



Parent/Student Handbook

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UNIQUE ASPECTS OF EXPLORER ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL

Explorer Elementary Charter School is an independent public school, founded in 2000, that serves 320 students enrolled by lottery from across San Diego. Each classroom numbers no more than 20 students in grades kindergarten through third and 24 in grades four and five. The staff is composed of a principal, 15 teachers, and a number of part-time specialists (art, science, physical education, reading, and classroom assistant teachers and instructional aides). Spanish is taught by parent volunteers. Explorer Elementary has a full resource team and parents run an “Everyone a Reader” program for children with the need for extra support in reading.

Explorer’s mission is to create caring, confident learners in a compassionate learning community that respects and values the different interests, abilities, learning styles, ethnic diversity, and cultural backgrounds of each child. Explorer’s program is based on the belief that education is a shared responsibility of students, faculty, parents, and community.

WHAT MAKES EXPLORER UNIQUE?

1. ***School-Wide Social Emotional Literacy Program:*** The Social-Emotional Literacy Program is central to Explorer’s identity and differentiates it from other schools in San Diego. This program integrates social issues into the daily academic curriculum and involves all students, parents, teachers, and community members. The program teaches and reinforces core concepts such as tolerance, compassion, ethical and responsible behavior, empathy, positive conflict resolution, and collaboration. The goals of this program are (1) to raise the level of social and emotional competence in all children as part of their regular education – not just children who are faltering and identified as “troubled;” (2) to improve academic performance by creating caring, confident learners who are self aware; and (3) to create a compassionate, ethical, socially responsible, collaborative learning community.
2. ***How Children Learn Is As Important As What Children Learn:*** Explorer’s program is designed to teach children with dignity. The faculty is dedicated to providing a developmentally appropriate program that respects each child’s style of learning. Critical to the program is teaching children the skills that will empower them to become self-motivated, life-long learners. Learning experiences are structured to encourage children to develop positive social behaviors by interacting with others cooperatively, collaboratively, and compassionately. Project-based approaches provide meaningful opportunities for students to make connections with the world around them.
3. ***Strategies for Deeper Learning:*** Faculty at the school have been trained in strategies to add depth and complexity to students’ learning. All children, at every level of learning, are exposed to these strategies. For example, when reading literature, children might be asked to find evidence of concepts such as multiple perspectives, ethics, convergence, rules, patterns and details within the context of the book. Every grade also chooses a “big idea” interdisciplinary theme such as change, systems, relationships, influence, or power, as a lens through which they find meaning in their work. Students discuss these ideas in scholarly groups of various kinds – circles, debates, or “world cafes.”
4. ***Social and Academic Learning:*** At Explorer, we have seen that the awareness of self and others that is created through the school’s social curriculum has profound academic impacts. In writing, for example, children find and use their authentic voice. In history, children see and analyze differing perspectives. In science, children analyze a problem, hypothesize a solution, and test the solution with evidence – the same way we teach them to solve a problem on the playground. Just as in social and emotional development, rote academic learning can be superficial and fleeting. Learning, both emotional and cognitive, rooted in rigorous analysis of self, others, texts, and data can be longer lasting, deeper, and more flexible.

5. ***Partnerships with Parents:*** Underlying our relationship with parents is the understanding that they have much to teach us about their children. Parents are an integral part of their children's education and are valued as contributing members of this learning community. The Parent Education Program provides ongoing, structured support for parents. The goal of this program is to help parents deal more effectively with their children's emotional life. In this way, children receive consistent messages about social and emotional competence in all parts of their lives.
6. ***University Partnerships:*** The school has strong working relationships with UCSD, USD and Point Loma Nazarene. In addition, Explorer has been involved in the development of the HTH Graduate School of Education, one of very few school-centered schools of education in the United States. Explorer's practices and approaches to instruction, learning and assessments are informed by current educational and neuroscientific research. In addition, Explorer's teachers and university faculty work together to ensure that research is well informed by the real-life issues that occur every day in school.
7. ***Partnership with High Tech High Learning:*** Explorer Elementary is affiliated with High Tech High Learning and is a member of its charter management organization. Children have many opportunities for working together with middle school and high school students and the school directors meet regularly to discuss school-related issues. Upon graduation, fifth grade students at Explorer Elementary have the opportunity to attend one of the High Tech Middle Schools.

