

# Big Sur Charter School 2025-26 Family Handbook



## ***Our Mission***

*The Big Sur Charter School is devoted to guiding students to become intellectually curious, emotionally intelligent, environmental stewards.*

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Big Sur Charter School ("BSCS") community! BSCS offers a vibrant alternative to traditional public schooling. We combine education at our Monterey Learning Center, the home environment, in the community and in nature to ensure that students benefit from diverse and experiential learning environments. The school and the family represent two parts of a key, when connected in partnership, unlocks the potential of each student.

We recognize that not all students learn the same way and are committed to providing academically challenging programs that meet the individual needs of every student.

This handbook is designed to help you understand more about our school, so that you can fully participate as a partner in your child's learning. We know that you want the best for your child. Let's work together to provide your child with the support they need to be successful!



**Where Home, School, and Community  
are Partners in Learning**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

The Charter School does not discriminate against any person on the basis of actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, immigration status, religion, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes in the California Penal Code.

The Charter School adheres to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEIA").

The Charter School does not discourage students from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the Charter School for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance, disability, neglect or delinquency, English proficiency, for being homeless or a foster/mobile youth, economic disadvantage, nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The Charter School shall not encourage a student currently attending Charter School to disenroll or transfer to another school based on any of the aforementioned reasons except in cases of expulsion and suspension or involuntary removal in accordance with the Charter School's charter and relevant policies.

The Charter School does not request nor require student records prior to a student's enrollment.

The Charter School shall provide a copy of the California Department of Education Complaint Notice and Form to any parent, guardian, or student over the age of 18 at the following times: (1) when a parent, guardian, or student over the age of 18 inquires about enrollment; (2) before conducting an enrollment lottery; and (3) before disenrollment of a student.

The Charter School is committed to providing an educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex); Titles IV, VI, and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, or national origin); The Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the IDEIA; and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA (mental or physical disability). The Charter School also prohibits sexual harassment, including cyber sexual bullying, and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, religious affiliation, creed, color, immigration status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. The Charter School does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including discrimination, intimidation, or bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which the Charter School does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of position or gender. The Charter School will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted. Inquiries, complaints, or grievances regarding harassment as described in this section, above, should be directed to the Charter School Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") Compliance Officer:

Aimee Alling, School Director  
304 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940  
831-324-4573

The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in the Charter School's programs or activities. The Charter School prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint or who participates or refuses to participate in a complaint investigation.

## **Admission Requirements**

BSCS admits students residing in Monterey County and all adjacent counties. Upon enrollment families are required to provide immunization records, proof of age, and residency documentation for each student. Those students who do not meet the State guidelines for immunizations, and are not otherwise lawfully exempt from these requirements, will be excluded from attendance until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from BSCS classes at the discretion of the School.

We are a public school and do not charge tuition. All interested families are encouraged to complete the Application for Enrollment. To ensure that parents and students understand the model of our home-school-community approach we encourage you to schedule a school visit. These appointments may be made on our website.

If the number of students who wish to attend the Charter School exceeds the Charter School's capacity, as set annually by the Board of Directors, admission shall be determined by a public random drawing. In the event of a drawing, current students wishing to return will be automatically enrolled. Remaining enrollment spots will be filled through the public random drawing, scheduled at a time and place so as to allow for maximum parent involvement, with the following admissions preferences:

Siblings of students admitted to or attending the Charter School  
Residents of the District (Big Sur Unified School District)  
All other applicants

Students selected in the lottery process have thirty (30) days to formally register in order to ensure enrollment. If the registration is not completed in the allotted period of time, the Charter School will proceed to offer enrollment to the next student on the waiting list.

Formal enrollment in the Charter School also requires the following documents submitted prior to the start of the school year:

- Master Agreement and Acknowledgement of Responsibilities document signed by the parent, student, charter school teacher, and any person designated by the parent to teach their child. This document will clearly provide educational guidelines and responsibilities and provide consent to voluntarily participate in this independent study program.
- Records documenting immunizations required by the State of California.
- Residency verification documents.

At the conclusion of the public random drawing, all students who were not granted admission due to capacity shall be given the option to put their name on a waitlist according to their draw in the lottery. This waitlist will allow students the option of enrollment in the case of an opening during the current school year. In no circumstance will a waitlist carry over to the following school year.

Parents/guardians, teachers and the student are required to sign the Master Agreement before the first day of instruction. The Master Agreement contains the courses and monthly consultation meeting times.

Students may not be given access to any school curricula or activities until the Master Agreement is signed by all parties. No attendance may be claimed by the school until the Master Agreement has been signed.

## **Disenrolling**

The state of California allows students to be enrolled in only one school at a time, regardless of whether the schools are public or private. Parents must notify BSCS when their child is enrolled in another school. Families must attend a final meeting with their teacher to return curriculum and materials. When a request for cumulative records is received from the new school, student records will be mailed to the requesting school.

The school district where the student resides will be notified of the student's disenrollment pursuant to Education Code 47605(d)(3):

*If a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter school without graduating or completing the school year for any reason, the charter school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil's last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information.*

## **Involuntary Removal Process**

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the action ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include the charges against the student and an explanation of the student's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. The hearing shall be consistent with the Charter School's expulsion procedures. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the Charter School's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon parent/guardian request for a hearing, the Charter School will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder, and shall include a copy of the Charter School's expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If the parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing the student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the Charter School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or reoccur.

## **Parent Engagement**

BSCS is committed to fostering family involvement. Families are encouraged to volunteer for fundraising events, attend school board or other school meetings, or sign up to be the class parent.

Parent meetings are another great way for families to be involved. These meetings provide opportunities to exchange ideas, strategies, and resources are crucial to student success.

Eighth grade families have the opportunity to plan the 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion.

## **School Communication**

ParentSquare is the school's primary communication tool. Class and school calendars along with all school communication is delivered through ParentSquare.

Family contact information, including the phone numbers and email addresses of all families who choose to be included is available on ParentSquare. ParentSquare offers parents the option to keep your contact information private. This information is for school use only and may not be used for mailing lists, promotion of business, religious, or other advertisement purposes. We understand that contact information can change during the school year. BSCS relies on families to keep their contact information current in ParentSquare and with the office. Missing communication from the school can lead to students getting behind and to missed adventures!

## **Sibling Policy**

Big Sur Charter Schools Sibling Policy is one that considers the safety and needs of students, faculty, and families, while supporting parent participation and ensuring that both teacher and parent volunteers can focus entirely on the children in the classroom and during other school-sponsored events.

- Siblings may accompany parents to school events that are open to the public.
- Siblings may attend classroom activities with their parents at the discretion of the individual teacher. Please make prior arrangements with the teacher.
- Siblings are not allowed when parents chaperone field trips, Coastal Stewardship classes or other school organized events.
- Siblings are not allowed when parent volunteers are in the learning classroom.

## **Fundraising**

The purpose of the fundraising policy is to ensure that all fundraising efforts on behalf of the Big Sur Charter School (BSCS):

- Are consistent with the school's mission
- Comply with state and federal laws
- Are properly accounted for
- Directly impact the students of BSCS

Fundraising makes it possible for BSCS to provide programs aligned with the school's mission such as Coastal Stewardship, Art and Community Learning Partners programs.

Written permission from the school director is required if:

- Any individual or organization wanting to solicit funds or property on behalf of BSCS
- Any individual or organization, whether or not affiliated with BSCS, wishes to use any BSCS database, contact list, or communication channel to solicit funds or property to solicit fund on behalf of BSCS
- Any use of the BSCS name, brand and logo for fundraising activities



It is the intent of the BSCS Board that all fundraising events or programs should strive to incorporate practices that are in keeping with the mission of BSCS.

All gifts and donations will be accepted by the BSCS Board of Directors during regular Board meetings.

The school Director shall oversee and support all BSCS fundraising activities. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to, developing the annual fundraising plan in collaboration with the Board of Directors.

### **Family Giving**

Family giving is a great way to directly impact students. The Board recommends contributions from each parent at the level of \$50 per educational month per student for families of two students or less, and \$20 per educational month per student for families with three or more students. Please note that donations are strictly voluntary. No student's enrollment status will be impacted, nor will the student incur any other penalties if the family does not donate.

### **Drop-off, Pick-up and Parking**

- Wave Street/Cannery Row is the safest place to park and either walk your student up to the Learning Center or let them out.
- Please drop-off & pick-up your student on time.
- There is no supervision before 9 am or after classes end.
- If your student is in TK through Grade 4, you must sign your student in and out.
- Please wait in the courtyard for classes to begin or end. Be mindful of the noise as some classes may still be in session.
- There is no parking in either of the lots for any reason.
- No stopping in the red zone - it blocks the crosswalk making it unsafe for pedestrians.

### **Lunch and Snack**

- Zero waste as possible
- Send lots of food, reusable water bottle and utensils
- If you need to drop a lunch off after school starts, please bring it to the office.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Big Sur Charter School's academic program provides educational opportunities in multiple environments - home, learning center, and community. The amount of time spent in any one learning environment is determined by grade level, with transitional kindergarteners spending more time learning at home, and eighth graders spending more time learning at the learning center and in the community.

At the learning center, kindergarten through eighth grade students work in small classroom settings with credentialed teachers using a comprehensive curriculum that meets Common Core Standards. Focus subjects are:

- Math (K-8)
- Language Arts
- Reading (K-2)
- Written expression (3-8)
- Art

Transitional kindergarten students will engage in play-based, hands-on investigations that incorporate language, literacy, and mathematics throughout the day.

In addition to their learning center classes, all students participate in Coastal Stewardship classes, our environmental education program.

