cough syrup) without a doctor's prescription or a parent note. If your child needs a prescribed medication to be administered during school hours the policy is as follows: Bring the medicine, with prescription label and written permission, to the office or to the director of morning care from 7:00-8:00 A.M. Complete the *Medication to be Administered Form*.

Injuries at School

If a child is injured at school a CPR/Red Cross certified staff member will administer primary first aid. Slight injuries and other incidents are reported on The Phoenix Ranch 'Injury Report' form. This form will be sent home with your child. All injuries that are more than minor cuts or abrasions will be handled as follows: 1) Parent is called immediately. 2) The student is transferred to a local doctor for emergency treatment if needed. 3) If life threatening, 911 will be called immediately. If the parent does not want this procedure followed, the parent must provide Phoenix Ranch with written instructions indicating what procedures or medical treatment the parent desires. Children cannot be transported to their personal physician.

Lice Infestation

In the event that a child has been sent home with a lice infestation, a parent or guardian must bring the child to the Main Office after treatment and removal of lice and nits before readmission to school. We highly recommend salons or at-home service providers that specialize in lice/nit removal

Illness at School/Return to School Following Illness

Ill students are not admitted to school. Alternative arrangements must be made in case your child becomes ill. An ill child must stay home for at least 24 hours after a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Students who appear to have flu-like illness will be sent to the Health Office until they can be sent home.

- Utilize basic steps in cold/flu prevention: stay home when sick, wash hands frequently with soap and water, cover nose and mouth with tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Routine Cleaning: School staff will routinely clean areas that students and staff touch often.
- School staff will look for symptoms suggestive of infection, such as fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches and fatigue. Any student who has at least 2 of these symptoms will be separated from the others and sent home as soon as possible.

Holidays

The school and camp are closed on all national holidays and at other times. See the School Activity Calendar for a listing of all minimum days and closed days.

Hours of School

Transitional Kindergarten through Sixth Grade: Classes begin Monday, August 14, 2023. Hours: 8:30 A.M. to 2:45 (TK-2nd) or 3:00 (3rd-6th) . Parents of children arriving late to school or absent should call the Main Office. Extended Care hours are 7:00-8:30 A.M. and 3:00 until 6:00 P.M.

Library Information

Our librarian meets with each class (preschool through sixth grade) each week. Students may check out books and return them the following week. The library contains fiction and non-fiction books and magazines, as well as resource materials.

Lunch, Snacks, and Assigned Lunch Hours

Morning Snacks: Students are encouraged to provide a nutritious morning snack to be eaten at recess.

Lunch: Students may bring lunch from home or participate in the “Choice Lunch” program. Choice Lunch is an online lunch program that delivers lunch daily to students who have purchased lunch on their website. Students are able to select from a variety of meals and snacks. To contact Choice Lunch please go to their website: www.choicelunch.com. The cost of the lunch is available at time of order and charged to your credit card. Items are delivered to the school in both refrigerated and heated carts for lunch service..

Lunch Times

- TK – 2nd Grade - 12:35-1:20 ● 3rd-6th Grades – 11:45-12:30

Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child

Our philosophy is to educate the whole child through a hands-on, interactive approach. Small class sizes, individualized attention and constant communication between faculty and families ensures that our students are given the resources to succeed. We recognize that children come to Phoenix Ranch with varied needs and abilities. Teachers and administration are trained to provide a wide variety of accommodations for all students.

Phoenix Ranch Student Behavior Contract: This contract is designed to protect student rights and inform students and parents of acceptable school behavior. Our students succeed when the environment is free of harassing, threatening, and hurting behavior. Violations of the behavior contract are examined on a case by case basis, following school protocol.

Outside Referrals: When staff members have concerns about a child and feel it would be beneficial for an evaluation of the child's development, they are obliged to convey this information to the principal. The principal or school consultant will observe the child and contact the parent to arrange a conference. If the principal believes a referral is necessary, a list of referral options will be presented to parents at the time of the conference. Evaluation findings will be examined, and every effort will be made to help the child succeed at school. Students must be physically in good health, cognitively able to follow and understand direction for their grade level, and emotionally be able to conduct him or herself harmoniously in a group without infringing upon the rights of others.