GOVERNANCE

Explorer Elementary Charter School is incorporated as a non profit public benefit corporation and is governed by a Board of Directors. All Board meetings are public and minutes are available in Explorer's front office. The Board of Directors includes a non-voting faculty representative as well as a non-voting representative from the Parent Council.

SCHOOL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

Arrival and Dismissal Policy

School begins at 8:15 am. School ends at 3 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and at 12:30 pm on Wednesdays. If your child is late, please stop by the office on your way in. Doors to Explorer School will be locked at 3:30 pm every day; 1 pm on Wednesdays. The Truxtun entrance is open from 8 am to 8:30 am and 2:45 pm to 3:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and locked at 1 pm on Wednesdays. If you will be picking your child up after these times, please enter and exit through the gate to the playground. For the safety of your children, hallways are closed when teachers are no longer supervising.

WEDNESDAY is a MINIMUM DAY with 12:30 pm DISMISSAL after lunch

Attendance Policy

It is our goal to provide an excellent academic program for your children. All classes begin each day with a morning meeting. This meeting fulfills many objectives including building community, sharing with one another, and imparting important academic information.

It is essential that children be at school on time each day at 8:15 am. When children enter the classroom late, it is difficult for learning to successfully begin. It is also difficult for a child to enter when a meeting is in progress or work is ongoing. **If a child is tardy or you need to pick your child up early, please stop by the office to sign your child in/out.**

Should your child frequently arrive late to school, you will be contacted by the school office. Hopefully, we can work in partnership to assure that students have every opportunity for an enriched and productive academic experience.

Snack Policy

Please provide a nutritious snack for your child each day. We will have a limited amount of snacks available in the office for emergencies only.

Lunch Policy

Explorer provides a catered nutritious hot lunch for children for a fee. Pizza is served on Tuesdays. Forms are sent home twice a year to sign up for hot lunches. If you do not sign up for hot lunch and/or pizza, please pack a healthy lunch for your child. In cases of emergency, children who are not signed up may eat hot lunch and the school will bill you.

Families with income below 150% of the poverty line (about \$38,000 for a family of four) may qualify for free lunch. The office will send a form home early in the year to determine eligibility.

Birthday Policy

Since our school is small, we need to be especially sensitive to children's feelings about celebrations and parties. We encourage celebrations of children's birthdays with a special snack in the classroom. For out-of-school parties, when the entire class is not invited, please mail invitations to the invited children's homes rather than deliver them in school. We expect you will be careful to be inclusive as children's feelings are often hurt when they are left out.

Illness Policy

For the protection of your children and our staff, we must ask you to carefully read our Illness Policy. Please keep your child home if he or she has:

- ◆ A fever. A child should stay home until he/she has a normal temperature for 24 hours.
- ◆ An unusual rash that may be a symptom of a contagious disease.
- ◆ A contagious disease such as measles, mumps, roseola, or chicken pox.
- ◆ An eye infection with discharge or that is unusually red. After being examined by a physician and placed on medication, your child may return.
- ◆ An ear or throat infection. Once examined, on medication, and comfortable, your child may return.
- ◆ A cold. Your child should stay home until the symptoms of a cold such as coughing, sneezing, watery eyes and thick, green mucous secretions have subsided.
- ◆ Diarrhea and/or symptoms of flu. A child, who has been vomiting, has had diarrhea and/or complaining of a headache, often gets even worse at school.
- ◆ A persistent, hacking cough.
- ◆ Been breathing rapidly or noisily with effort.
- ◆ Head lice and/or nits (lice eggs) on the shafts of the hair. Your child may return to school once all head lice and nits are removed.