On days students are not at the Learning Center, they continue to learn at home under the direct supervision of parents/guardians, using curriculum and resources provided by the school. Focus subjects are:

- Language Arts - Grammar, vocabulary, reading or writing depending on grade
- Social Studies
- Science
- PE
- Math (TK)

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that students engage in educational activities assigned by the School on each of the days of the regular school calendar in order to be considered in attendance on that day.

The school year is divided into ten (10) Learning Periods (LP) with a maximum of 20 school days each. For students in all grade levels offered by the School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be no more than twenty (20) school days.

Big Sur Charter School recognizes that travel can provide students with important life experiences that enhance their education. If a student is to be absent for more than a week, parents must work with their student's teacher to complete a travel form. Failure to do so may result in a Report of Missed Assignment meeting to determine if Intendent Study is in the best interest of the student.

Big Sur Charter School offers a full home education option when extenuating circumstances exist. However, participation in the learning center classes ensures that students meet the rigorous academic state standards that collaborative work and group discussions becomes challenging in a home setting and therefore is strongly discouraged once a student reaches 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Families participating in this option will not have access to Coastal Stewardship classes, due to class size and requirements of the Learning Center Program.

Requests must be submitted in writing and approved by the School Board. Once approved, families meet weekly with their teacher of record. At this meeting, weekly work will be evaluated for time value for attendance purposes and assessments may be administered. All work is to be graded by the parent. Ungraded work will be sent home and can be presented to the teacher at the next meeting.

### **Teacher Qualifications**

As the Charter School receives Title I federal funds through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA"), as reauthorized and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA"), all parents/guardians of students attending the Charter School may request information regarding the professional qualifications of classroom teachers and/or paraprofessionals, including at a minimum:

1. Whether the student's teacher:
  - a. Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - b. Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
  - c. Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Upon request, the Charter School will provide the information to the parents/guardians in a timely manner. Parents/guardians may contact the School Director by email, [director@bigsurcharterschool.org](mailto:director@bigsurcharterschool.org), or by phone, 831-324-4573, to obtain this information.

### **Coastal Stewardship**

The Coastal Stewardship Program is an integral part of Big Sur Charter School, offering students a unique opportunity to explore and engage with the environment through hands-on learning. Students in grades TK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade participate in weekly outdoor education classes that include guided nature hikes, ecology lessons, and discussions on environmental challenges. This experience helps students develop a deep understanding of the threats facing our oceans and ecosystems—going beyond awareness to take meaningful action in protecting our coast. Led by our Nature Specialist, the program takes place in various locations throughout Monterey County. Its goals are age- and grade-specific, aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and NOAA Sustainability Standards, with academic rigor increasing progressively by grade level.

### **Art**

Art education is an essential part of our curriculum, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression. It enhances problem-solving skills, builds confidence, and provides students with meaningful ways to interpret and connect with the world around them.

BSCS students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade participate in a weekly art class. Rooted in the Visual and Performing Arts Standards, our program encourages students to explore their artistic passions.

### **Curriculum**

All students are provided school selected, California standards-based curriculum. A copy of the curriculum list is available in the main office and on our website. All materials are the property of BSCS and must be returned in good condition at the end of each year or as required by the resource library. Parents agree to pay for all lost or damaged materials.

## **Assignments**

Each Learning Period students receive a Home Study Guide (HSG) from their teacher. The HSG is a monthly plan that defines the content and assignments to be taught and graded at home by the parent or guardian, and has weekly turn in dates for assignments.

Each week, completed and graded HSG assignments are turned in along with the Assignment and Work Record (AWR). The AWR is a weekly record completed by the student to monitor completion and mastery of content in the Home Study Guide. Ungraded HSG assignments will be sent home and must be resubmitted within five (5) days to make up for any lost attendance.

Students also receive instruction and assignments from teachers during learning center classes. These assignments are graded and reported by the teacher.

## **Academic Honesty**

The Governing Board believes that academic honesty and personal integrity are fundamental components of a student's education and character development. The Board expects that students will not cheat, lie, plagiarize or commit other acts of academic dishonesty.

Students, parents/guardians, staff and administrators shall be responsible for creating and maintaining a positive school climate that encourages honesty. We understand that part of growing up is to test boundaries. For that reason, when addressing academic dishonesty, the first step will be a conversation with the teacher and or school director explaining the importance of doing one's own work, and being honest. If a second conversation is warranted, the parents will be notified, and the student shall be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion from Big Sur Charter School.

## **8th Grade Stewardship Camp**

Participation in Stewardship Camp requires that students be in good academic and behavioral standing. Good academic standing is defined as having the equivalent to at least all C's and having maintained full attendance for LP's 6-10. Good behavioral standing means that students are following the school expectations:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe
- Be Your Personal Best

## **Attendance**

As a nonclassroom-based school attendance at BSCS is assignment based. Students must complete all HSG and learning center assignments to receive full attendance and to ensure that the following instructional minutes are met:

- 36,000 minutes in kindergarten (equivalent to approx. 3.4 hrs/day)
- 50,400 minutes in grades 1-3 (equivalent to approx. 4.8 hrs/day)
- 54,000 minutes in grades 4-8 (equivalent to approx. 5.1 hrs/day)

Completed HSG and learning center assignments are evaluated monthly by the teacher for attendance purposes. The teacher may deduct attendance days if, in his/her professional judgment, the work does not represent sufficient instructional time. Ungraded/incomplete work may be sent home and must be resubmitted within five (5) days to make up for any lost attendance.

### **Report of Missed Attendance (Involuntary Removal)**

Per the Independent Study Policy, when any student fails to complete their assigned work during any Learning Period, the School Director or his/her designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study. A student may miss six (6) assignments in any given LP and still receive full attendance. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record.

A Report of Missed Attendance evaluation may also be conducted if the student is not making adequate academic progress. The evaluation can include the following supportive strategies:

- A required meeting between student, parent/guardian and supervising teacher to create a plan to support the student and/or parent.
- Possible strategies to support the student's learning such as individual or small group tutoring, parent coaching, or other methods to support the student's success.

The Administration shall take any information presented by the parent/guardian into consideration when determining whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study. Additional factors to be considered include but are not limited to the following:

1. Student's grades at the time of the evaluation
2. Teacher observation/feedback
3. Standardized testing data
4. Student's progress in independent study curriculum

The Administration's decision shall be provided in writing to the parent/guardian within three (3) days of the evaluation. The Administration may:

1. Place the student on attendance probation to be evaluated again at a later time,
2. Use other alternatives to improve attendance, or
3. Find that it is not in the student's best interest to remain in independent study.

If the Administration finds that it is not in the student's best interest to remain in independent study, then the student shall be involuntarily removed from Big Sur Charter School pursuant to state law and charter school procedures.

### **Report of Missed Attendance for Special Education Students**

If a Report of Missed Assignment Evaluation is needed for a Special Education student, the IEP team will be notified and an IEP meeting will be held to determine if independent study is an appropriate placement.

### **Grading**

Parents are responsible for grading all HSG work according to the grading scale below. Ungraded work will be sent home to be graded, but must be returned within five (5) instructional days for the student to receive credit.

Big Sur Charter School's evaluation scale seeks to measure students' understanding of academic content but also, and maybe more importantly, the effort students put into learning the content and their academic growth. Students receive grades at the end of each Learning Period based on content mastery.

Evaluation Scale Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:

**4 = Expert**- Student understands content well enough to thoroughly teach it to someone else.

**3 = Practitioner**- Student requires minimal support and makes few mistakes.

**2 = Apprentice**- Student is starting to understand the content but requires moderate support.

**1 = Novice**- Student is starting to learn the content but does not understand it yet.

**0** = No work turned in

## **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

BSCS will provide monthly access to progress reports via the student portal. Report cards are sent home at the end of each school year.

Report cards are a combination of the grades they receive from parents on home education assignments and their teachers on learning center assignments. While the teachers ultimately determine final grades, parent input is key to fully evaluating a student's academic progress.

To assist the teachers in determining a student's final grade and reflect on progress made during the school year card process, parents are required to complete a report card form at the end of the year.

## **State Testing**

Every publicly funded school is required to administer standardized tests to the applicable grades (e.g., the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress.) Student non-participation in these tests can seriously impact the school's funding allocation and renewal of the BSCS Charter. BSCS expects all students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> to participate in required annual testing. Test scores are sent to parents and can be a useful tool in assisting families in measuring annual progress and planning curriculum. Schools are required to have a 95% participation rate; however, we cannot require students to take the test, but participation is highly encouraged.

Tests include:

- Physical Fitness testing for grades 5<sup>th</sup> and 7
- English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC)
- State Mandated Standardized Testing for grade 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent's or guardian's written request to Charter School officials to excuse their child from any or all parts of the CAASPP shall be granted. Upon request, parents have a right to information on the level of achievement of their student on every State academic assessment administered to the student.

## **Systems of Support**

We understand that not all students learn at the same rate, and even the most skilled students hit bumps in the road – it's called learning! For this reason, we use a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to support students' academic and behavioral needs. MTSS models include universal screening of all students, multiple tiers of intervention delivery, a collaborative problem-solving approach, and uses data to inform decisions at each tier. Intervention delivery is based on individual students' academic, social, and behavioral needs. Teachers meet weekly to discuss the progress of all students. As part of MTSS interventions, students have access to small group tutoring, receive focused support during class time, and families receive support and resources as needed.

