



Novato Charter School

Middle School Parent/Student Guide 2017-2018

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<http://www.novatocharterschool.org>



Dear Parents and Students,

This guidebook contains information on school policies, procedures and topics that will help you navigate the Middle School experience at NCS. In order for schools to operate safely and efficiently, it is important that students and families are familiar with, and abide by the expectations, procedures and rules outlined in this document. The guidebook is posted online and is subject to amendments during the school year. An up-to-date version will be maintained online at <http://www.novatocharterschool.org>. Notice of any changes will be communicated via email and will take effect upon notification. The following page is an acknowledgement that you have read and understand the guide and polices and agreements therein. Please sign and return to your class teacher by Back to School Night.

When questions and concerns arise, the practice of communicating directly is an essential ingredient for both individual and community success. Towards that goal, we request that students and parents contact, and communicate directly, with the person most closely related to the given subject of concern.

We look forward to a year of exciting learning opportunities and are glad you have chosen to be part of the vibrant NCS Middle School experience.

The Middle School Team

Nikki Tausch Lloyd, Director
Steve Kinney, 8th Grade Teacher
Rick Betz, 7th Grade Teacher
Karina Salvesen, 6th Grade Teacher
Kenny Blacklock, Music Teacher
Christine Jones, Math Teacher
Justin Bayer, Movement Teacher
Liliana Castro, Spanish Teacher

NOTE: The School has the right to amend the guide for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made. This guide is designed to familiarize the reader with the major policies and practices in place at NCS in the Middle School at the time of publication. While every effort has been made to make this guide as complete and encompassing as possible, and does provide general guidance in many areas it cannot address all situations. All previously issued guidebooks and any inconsistent policy statements are superseded with the publication of this guide. NCS reserves the rights to revise, modify, delete, or add to any and all policies and practices stated in this guide or any other document.



Acknowledgement

Parent 1 Name: _____

Student 1 Name: _____

Parent 2 Name: _____

Student 2 Name: _____

We have read and understand the following sections of the Novato Charter School Middle School Parent/Student Guide:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| DIRECT COMMUNICATION | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| TECHNOLOGY USE AGREEMENT | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| DRESS CODE POLICY | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| STUDENT BEHAVIOR REPORT AND ACTION FORM | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| NOTICE TO PARENTS (YELLOW FORM) | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| HOMEWORK GUIDELINES & LATE HOMEWORK | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| HIGH SCHOOL SHADOW PROCESS & FORM | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS & INSTURCTIONS | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| HIGH SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION REQUEST FORM | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT PROPOSALS | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| HEALTHY FOOD & DRINK/LOW WASTE PROCEDURES | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| NOTE TAKING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL | ___ (V FOR YES) |
| SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS | ___ (V FOR YES) |

Parent 1 Signature

Student 1 Signature

Parent 2 Signature

Student 2 Signature

Please return this form to the class teacher on or before Back to School Night.



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Direct Communication & Empowering the Middle School Student to Self-Advocate in Preparation for High School and Life

As with all skills, we always want to provide adult examples worthy of imitation. This means that teachers and parents should model healthy, direct communication with each other and with the students. As a developing skill, the students will need a lot of support and guidance throughout middle school. Learning to communicate effectively and solve problems is as important as doing well academically. These important life skills are highly emphasized on high school recommendations. The ability to clearly communicate and self-advocate is essential to the students' success in high school and beyond.

To begin with, we want to keep the student in the “center vs. middle” of the adult’s interactions. To do this, parents and teachers need to act as a team and not pit the student against the teacher or parent against the teacher. The adolescent in middle school at times may try to avoid responsibility or deflect blame by positioning adults against one another. The adults need to turn the focus back to the student to find some learning or area for which they can take responsibility. This is most easily accomplished when the adults assume goodwill from each other, and that the student, not the adults, are responsible for challenges. That is why if you hear something troubling from your student, directly contact the teacher via their preferred means, and whenever possible begin the discussion with a question not an assumption or confrontation. For example, “My child told me about xxxx. Could you tell me more about it?” In this manner you will add the teacher’s perspective to your student’s perspective before forming any opinion about or against a teacher or another student.

How to start

Encourage your student to speak to her/his peers or teachers directly. While adults often naturally want to jump in to solve problems for their child, it doesn’t always work at this age and can disempower the student from true learning and growth. Instead, support your student by preparing for hard conversations through role playing, offering help by framing an opening question and letting them know that, while difficult, you know they can learn this skill. Reviewing each conversation afterwards for what they felt went well and what could go better in future conversations is also helpful. Avoid joining in their “feeling life” and strong emotions, which is not always easy especially if an adult has had similar issues in their own biography. Often what is the most needed is for them to feel heard and that the adults have an understanding that they are juggling a lot during these critical years.



Who to talk to when:

Topic:	Student to contact:
Any concern relating to a class, academic or otherwise	Teacher teaching the subject where there is concern
Unresolved conflict w/classmate or subject teacher	Class Teacher and/or student involved
General question about school policy/request or proposal	Middle School Team (MS Teachers & Director) *See guidelines for MS student proposal
Unresolved concern with a teacher or student after multiple attempts	Parent meeting with Teacher, or with Teacher & Director.



NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD POLICY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I PURPOSE

- A. To foster an environment that encourages honesty, fairness and high academic standards.
- B. To set clear guidelines and expectations for academic integrity.