You will need to assess the comfort of your child before leaving for school. If your child has been listless, complains of a headache, is pale, or unusually irritable, then this would be a good day to stay home.

Please call the school at (619) 398-8600 if you keep your child home due to illness. If you have to leave a message, please leave the following information: Child's Name; Teacher's Name; and specific illness, i.e. cold, flu, etc.

The staff needs to be aware of the illnesses which may be present among children. Please remember to keep your emergency information up to date. You will be contacted if your child becomes ill at school.

School Visit Policy

Parents are encouraged to make regular visits and volunteer at the Explorer School. In order to monitor safety, we would like parents to check in at the office before going to the classroom.

Field Trip Policy

Field trips complement learning. They offer students a way to meaningfully connect curriculum to experience. To participate in a field trip, all students must have a signed field trip permission slip. Each trip requires its own permission slip. These will be sent home prior to the trip and must be signed by a parent or guardian.

Returned Check Policy

All bank fees and amounts due will be your responsibility if the bank returns a check as a non-sufficient funds (NSF) check. If a NSF check occurs a second time, you will be asked to pay with cash, cashier's check or money order for any future payments to Explorer School.

Parent Directory Use Policy

The Parent Directory information, including names, addresses, phone numbers and emails, is provided as a courtesy to our families. Its sole purpose is to connect families for school-related matters. Please do not use the directory to solicit non-school related business.

Parking Policy

Explorer has only limited parking available for student pick-up and drop-off. If you choose to park in the lot in front of the school OR in Lot D (across from the school) please be aware that you are only permitted to park in spaces marked "Visitor." Parking in any other space may result in a ticket. If no "Visitor" spaces are available, there is ample street parking in the residential neighborhood on the other side of Farragut Road.

Aftercare Policy

Explorer's aftercare program runs from 3 pm to 6 pm every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday; 12:30 pm to 6 pm every Wednesday; and, 3 pm to 5 pm every Friday. Aftercare is open to all students and drop-in care is available. Children not picked up in front of their classroom by 3:15 pm will automatically be escorted to aftercare. The charge per hour is currently \$5.50 and you will receive an invoice every two weeks. Payment is due upon receipt of invoice. If you are late picking up your child (i.e. after 6 pm Monday through Thursday or after 5 pm on Friday) you will be charged a \$20 fee. We know that you understand how important it is to be on time. Therefore, even if your child qualifies for aftercare at no charge, you will still be held responsible for the \$20 late fee. *If a child is picked up late more than two times, a conference will be held and your child may not be eligible for aftercare.*

Children must remain in aftercare until an adult signs them out; therefore, older siblings may not take younger siblings from Explorer School to any of the High Tech schools. Children need to be enrolled in a formal program after school hours to ensure their safety.

Families that are eligible for free lunch (with income less than about \$38,000 for a family of four) may qualify for free aftercare. The office will send a form home early in the year to determine eligibility.

Explorer Elementary Charter School

HOME-SCHOOL AGREEMENT

STUDENT

I will:

- ?½ Take responsibility to achieve my personal best and ask for help when I need it
- ?O Attend school regularly and on time
- ?ä Complete all assigned schoolwork and homework
- ?x Give parents all papers sent from school and return them as required
- ? Show kindness, respect, and consideration to all
- ?ÿ Wear appropriate clothing

PARENT

I will:

- ?• Make sure my child or children attend school regularly and on time (A home study contract will be expected for all approved absences)
- ?ã Assist my child or children with homework and review schoolwork with them, which includes reading to and with them a minimum of five nights each week. I will also provide an appropriate study area equipped with necessary materials
- ?v Review school and class rules and consequences with my child or children and support the school's discipline plan
- ?x Maintain good communications between teacher and parent, including reading, signing, and returning all papers in a timely manner
- ?ò Provide accurate, up-to-date telephone numbers and emergency contact information to the office
- ?@ Commit to being an active member of the parent/school community and show my support. Encouraged methods of support include: attending parent conferences and Back-to-School Night and Open House activities, attending student presentations, driving students on field trips, assisting with projects, helping with fundraisers, volunteering in class, etc.
- ? Show kindness, consideration, and respect to all