## **Sexual Health Education**

The Charter School offers comprehensive sexual health education to its students in grades 7-8. A parent or guardian of a student has the right to excuse their child from all or part of comprehensive sexual health education, HIV prevention education, and assessments related to that education through a passive consent ("opt-out") process. The Charter School does not require active parental consent ("opt-in") for comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education. Parents and guardians may:

- Inspect written and audiovisual educational materials used in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education.
- Excuse their child from participation in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education in writing to the Charter School.
- Be informed whether the comprehensive sexual health or HIV/AIDS prevention education will be taught by Charter School personnel or outside consultants. When the Charter School chooses to use outside consultants or to hold an assembly with guest speakers to teach comprehensive sexual health or HIV/AIDS prevention education, be informed of:
  - The date of the instruction
  - The name of the organization or affiliation of each guest speaker
  - Request a copy of Education Code sections 51930 through 51939.

Anonymous, voluntary, and confidential research and evaluation tools to measure students' health behaviors and risks (including tests, questionnaires, and surveys containing age-appropriate questions about the student's attitudes concerning or practices relating to sex) may be administered to students in grades 7-12. A parent or guardian has the right to excuse their child from the test, questionnaire, or survey through a passive consent ("opt-out") process. Parents or guardians shall be notified in writing that this test, questionnaire, or survey is to be administered, given the opportunity to review the test, questionnaire, or survey if they wish, notified of their right to excuse their child from the test, questionnaire, or survey, and informed that in order to excuse their child they must state their request in writing to the Charter School.

A student may not attend any class in comprehensive sexual health education or HIV prevention education, or participate in any anonymous, voluntary, and confidential test, questionnaire, or survey on student health behaviors and risks if the Charter School has received a written request from the student's parent or guardian excusing the student from participation. An alternative educational activity shall be made available to students whose parents or guardians have requested that they not receive the instruction or participate in the test, questionnaire, or survey.

## **Surveys About Personal Beliefs**

Unless the student's parent/guardian gives written permission, a student will not be given any test, questionnaire, survey, or examination containing any questions about the student's, or the student's parents' or guardians' personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, or religion.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Rights for Parents and Eligible Students**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within five calendar days after the day the Charter School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Charter School Director or designee a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Charter School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected, in accordance with California Education Code § 49069.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
3. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Charter School to amend a record should write the Charter School's Director or designee, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the Charter School decides not to amend the record as requested, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. If the Charter School denies the amendment request, parents and eligible students may add a written statement of objection to the student's record, as outlined in California Education Code § 49070.
4. The right to provide written consent before the Charter School discloses personally identifiable information ("PII") from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
5. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to Charter School officials with legitimate educational interests. A Charter School official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the Charter School's Board of Directors. This also includes a volunteer, consultant, vendor, or contractor performing an institutional service under the school's direct control, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or provider of digital educational services.

The Charter School may also disclose records without consent:

- To other schools where the student seeks or intends to enroll, per California Education Code § 49068. The Charter School will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the request for records, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, subject to 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(9)(i).
- To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency per California Education Code § 49076(a)(2)(C).
- To state and local authorities in the juvenile justice system under California Education Code § 49076(a)(1)(M) and (N).
- To foster family agencies or caregivers for the purpose of case management per California Education Code § 49076(a)(1)(N).

The Charter School will not release student information to third parties for immigration enforcement purposes, except as required by law or court order, in compliance with AB 699.

Parents have the right to:

1. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Charter School to comply with FERPA requirements. Complaints may also be filed with the California Department of Education per California Education Code § 49085.



Contact Information for Complaints

Student Privacy Policy Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

California Department of Education

1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

2. The right to request that the Charter School not release directory information - student names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent, in accordance with California Education Code § 49073.5.

"Directory Information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. The Charter School may disclose directory information without a parent's or eligible student's prior written consent. The Charter School has designated the following as directory information:

- Student's name
- Student's address
- Parent's/guardian's address
- Telephone listing
- Student's electronic mail address
- Parent's/guardian's electronic mail address
- Photograph/video
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level

If you do not want the Charter School to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the Charter School in writing at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment. Parents/guardians must also be notified annually of their right to opt out, per California Education Code § 49073.

A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office.

## **SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

### **English Language Learners**

The Charter School is committed to the success of its English Learners and support will be offered both within academic classes and in supplemental settings for students who need additional support for English language learning. The Charter School will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, English Learners and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. The Charter School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding English Learners and the rights of students and parents.

Students identified as English Language Learners on the Home Language Survey are required to take the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) each year. Students designated as English Learners will be monitored for progress in English language development and, when appropriate, recommended for ELL Reclassification.

The BSCS English Learners reclassification procedures are based on California Education Code 52164.6 and the research which shows early reclassification of English learners improves overall academic achievement. Reclassification procedures utilize multiple criteria in determining whether to classify a student as proficient in English including, but not limited to, the following:

- Assessment of language proficiency using an objective assessment instrument including, but not limited to, the ELPAC.
- Participation of the student's classroom teachers and any other certificated staff with direct responsibility for teaching or placement decisions of the student to evaluate the student's curriculum mastery.
- Parental opinion and consultation, achieved through notice to parents or guardians of the language reclassification and placement including a description of the reclassification process and the parents opportunity to participate, and encouragement of the participation of parents or guardians in the reclassification procedure including seeking their opinion and consultation during the reclassification process.

Comparison of the student's performance in basic skills against an empirically established range of performance and basic skills based upon the performance of English proficient students of the same age that demonstrate to others that the student is sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in a curriculum designed for students of the same age whose native language is English.

### **Section 504**

The School recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program of the School. Any student who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity, including, but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodations by the School. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for accommodations under Section 504 may make a referral for an evaluation to the School Director. The full Section 504 Policy can be found on the school website.

## **Special Education - Child Find**

Big Sur Charter School recognizes its legal obligation to identify, evaluate, and serve students with disabilities to provide them with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The Charter School ensures compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), California Education Code requirements, and the applicable policies and procedures of the Sonoma County SELPA.

The Charter School is responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating all children with suspected disabilities within its jurisdiction, regardless of the severity of the disability. This includes:

- Children enrolled at the Charter School
- Children who are homeless or in foster care
- Highly mobile children, such as migrant students
- Children advancing from grade to grade who may still need special education
- Children enrolled in private schools or receiving home instruction within the jurisdiction

The Child Find process ensures that no child is excluded from consideration for special education services due to disability status, enrollment status, or economic circumstances.

## **Evaluation and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development**

Parents, teachers, and school staff collaborate in the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students determined eligible for special education services. If a parent, guardian, or staff member believes that a student may have a disability requiring special education services, they may submit a written request for evaluation to the School Director.

Upon receipt of a written referral for evaluation, the Charter School shall:

- Provide an assessment plan within 15 calendar days (excluding school breaks of more than 5 days)
- Complete the assessment within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent
- Hold an IEP meeting within 30 days of completing the assessment

The assessment process follows all procedural safeguards required under IDEA and California law, including providing assessments in the student's primary language and ensuring parental participation in decision-making.

## **Special Education Services & Placement Considerations**

Big Sur Charter School offers high-quality educational programs and services in accordance with each student's assessed needs. The school collaborates with parents, students, teachers, and other agencies to ensure that every eligible child receives appropriate support.

Independent study may be considered as a placement option only if determined appropriate by the student's IEP team and if it provides the student with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The school will ensure that students with disabilities placed in independent study continue to receive all necessary special education and related services as required by their IEP.

## **Non-Discrimination and Enrollment Rights**

Big Sur Charter School shall not deny, discourage, or condition enrollment based on a student's disability, need for special education services, or the perceived cost of accommodations. The school ensures equal access to its programs for all students and provides necessary services as determined by a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. If you believe your child may be eligible for special education services, please contact the School Director at:

Email: [director@bigsurcharterschool.org](mailto:director@bigsurcharterschool.org)

Phone: (831) 324-4573

## **Homeless Children and Youth Annual Notice**

The term "homeless children and youth" refers to individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes children and youths who (42 U.S.C. § 11434a; Education Code § 48850 et seq.):

3. Are sharing housing with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of adequate alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or have been abandoned in hospitals.
4. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
5. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
6. Are migratory children or unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) who meet the above definition of "homeless."

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the Charter School Liaison.

The School Director or designee appoints the following staff member as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)):

Christin Strang Lopez, Assistant Director  
304 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940  
christin@bigsurcharterschool.org  
831-324-4573

The Charter School Liaison shall ensure that (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through outreach, coordination with outside agencies, and the annual housing questionnaire administered by the Charter School.
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at the Charter School.
3. Homeless students and families receive access to educational services for which they are eligible, including:
4. Head Start and Early Head Start programs,
5. Early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),
6. Preschool programs administered by the Charter School (if available),
7. Referrals to healthcare, dental, mental health, and substance abuse services,
8. Housing assistance and other appropriate community services.
9. Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education.
10. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is distributed and posted in places frequented by parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth (e.g., schools, shelters, libraries, and soup kitchens) in a manner understandable to them.
11. Enrollment and admission disputes are mediated in accordance with applicable laws, the Charter School's policies, and Board regulations.
12. Parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of available transportation services, as applicable.
13. Charter School personnel receive professional development to better support and serve homeless students.
14. The Charter School Liaison collaborates with state coordinators, local agencies, and school personnel to ensure that homeless students receive education and related services.
15. Unaccompanied youth:

16. Are enrolled in school and provided with opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as their peers.
17. Are recognized as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
18. Receive assistance from the Charter School Liaison to obtain verification of their independent student status for FAFSA and financial aid purposes.