II. AUTHORITY

- A. Director

III. BACKGROUND

The school's expectations are that:

- A. Students shall consistently represent themselves and their schoolwork with honesty and openness so as to always convey the complete truth. For example, students shall do his or her own work without cheating and without interfering with other students' efforts. If sources are allowed they must be properly acknowledged.
- B. Parents and other interested parties may assist students with assignments and homework so long as each of them complies with the teacher's instructions, school policies and applicable laws. Parents and other interested parties shall not provide answers or directly perform students' assignments on their behalf.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Purposeful or negligent misrepresentation includes, but it is not limited to, acts of cheating, collusion and plagiarism which conflict with Novato Charter School policies, teachers' instructions or applicable laws.

- A. **Cheating** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through dishonest means. **Collusion** is a secret and/or unallowed agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose. Examples of cheating and/or colluding include, but are not limited to:



1. Copying, in part or whole, or otherwise acquired from another's examination, assignments (in class or homework) mathematical calculations(s), research, creative project or the like;
2. Submitting as one's own work an examination, assignments (in class or homework), mathematical calculations(s), research or creative project, or the like which has been purchased, borrowed, or stolen;
3. Intentional falsification or invention of data or a source in an academic exercise;
4. Using notes, or materials not specifically authorized by the instructor during an examination;
5. Any collaboration between a student and another person at times or in ways not permitted by the instructor;
6. Intentional falsification of academic records;
7. Providing materials, notes or assignments willingly or unwillingly to someone else without teacher permission.

B. **Plagiarism** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work by representing the work of another as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

1. Taking a fact or idea from another source (including text found on the Internet) but presenting it in your own words without disclosing the source.
2. Using some wording from a source, identifying the source, but not using quotation marks to identify the exact words of the source.
3. The act of incorporating another's intellectual or creative work such as musical composition, computer program, photograph, painting drawing, sculpture, research, the like, into one's own without the proper permission and disclosure.
4. Copying one or more specific phrases or sentences from a source without disclosing the source. Turning in a paper written even in part by someone else, including a friend or relative who helped you with your paper, with or without that person's knowledge and consent.



5. Turning in a paper purchased or otherwise obtained from a paper mill or other source or that was created or published in whole or in part by someone else.
6. Copying the order of ideas of a work completed by somebody else.

V. VIOLATION CONSEQUENCES

The following stated consequences will be applied in cases of cheating and/or plagiarism at Novato Charter School:

A. First Offense

1. Conference with teacher, parents, student, and director in which this Policy is reviewed and signed by all parties.
2. Student work in question is copied and attached to an official letter sent to parents (see Exhibit A).
3. Student may rewrite the assignment for credit. A "C" will be the highest possible grade given for the rewrite.

B. Second Offense

1. Conference with teacher, parents, student, and director.
2. Record in permanent cumulative file.
3. Student receives no credit for that assignment.

C. Third Offense

1. Conference with teacher, parents, student, and director.
2. Suspension/In-House Suspension.
3. Record in permanent cumulative file.
4. Student receives a failing grade for block/subject.



EXHIBIT A
OFFICIAL LETTER OF POLICY VIOLATION

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I regret to inform you that _____ has violated the Academic Integrity Policy of Novato Charter School for the _____ time. This offense occurred in _____ class on _____ date.

In our efforts to provide an effective educational environment we must maintain high academic standards for all our students. This includes the expectation that students will complete their own assignments without copying, plagiarizing or cheating. When research is necessary, it is the expectation that the proper acknowledgment of sources will be included along with the assignment.

This letter will be placed in your student's discipline file and will be used as reference, if further such activity should occur again in any class. Please review the Academic Integrity Policy with your student (found under the Parent Handbook section of the school's website: www.novatocharterschool.org), or ask the main office for a hard copy).

Violation:

- Plagiarizing work for a report or assignment
- Copying another student's work
- Cheating on an exam or other assignment
- Doctoring or modifying a score given by a teacher
- Aiding or abetting another student in cheating
- _____

Sincerely,

Teacher

Director

Parent(s)

Student



TECHNOLOGY USE AGREEMENT

During middle school at Novato Charter School, students will increase their use of electronic technology both inside and outside of the classroom. In order to support a healthy and productive learning environment for both the students and teacher, the following agreements are required:

Use of Computer Lab

Middle School students will have use of the computer lab and will be provided a specific lab computer for their use. Students may perform online research, project development, word processing, typing practice, or other applications permitted by the teacher. The following guidelines are required in the computer lab:

- Students may not change any settings on the computers.
- Students may not install any software on the computers
- Students must handle the computers with care and not modify any hardware.
- Students may not access personal social networking sites, computer games, chat rooms, or any other school inappropriate applications.
- Students may only access e-mail accounts if they have permission from the teacher (this is on an exception basis)
- Students may only print if they have permission from the teacher.
- Students may only access e-mail if they have permission from the teacher, and may only use it for school related work.
- Students may not chat online with other students in the lab in any manner.
- Students may only visit websites approved by the teacher.
- Students may not store files on the computer except in their designated personal folder.
- Students must enter and work silently in the lab, not talking with other students unless permitted by the teacher.
- Students must return the computer to its regular position if it was altered during the course of working in the lab.

If the student does not follow these guidelines, the teacher may suspend their computer lab privileges.

Use of Personal Electronics

Novato Charter School is a personal electronics free campus. This includes cell phones, e-readers, tablet computers, laptop computers, digital cameras, or any other personal electronic device. We ask that parents also follow this policy while on campus.



In the event that a middle student must bring a personal electronic device to school it must be on an exception basis. The personal electronic device must be checked into the office before the start of the school day and picked up after school and not used until they are outside of the school property (dismissal area included). A parent note explaining the use of electronic device must be turned into the office with the device.