Parent Code of Conduct and Family Commitment

The Phoenix Ranch School, using administrative discretion, may at any time refuse or terminate service due to parental/guardian behavior that is deemed detrimental, disruptive, or threatening to staff or the environment. The Phoenix Ranch School is a community working together to provide excellence and balance in all areas of a child's education. Parents are required to review this handbook and are urged to clarify any questions before each student begins school in the fall. The family's commitment to the policies and procedures of the School was agreed upon during the application process and upon enrollment. The student and the student's parents agree to abide by the School's policies, rules, and regulations, as may be adopted or amended from time to time. The acceptance of the student for enrollment in any school year shall not obligate the School to accept the student in any succeeding year.

This handbook is designed to be a guide and does not cover any and all eventualities. We ask that parents and students interpret these guidelines in the spirit of rules intended to help the smooth running of our school community. All matters of dispute can be brought to the attention of the Administration. The administration reserves the right to use their discretion in all matters and to make changes to this handbook as necessary.

Parking and Carpool Information

Parking is available in the front parking lot.

Drop-off Procedures

7:00-8:00 – Park in the front lot and walk your child to the morning care room.

8:00-8:30 – We utilize a carpool drop-off system. Pull up to the curb by the main entrance. Remain in your car and staff members will assist your child from the car.

Students arriving after 8:30 must be escorted to the office to obtain a tardy pass.

Pick-up Procedures

2:50-3:00 – Carpool pick up for TK through 2nd Grade.

3:00-3:15 – Carpool pick up for 3rd through 6th Grade

If your child stays for afternoon extended care, park and come to the office. Your child will be brought to you.

Playground and Play Equipment Rules

Students are to be respectful of peers, playground supervisors, and school property. No hitting, pushing, fighting, combat play, or tackle sports are permitted. Students who are eating must do so while seated at the lunch tables or benches. No eating and playing on the sport's field or play equipment. Students are reminded to throw away all personal trash. Rules vary on different apparatus on the playground. Teachers, lunch supervisors, or after school counselors will review rules regularly. General play equipment rules include: Use equipment slides by facing forward, sitting up, and sliding down one at a time (no climbing up the slide). Kickball, soccer, and other large area sports must be restricted to the field. Basketball and volleyball are played in the designated areas. Handball and gaga are sports activities with specific rules. Rules are reviewed by teachers or staff.

Recess Periods

Students in Kindergarten through sixth grade have a recess or nutrition break daily as follows:

● TK-Kindergarten –10:30-11:00 A.M. ● First & Second Grade –10:00-10:20 ● Third & Fourth Grade – 10:20-10:40 A.M● Fifth & Sixth Grade -10:25-10:40 A.M.

Release of Children to Adults Other Than Parents

The Phoenix Ranch School will release students to their parents or adults indicated on the “Authorization to Pick Up” form. The Phoenix will release a child to an adult other than a parent (other than listed on the authorization form), under the following circumstances:

- The parent sends a note or calls to notify us of the adult picking up. We will check for verification of this person's identity.
- If the parent has not called or written in advance – the adult must be sent to the office. At the office, the parents will be called for clearance.
- If the parent cannot be reached – the child **MAY NOT BE RELEASED** until parental consent can be verified.

Release of Personal Information and Confidentiality

Student information is confidential. Parents or legal guardians only are permitted access to information regarding their child. Information including but not limited to the CUM file, classroom teacher grades or portfolio assessments or any assessment information is available. The classroom teacher and administration personnel also have access to student information. Files are kept in locations that are not open to general viewing but kept in areas and in containers labeled confidential or located within an office. No release of personal information may be made without the following conditions being met:

- 1) Consent from the parent (to allow SVUSD access, or physician access, etc.)
- 2) In the case of extreme emergency: children's health or safety is jeopardized

Standardized Testing Information

Preschool children and students in kindergarten through second grade do not participate in standardized testing. Those students are assessed using observational and anecdotal information by the teachers as well using instruments designed by the school and relating directly to the curriculum. Students in third through sixth grade participate in the SAT X (Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Edition). The testing will be held in May. Results are mailed to parents during the month of July. The SAT is a national standardized test that provides important information for parents and for the school regarding the progress of students and effectiveness of teaching and curriculum. The Phoenix Ranch School typically performs in the top 75th-85th percentile in the country. The SAT tool is different than is currently presented in the public schools in California, which is comparative only to other students in California.