A list of California Homeless Education Liaisons is available at:

[CA Department of Education Homeless Education](#)

### **Housing Questionnaire (Education Code § 48851)**

The Charter School shall administer an annual housing questionnaire to identify homeless children and youth.

- The questionnaire shall be based on best practices developed by the California Department of Education (CDE).
- The questionnaire will be provided annually to:
  - All parents/guardians of enrolled students.
  - All unaccompanied youth.
- The housing questionnaire will include:
  - An explanation of the rights and protections for homeless students.
- The questionnaire shall be available:
  - In paper form.
  - In English and, if 15% or more of enrolled students speak another language, in that primary language.
  - Translated into additional languages upon request.
- The school shall collect completed questionnaires and report to the CDE annually on the number of homeless children and unaccompanied youth enrolled.
- Acceptance of Coursework & Graduation Requirements
- In accordance with Education Code §§ 51225.1, 51225.2, and 51225.3, the Charter School shall:
  - Accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at:
    - A public school,
    - A juvenile court school,
    - A school in another country,
    - A nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency.
  - Award credit for partial coursework completed while a student was homeless.
  - Not require students to retake portions of courses already completed unless:
    - The Charter School determines that the student can complete the requirements in time to graduate.
    - The decision is made in consultation with the student's educational rights holder.
  - Ensure that homeless students are not prevented from enrolling in A-G courses necessary for admission to the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU).
  - Provide a copy of the Charter School's complete Homeless Education Policy at the time of enrollment for any homeless student.

A copy of the complete policy is available upon request at the main office.

## **Foster Youth Annual Notice**

For the purposes of this annual notice, the terms are defined as follows:

- "Foster youth" means any of the following:
- A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code ("WIC") section 309 (whether or not the child has been removed from the child's home by the juvenile court).
- A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to WIC section 300 or WIC section 602, has been removed from the child's home by the juvenile court, and is in foster care.
- A nonminor under the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court, as described in WIC section 450, who satisfies all of the following criteria:
- The nonminor has attained 18 years of age while under an order of foster care placement by the juvenile court.
- The nonminor is in foster care under the placement and care responsibility of the county welfare department, county probation department, Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization.
- The nonminor is participating in a transitional independent living case plan.
- A dependent child of the court of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization who is the subject of a petition filed in the tribal court.
- A child who is the subject of a voluntary placement agreement, as defined in WIC section 11400.
- A student participating in extended foster care under AB 12 (WIC 450).
- "Former juvenile court school student" means a student who, upon completion of the student's second year of high school, transfers from a juvenile court school to the Charter School, including those from county community schools.
- "Child of a military family" refers to a student who resides in the household of an active-duty military member.
- "Currently migratory child" refers to a child who, within the last 12 months, has moved with a parent, guardian, or other person having custody to the Charter School from another Local Educational Agency ("LEA"), either within California or from another state, so that the child or a member of the child's immediate family might secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity. This includes a child who, without the parent/guardian, has continued to migrate annually to secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity.
- "Student participating in a newcomer program" means a student who is participating in a program designed to meet the academic and transitional needs of newly arrived immigrant students, with the primary objective of developing English language proficiency.
- Foster youth, former juvenile court school students, children of military families, currently migratory children, and students participating in newcomer programs will be collectively referred to as "Foster and Mobile Youth." A parent, guardian, or other person holding the educational rights for a Foster and Mobile Youth will be referred to as a "parent/guardian."

The School Director or designee designates the following staff person as the Liaison for Foster and Mobile Youth:

Christin Strang Lopez, Assistant Director  
304 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940  
christin@bigsurcharterschool.org  
831-324-4573

The Charter School will work with foster youth and their parent/guardian to ensure that each pupil is placed in the least restrictive educational programs and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities available to all pupils, including interscholastic sports. All education and placement decisions will be based on the best interest of the child, considering educational stability and access to necessary services.

Foster youth, currently migratory children, and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest. If a dispute arises, the foster youth shall remain in their school of origin pending the resolution. The Charter School will provide transportation assistance to maintain school stability, in alignment with EC 48853.5.

Foster and Mobile Youth seeking to enroll will be immediately enrolled regardless of documentation, such as immunization records, proof of residency, or transcripts.

The Charter School will accept coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, juvenile court school, international school, or nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by Foster and Mobile Youth. Partial credit will be awarded per EC 51225.2, and students will not be required to retake completed portions of courses unless it is necessary for academic success.

Foster and Mobile Youth meeting eligibility requirements under AB 167/216/365 (EC 51225.1) may be exempt from local graduation requirements if transfer delays prevent them from completing them on time. They will also have the right to remain in high school for a fifth year if they can reasonably complete all requirements.

When the Charter School receives a transfer request for student records, it will provide them within two (2) business days, in compliance with EC 49069.5. Records will include full or partial credits earned, seat time, grades, immunization records, and special education documents (if applicable). The Liaison will oversee record requests to ensure compliance with legal protections.

The Charter School will not lower a foster youth's grades due to absences related to verified court appearances, placement changes, or child welfare activities (EC 49069.5, EC 51225.2).

The Charter School may disclose student records to child welfare or probation agencies without parent/guardian consent, in accordance with FERPA and EC 49076(a)(11).

#### Discipline Protections

If the Charter School intends to suspend or expel a foster youth, the student's attorney and an appropriate representative from the relevant county agency must be invited to disciplinary meetings (EC 48911, EC 48915.5). For students with disabilities, a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) must be conducted before suspending for more than 10 days. The school must also consider alternative interventions before suspension or expulsion.

A complaint of noncompliance with any of the above requirements may be filed through the Charter School's Uniform Complaint Procedures. If unresolved, complaints may be submitted to the California Department of Education (CDE) for review.

For any Foster and Mobile Youth who enrolls at the Charter School, a copy of the Charter School's complete foster youth policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. Copies are also available upon request at the main office.

#### Resources for Support:

- Foster Youth Ombudsman: 1-877-846-1602
- Children's Law Center: (323) 980-1700
- Foster Ed California: [foster-ed.org](http://foster-ed.org)

This policy ensures compliance with California Education Code sections 48850-48859, 49069.5, 51225.1, and 51225.2 and related federal laws.

# CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR POLICIES

## Behavior Expectations

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe
- Be Your Person Best

A large part of what we do at Big Sur Charter School is guide students to become well balanced members of their community. We understand that students come to us with a variety of experiences that have shaped who they are. Given that, each circumstance is treated individually and can result in a different response based on the frequency and severity of behavior and student's age. Our goal is to ensure all students feel safe and respected as they learn to navigate their community, and every effort is made to support students in examining and correcting behavioral missteps.

Society recognizes certain activities to be unacceptable, and laws are enacted to protect everyone's best interests. Most of these behaviors also find their reflection in California law. While each incident has its own circumstances, suspension and possible expulsion consequences are in effect regarding specific behaviors.

### Level One

Minor physical contact, mild verbal abuse (saying shut up or calling someone stupid, for example), disrespectful/disruptive behavior, mild use of profanity, minor threatening behavior, accidental damage of property.

Actions & Consequences:

- Conflict resolution conversation, peer mediation with all concerned, restorative justice circle, repair harm.

### Level Two

Repetition of Level One behavior, skipping class, willful damage of property, engaging in bullying, bringing a toy weapon to school (one which cannot cause harm), leaving school without permission.

Additional Actions & Consequences:

- Office referral.
- Parents notified by phone.
- Parent conference mandatory.
- An incident report will be written for the student's file, with a copy going to the parents.
- Possible behavior intervention plan created.
- Suspension and/or expulsion (depending on severity)

### Level Three

Significant repetition of Level Two behavior, stealing, significant threatening behavior (using anything as a weapon), bringing an imitation of a weapon to school which might reasonably be mistaken for a weapon, serious physical abuse, serious use of profanity (such as swearing at a teacher).

Additional Actions & Consequences:

- A suspension report may be written for the student's file, with a copy going to the
- parents.
- Behavior intervention plan created.



#### Level Four

Stealing, drug possession or use at school functions, sexual misconduct, sexual activity, bringing a weapon to school (including all knives), tobacco use.

- Suspension, during which it will be decided what further action is needed, including community service, other forms of restitution, or expulsion.

The decision to suspend or expel will be based on the BSCS Suspension and Expulsion Policy. This may include activities to be completed at home with parental support.

#### **Cell Phones at the Learning Center**

Cell phones must be turned off and will be collected at the beginning of class and stored in a secure location until the end of their day at the Learning Center. If students need to be reached during the day please call the office, 831-324-4573, and a message will be delivered to your student. Cell phones that are not kept in a backpack will be taken to the office until a parent can accompany the student to pick it up.

Cell phones may be used:

- In the case of an emergency, or in response to a perceived threat of danger.
- When a teacher or administrator of the Charter School grants permission to the student to possess or use the smartphone, subject to any reasonable limitation they may impose.
- When a licensed physician or surgeon determines that the possession or use of a smartphone is necessary for the health or well-being of the student.
- When the possession or use of a smartphone is required in a student's individualized education program.

#### **Lost or Damaged School Property**

If a student willfully damages the Charter School's property or the personal property of a Charter School employee, or fails to return a textbook, library book, computer/tablet or other Charter School property that has been loaned to the student, the student's parents/guardians are liable for all damages caused by the student's misconduct not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), adjusted annually for inflation. After notifying the student's parent or guardian in writing of the student's alleged misconduct and affording the student due process, the Charter School may withhold the student's grades, transcripts until the damages have been paid. If the student and the student's parent/guardian are unable to pay for the damages or to return the property, the Charter School will provide a program of voluntary work for the minor in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. Upon completion of the voluntary work, the student's grades will be released.