The consequences for not following these guidelines are as follows:

- 1) First incident: the electronic device will be confiscated and held in the office until the student's parent comes in to collect it. At that time, we will want to know if and when the student will be bringing the device to school again. If so, we will expect it to be turned in to the office each day as described above.
- 2) Second incident: the electronic device will be confiscated and held until a conference between the parents and the Director is arranged. At the conference, parents will be given the choice of:
 - a) Suspending the child's privilege of bringing an electronic device to school for any reason, for an agreed upon period of time, or
 - b) Having the school write up a behavior report for the student's permanent file documenting the repeated disregard of the rule.
- 3) Third incident: the electronic device will be confiscated and must be picked up by the parent. There will be an automatic behavior report recorded in the student's permanent file followed by a one-day suspension.

Personal Storage Drive vs. Cloud Storage (i.e., Office 365 or Google Docs/Drive)

If a student wants to transport electronic school documents between the computer lab and home, a personal data storage drive (a.k.a. "Flash Drive") can be used by the student. Use of a personal storage drive is highly recommended and very successful.

Alternatively, students may use a cloud-based file system such as Microsoft Office 365 or Google Docs if permitted by their parents. This requires them to have a working Internet connection at all times to access their documents, but it alleviates the need for a Flash Drive.

Students who use these services are not allowed to share access to their NCS assignments with other students, unless they are specifically working on a designated group assignment.

Sharing documents and any personal work or texting with other students is a violation of The NCS Academic Integrity Policy.



Printing Requirements

Beginning during the 6th grade as designated by the class teacher, Novato Charter School students will be given the option to type certain assignments. Generally this will increase throughout the 7th and 8th grades. Typing assignments is not required and students may always handwrite their assignments, especially if a personal printer is not accessible or working properly. ***If a student chooses to type their assignments, the student and parent must agree to have access to a fully functioning printer complete with toner and paper, and internet connection if needed. If a student does not have access to a fully functioning printer, they will not be excused from turning in an assignment on time. Students are never allowed to solicit a teacher, resource staff, or office staff to print a document for them or to access the computer lab at school solely for printing purposes.***

Class Websites

Middle School teachers may maintain a class website to list homework requirements, class policies, and other communications. It is the students and parents responsibility to regularly check the website for information prior to e-mailing the teacher to request information that is already provided on the class website.

Thank you for adhering to this agreement.

The Middle School Team



Approved by NCS Board on: March 11, 2015

NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL DRESS CODE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

- A. To define acceptable apparel and personal grooming at Novato Charter School.
- B. To define enforceable standards of apparel and personal grooming.
- C. To define procedures to be followed should the enforceable standards be violated.

II. AUTHORITY

- A. First Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution; the California State Constitution

III. BACKGROUND

- A. This policy has been developed after extensive comment from Faculty, Parents, Middle School Students and the Board of Trustees.
- B. The Novato Charter School makes every effort to support students to develop an awareness of self, based on an inner knowing of personal beauty, and discourages the development of a false sense of self based on media, commercial, sexist or racist influences. Support and cooperation of all parents are requested to encourage moderation in clothing and personal grooming for the sake of creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. In an effort to create a healthy working and learning environment at school, students are expected to wear clothing that is clean, simple and in good repair. Clothing and shoes should be suitable for both indoor and outdoor activities. Simplicity and appropriateness should be major considerations.
- C. School administrators may prohibit clearly-specified types of clothing or accessories it reasonably believes lead to disruption of the School's educational environment, to foster a safe, non-violent atmosphere (*Jeglin v. San Jacinto Unified Sch. Dist.* (C.D. Cal.1993) 827 F.Supp. 1459, 1460-1461).



D. Public school students have free speech rights under the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution and also under the California Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution also provides the rights to liberty. These rights do not disappear once the student enters school grounds.

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. **Media** means any of the following:

- References to television shows and characters.
- References to movie & video characters.
- References to popular consumer products.

V. POLICY

Recommended Apparel:

The Novato Charter School discourages the use of clothing with media advertisement, cartoon images or slogans, and commercial logos of any kind. The use of makeup, fingernail polish, hair dye, tattoos, and heavy jewelry is discouraged.

In an effort to create a productive working and learning environment at school, students are expected to wear clothing that is clean, simple and in good repair. Excessively loose (baggy) or tight clothing is not allowed.

Children need comfortable, practical, flat-soled shoes that are firmly attached to their feet. Shoes are to be free of lights and wheels. Toes and heels should be covered to allow the freedom to safely run, play and climb. Crocs, boots (Uggs, cowboy, etc.) and dress shoes, limit mobility and can be unsafe. 8th Graders are allowed to wear open-toed shoes, including flip-flops, provided they bring athletic footwear to school for daily movement.

Extreme hairstyles and dyed hair are strongly discouraged for all students, and are definitely inappropriate in grades K-6. Hair should not hang in the eyes: students should either tie hair back from the face or trim bangs accordingly.

The following are enforceable standards:

A. Clothing and accessories (e.g., backpacks, lunch boxes) marked with references to drugs, alcohol, racism, sexism or violence are prohibited.



- B. Skirts/shorts/dresses should be a horizontal hand (student’s own hand) above the knee or longer. Horizontal hand measurement applies to any outer garments worn regardless of tights or leggings underneath the skirt/shorts/dress.
- C. 5th through 8th Grade Students: Leggings, Jeggings, Yoga/Athletic pant wear can be worn as an under layer for modesty or warmth. The outer layer (skirt, shorts, sweater, dress, etc.) must come down to the longest finger when arms are straight down alongside the body. Students may remove the outer layer for Movement Class. Leggings must not be see- through.
- D. Strapless dresses, tube tops, low-cut tops, spaghetti straps that do or could expose cleavage, see-through tops without a modest camisole and midriff tops are considered to be improper school attire and are therefore prohibited. Undergarments should not be visible, straps included. Tank top straps shall be equal or wider in width than the combined width of the index and middle fingers of the student wearing the tank top. For the purposes of measurement, the fingers of either the right or left hand shall be placed over the tank top straps and if the two fingers fully cover any of the straps, then the tank top strap width shall be deemed too narrow. Attire that exposes undergarments, midriff and/or buttocks is prohibited.
- E. Excessive or extreme jewelry or accessories, e.g., dangling chains, spiked bracelets, large earrings are prohibited.