Substance Abuse Policy

The Phoenix Ranch School abides by the laws of the United States and the State of California. At no time does the Phoenix condone the use, possession, distribution, or sale of tobacco, drugs, and/or other harmful substances or paraphernalia as it creates a hazard to the welfare of students, faculty, and families of the School. Evidence of alcohol, tobacco, or drug use by a student will result in parent and/or authority involvement and will result in suspension or expulsion.

Uniform Dress Code and Hygiene

The dress code for Phoenix Ranch is designed to support the principle that students are first and foremost engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and learning.

The Phoenix Ranch Dress Code Expectations are as follows:

- **Clothing:** Students are to wear the school uniform. Dennis Uniform Company is our uniform provider for children in TK through sixth grade. Contact Dennis Uniform at (818) 887-5376 or www.dennisuniform.com. Additionally, the Main Office has a small selection of gently used uniform items for sale. Dennis Uniform comes on campus in early August to assist parents. See the Uniform Handbook for complete uniform details by grade.
- **Outerwear:** Students must wear Dennis Uniform jackets, sweaters and sweatshirts.
- **Shoes:** Proper shoes are required. For safety reasons, shoes must be close-toed. Black, brown, white, or navy shoes are permitted. Boots are only allowed on rainy days.
- **Grooming and Accessories:** Students are to arrive at school well groomed. Hair may only be natural colors. Jewelry is strongly discouraged for safety reasons. Ribbons, headbands, and hair accessories should be simple.
- **Cold Weather:** Students may wear navy blue, black, or white tights or leggings under their uniform skirts. Tights and leggings do not need to be ordered through Dennis. However, leggings and tights must be plain with no designs or embellishments. Students must wear Dennis uniform long sleeve shirts; Short sleeve uniform shirts may not be layered over non-uniform long sleeve shirts. On rainy days only students may wear a non-uniform raincoat.
- **Free Dress Days:** Free dress day attire is defined as clothing that is clean, not torn, and free of inappropriate* words or logos, with tennis or other close-toed shoes. Tank tops, strapless tops, short shorts and mini-skirts are not permitted.

** Inappropriate written messages, pictures, or symbols on clothing which portray ideas that are hostile or adverse to the health, safety, and welfare of students such as messages that relate to drugs, profanity, alcohol, or violence.*

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Academic Code of Conduct

Standards for Academic Integrity: The Phoenix Ranch School sets high standards for academic integrity and honesty. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Using another student's paper or notes without teacher permission.
- Giving or receiving help from another student on a test or quiz.
- Turning in homework that is not his/her own work.
- Giving or receiving answers on homework assignments.
- Plagiarism, including the submission of AI-generated or pre-written essays as original work, is strictly prohibited.
- Possession of an unauthorized previous test and/or materials which would give the student an unfair advantage.
- Talking or distracting other students in a testing situation.

Violations of the Academic Code of Conduct will result in consequences that could include: teacher intervention, parental contact, or suspension.

Academic Probation

The Phoenix Ranch School requires all students in third through sixth grade to maintain a 2.0 GPA (see the grading standard table below for grade point equivalents). There is no social promotion. Students whose grades fall below a 2.0 GPA and/or students who have earned 3 or more *N*'s in two or more quarters, are likely candidates for retention or become ineligible for continuation into the next academic year. It is our sincere wish that each student at The Phoenix Ranch School finds academic success, and we can help through our Resource and Referral Program and assistance with outside resources (educational testing, tutors, etc.). All teachers have school email addresses and will respond to parent inquiries and concerns promptly. Monday newsletters with the week's homework and Friday's Communication Folder keep parents informed.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed to integrate information from many different academic content areas into a hands-on, multi-sensory approach to learning beyond the normal classroom environment. Trips reflect California State Content Standards and typically begin or conclude a unit of inquiry or study with important content information and application.

- TK-Kindergarten through Sixth Grade Students will have two to three excursions planned each academic year. Transportation is usually by hired school bus, but on occasion parents are requested to drive their children (parents may form carpool groups on their own.)