#### **Staff-Student Interaction and Boundaries Policy**

It is the policy of Big Sur Charter School that no teacher or other staff member will use corporal punishment against a student. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, tying, taping, or the use of any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior. However, this policy does not prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Briefly restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behavior is also allowed, however, prone restraint is prohibited. Only such force as necessary to defend one's self, another person, or the child or to protect property is legally permitted. Excessive force is prohibited.

While the use of appropriate touching is part of daily life and is important for student development, teachers and other staff members must ensure that they do not exceed appropriate behavior.

## **Boundaries Defined**

For the purposes of this policy, the term “boundaries” is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing beyond the boundaries of a student-teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

## **Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviors**

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member's point-of-view but could be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of students or parents. There is no single reasonable person standard. The purpose of the following lists of unacceptable and acceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to or may be perceived as inappropriate, or sexual misconduct, or “grooming.” Grooming is defined as an act or series of acts by a sexual predator to gain physical and/or emotional control by gaining trust (of staff and/or family and a minor) and desensitizing the minor to various forms of touching and other intimate interaction.

Staff members must understand their own responsibilities for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Violations could subject the teacher or staff member to discipline up to and including termination. *Disagreeing with the wording or intent of these established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for any required disciplinary purposes.* Thus, it is critical that all employees study this policy thoroughly and apply its spirit and intent in their daily activities.

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member's point-of-view but could be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of students or parents. There is no single reasonable-person standard, therefore staff members must exercise discretion. The purpose of this policy is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to inappropriate behavior, or be perceived as inappropriate.

It is impossible to list all inappropriate and appropriate behaviors. Staff members should apply common sense when interacting with students.

## **Reporting**

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member (or volunteer, guest, vendor) having crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, or has a strong suspicion of “grooming behavior,” he or she must report the suspicion to the School Director or the Assistant Director promptly. “Grooming behavior” is an attempt to build an emotional and/or physical connection with a minor to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse. “Suspicion” means something perceived in spite of inconclusive or slight evidence. It is based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to believe that a violation of the boundaries policy occurred. Prompt reporting of “unacceptable behaviors” observed in adult interactions with minors is essential to protect students, staff, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. When observant staff members call attention to a boundaries violation(s), the likelihood of harm is greatly reduced.

## **Child Abuse / Sexual Abuse Reporting (Mandatory Reporting)**

California Penal Code Section 11166 requires any staff member to immediately report this information or suspicion directly to your county child protective agency (CPS). The report shall be made by phone immediately, and a subsequent written report must be sent within 36 hours of your knowledge or suspicion of the abuse.

Internal reporting to the School Director occurs after the phone-in report is made to the CPS.

## **Internal Investigations**

The School Director will promptly investigate, report and document any allegation of sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior.

## **Consequences**

Staff members who have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, and where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action.

## **Big Sur Charter School Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

### **Purpose and Legal Compliance**

The Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures are established to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students at Big Sur Charter School ("the Charter School"). This policy aligns with applicable federal and state laws, including California Education Code Sections 48900-48927, 47605, 47606.2, 51747, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

This policy shall be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with all legal requirements, including updates to state laws, chartering authority mandates, and best practices in student discipline.

### **Prohibited Disciplinary Practices**

No corporal punishment is allowed.

### **Suspension for willful defiance (Ed Code § 48900(k)) is prohibited in grades K-3.**

For grades 4-12, suspension for willful defiance should only be used as a last resort after implementing positive behavioral interventions.

### **Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion**

A student may be suspended or expelled only if the offense is related to school activity or school attendance, including but not limited to:

- While on school grounds
- While going to or coming from school
- During lunch (on or off campus)
- During, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity

### **Mandatory Expulsion Offenses (Ed Code § 48915(c))**

A student must be recommended for expulsion for the following:

- Possessing, selling, or furnishing a firearm or explosive device.
- Brandishing a knife at another person.
- Selling a controlled substance.
- Committing or attempting to commit sexual assault or battery.

### **Discretionary Suspension and Expulsion Offenses**

The school may suspend or expel students for other violations, including but not limited to physical violence, drug-related offenses, harassment, bullying (including cyberbullying), and threats to school safety.

## **Due Process for Suspension and Expulsion**

### **Suspension Process**

- Conference: A meeting with the student and parent/guardian must occur before suspension unless an emergency situation exists.
- Written Notice: Parents will receive written notification of the suspension in their primary language.
- Homework Access (Ed Code § 47606.2): Students suspended for two or more days are entitled to assignments and grading protections.
- Limits on Suspension: Suspensions may not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per incident.

### **Expulsion Process**

- Hearing Requirement (Ed Code § 47605): Expulsions require a hearing before a neutral administrative panel.
- Parental Rights: Parents may present evidence, call witnesses, and have legal representation.
- Written Notice: Parents must receive at least ten (10) calendar days' written notice of the hearing.
- Appeal Rights: Expelled students have the right to appeal to the County Board of Education.
- Alternative Education: The school must assist in finding an alternative placement for expelled students (Ed Code § 48916.1).

### **Involuntary Removal (Truancy and Independent Study Non-Compliance)**

- Parental Notification: Parents must receive at least five (5) school days' written notice before removal.
- Right to Hearing: If requested, the student remains enrolled until a final decision is made.
- Rehabilitation Plan: The school must provide a path for students to re-enroll.

### **Protections for Students with Disabilities (IDEA & Section 504)**

- Manifestation Determination Review (MDR): Required before suspending a student with disabilities for more than 10 days.
- Interim Alternative Educational Settings (IAES): May be used for up to 45 days in cases involving weapons, drugs, or serious bodily harm.
- Procedural Safeguards: Parents may request an expedited due process hearing.

### **Data Reporting and Compliance (Ed Code § 47605 & § 48916.1)**

The Charter School will collect and report suspension and expulsion data, disaggregated by race, gender, special education status, and other relevant factors, to the California Department of Education (CDE) and the chartering authority.

### **Restorative Justice and Alternative Discipline Strategies**

- Restorative Practices: The school will prioritize mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative justice practices before resorting to suspension or expulsion.
- Behavior Intervention Plans: Students will be given appropriate behavioral supports to prevent reoccurring misconduct.

### **Notice to Teachers**

Teachers will be notified of any student disciplinary history in accordance with Ed Code § 49079.

## **STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY**

Big Sur Charter School believes that the health and safety of our students is a top priority. All students and staff will have the opportunity to review and practice safety procedures. A copy of the BSCS School Comprehensive Safety Plan is available on the school's website.

### **Vision, Hearing, Oral Health Assessments**

Periodic health examinations of students may lead to the detection and treatment of conditions that impact learning. Health examinations also may help in determining whether special adaptations of the School's program are necessary. The School shall conduct health examinations of students as needed to insure proper care of the students.

Students enrolling in kindergarten or while enrolled in first grade if the pupil was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school are required to have an oral health assessment completed by a dental professional. Please contact the main office if you have questions about this requirement. During the kindergarten year, and in grades 2, 5 and 8, the School shall appraise the student's hearing and vision. The appraisal shall include tests for visual acuity, including near vision and color vision, although the color vision shall be appraised once and only on male students, the results of which shall be entered in the health records and need not begin until the student is in first grade. Classroom teachers are responsible for continuous and regular observation of the student's eyes, appearance, behavior, visual performance, and perception that might indicate vision difficulties.

Where a student's school performance begins to give evidence that the existence of the problem might be caused by a visual difficulty, the school will contact the parents.

A student's vision may be appraised by using an eye chart or any other scientifically validated photoscreening test. Photoscreening tests shall be performed, under an agreement with, or the supervision of, an optometrist or ophthalmologist, by the school nurse or a trained individual who meets requirements established by the CDE. The School will provide for the testing of hearing of each student enrolled in the school in kindergarten year, and in grades 2, 5 and 8. Pupils at risk of hearing loss are: those exposed to loud noises, including loud music, pupils that have been referred for testing by a parent or teacher, repeat tests for those pupils for whom there was a previously documented problem, pupils who have not had a hearing test for three years; and any student who has enrolled for the first time in the School.

The School will provide families of children who fail the hearing or vision tests with a written notification of the test results and recommend further testing by a specialist.

The vision and hearing evaluation is highly recommended, but optional.

### **Physical Examinations and Right to Refuse**

All students must complete a health screening examination on or before the 90th day after the student's entrance into first grade or such students must have obtained a waiver pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 124040 and 124085. This examination can be obtained from your family physician or possibly through the services provided by your County Health Department. Information and forms are distributed to students enrolled in kindergarten. If your child's medical status changes, please provide the teacher with a physician's written verification of the medical issue, especially if it impacts in any way your child's ability to perform schoolwork.

A parent/guardian having control or charge of any child enrolled in the Charter School may file annually with the School Director a written and signed statement stating that the parent/guardian will not consent to a physical examination of the child. Thereupon the child shall be exempt from any physical examination, but whenever there is a good reason to believe that the child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, the child shall be sent home and shall not be permitted to return until the school authorities are satisfied that any contagious or infectious disease does not exist.

## **Immunizations**

Pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code and the California Code of Regulations, children must provide proof of having received required immunizations (shots) before they can attend school unless they meet the requirements for an exemption. Immunization records are required for all incoming students. Verification of immunizations will be completed with written medical records from the child's doctor or immunization clinic. To ensure a safe learning environment for all students, the Charter School follows and abides by the health standards set forth by the state of California. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Those students who are not in compliance with the State requirements must be excluded from attendance until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of the Charter School.