Student's Last Name _____

Student's First Name _____

STAFF

All staff members agree to:

- ?6 Promote a positive school climate
- ?É Be an excellent role model
- ?] Show respect for all
- ?ö Provide a safe and orderly environment

As a teacher I will:

- ?« Provide a regular communication between home and school. This communication will contain information regarding student's progress
- ?Ñ Meet the needs of all students by differentiating lessons to allow for different learning styles and ability levels
- ?ø Promote positive self-esteem and self-confidence in each child
- ?Ⓔ Work closely with other teachers to ensure academic parity
- ? Welcome parent involvement
- ?³ Be available for extra help for students
- ?H Show kindness, respect, and consideration of all

Signatures:

Student Parent

Teacher Administrator

Date

Non-compliance with the Home School Agreement may result in a non-renewal of the agreement or the child's removal from the school in accordance with provisions outlined in the school's discipline plan

ASSESSMENT

Explorer Elementary Charter School accepts the challenge of finding ways to assess student learning that give an authentic picture of student accomplishment.

The goal of assessment is to provide information for:

- Curriculum planning and determining and improving instructional practices
- Special needs and interests of students
- Feedback to students regarding their individual progress
- Program accountability
- Communication with parents and the larger community

Multiple measures of assessments are used to maintain a balanced assessment system. These assessments are linked to the standards for literacy, mathematics, science, history-social science, and applied learning. Each child is assessed at least twice a year in the comprehensive inventory of basic math skills, independent reading inventory, running reading records, writing prompts that are genre specific, and conceptual math testing in grades three, four and five. The assessments are rubric-scored and data is collected to chart both individual growth and school wide trends.

The school implements performance-based assessments that enable children to demonstrate what they know and articulate information they have studied and learned. This is accomplished in an annual “All School Exhibition of Learning” and in projects within all classrooms.

Students keep journals which reflect their own performance in math and writing. Charts on all classroom walls reflect student thinking, problem solving, and scholarly debates.

Parent/teacher conferences are held formally twice a year and informal conversations occur daily. It is our goal to always listen to parents and to keep them intimately informed about their child’s progress.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is defined as out-of-school tasks assigned to students as an extension or elaboration of classroom work. At Explorer Elementary Charter School, there are three main types of homework: practice, preparation, and extension. At times, homework will be geared toward creating parent/child interaction, but most often should be done independently by the child.

Practice assignments reinforce newly acquired skills. For example, students who have just learned a new method of solving a mathematical problem are given sample problems to complete on their own. Preparation assignments help student get ready for activities that will occur in the classroom. Students may, for example, be required to do background research on a topic to be discussed later in class. Extension assignments are frequently more long-term continuing projects that complement class work and create opportunities for critical thinking.

Explorer Elementary Charter School Homework Expectations

- ◆ All homework should be completed in pencil (final copies may be required to be in ink or typed).
- ◆ All work must be labeled with child's name and date.
- ◆ Work must be neatly and carefully written so that it is easy to read.
- ◆ Paper should not be torn from a spiral notebook and should not have jagged edges.
- ◆ Keep homework clean and unwrinkled.
- ◆ Be sure to edit work.
- ◆ When writing, be sure to use your own words.
- ◆ Remember always to do your best.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the goal of Explorer Elementary Charter School to provide experiences for children that teach them compassion, commitment, and concern for others. It is understood that children learn what they experience, and therefore all adults model appropriate behavior for children. The faculty at the school help children behave in ways that are conducive to learning and building community.

Classroom experiences create developmentally appropriate opportunities for autonomy and positive decision making. The essence of discipline is understanding behavior and finding effective alternatives to punishment.