Traditionally, field trip costs can range from \$25.00-\$35.00 or more. Parents who wish to drive their children on a trip may do so. However, the fee will remain unchanged to assist us in paying for the bus and cover any admission cost. Parents are not permitted to transport other children from the class or bring younger or older siblings on field trips. Parents are required to sign a permission slip to allow their child to attend a trip. Parents may not opt to leave their child at school instead of going on a trip. Because trips assist us in meeting the State Standards, attendance is required.

Gradebook Wizard (Online Grading Program)

The Phoenix Ranch School uses an online program called Gradebook Wizard (www.gradebookwizard.com) for students in 1st through 6th grade. Lists of assignments that go into each reported grade are provided, to show how the final grade is calculated. Grades will be updated frequently so that you may keep current with your child's progress. Each student has an assigned individual ID number that will be given to parents at Back to School Night

Grading Standard

Students are assessed three times per year (trimester system) in first through eighth grade.

Transitional Kindergarten: Students are assessed each trimester using a Skills Development Survey. No grades are assigned. In addition, teachers monitor student progress daily through observation; they also develop a student portfolio (student artifacts that are accumulated to identify growth and progress).

Kindergarten: Teachers conduct frequent assessments to determine knowledge acquisition. Kindergarten students are assessed three times a year on a generalized scale:

M=Meets Expectations (Consistently demonstrates understanding and application of a concept or skill.)

AP=Approaching Expectations (Student is working towards competency. Needs practice and use of skill.)

ND=Not Demonstrated(Student does not demonstrate an understanding of the concept or skill yet.)

First -Second Grade: Students in first through second grade are evaluated using a generalized grading scale:

E = 90-100% S+ = 80-89% S =70-79% S- = 60-69% N = 59% and below needs to improve

Third-Sixth Grade: Students in third through sixth grade will have graded work that follows a traditional grading scale. The use of rubrics for student writing or major assignments is mandated. Rubrics outline assignments and clearly delineate the requirements associated with a score that will equate with a grade. Faculty will use a point system that is explained to the children and parents. Points will equate with percentiles and your point/percentile breakdown will remain constant throughout the year. Deviations from this scale will be discussed with parents and students in the first week of school.

A = 96-100% **A+** 93-95% **A** and 90-92% **A-**

B = 86-89% **B+**, 83-85% **B**, and 80-82% **B-**

C = 76-79% **C+**, 73-75% **C**, and 70-72% **C-**

D = 66-69% **D+**, 63-65% **D**, and 60-62% **D-**

(Below 60% - fail 'F')

Homework Policy

The philosophy of the Phoenix Ranch is that homework is an important component of the educational process. Homework is assigned as follows:

Transitional Kindergarten – Homework is assigned weekly, for the student and parent together.

Kindergarten – Homework is assigned to be completed at home with parents two evenings per week.

First through sixth grade: Students will be assigned homework Monday through Thursday.

(1st Grade – 10-15 min. per night; 2nd Grade – about 20 min. per night; 3rd Grade - about 30 min. per night; 4th Grade – about 40 min. per night; 5th Grade – about 50 min. per night; 6th Grade– about 60 min. per night).

Occasionally, additional projects will be assigned that may require additional time during the week or on weekends (e.g. book reports, research reports, etc.).

Parent/School Communication and Conferences

The Phoenix Ranch is committed to outstanding communication between the school and parents.

- School-wide, all teachers present a Monday Newsletter that outlines activities and homework.
- Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten students take home their Communication Folder each day and return it the next school morning.
- In first through sixth grade, each student is provided a Communication Folder. Monday through Thursday work is graded and kept by the teacher. On Friday, all student-graded work is placed in the Communication Folder. If there is work to sign and return, or forms going home, that information will be placed on the side of the folder that says “Return to School”. Parents sign the back of the folder and return it on Monday (or first school day of the week).
- Parent-Teacher conferences are mandated and arranged in the first trimester and as requested by parents or teachers at any time during the school year. Other forms of communication with parents include Gradebook Wizard, The Phoenix Monthly Newsletter, the Phoenix website: www.phoenixranch.org, Brightwheel, teacher phone calls, emails, etc.

Textbooks

The Phoenix Ranch School provides a variety of curriculum support materials including consumable and reusable books. Consumable books are sent home when complete or at the end of the year, or pages are removed for use and sent home each week in the communication folder.