These required immunizations include:

<b>Child's Grade</b>	<b>List of shots required to attend school</b>
<b>TK/K-12 Admission</b>	<p>Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTaP) - Five (5) doses Polio - Four (4) doses  Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) - Two (2) doses Hepatitis B (Hep B) - Three (3) doses  Varicella (chickenpox) – Two (2) doses</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Four doses of DTaP are allowed if one was given on or after the fourth birthday. Three doses of DTaP meet the requirement if at least one dose of Tdap, DTaP, or DTP vaccine was given on or after the seventh birthday (also meets the 7th-12th grade Tdap requirement.) One or two doses of Td vaccine given on or after the seventh birthday count towards the requirement for DTaP. Three doses of Polio are allowed if one was given on or after fourth birthday. MMR doses must be given on or after first birthday. Two doses of measles, two doses of mumps, and one dose of rubella vaccine meet the requirement, separately or combined. Combination vaccines (e.g., MMRV) meet the requirements for individual component vaccines.</p>
<b>Child's Grade</b>	<b>List of shots required to attend school</b>
<b>Entering 7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<p>Tetanus, reduced Diphtheria, and acellular Pertussis (Tdap) - One (1) dose  Varicella (chickenpox) - Two (2) doses</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> In order to begin 7th grade, students who had a valid personal belief exemption on file with a public or private elementary or secondary school in California before January 1, 2016 must meet the requirements listed for grades K-12 as well as requirements for 7<sup>th</sup> grade advancement (i.e., polio, MMR, varicella and primary series for diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis). At least one dose of pertussis-containing vaccine is required on or after the 7th birthday.</p>

## **Medical Exemptions**

Starting in 2021, a law enacted by Senate Bills 276 and 714 requires new medical exemptions to be issued using a State database and a standardized medical exemption form. Medical exemptions issued using the California Immunization Registry-Medical Exemption website (CAIR-ME) are the only medical exemptions schools and pre-kindergarten facilities can accept from students entering a new grade span in 2021 and beyond. Medical exemptions issued starting January 1, 2021 are subject to CDPH review and may be revoked.

Valid medical exemptions on file for a student prior to January 1, 2021 may remain valid until the student enrolls in the next grade span, typically at kindergarten (or transitional kindergarten) or 7th grade.

## **Medications at School**

Any student who is or may be required to take, during the regular school day, prescription medication prescribed or ordered for the student by an authorized health care provider may be assisted by the School Director or designated Charter School personnel.

In order for a student to be assisted by the school nurse or other designated Charter School personnel in administering medication, Charter School shall obtain both:

1. A written statement from the student's authorized health care provider detailing the name of the medication, method, amount/dosage, and time schedules by which the medication is to be taken, and
2. A written statement from the parent, foster parent, or guardian of the student indicating the desire that BSCS assist the student in the matters set forth in the statement of the authorized health care provider.

These written statements specified shall be provided at least annually and more frequently if the medication, dosage/amount, frequency of administration, or reason for administration changes.

For student safety, all medication to be administered at school must be in the original manufacturer's container and labeled with:

- Student's name and the name of the medication.
- Dosage of medication.
- Method by which the student is required to take the medication.
- Time the medication is to be taken during the regular school day.
- Date(s) on which the student is required to take the medication.
- Authorized health care provider's name and contact information.

A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office.

## **Mental Health Resources**

Big Sur Charter School is committed to ensuring that all students are healthy, safe, engaged, challenged and supported. We know that when unidentified and unaddressed, mental health challenges can lead to poor academic performance, increased likelihood of suspension and expulsion, chronic absenteeism, student attrition, homelessness, incarceration, school violence, and even suicide. Access to mental health services at the Charter School and in our community is not only critical to improving the physical and emotional safety of students, but it also helps address barriers to learning and provides support so that all students can learn problem-solving skills and achieve in school and, ultimately, in life. The following resources are available to your child:

### Available on Campus

- School based counseling services: To make certain each child's mental health needs are addressed the Charter School offers counseling services. Please contact the office at 831-324-4573 for more information. The full Suicide Prevention Policy can be found in the Annual Updates and Policy section of this handbook.
- Special education services: If you believe your child may have a disability, you are encouraged to directly contact Aimee Alling at 831-324-4573 to request an evaluation.

### Available in the Community

- [Prevention and Early Intervention \(PEI\) Resources and Supports \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Community Human Services - Mental Health](#)
- [First 5 Monterey](#)
- [Interim, Inc.](#)
- [Monterey County Behavioral Health](#)
- [Harmony at Home](#)
- [The Village Project](#)
- [Center for Community Advocacy](#)
- [Central Coast Citizenship Project](#)
- [United Way Monterey County](#)
- [Bereavement Support](#)
- [Programs for Moms](#)

### Available Nationally

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline - This organization provides confidential support for adults and youth in distress, including prevention and crisis resources. Available 24 hours at 1-800-273-8255.
- The Trevor Project - This organization provides suicide prevention and crisis intervention for LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13 and 24. **Available at 1-866-488-7386 or visit <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.**
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America – This organization is a community- based mentorship program. Community-specific program information can be found online at <https://www.bbbs.org> or by calling (813) 720-8778.

The full Health and Safety Policy can be found on the school's website.



## **Type 2 Diabetes Annual Notification**

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes in adults. Until a few years ago, type 2 diabetes was rare in children, but it is becoming more common, especially for overweight teens. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), one in three American children born after 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime.

Type 2 diabetes affects the way the body is able to use sugar (glucose) for energy.

- The body turns the carbohydrates in food into glucose, the basic fuel for the body's cells.
- The pancreas makes insulin, a hormone that moves glucose from the blood to the cells.
- In type 2 diabetes, the body's cells resist the effects of insulin, and blood glucose levels rise.
- Over time, glucose reaches dangerously high levels in the blood, which is called hyperglycemia.
- Hyperglycemia can lead to health problems like heart disease, blindness, and kidney failure.

It is recommended that students displaying or possibly experiencing the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes be screened (tested) for the disease.

### **Risk Factors**

Researchers do not completely understand why some people develop type 2 diabetes and others do not; however, the following risk factors are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in children:

- Being overweight. The single greatest risk factor for type 2 diabetes in children is excess weight. In the U.S., almost one out of every five children is overweight. The chances are more than double that an overweight child will develop diabetes.
- Family history of diabetes. Many affected children and youth have at least one parent with diabetes or have a significant family history of the disease.
- Inactivity. Being inactive further reduces the body's ability to respond to insulin.
- Specific racial/ethnic groups. Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, or Asian/Pacific Islanders are more prone than other ethnic groups to develop type 2 diabetes.
- Puberty. Young people in puberty are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than younger children, probably because of normal rises in hormone levels that can cause insulin resistance during this stage of rapid growth and physical development.

### **Warning Signs and Symptoms Associated with Type 2 Diabetes**

Warning signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes in children develop slowly, and initially there may be no symptoms. However, not everyone with insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes develops these warning signs, and not everyone who has these symptoms necessarily has type 2 diabetes.

- Increased hunger, even after eating
- Unexplained weight loss
- Increased thirst, dry mouth, and frequent urination
- Feeling very tired
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing of sores or cuts
- Dark velvety or ridged patches of skin, especially on the back of the neck or under the arms
- Irregular periods, no periods, and/or excess facial and body hair growth in girls
- High blood pressure or abnormal blood fats levels

### **Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Methods and Treatments**

Healthy lifestyle choices can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Even with a family history of diabetes, eating healthy foods in the correct amounts and exercising regularly can help children achieve or maintain a normal weight and normal blood glucose levels.

- Eat healthy foods. Make wise food choices. Eat foods low in fat and calories.
- Get more physical activity. Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes every day.
- Take medication. If diet and exercise are not enough to control the disease, it may be necessary to treat type 2 diabetes with medication.

The first step in treating type 2 diabetes is to visit a doctor. A doctor can determine if a child is overweight based on the child's age, weight, and height. A doctor can also request tests of a child's blood glucose to see if the child has diabetes or pre-diabetes (a condition which may lead to type 2 diabetes).

#### Types of Diabetes Screening Tests That Are Available

- Glycated hemoglobin (A1C) test. A blood test measures the average blood sugar level over two to three months. An A1C level of 6.5 percent or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- Random (non-fasting) blood sugar test. A blood sample is taken at a random time. A random blood sugar level of 200 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) or higher suggests diabetes. This test must be confirmed with a fasting blood glucose test.
- Fasting blood sugar test. A blood sample is taken after an overnight fast. A fasting blood sugar level less than 100 mg/dL is normal. A level of 100 to 125 mg/dL is considered pre-diabetes. A level of 126 mg/dL or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- Oral glucose tolerance test. A test measuring the fasting blood sugar level after an overnight fast with periodic testing for the next several hours after drinking a sugary liquid. A reading of more than 200 mg/dL after two hours indicates diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes in children is a preventable/treatable disease and the guidance provided in this information sheet is intended to raise awareness about this disease. Contact your school administrator or health care provider if you have questions.

A copy of the information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes is available at:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/type2diabetes.asp>. Please contact the office if you need a copy of this information sheet or if you have any questions about this information sheet.

### **Type 1 Diabetes**

The Charter School will provide an information sheet regarding type 1 diabetes to the parent or guardian of a student when the student is first enrolled in elementary school, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.6. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 1 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that parents or guardians of students displaying warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes should immediately consult with the student's primary care provider to determine if immediate screening for type 1 diabetes is appropriate.
4. A description of the screening process for type 1 diabetes and the implications of test results.
5. A recommendation that, following a type 1 diagnosis, parents or guardians should consult with the pupil's primary care provider to develop an appropriate treatment plan, which may include consultation with and examination by a specialty care provider, including, but not limited to, a properly qualified endocrinologist.