At Explorer Elementary Charter School, we are dedicated to helping children learn to meet their own needs while respecting the needs of others. Within each classroom, age-appropriate rules and consequences are decided upon in the beginning of the school year. Teachers form empathic and positive relationships with their students, holding them to high standards of behavior.

Children and teachers decide upon rules together for their mutual benefit. They also decide upon solutions that will be helpful to all concerned should problems arise. When teachers make decisions without a student's input, they use firmness with kindness, dignity and respect.

It is our strong belief that while punishment may work in the short term to stop misbehavior immediately, long-range results may include resentment, revenge, rebellion, and/or retreat. Therefore, Explorer Elementary Charter School uses discipline that is not humiliating to children. Its purpose is to achieve long-range goals as well as responsibility and immediate cooperation. It is based upon mutuality and incorporates clear and firm expectations with respect for children so that a foundation for teaching life skills, good decision-making and self-control is emphasized.

The main objective in assigning consequences for misbehavior is to assist children in making good choices, whether in the classroom, at lunch time, or during recess. When a child is **unsafe, interrupts learning, or clearly does not respect the needs of others**, the following course of action occurs:

- Children are reminded of the expected behavior and previously agreed-upon school standards.
- Should the behavior continue, the teacher will conference with the child to determine good decision making.
- When inappropriate behavior does not change, the principal and/or social curriculum coordinator will be consulted.
- Finally, a conference will be called with the parent in order to assist the child in meeting the school's expectations for behavior.

If at any time a child's behavior is unsafe or dangerous to himself/herself, or to another child or teacher, the child will be sent home from school for at least the remainder of the school day. The school upholds the right to further suspend or require a child be withdrawn from school should these behaviors occur or it be determined that the school cannot meet the child's academic, social, or emotional needs. Explorer Elementary Charter School regards suspensions and expulsion as a last resort. Should the child's behavior be dangerous to self, to others, or the teachers, or if the school decides it cannot meet the child's needs, expulsion will occur according to the policies designated in its charter.

SCHOOL WIDE RULES

- Respect the needs and feelings of others
- Use appropriate language and demonstrate concern for the property of teachers and peers
- Be safe and be considerate of the safety of others
- Remain in the classroom or on school grounds unless permission is given by the teacher or administrator to leave

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Explorer Elementary Charter School strives to meet the needs of all children regardless of their physical or developmental challenges. A Student Study Team will be called together as needed (teacher, resource teacher, principal) based on each child's special circumstances.

In the event a learning or physical challenge hindering a student's progress significantly is documented through appropriate observation and testing, a student may qualify for participation in a formal Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This process designates a clearly identified group of professionals who, along with the parents, implement a specifically designed education program complete with formal methods, time frames, and documentation procedures.

Students may enter the school with an active IEP. In these cases, our faculty will determine the best way to provide continuity of service.

RECORDS

Student Records

Administrators take care to preserve both the integrity and the privacy of required school records. These records are retained permanently at the school site until such time that a request of records is made from another school or agency (please see below for guidelines of records requests). Each student's cumulative record includes the following minimum data:

- Directory information
- Academic work completed
- Grade or level placement
- Enrollment and attendance data
- Standardized test data
- Permanent health record

Emergency Care Information

The Principal has readily accessible records containing emergency care information for each student. Emergency care information is also available to extended day care personnel.

Access to Student Records

Parents of currently enrolled or former pupils have an absolute right to access any and all pupil records related to their child. The editing or withholding of any such records is prohibited.

School professionals and certified personnel have access to student records for legitimate educational interests only. Student records will not leave the grounds and prudence will be exercised so that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 is not violated.

Designated clerical staff have access to student records for purposes of making entries or maintaining records under the supervision of the Principal.

Procedures for Challenging the Content of the Records

Challenges to the content of your child's records are concerned with the correction of data in the student record, not with substantive decisions on academic grades.

The parent of a student may file a written request to the Principal to correct or amend any information in their child's permanent records which they allege to be:

- Inaccurate.
- An unsubstantiated personal conclusion or inference.
- A conclusion or inference outside the observer's area of competence, or not based on personal observation.