VI. PROCEDURE/ Enforcement

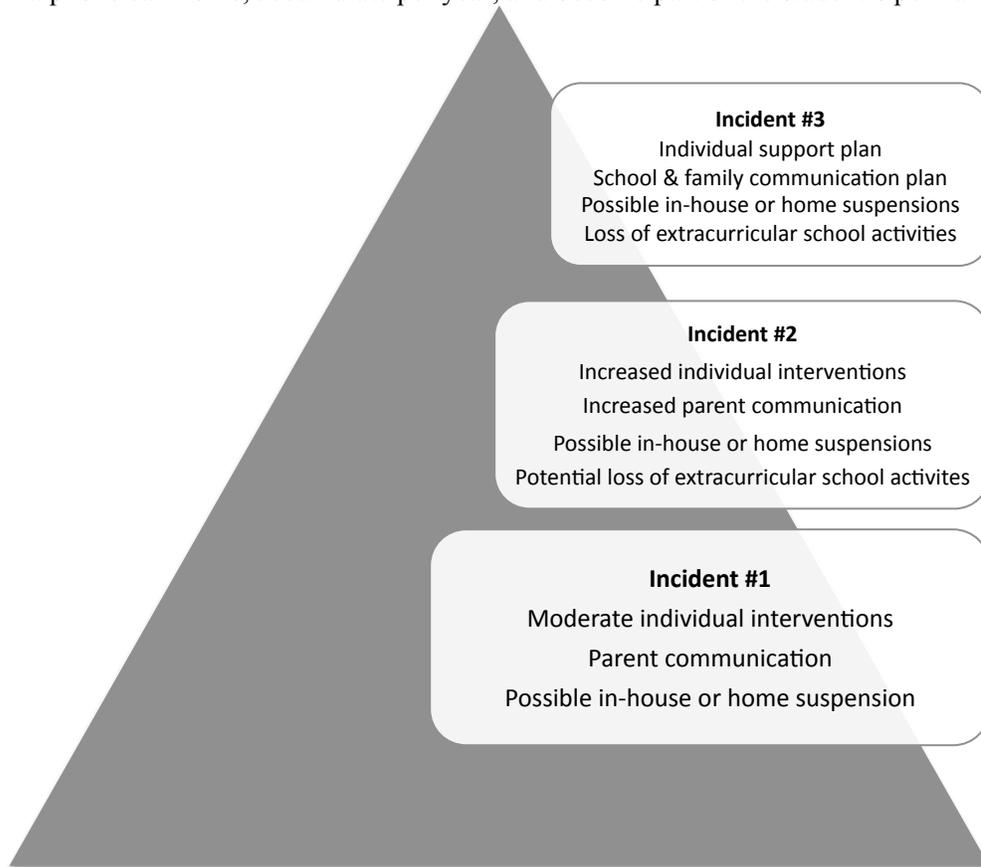
- A. The Director and the class teachers shall monitor the dress standards at the Novato Charter School in accordance with the Dress Code Policy. The Director and class teachers may counsel students with reference to the Dress Code Policy.
- B. If a student is found to be in violation of the enforceable standards of this policy, the Director or teacher may take action in the following successive steps:
 - 1. Speak to a student privately – suitable, alternative clothing may be provided by the school.
 - 2. Call a student’s parents to provide a change of clothing.
 - 3. Issue a Behavior report.
 - 4. Meet with a student and his/her parents.
 - 5. Suspend a student.
- C. Should any questions of attire and personal grooming arise that are not addressed



Restorative Discipline Guidelines

Our goal at NCS is to create a positive learning environment and support healthy social interactions where students have the necessary skills to self-regulate their own behavior and learning. We use a restorative discipline approach that is aimed to build classroom communities that are supported by clear agreements, authentic communication, and specific tools to bring issues and conflicts forward in a helpful way. This provides specific pathways for students to take responsibility for their actions, repair harms, increase social and emotional skills, and come to agreement about setting things right.

The Student Behavior Report and Action Plan is for serious or repetitive behaviors.* These reports result in a phone call home, accumulate per year, and become part of the student's permanent school record.



* These actions are general guidelines. School may use discretion when using these restorative discipline guidelines.

Student Behavior Report

Report # _____

Student must return this completed form to the class teacher the following school day in order to be readmitted to class.

Student Name _____ Date _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____

The goal of this Student Behavior Report and Action Plan is to support each student in the following three areas:

1. **Accountability** – to provide opportunities for students to be accountable to those they have harmed, and enable them to repair the harm they caused.
2. **Community safety** – to help students learn to identify solutions that repair harm and keep the community and individuals safe.
3. **Interpersonal development** – to develop healthy social and emotional skills for individual and community benefit.

Teacher description of incident:

Action taken:

Teacher signature _____

Student signature _____

Parent signature _____

original: parents cc: office, teacher, rsp

ACTION PLAN

For Kindergarten through 2nd Grade Students

Parents please have a discussion with your child using the following format. This is a tool to help your child work with the conflict at hand. Parents may assist child to answer questions using complete sentences.