A copy of the information sheet regarding type 1 diabetes will be made available by the CDE on the CDE website. Please contact the office if you need a copy of this information sheet or if you have any questions about this information sheet.

## **Human Trafficking Prevention**

California has the highest number of incidents of human trafficking in the U.S., and all students may be vulnerable. The Charter School believes it is a priority to inform our students about (1) the prevalence, nature of and strategies to reduce the risk of human trafficking, techniques to set healthy boundaries, and how to safely seek assistance, and (2) how social media and mobile device applications are used for human trafficking.

In accordance with the California Healthy Youth Act, the Charter School will provide age-appropriate instruction on the prevention of human trafficking, including sexual abuse, assault, and harassment. You have the right to excuse your child from all or part of the instruction on the prevention of human trafficking. An opt-out form is available at the main office for your convenience. Your consent for this instruction is NOT required. If we do not receive a written request to excuse your child, your child will be included in the instruction.

Information and materials for parents/guardians about the curriculum and resources on prevention of human trafficking and abuse, including sexual abuse, assault, and harassment are available on Charter School's website for your review.

## **Pregnant and Parenting Students**

The Charter School recognizes that pregnant and parenting students are entitled to accommodations that provide them with the opportunity to succeed academically while protecting their health and the health of their children. A pregnant or parenting student is entitled to eight (8) weeks of parental leave, or more if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician, which the student may take before the birth of the student's infant if there is a medical necessity and after childbirth during the school year in which the birth takes place, inclusive of any mandatory summer instruction, in order to protect the health of the student who gives or expects to give birth and the infant, and to allow the pregnant or parenting student to care for and bond with the infant. The Charter School will ensure that absences from the student's regular school program are excused until the student is able to return to the regular school program.

Upon return to school after taking parental leave, a pregnant or parenting student will be able to make up work missed during the pregnant or parenting student's leave, including, but not limited to, makeup work plans and reenrollment in courses. Notwithstanding any other law, a pregnant or parenting student may remain enrolled for a fifth year of instruction in the Charter School if it is necessary in order for the student to be able to complete any graduation requirements, unless the Charter School determines that the student is reasonably able to complete the graduation requirements in time to graduate from high school by the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pregnant or parenting students may be filed under the Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") of the Charter School. The complaint may be filed in writing with the compliance officer:

Aimee Alling, School Director  
304 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940  
831-324-4573

A copy of the UCP is available upon request at the main office. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the complaint procedures, please contact the School Director.

## **School Safety Plan**

The Charter School has established a Comprehensive School Safety Plan. The Plan is available upon request at the main office.

## **Campus Search and Seizure**

The Charter School recognizes and has determined that the occurrence of incidents which may include the possession of firearms, weapons, alcohol, controlled substances, or other items of contraband prohibited by law or Charter School rules and regulations, jeopardizes the health, safety and welfare of students and Charter School employees.

The California Constitution requires that all students and staff of public schools have the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure, and peaceful. As such, Charter School has adopted a Policy outlining the reasonable search of students and their property, student use areas, and/or student lockers and the seizure of illegal, unsafe, unauthorized or contraband items and materials through a search based upon reasonable suspicion.

A student's personal cell phone, smartphone, or other personal electronic device shall not be searched by school officials without a warrant, the student's consent, or a legitimate emergency, unless the device is lost or abandoned. An emergency is any situation involving danger of death or serious physical injury to any person, that requires access to the information located or reasonably believed to be located on the electronic device. If the Charter School has a good faith belief that the device is lost, stolen, or abandoned, the Charter School may only access electronic device information in order to attempt to identify, verify, or contact the owner of the device.

The Charter School is not prohibited from seizing/confiscating a student's personal electronic device, without searching its contents, if the student's use or possession of the private electronic device is in violation of Charter School rules or regulations.

## **Youth Suicide Prevention Policy**

The Governing Board of Big Sur Charter School ("the School") recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that an even greater amount of youth consider (17 percent of high school students) and attempt suicide (over 8 percent of high school students) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. As a result, we are ethically and legally responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response in preventing suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths. We also must work to create a safe and nurturing campus that minimizes suicidal ideation in students.

Recognizing that it is the duty of the School to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy aims to safeguard students and staff against suicide attempts, deaths and other trauma associated with suicide, including ensuring adequate supports for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss. As it is known that the emotional wellness of students greatly impacts school attendance and educational success, this policy shall be paired with other policies that support the emotional and behavioral wellness of students.

This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention, and has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, increase help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors. Empirical evidence refutes a common belief that talking about suicide can increase risk or "place the idea in someone's mind."

In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the School Director or Designee shall develop strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and the identification of the mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. These strategies shall include professional development for all school personnel in all job categories who regularly interact with students or are in a position to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, including substitute teachers, volunteers, expanded learning staff and other individuals in regular contact with students such as crossing guards, tutors, and coaches.

The School Director or Designee shall develop and implement preventive strategies and intervention procedures that include the following:

The School Director or Designee shall involve administrators, other school staff members and parents/guardians/caregivers, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention. Districts must work in conjunction with local government agencies, community-based organizations, and other community support to identify additional resources.

Messaging about suicide has an effect on suicidal thinking and behaviors. Consequently, Big Sur Charter School along with its partners has critically reviewed and will continue to review all materials and resources used in awareness efforts to ensure they align with best practices for safe messaging about suicide.

The Big Sur Charter School along with its partners has carefully reviewed available staff training to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

Training shall be provided for all school staff members, and include the following:

- At least annually, all staff shall receive training on the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention.
- Core components of the general suicide prevention training shall include:
  - Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors;
  - How to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide;
  - How to respond appropriately to the youth who has suicidal thoughts.
  - Emphasis on immediately referring (same day) any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide for assessment while staying under constant monitoring by staff member;
  - Emphasis on reducing stigma associated with mental illness and that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide;

#### **Resources:**

The K–12 Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention has been created to help schools comply with and implement AB 2246, the Pupil Suicide Prevention Policies. The Toolkit includes resources for schools as they promote youth mental wellness, intervene in a mental health crisis, and support members of a school community after the loss of someone to suicide.

- Additional information about this Toolkit for schools can be accessed on the Heard Alliance Web site at: <http://www.heardalliance.org/>.
- For information on public messaging on suicide prevention, see the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Web site at <http://suicidepreventionmessaging.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/>
- For information on engaging the media regarding suicide prevention, see the Your Voice Counts Web page at <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/making-headlines-guide-engaging-media-suicide-prevention-california-0>
- For information on how to use social media for suicide prevention, see the Your Voice Counts Web page at <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/how-use-social-media>

## **Local Control and Accountability Plan (EC §§52060-52077)**

Big Sur Charter School is required to adopt a three-year Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and to update the LCAP on or before July 1 of each subsequent year. The LCAP is required to identify annual goals, specific actions geared toward implementing those goals, and must measure progress for student subgroups across multiple performance indicators based on eight priorities set by the State. The priorities must be aligned to the school's spending plan. The LCAP must be approved before the annual budget can be adopted. Once the budget and LCAP are adopted at the local level, the Plan will be reviewed by the County Superintendent to ensure alignment of projected spending toward goals and services. The following are the eight State priorities:

- Providing all students access to fully-credentialed teachers, instructional materials that align with State standards, and safe facilities;
- Implementation of and student access to State academic content and performance standards;
- Parent involvement and participation;
- Improving student achievement and outcomes along multiple measures;
- Supporting student engagement;
- Highlighting school climate and connectedness;
- Ensuring all students have access to classes that prepare them for college and careers; and,
- Measuring other important student outcomes related to required areas of study.

Big Sur Charter School will consult with its teachers, administrators, other school personnel, parents, and pupils in developing the LCAP.

Big Sur Charter School will hold at least one hearing to solicit recommendations and comments from the public regarding expenditures proposed in the plan before adopting the LCAP.

Big Sur Charter School will post the approved LCAP on the school website and establish policies for filing a complaint of noncompliance under Education Code section 52075 using the Uniform Complaint Procedures. Information regarding the requirements for a LCAP and the complaint process shall be provided to pupils, parents, guardians, and employees on an annual basis.

# COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

## Uniform Complaint Procedures

The Charter School is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. The Charter School shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints using policies and procedures known as the Uniform Complaint Procedure ("UCP") adopted by our Governing Board for the following:

1. Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any protected group on the basis of the actual or perceived characteristics of age, ancestry, color, mental disability, physical disability, ethnic group identification, immigration status, citizenship, gender expression, gender identity, gender, genetic information, nationality, national origin, race or ethnicity, religion, medical condition, marital status, sex, or sexual orientation, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any Charter School program or activity.
2. Complaints alleging a violation of state or federal law or regulation governing the following programs:
  - a. Accommodations for Pregnant, Parenting or Lactating Students;
  - b. Consolidated Categorical Aid;
  - c. Education of Students in Foster Care, Students who are Homeless, former Juvenile Court Students now enrolled in a public school, Migratory Children and Children of Military Families;
  - d. Every Student Succeeds Act;
  - e. Migrant Education Programs;
  - f. Regional Occupational Centers and Programs;
  - g. School Safety Plans;
3. Complaints alleging noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees. A student enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
  - a. A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory or is for credit.
4. A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, clothes, or other materials or equipment.
5. A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment, or clothes associated with an educational activity.

Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees may be filed with the School Director.