If the request is denied, the parent will be given an opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issue raised. This should be done in a meeting with the Principal. After the hearing, a final decision will be made by the Principal, and material in question will either be retained or removed.

Release of Directory Information

Directory information includes: Student's name, class assignment, parent(s) name, address, telephone and email listings.

Explorer Elementary Charter School will provide parents with the opportunity to request that directory information not be released without their consent. Schools are never permitted to furnish a list of student names and addresses to be used for commercial purposes.

Release of Student Record Information to Schools

Student records will be released as soon as possible to requesting schools. Parental signatures will be required before records are sent to anyone.

Release of Records to Persons or Agencies other than Schools

Explorer **must** comply with a court order to release information concerning a student. However, the student's parent should be notified in advance of compliance if it is lawfully possible within the requirements of the judicial order.

Explorer **may not**, without the written authorization of the parents, permit access or release written transcripts to any person or agency not cited previously. This authorization shall be in writing, signed and dated by the person giving the consent. It must specify the records to be released, the reasons for the release, and the names of the parties to whom the records will be released.

PARENT COUNCIL

Explorer is lucky to have an extraordinarily active and supportive parent community. The Explorer Elementary Parent Council coordinates a myriad of activities at the school every day. The Parent Council operates as an arm of the school, but has its own by-laws, which are viewable on its website <http://eepc.explorerelementary.org>. Parent Council is governed by an Executive Board consisting of the following positions.

President

VP / Communications

VP / Volunteer Coordinator

Secretary

Treasurer

Fundraising Coordinator

Parliamentarian

Room Parent Coordinator

Board Liason

At-Large Representative

Alumnus Representative

The Executive Board meets monthly. In addition, there is an open Parent Council meeting each month. The Executive Board includes one member who acts as a parent representative and liaison to Explorer's Board of Directors.

The following committee positions are filled each year by parents:

Hot Lunch

Pizza Tuesdays

eSCRIP / Box Tops

Explorer Wear

Gift Wrap

Kids Art Cards

Scholastic Book Fair

Jog-a-Thon

Hospitality

Art From The Heart

Yearbook

Everyone A Reader

Welcome to School Picnic

Last Day Social

Webmaster

Destination Imagination

Newsletters

Skate Nights

Movie Nights

Dad's Day

Teacher Appreciation

Volunteer Appreciation

School Communications

The Parent Council sends weekly emails with reminders and information about the various activities and events occurring at Explorer. Please make sure that we have your correct email address so that you will receive these updates, and set your email program to accept all emails from pc.communications@explorerelementary.org. In addition, some emails may originate from the office. As a reminder, Explorer emails will always have the word "Explorer" in the subject heading, as well as a brief description of the contents. Please contact the office or the Communications chair (at the above email address) if you have additional questions.

Explorer maintains a website with general school information at <http://www.explorerelementary.org>. The Parent Council also maintains a web site that is updated weekly with current news, schedules, and forms at <http://eepc.explorerelementary.org/>. To protect our school and children, parts of the Parent Council website are protected. You will need to enter the **USERNAME** and **PASSWORD (found at the bottom of the weekly email)** in order to access those areas.

In the event of an emergency, you will automatically receive a communication from the Connect-Ed. Emergency Phone System at all the numbers we have on file for your family.

PARENT VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

We welcome parents into our classrooms to assist the learning process. Our goal is to help you make your experience one in which volunteers feel productive and valued. Therefore, we are asking parents who wish to give time to our classrooms to engage in the following process so that your involvement will be focused and worthwhile:

- ◆ Before volunteering in the classroom, you will need to attend a mandatory parent's meeting
- ◆ We will begin parent assistance after the first six weeks of school.
- ◆ Teachers will coordinate volunteer times to accommodate both your needs as well as the needs of the classroom.
- ◆ It would be helpful if all parents who wish to work in our classrooms would read, *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen* by Faber and Mazlish before beginning to volunteer (available in the library and in the parenting bookstore).
- ◆ Prior to volunteering, the teacher will meet with you to clarify expectations and goals.