Disapprove – Affirm – Discover – Do-Over (DADD)

1. *The first D is for "Disapprove". Begin by expressing clear disapproval for the action. "It is hurtful to behave as you did." "We don't speak that way in our family/class." Speak with quiet directness. Mean it.*

Parents, please initial here _____

2. *A is for Affirm. We know that we are supposed to separate a child's actions from his/her whole being, but it's not always easy. To achieve this, disapproval needs to be followed up right away by an affirmation: "You hardly ever speak like that." "So often you say helpful things."*

Parents, please initial here _____

3. *Then D for Discover. Then the adult discovers what the subtle issues are. "What's going on?" "Something must be bothering you." This question must come at the right time to get an honest response.*

4. *Finally D for Do-over. When the issue is clarified, the adult can help the child to do over. "Let's work out a way to say what you need to say without being hurtful," or "You'll need to apologize for the words you used but then you can say what's bothering you." Most often for younger children this stage involves physically doing something to help remedy the situation.*

ACTION PLAN
For 3rd through 8th Grade Students

Restorative Dialogue – parents please use the questions below to open up a discussion with your student: Dialogue leads to understanding and action to set things right and repair and restore relationships. Please discuss the following questions with your child. * **Please have student write the answer to each question using complete sentences.**

1. What happened and what were you thinking at the time of the incident?

2. Who has been affected by what happened and how?

3. What about this has been hardest for you?

4. What is one thing you can take responsibility for? What is one thing you need help with?



Notice to Parents

Regular and timely communication between school and home is vital for student success. Report Cards are issued after each semester (January and June.) In between semesters, teachers periodically send home *Notice to Parents* to inform a family if a student has excessive absences, tardies, lower academic performance (in danger of not passing), or a behavior that is continuously interrupting their learning or the success of the classroom. This notice can come from the classroom teacher or a specialty teacher for any student. This communication is intended to provide you with information early in the term so that you may discuss this with your student, and develop a plan for corrective action, prior to the end of the grading terms. The following page is a blank *Notice to Parents* for your preview.

NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL
Notice to Parents

For Office Use Only
Mailed ____/____/____
-

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher: _____ Subject: _____ Current Grade in Subject: _____
(Middle School only)

Dear Parent of Guardian:

*Presently, your child is **not meeting** classroom standards. The attitude, habit, or behavior listed below is interfering with your child's success in the classroom.*

BEHAVIOR

- Excessive talking
- Disrupts learning environment
- Inattentiveness
- Lack of effort
- Coming to class unprepared
- Unwilling to work cooperatively

ACHIEVEMENT

- Not mastering grade level work
- Incomplete assignments
- Missing assignments
- Poor test scores
- Poor performance on classwork
- _____

ATTENDANCE

- Excessive tardies
- Excessive absences
- _____

Additional concerns: _____

Suggestions for improvement: _____

- Please contact teacher to confirm receipt of this notice. by phone by email
- Please contact teacher to schedule a conference. by phone by email
- Please discuss this with your child.

Teacher contact: _____

Student signature: _____ (optional/teacher discretion)

Teacher signature: _____ Date: _____



Middle School Homework Guidelines, Late Homework Policy, and A.C.T.

Generally, homework is geared toward practice and mastery, such as reading, practice problems reinforcing math concepts, music instrument practice, and review and study of block material. These are areas where repetition is valuable in developing mastery and comprehension. Homework is often not an ideal setting for learning new material or applying very new concepts and we strive to do this during school hours. We dedicate extensive time at school to start and often complete assignments, and try to limit homework to allow for a student to have outside of school activities.

In middle school, the target is for approximately 60-90 minutes of regular homework five days a week. This will be toward the lower end of the range in 6th grade and toward the higher end by 8th grade. Sometimes during the year there will be projects, reports, and performances, and homework may become less predictable and dependent on the time management of the student, however teachers will try to adjust the regular homework load to accommodate these fluctuations. Teachers will conduct homework studies during the year where students will explicitly track all homework minutes to see how they are doing in general on meeting the homework targets.

Math is not covered or assigned on Fridays in 6th and 7th grades, and teachers try whenever possible to not assign new homework on Friday, but it is possible that there is some homework over the weekend that involves reading, studying, and/or catch up work from the week. Here is an estimated breakdown of daily homework:

Monday thru Friday in 7th and 8th grade, Monday thru Thursday 6th grade

20 minutes of Main Lesson (focused on studying, completion of work from class)

20 minutes of Math Practice (8th Grade Algebra 30 minutes)

15 minutes of specialty class homework (usually Music and Spanish)

15 minutes of Language Arts Practice (reading, vocabulary, writing)

Obviously there will be variation based on the student, and some students will require more or less than the target. Another variable is the amount of work that the student completes during work time made available at school. Another factor is the individual pace of the student. If your student is spending much more than is expected on a regular basis, that is a sign that the teacher, parent, and student should meet together to develop a plan to bring the student back in line with expected time for homework.