Reusable textbooks are used in first through sixth grade. These books are usually very expensive and must be used with care; the cost for replacement is considerable. In third through fourth grade, textbooks are occasionally sent home for homework or test preparation. In fifth through sixth grade, textbooks will be sent home regularly. As often as possible, The Phoenix Ranch School will send home any extra textbooks to be kept at home for the school year (must be returned in May), to assist in the transport of books back and forth from school to home. Parents pay a book rental fee as part of the registration fee, which includes the use of reusable textbooks. Students may not write in or deface non-consumable textbooks, and parents will be responsible to replace lost, stolen, or damaged books.

The Phoenix Ranch School Student Behavior Contract (Updated 2023-2024)

The Phoenix Ranch School Student Behavior Contract is designed to protect student rights, inform students and parents of acceptable school behavior and to identify the consequences of misconduct. The school's reaction to misconduct will be a measured response and will include a parent conference with the school principal and the teacher. The Phoenix Ranch School will at no time inflict corporal punishment or use inappropriate means (such as humiliation, intimidation, etc.) to gain pupil cooperation. All students in TK through sixth grade are responsible for the content and intent of this contract.

The Phoenix Ranch Student Rights Statement

The Phoenix Ranch School faculty and staff will protect each individual student's right to:

- Learn and play in an environment free of violence and bullying (a non-threatening, safe, and caring environment)
- Learn in a classroom free of constant distraction
- Participate in all school activities without prejudice or harassment of any kind

These following rules are part of the student contract and include information regarding consequences to the violation of established rules. The Phoenix Ranch School publishes annually a Parent / Student Handbook which outlines many school policies and procedures in detail. Parents are referred to the Handbook for more information, available in the Main Office or online at www.phoenixranch.org.

1) Students will work and play cooperatively without bullying, harassing, hurting, or threatening others (see Student Rights Statement).

- 1) Students who **bully others** (*intimidate or harass a person to make them do something*) will be confronted by faculty or staff. Students are encouraged to seek adult assistance immediately in response to a bullying, harassing, or hurting incident. An incident report will be completed and sent home with the offending child and parents notified. Subsequent acts of bullying or harassment may result in parent conference, suspension and/or expulsion from school.
- 2) Students who **hurt** others will be removed from the classroom or activity. An incident report will be written, parents will be contacted, and the student will possibly be suspended. Subsequent hurting incidents will result in parent conference, suspension, and/or expulsion from school.
- 3) **Threat of violence** is against the law and school policy. A threat of violence might include statements about hurting another person or entity (student, parent, teacher, student body, school, etc.) and is taken very seriously. A threat of violence will result in action on the part of the school that may include involvement of police, suspension, or expulsion.

Bullying, harassing, threatening, and hurting behavior are in violation of The Phoenix Ranch School Student's Rights Statement (above). Response to these infractions will be measured in accordance with the age of the child, the frequency of incidents, and severity of the offense. These infractions are considered most serious and will be treated as such by administration.

2) Students will be treated fairly, without prejudice and with courtesy (see Student Rights Statement).

No child will receive unfair or prejudicial treatment from the faculty or staff. All students will demonstrate common courtesy toward each other. Violations of this Student Right may result in poor marks, parent conferences, and/or administrative reprimand.

3) Students will be polite and respectful to teachers and staff.

Students will receive a grade in work habits and cooperation that will reflect their effort in these areas. Students who are impolite or disrespectful to faculty or staff will meet with the principal and/or teacher and receive an Incident

Report. A subsequent violation will result in a parent conference. Continued disrespect may result in removal from the classroom/activity, detention, missed special activity participation, a 1-2 day suspension, etc.

4) Students will arrive at class on time, prepared and ready to learn each day (with homework, if required).

The Phoenix Ranch School follows the State of California Education Code Section 48260-48273 explained in the Phoenix Ranch School Parent / Student Handbook. Frequent tardiness is a disruption to the classroom and will be treated as such. Students should come to school well rested, fed, clean, and dressed neatly in the school uniform, with all required materials. Parents will be contacted in the event of a uniform infraction.