As always, we appreciate your willingness to contribute to Explorer's learning community. We look forward to working together.

School Fundraising Opportunities

Explorer participates in several fundraising programs that are FREE to both you and the school, yet raise thousands of dollars for important school programs. These are as follows:

eScrip: This is our most important fundraising program—our goal is to have every family enrolled in eScrip! This program lets you register your grocery and credit cards for cash back from a wide range of retailers around San Diego when you use a registered card. When you shop at Vons, Henry's, Whole Foods, or 100's of other local shops and restaurants, the school receives up to 4% of your spending back in cash! Go to www.escrip.com to register using Explorer's school ID # 4503523.

Box Tops for Education: simply collect box tops and deposit them in the box near the office

Cell phone and printer cartridge recycling: Place these in the green bin near the office

Target Visa: Your Target purchases earn the school 1% cash back, while all non-Target purchases earn ½%! To enroll, go to <http://www.target.com/tcoe> and use Explorer's school ID #115907.

Washington Mutual Visa: Visit <http://www.wamoolaforschools.com> for more information.

Ralph's grocery card: If you shop mostly at Ralph's for your groceries, please contact our eScrip coordinator at pc.escrip@explorerelementary.org to register for this program.

Explorer Annual and Ongoing Events

We want all our new families to feel included in our community from the first day of school through their child's graduation. Following is a list of annual and ongoing events:

Art from the Heart: This annual spring fundraising event features a silent auction as well as a live auction of children's artwork created by each classroom and by the art program.

Skate Night: Held 3-4 times a year, this fun event gets children, teachers, and parents out to have fun skating while raising money for Parent Council projects.

Jog-a-thon: This springtime event gives children the opportunity to raise funds for the school through pledges and their own efforts running/walking laps.

Gatherings: On pre-announced Friday afternoons, the last 20-30 minutes of the school days are devoted to these all-school assemblies. We encourage parents to attend and experience the children's presentations.

Parent Education: Explorer sponsors weekly classes on various parenting topics, led by professional local therapists and educators with experience in topics such as sibling rivalry, sex education, stress management, and more. Visit the Parent Council website for a complete listing of classes, as well as times and dates.

Parent Bookshop/Children's Bookshop: These bookshops are maintained by the Parent Council in the hallway near the office, and contain books that our parent educators recommend to address various parenting issues and children's concerns.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

As part of our Disaster Preparedness Plan at Explorer Elementary Charter School, we ask parents to supply personal use and consumable items should a disaster require that students remain at school for an extended period of time.

Please send the following items with your child by the end of the first week at school. Please check the expiration dates for the longest shelf life as these items will be kept in your child's classroom and will be returned to you at the end of the school year.

Please put these items in a one gallon Ziploc bag:

- ◆ Clearly mark your child's name on a 3X5 card, readable from outside the bag.
- ◆ On the reverse side of the card, please list your name(s) and those of other people who are authorized to pick up your child.
- ◆ Provide day and evening phone numbers for everyone listed, including you.
- ◆ Provide any helpful medical information, i.e., physician's name and phone number, allergies, etc.
- ◆ Sign and date the card as parent or guardian.
- ◆ Supplies may include but are not limited to the following:
 - 2 each – 8 oz. juices (canned or boxed) with pop tops
 - 2 each – 4 ½ oz. cans of small fruit with pop tops
 - 2 each – dried fruit snack packages
 - 2 each – peanut butter or cheese and cracker type snack packages
 - 2 each – granola bars
 - 2 each – individual moist towelettes
 - 1 plastic spoon
 - A family picture and "I love you" note to your child

We have very limited storage space, so please limit the items to those that will fit in a gallon Ziploc plastic bag. The school will have a supply of water, snacks, flashlights, hygiene and first aid supplies on hand in case of disaster. The items in your bag will be your child's own personal "comfort bag" in the event of a disaster.