If on a particular evening a student is spending excessive time for current homework (make-up work excluded), a parent may send a homework log (below) to the teacher logging the amount of homework completed by subject that evening and request an extension. The homework log is located below and may be on the class teacher's website. Should this become a repeated occurrence, **the teacher may refer the student to after school Homework Club for additional support with homework completion.**

Missing or Late Homework. It is the middle school student's responsibility to turn in homework at the very start of the day when it is due. Homework not turned in at the very start of the day is considered late, unless the teacher makes an exception. Late homework will not receive full credit, and the grade is typically lowered by a full grade each day the assignment is late. Homework over two weeks late will receive zero credit. Should this become a repeated occurrence, **the teacher may refer the student to Homework Club for additional support with homework completion.**

Missed homework due to absences. Students who are absent due to illness or shadowing high schools still must make up assigned homework on a timely basis. In the case of shadowing, the student is expected to make arrangements ahead of time to make up the homework that same day. If a student misses school due to illness, the student has one week to make up the homework assignment for full credit. After one week, only 50% credit is available for the assignment. If a student repeatedly turns in homework assignments late or has frequent absences, **the teacher will refer the student to after school Homework Club for additional support with homework completion.**

Missed tests due to absences, and A.C.T. If a student is absent when a test is given, they will be required to attend After Class Time, or A.C.T., to make up the test. ACT will be a quiet and productive setting that is closely supervised by a middle school teacher to ensure test integrity. ACT also ensures that a student does not miss additional instructional time to make up a test during the school day. Parents will be notified via e-mail when a student is assigned ACT to make up a test. As soon as a student has finished their test, they can be excused from ACT. ACT will take place on Thursdays from 1:05 to 2PM, and is mandatory when assigned. It is recommended that personal appointments or other after school commitments be avoided until after 2PM on Thursday.

Monitoring homework completion and grades. Homework and graded assignments are entered directly by NCS teachers on the *NUSD Aeries System*, which is accessible to parents and students by setting up an *Aeries Homelink™* account. Teachers will not notify parents or students of missing work on a regular or ongoing basis, unless the student is in danger of not passing a class (in which case a "Notice to Parents" report will be sent home). It is the students and parents option to monitor the records for their student online.



Daily Homework Log

Name: _____

Date: _____

Area:	Assignment/Description of Activity	Start Time (HH:MM)	Stop Time (HH:MM)	Total Time (MIN)
Main Lesson				
Main Lesson				
Main Lesson				
Math				
Spanish				
Music				
Language Arts				
Other (specify)				
			TOTAL (MIN):	

Instructions: Record your homework by assignment/activity. Total your time for the day in minutes.

Parent Signature _____ **(required)**

Explanation of excessive homework: _____



Shadowing High Schools

Most high schools provide an opportunity for 8th Grade students to “shadow” for one academic day. The practice of “shadowing” means the 8th grader attends the high school for a school day by joining an assigned high school student as they attend their regularly scheduled classes. This allows 8th Grade students the opportunity to learn more about the high school and discern their interest. Most shadowing takes place in 8th grade from September through early December. On occasion students will shadow in 7th grade. If a 7th grader shadows a particular school they will not be granted an excused absence for shadowing that same school in 8th grade. In general, NCS recommends that students wait until their 8th grade year to begin the shadowing process.

While shadowing is beneficial to help students determine next steps for high school, it can negatively affect their acquisition and performance with the 8th grade curriculum. Students will be expected to inform teachers of the upcoming absence due to shadowing and to preview what instruction they will miss and ascertain how to complete the work for that day.

Students will be responsible for turning in their schoolwork on the day they return from the shadow day and are not given additional time as they are when absent due to an illness.

When a school is under serious consideration by a student, NCS fully supports shadowing. To avoid unnecessary shadow days, NCS encourages parents and students to attend open houses offered in the evening or weekends prior to shadowing to carefully determine whether a shadow day is needed. Shadowing can negatively impact a student’s access to instruction and even academic performance, and presents challenges for both students and teachers to plan for the missed instructional time. When anticipating upcoming shadow days, students (with support from their parents) must adhere to the following steps.

1. Email both the teacher and Office Manager with the scheduled shadowing date at least 2 weeks in advance.
2. An NUSD Shadowing Form, obtained at the NCS office (or teacher website) before the visit, must be signed by the teacher or administrator at the High School visited on the date of the visit. This form must then be returned to the NCS office for the absence to be excused the next school day.
3. The student is responsible for ensuring that his/her absence will not adversely affect his/her schoolwork, and current assignments must be submitted upon return for full credit in most cases.

SHADOW FORM INSTRUCTIONS

- Form must be signed by student and parent and approved by the principal/designee of student's school of residence prior to shadowing
- The student must bring the form to the school they are shadowing and present it when checking in
- The principal/designee of the shadowing school must sign the form verifying the student's participation in shadowing that day
- It's the student's responsibility to bring the completed form to the attendance office the following day to clear the absence (keep with attendance/absence records)
- The attendance code for a shadow day is F (field trip)

NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**REQUEST/PERMISSION TO SHADOW
& ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION**

**STUDENT: RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR SCHOOL'S ATTENDANCE OFFICE,
FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

▶ PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY ◀

SECTION A: REQUEST / PERMISSION (completed by student, parent and school of attendance)

Student Name: _____ Date of Request: _____

School of Attendance: _____ Date of Shadow Day: _____

School Site Shadowing: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal/Designee Signature: _____ Date: _____

SECTION B: ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION (completed by school shadowed)

School Site Shadowed: _____ Date Shadowed: _____

Principal/Designee Signature: _____ Date: _____



High School Application Process and Instruction

Dear 8th Grade Parents and Students:

<p>If your child is applying to any private high school or to a school-within-a-school program (MSA or STEM), let us know by December 1st. These schools ask for input from Novato Charter: teacher recommendations, transcripts, discipline, attendance data and/or test scores. We need to have a release of confidentially form from you before we release this data.</p>	<p>The final date to request recommendations and transcripts from Novato Charter School teachers/Staff /Office is December 1st. Most high schools require our input by mid-January, and we need time to write recommendations and prepare packets before their deadline.</p>
<p>Office Processing Fee (Per Application)</p>	<p>We request a \$35 fee to cover staff time, clerical supplies, and postage. Please make checks out to: NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL. If the fee presents a hardship, you may request a waiver.</p>
<p>Forms Provided to Novato Charter by Parents</p>	<p>Your student needs to provide a “brag sheet” to each teacher who agrees to write a recommendation. Check each high school’s website. Some schools (Marin Academy, Sonoma Academy, St Vincent’s) provide Transcript Request forms that must be signed by a parent and submitted to their student’s middle school. Some schools (Branson, Marin Catholic, The Marin School) have online processes set up, and they will ask parents to submit email addresses for teachers and/or a counselor/administrator. For the counselor/administrator’s email address, please use jhealy@nUSD.org. If you don’t know a teacher’s email address, Jill Healy can provide that information to you.</p>
<p>Turn in Fee and Forms</p>	<p>Drop off the fee and signed forms to Jill Healy in the front office on or before December 1st.</p>
<p>Forms Provided to High Schools by Novato Charter</p>	<p>Some or all of the following: teacher/counselor/administrator recommendations, transcripts, attendance data, discipline records, test scores. We are not able to accommodate requests made after December 1st.</p>

If you have any questions, please email Jill Healy (jhealy@nUSD.org).



High School Recommendation Request Form

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Need a letter of recommendation for high school?

Complete and return this form no later than December 1st to the office.

1. **Write a “brag sheet” about yourself.** Your brag sheet should contain any or all of the following: your positive personal qualities, your favorite subjects (and why), your hobbies, your interests, your activities (sports, clubs, youth groups), your accomplishments, your talents, any hardships or challenges you have overcome, any awards you have received, any leadership roles, any work experience, and any volunteer experience.

2. Make copies of the brag sheet. Keep one for yourself, provide one to each teacher who you ask for a recommendation, and give one to Jill Healy.

3. List the private high schools and/or school programs that you are applying to:

Write name of school here	Write name of school here
Write name of school here	Write name of school here
Write name of school here	Write name of school here

4. Visit each teacher who you would like to write a recommendation **on or before December 1st**. Politely ask the teacher whether he/she will write a recommendation for you. If he/she says yes, give them a copy of your brag sheet. **Fill in their name below and ask the teacher to sign by their name. Write the name of the school/program that the teacher will write a recommendation for.**

Name of teacher/ other	Signature of Teacher	School/Program/Subject
Name of teacher/ other	Signature of Teacher	School/Program/Subject
Name of teacher/ other	Signature of Teacher	School/Program/Subject

5. For every school/program you’re applying to, check their website for forms that you need to submit to Novato Charter School (for example: Transcript Releases). Many schools/programs require transcripts, grades, attendance, discipline, and test scores.

Your parent must sign here to authorize release of this data:

Signature of Parent	Signature of Student
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6. Novato Charter School requests a \$35 fee to cover staff time and office supplies. Please make checks payable to “Novato Charter School”. **Please deliver the payment, any forms you need to submit to Novato Charter, a copy of your brag sheet, and a copy of this completed signed NCS High School Request form on or before December 1st to Jill in the office.**

If you have any questions, contact Jill Healy in the office: jhealy@nUSD.org or (415) 883-4254



Guidelines for a Middle School Student Proposal

Dear Middle School Student,

As a school we are committed to utilizing Direct Communication with each other. This means that when we have a request, concern or question we direct it to the person most closely associated with the topic. For the most part this means that when a topic arises you will direct your inquiry to your class teacher. At times you may want your topic considered by a larger audience or the topic might be relevant to a larger decision making group i.e. the Middle School Team. When this is the case you may submit your proposal, request or topic of consideration to the MS Teaching Team. Below we have outlined the format for submitting your proposal. The Middle School Team is comprised of the MS Teaching Faculty and Ms. Lloyd. We generally meet on Monday afternoons and are usually able to review requests **submitted by the Friday before the Monday meeting**. If we have a full agenda we will notify you that your proposal will be reviewed the following Monday. For consideration your proposal must meet the following criteria:

- *Final Draft quality*
 - Neat (typed or handwritten)
 - Contains a date, opening and closing
 - Contains the name of submitter
- Clearly state the request and supporting ideas in a respectful manner.

You may chose to utilize a memo format as follows:

To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

Opening

Summary

Conclusion

A Middle School Team member will follow up with you regarding your proposal within a week after the Monday it was considered.

Please feel free to ask any MS Team member for clarification.

Warm Regards,

MS Team



Healthy Food and Drink/Low Waste Agreement

While the middle school student may be expected to pack their own lunch, it is important to provide them with plenty of healthy food options in packaging that can be easily reused and not generate waste or litter on campus. We strive to be zero waste, so any landfill trash brought in that is not recyclable needs to be packed back home. Please have all containers and lunch containers clearly labeled with your student name so misplaced items can be easily returned.

Sweets and Treats. Students are not allowed to bring sweets, treats, or candy in their lunches. We do allow for treats to be served on for special occasions (birthday celebrations, etc.).

Drinks. The only drink that is allowed be brought to school is water in a refillable water container. We do not allow carbonated, flavored, or caffeinated drinks, milk, chocolate milk, juices, teas, or other sugary drinks. When these drinks spilled on the rug they are difficult to eradicate from the carpets. Also do not send students onto campus in the morning with drinks from the local coffee shop in single use containers. Again, these produce waste in the classroom and the potential for spillage or exploding.

Messy Food Items. Please be aware that we often eat in the classroom, and that messy food items often fall on the floor. Particularly messy are larger bags of chips or popcorn. These items, if brought to school, should be in individual serving sizes. Larger bags tend to be shared around and subsequently spilled and ground into the floor.

Nut Free Zone. Please avoid raw nuts and peanut butter. In certain classes, where severe allergies are present, nuts are not allowed.