5) Students will follow classroom rules and may not inflict disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Disruptive behavior prevents the teacher from teaching and other students from learning. Frequent disruptive behavior will result in a poor grade in cooperation/citizenship, Incident Report filing, parent conferencing, and removal from the classroom, missed activities, and/or suspension. Constant disruption violates the Phoenix Ranch Student Rights Statement (see above).

6) Students must use acceptable language and must not spit.

Inappropriate language is not allowed at school. Students who are spitting or using unacceptable language will be reprimanded by the faculty or staff. Continued infractions will result in a poor grade in cooperation or citizenship (demerits), parent conference, and possible suspension.

7) Students will care appropriately for all school books and school property including technology equipment.

Destruction of property, including the school facility, textbooks, equipment (including technology equipment), or supplies is forbidden. Parents will be held financially responsible for defacement or loss of materials, including textbooks. Students who deface school property may be subject to a parent-supervised cleanup day(s), detention, and/or suspension or expulsion.

8) Students must remain with a teacher or counselor at all times at school or Club.

It is forbidden for any student to leave the campus at any time without a parent or parent-designated adult. Students may not run away or hide. If a student should run away from the school facility or supervising personnel, parents will be contacted immediately, and then the Simi Valley Police will be notified. Phoenix Ranch School is unable to physically restrain a child and can only talk to the student and monitor his or her movement, in the event that the child is attempting to leave the campus. This behavior is a very serious concern due to the threat to child safety and may result in expulsion.

9) Students will be honest and truthful in the classroom, in school, and in Club. Cheating or stealing will not be permitted. Plagiarism is not permitted.

See the Parent/Student Handbook "Academic Code of Conduct" for information regarding cheating, plagiarism, and dishonesty. Consequences are clearly defined and include: zero points on the worksheet, test, or project (no retest or resubmit will be allowed), parents will be contacted, and possibly additional consequences (written documentation, parent conference, detention, missed special activity participation, or suspension). The consequences will include consideration of the child's age and possible recurrence of this infraction. Stealing is a serious crime. In the event that a student steals, the teacher or administrator will contact the parent, an incident report will be written, and the student will be responsible to return the stolen item(s) with a handwritten apology. Recurrence will be treated very seriously and will result in suspension or possible expulsion. Plagiarism is not permitted and will be prosecuted as follows: the student will receive zero points on the assignment and may not resubmit, the parent will be contacted, and a parent conference with the teacher and child will be arranged. To copy, cut and paste, or directly use material from a book, magazine, online source, or other source, without identification of the writer/source is forbidden. Students are reminded to appropriately identify ownership of writing through citations (use of quotes, recognition of author, footnotes, and/or bibliography).

10) Students will use good digital citizenship. Students will use technology including computers, Internet use, as directed by administration and will not use programs or sites that are inappropriate.

Students will not use the computers to email, or view websites that have inappropriate content or use the computer in any manner that is not explicitly described by the teacher. The Phoenix Ranch School has installed Internet filters that limit access to inappropriate material, but it is acknowledged that it may be possible to gain access to inappropriate sites using backdoor and other means. Students must treat all school equipment with care, especially all technical equipment including classroom Eno Boards and projectors and computers (desktop and laptop), as well as other teaching tools.

- The use of technology in harmful ways has caused us to consider the term **Digital Citizenship**. Teachers will discuss this topic in all classes from third through sixth grade. Discussion will include appropriate and inappropriate uses of texting, social website use, phone, game, AI, and other technology devices. Students may not email or text other students and use inappropriate or hurtful words or language, or send pictures over the internet of other students. The use of phones, texting, social websites, and game sites occur off campus, yet we are impacted by the results of inappropriate language, hurtful content, and other postings to students' personal devices. Inappropriate content brought to the attention of the teacher or principal will result in a parent meeting at school and additional consequences if this inappropriate behavior continues.

The Phoenix Ranch School Student Behavior Contract is designed to protect student rights and to inform students and parents of acceptable school behavior and the consequences of misconduct. The school response to misconduct will be a measured response and will include a parent conference with the student's teacher, or director, or principal. Response protocols have been written and may be reviewed with your child's teacher. Phoenix Ranch School teachers, staff, and administrators will at no time inflict corporal punishment. All students enrolled in TK-6th grade at Phoenix Ranch School will be held responsible for the content and intent of this document.