Complaints alleging noncompliance with the requirements governing the Local Control Funding Formula ("LCFF") or Local Control and Accountability Plans ("LCAP") under Education Code sections 47606.5 and 47607.3, as applicable. If the Charter School adopts a School Plan for Student Achievement ("SPSA") in addition to its LCAP, complaints of noncompliance with the requirements of the SPSA under Education Code sections 64000, 64001, 65000, and 65001 shall also fall under the UCP.

Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding child nutrition programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 49490-49590 are governed by Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations ("C.F.R.") sections 210.19(a)(4), 215.1(a), 220.13(c), 225.11(b), 226.6(n), and 250.15(d) and Title 5, California Code of Regulations ("C.C.R.") sections 15580 - 15584.

Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding special education programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 56000-56865 and 59000-59300 are governed by the procedures set forth in 5 C.C.R. sections 3200-3205 and 34 C.F.R. sections 300.151-300.153.

Complaints other than complaints relating to pupil fees must be filed in writing with the following Compliance Officer:

Aimee Alling, School Director  
Title XI Officer,  
(831)-324-4573; director@bigsurcharterschool.org  
304 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940

Complaints against the Director must be filed in writing with the following Compliance Officer:

Board Chair  
(831)-324-4573; boardchair@bigsurcharterschool.org  
304 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940

Only complaints regarding pupil fees or LCAP compliance may be filed anonymously and only if the anonymous complainant provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees or LCAP.

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, must be filed within six (6) months from the date the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, occurred or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. All other complaints under the UCP shall be filed not later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred. For complaints relating to the LCAP, the date of the alleged violation is the date on which the Charter School's Board of Directors approved the LCAP or the annual update was adopted by the Charter School.

The Compliance Officer responsible for investigating the complaint shall conduct and complete the investigation in accordance with California regulations and the Charter School's UCP Policy. The Compliance Officer shall provide the complainant with a final written investigation report ("Decision") within sixty (60) calendar days from the Charter School's receipt of the complaint. This sixty (60) calendar day time period may be extended by written agreement of the complainant.

The complainant has a right to appeal the Charter School's Decision to the California Department of Education ("CDE") by filing a written appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the Charter School's written Decision, except if the Charter School has used its UCP to address a complaint that is not subject to the UCP requirements. The appeal must include a copy of the complaint filed with the Charter School, a copy of the Charter School's Decision, and the complainant must specify and explain the basis for the appeal of the Decision, including at least one of the following:

- The Charter School failed to follow its complaint procedures.
- Relative to the allegations of the complaint, the Charter School's Decision lacks material findings of fact necessary to reach a conclusion of law.
- The material findings of fact in the Charter School's Decision are not supported by substantial evidence.
- The legal conclusion in the Charter School's Decision is inconsistent with the law.
- In a case in which the Charter School's Decision found noncompliance, the corrective actions fail to provide a proper remedy.



A complainant who appeals the Charter School's Decision on a UCP complaint to the CDE shall receive a written appeal decision within sixty (60) calendar days of the CDE's receipt of the appeal, unless extended by written agreement with the complainant or the CDE documents exceptional circumstances and informs the complainant.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the CDE's appeal Decision pursuant to 5 C.C.R. section 4633(f)(2) or (3), either party may request reconsideration by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction ("SSPI") or the SSPI's designee. The request for reconsideration shall specify and explain the reason(s) for contesting the findings of fact, conclusions of law, or corrective actions in the CDE's appeal Decision.

If a UCP complaint is filed directly with the CDE and the CDE determines that it merits direct intervention, the CDE shall complete an investigation and provide a written decision to the complainant within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the complaint, unless the parties have agreed to extend the timeline or the CDE documents exceptional circumstances and informs the complainant.

If the Charter School finds merit in a UCP complaint, or the CDE finds merit in an appeal, the Charter School shall take corrective actions consistent with the requirements of existing law that will provide a remedy to the affected student and/or parent/guardian as applicable.

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the Charter School's complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaints arising under state law, however, a complainant must wait until sixty (60) calendar days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if the Charter School has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of the complainant's right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 C.C.R. § 4622.

A copy of the UCP shall be available upon request free of charge in the main office. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the UCP, please contact the School Director

### **General Complaints**

Not all complaints fall under the scope of the UCP. Many concerns are the responsibilities of the local school district, including, hiring and evaluation of staff, classroom assignments, student advancement and retention, selection/provision of textbooks and materials, student discipline, provision of core curricula subjects, facilities, graduation requirements, homework policies and practices, use of general education funds and dress codes. For complaints that do not fall under the UCP or Title IX parameters please refer to the Charter School's General Complaints Policy, located on the school website.

## **Title IX, Harassment, Discrimination, Intimidation, and Bullying Prevention Policy**

Big Sur Charter School (BSCS) is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and legally compliant learning and working environment. It is the policy of BSCS to create and maintain an educational setting where students, staff, and community members are treated with dignity, decency, and respect, and where all forms of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are strictly prohibited.

This policy aligns with California Education Code sections 200 through 234.6, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, federal regulations under 34 C.F.R. Part 106, and other applicable state and federal laws. It applies to all school-related activities, including those off campus that cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

BSCS will actively enforce this policy at all levels and in all relationships involving students, employees, volunteers, and contractors. All school personnel must take immediate and appropriate action when witnessing behavior prohibited by this policy. Annual reviews will be conducted to ensure continued compliance, training, and implementation of best practices.

### **Misconduct Prohibited by this Policy**

This policy prohibits all intentional conduct—verbal, physical, written, or electronic—that is based on actual or perceived characteristics, including but not limited to:

- Mental or physical disability
- Sex (including pregnancy and parental status)
- Sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression
- Race, ethnicity, ancestry, or national origin
- Immigration or citizenship status
- Religion or creed (including agnosticism and atheism)
- Medical condition or genetic information
- Marital status or age
- Association with a person or group with one or more of these characteristics

### **Examples of Prohibited Harassment Include:**

- Epithets, slurs, derogatory jokes, or verbal abuse
- Physical conduct such as unwanted touching or assault
- Retaliation for reporting harassment
- Preferential or discriminatory treatment based on protected status

### **Sexual Harassment Under Title IX**

Sexual harassment under Title IX includes:

- Conditioning any school benefit or service on unwelcome sexual conduct
- Unwelcome sexual behavior that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it denies equal access to school programs or activities
- Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking

Sexual harassment may also include unwanted sexual advances, sexual comments or messages, visual displays of sexually explicit materials, or threats and coercion.

## **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Bullying includes any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act—including electronic communications—that:

- Places a student in reasonable fear of harm
- Causes emotional or psychological harm
- Interferes with academic performance
- Interferes with a student's ability to benefit from school activities

Cyberbullying includes electronic acts, on or off campus, that involve harassment, threats, impersonation, or false profiles. Cyber sexual bullying includes sharing sexually explicit images of minors through electronic means, except when such depictions have recognized educational, artistic, or scientific value.

## **Prohibited Retaliation**

Retaliation against individuals who report or participate in investigations of misconduct is strictly prohibited. Any such retaliation will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action.

## **Immigration Status Protections**

The school will not use or request information about immigration status to discriminate against students or families. Refusal to provide such information cannot be used to deny access to education. The school shall not collect or maintain any such data for purposes of exclusion.

## **Education and Training**

Students will receive age-appropriate instruction in how to recognize, respond to, and report bullying and harassment. Teachers and staff will be trained to:

- Understand varying immigration experiences and religious customs
- Recognize and respond to bullying behavior
- Intervene when safe to do so
- Report serious incidents, including those that may require law enforcement

## **Title IX Coordinator**

The Title IX Coordinator for BSCS is:

Aimee Alling, School Director  
304 Foam Street, Monterey, CA 93940  
director@bigsurcharterschool.org  
831-324-4573

The Coordinator is responsible for managing reports, investigations, training, and compliance.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student, parent, employee, or third party who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or retaliation may report it to:

- A teacher, counselor, or staff member
- The School Director (Title IX Coordinator)
- The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Reports may be made in person, by email, phone, or in writing. Anonymous reports are accepted, though disciplinary action cannot be based solely on anonymous information.

All school personnel are mandated reporters and must report observed or suspected prohibited conduct immediately to the School Director.

## **Investigation Process**

Upon receiving a report, the Title IX Coordinator will:

- Contact the complainant to offer supportive measures
- Explain the grievance process and the option to file a formal complaint
- Assign a neutral investigator to collect evidence and conduct interviews
- Ensure a neutral decision-maker reviews findings and issues a written determination based on a preponderance of the evidence
- Allow either party to appeal the decision based on new evidence, procedural irregularity, or conflict of interest
- Maintain all records related to the investigation for at least seven years

Supportive measures may include changes to schedules, counseling services, no-contact directives, or other accommodations.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

Students or employees found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension, expulsion, or termination. Corrective actions will be appropriate to the severity of the behavior and may include restorative practices when appropriate.

## **Appeals**

If dissatisfied with the outcome of a Title IX investigation, a complainant may:

- Submit a written appeal within five business days to the BSCS Board President
- File a complaint with the California Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights  
Office for Civil Rights  
Phone: 1-800-421-3481  
Email: [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov)  
Complaint Form: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html>

## **Availability of Policy**

This policy is published in the Student and Employee Handbooks, posted on the school website, and available upon request from the school office.

## Title IX, Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Complaint Form

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: \_\_\_\_\_

List any witnesses that were present: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident(s) occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e. specific statements; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements; what did you do to avoid the situation, etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I acknowledge that I have read and that I understand the above statements. I hereby authorize the School to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further understand that providing false information in this regard could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

### **To be completed by the Charter School:**

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_