Note Taking in the Middle School

It is recognized that a variety of learning styles must be accommodated to support note taking in the middle school, and that there is no single way for taking notes. The Waldorf curriculum stresses oral storytelling, and listening remains the primary method for receiving information from class. But as the content increases, methods for capturing information in written form are developed and supported through instruction and modeling by the teacher.

6th Grade

- Note taking is introduced
- The focus is on format and how to organize notes (i.e., Cornell Notes)
- Students may rely on teacher or peer notes, as needed
- Notes are collected with main lesson work, but are not assessed.
- Guided notes can also be used to develop note-taking skills, and for students who need extra note taking support.

7th Grade

- Students are prompted to capture summary level (outline) information.
- Students are prompted to capture limited supporting details; the depth varies based on the individual.
- Students may continue to rely on teacher or peer notes, as needed.
- Notes are collected with main lesson work for completeness, but are not assessed.
- Guided notes can also be used to develop note-taking skills, and for students who need extra note taking support.

8th Grade

- Students are prompted to capture summary level (outline) information.
- Students are prompted to capture sufficient supporting details; the depth varies based on the individual.
- Notes are collected with main lesson work, and are periodically assessed.
- Guided notes can also be used to develop note-taking skills, and for students who need extra note taking support.



The Block Switch

At Novato Charter it is our intent to bring to the middle school students a greater variety of teachers that reflect the growing maturity of this population. While keeping the Class Teacher model, the middle school teachers work as a team to hold, guide and teach the middle school classes. In addition to the specialty teachers, the middle school experiences *The Block Switch*. Twice a year each middle school class has a block with one of the other middle school teachers. For example, the 6th grade class, while having most of their Main Lesson Blocks taught by their class teacher, will have one block taught to them by the 7th grade class teacher, and another block taught to them by the 8th grade class teacher. In this way the middle school students will have three Main Lesson teachers each year.

Electives

It is also our intent to bring more choice to the middle school students. In addition to the projects that have “choices” built into them, we also offer the middle school one double-period per week for *Electives*. Each Friday between the Fall and Spring Breaks is devoted to bringing a range of classes that the middle school student can choose from. Traditionally we will have 7-9 different elective classes, running the gambit from woodworking to clay, sports to gardening, and murals to Maker Space. We also offer a class we call “Fab Lab” for students who might choose to use that time to catch up on homework or research their own projects. We offer two sessions of electives each year, making a total of six elective choices during a student’s middle school career.



Student Social Action Committee

Seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to participate in a student-led leadership and community service group called the Student Social Action Committee, or SSAC. The SSAC helps younger students and peers navigate social challenges by helping supervise recess areas and resolve social difficulties as they occur. They also promote a healthy social environment on campus by developing a “code of compassion” and by facilitating special events, such as No One Eats Alone Day. Students in the SSAC are led by NCS faculty to develop conflict resolution, communication, and leadership skills.

To be considered for the SSAC, a student must formally type a statement that explains their motivation and interest in joining the SSAC. In the statement, they must include one or more examples where they have been involved in bullying, teasing, or social exclusion/isolation and how they can empathize with others who experience this. Their experience can be as the target (victim), the bystander, or the perpetrator (bully). All of these perspectives are valuable to the SSAC committee.

Then at a designated meeting in the fall, the student will read their letter aloud to the existing committee. An important part of being in the SSAC is the ability to talk to students about their personal experiences so this demonstration is essential. The faculty chair will notify students if they are selected into the SSAC, which has a limited number of members.

Students need to be aware that the SSAC requires volunteering their recess time (typically two recesses a week) and occasionally additional time commitments. Once a student is selected into the SSAC, they are expected to fulfill their commitment for the remainder of the year. Should a student miss a meeting or service duty, they will receive a warning. Should they miss a second meeting or service duty, the student’s parents will be notified. After a third missed meeting or service duty, the student will be removed from the SSAC. It is our intent that only students who are truly committed to improving the social environment at NCS are allowed to participate in the SSAC.



Middle School Dance Guidelines (6-8 grade)

One NCS staff member has to be present, a 6-8th grade teacher. A minimum of 6 chaperones is recommended.

Chaperones will be given designated sections to supervise by NCS staff. (2 at door, 2 bathrooms, 2 Roaming dance floor area)

All issues and concerns that arise will be directed to the teacher chaperone.

Students may not leave the dance once admitted except to go to the bathroom.

Chaperones are on duty and they are responsible for the safety of the students and the smooth operation of the dance. *Please keep the focus on the students.*

Chaperones are responsible for receipt of money and check-in procedures.

Check in procedures:

- Adults may “signs-in” the students they bring to the dance. This includes the cell phone number(s) of an available adult for pick-up. Alternatively, a dance permission form with the required information can be accepted for every student.
- Only students on invited school’s rosters can attend. Class rosters are used to verify this. (Attending schools must provide student rosters at least 1 week prior to the dance)
- Student cell phones must be checked in at the door.

Students not abiding by expectations or who demonstrate inappropriate language or behavior will be asked to leave.

- No inappropriate dancing. No bumping, inappropriate touching, freaking, etc.
- Anyone who behaves inappropriately will be removed from the dance. Parents will be called to provide transportation.
- No alcohol or drugs
- Appropriate dress—no mini skirts, no “short shorts”, no bare midriffs. No shoulder-less tops or dresses. No clothing with inappropriate logos.

Students parents must be available for pick up at any point during the dance if these guidelines are not followed.

Music must be appropriate for age level and no explicit lyrics are allowed.

I have read, understand, and agree to uphold the middle school dance guidelines.

_____ Chaperone Signature