



*La Vida Charter School*

Parent & Student

Handbook

2011-2012

K-12 Personalized Education

*La Vida Means Life*



*LA VIDA MEANS LIFE!*

## **LA VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL**

Dear Parents and Students:

La Vida Charter School is ready and eager to offer its special program of Waldorf inspired onsite classes supporting home study curricula once again for the eleventh year. All last year the new and returning faculty enjoyed the opportunity of receiving instruction on teaching Waldorf classes and the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, online, with Eugene Schwartz, a master teacher with a deep understanding of Steiner and who has also mastered the art and technology of digital instruction. The school hopes to bring Mr. Schwartz to the Ridgewood campus this year for more individualized mentoring. In the meantime, main lesson blocks should demonstrate a deepening of the Waldorf pedagogy and the inclusion of its trademark methodologies of form drawing, storytelling and movement.

Four new teachers join the faculty, all of whom are highly qualified and experienced in either Waldorf education, special ed or homeschooling. Three have Masters Degrees. During August In Service each faculty member demonstrated an educational technique of their expertise. Two new teachers offered short workshops on form drawing and bean bag rhythms while returning teachers presented on sensory integration, brain gym activities, working with standards, and a fun fruit carving demonstration that high school students will be learning during the monthly culture class on TR Tuesdays whose theme this year is the "Art and Science of Food and Food as Art."

Two pilot projects will launch in the 2011-2012 year, both have come about through parent input. Five families in grades 1-4 will be able to try a new curriculum from the Well Trained Mind group, specifically the *Story of the World* curriculum which is history told in story form. Popular with homeschoolers, the curriculum comes with language arts options. Science is learned through a selection of Usborne kits and math will be either the California aligned Sadler-Oxford, or Saxon Homeschool.

The second pilot project will be a La Vida class of homeschoolers in Covelo meeting with a teacher there. The class will meet one day a week at the beautiful Round Valley Library for a Waldorf inspired day with grades 1-4. The teacher, Christina Sears, who resides in Covelo will also make home visits for the monthly Educational Coordinator meetings.

Instead of a two semesters year, the school is switching to three 12 week trimesters. Partly in response to parent satisfaction survey responses stating the desire for more feedback on the progress of their student, parents will now receive three report cards as well as signing three Master Agreements. The school hopes that by working in a trimester system, more momentum in learning will be maintained during the winter months. Also for high school students who need courses broken into chunks, they will be able to take a smaller credit load per trimester if they desire.

Students will be pleased to see our new (22 year old) shuttle bus. Once policies and procedures are in place, students will be able to get out to the ponds and Redwoods on the ranch for science classes. Seating about 23, the shuttle bus was a good price, and will serve our needs for local

transportation. Some sprucing up is in order and we are hoping that a family or two will take it on as their pet volunteer project.

Thanks to Larry Gluckman and his group of 14 students from MCOE schools for coming back to La Vida to paint the second coat of the building exterior. They were able to start on the trim, you may notice we now of yellow doors. Larry runs a wonderful program where students get paid to learn the skill of painting and get the experience of working full days on a crew.

Three current political items will effect La Vida. First SB 645 which is scheduled to be voted on soon, will have a major impact on the schools renewing their charters. The law will make it difficult for many schools including La Vida to continue. If voted in next week or so, the law will take effect in January 2012. Locally, the threat of a permanent Asphalt Plant upwind from La Vida is still in process. Public comments are being accepted by the county planning department until mid September. The November vote on the library tax will determine the fate of the Willits Library. If it does not pass, the library will close! Please take the time to get involved with one or more of these important issues. In Mendocino County, every vote is truly counts.

The following Parent and Student Handbook is a work in progress that is designed to help you better understand the philosophy as well as the policies and procedures of the school. Please read and sign the acknowledgements on the last page. Your suggestions are welcomed as the school depends on parent involvement.

Looking forward to another year of collaboration and educational growth.

Sincerely:

La Vida Board and Staff

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Board

Sarah Livingston Horrocks,  
Kevin Britton  
Cynthia Raiser Jeavons

Faculty

Michael Charnes  
Suzanne Farris  
Lindsay Leland Dolan  
Debbie Macy  
Lyra Matthews  
Carolina North  
Craig Rohrbough  
Christina Sears  
Kerry Sullivan  
Karen Walsh  
Marty Wolff  
Marta Wright

Staff

Ann Kelly, Executive Director  
Lisa Burgess, Business Manger and School Secretary  
Danielle Canaris, Business Secretary  
Sherma Summers, Business Secretary  
Andrew Miller, IT Technician

Carina Lopez, Office Help & Housekeeping  
Luke Kelly, Office Help  
Carmen Escobedo, Yard Maintenance  
Jeff Merz, Maintenance

## **MISSION AND GOALS OF THE SCHOOL**

**(Portions taken from the Charter Document of La Vida Charter School)**

### **MISSION**

The mission of the La Vida Charter School is to broaden the educational choices and opportunities for children and families who live in Mendocino County and surrounding areas through independent study, home schooling, and Waldorf inspired teaching methods.

### **GOALS**

Our goal is to establish a school in which all children are respected and recognized for their individual gifts, and feel supported in developing these gifts. Students will be appreciated for their unique ethnic and cultural backgrounds and will be encouraged in their understanding of the individuality represented by the traditions and cultures of their peers, as well as members of the global community. Through a three-pronged approach focused on cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor skills, LVCS's children will emerge with strong potential for academic excellence, a commitment to the enhancement of their community, and the ability to succeed amidst the challenges of today's and tomorrow's world.

### **WHOM THE SCHOOL IS ATTEMPTING TO EDUCATE**

LVCS's target population is those interested in home schooling or independent study, as well as those interested in Waldorf Education. LVCS serves students from Kindergarten through twelfth grade. LVCS offers two choices of completely independent study educational programs for student enrollment:

1. A blended program using a partial on- site class-model inspired by Waldorf education for students grades K-12 along with home study. The on-site portion of the independent study program offers parents and children a variety of education choices, including part-time day classes and other specialty courses. Designed as an enhancement to the home study program, the on-site program is considered a non-classroom based education for purposes of attendance recording. Parents and students meet with an Educational Coordinator who assists and manages the educational program.
2. Home school program for students grades kindergarten through twelfth, where parents can choose to utilize Waldorf inspired methods, or other Independent Study curriculum in which parents collaborate with an Educational Coordinator to achieve teaching goals and objectives.

## **HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS**

LVCS believes that learning best occurs when instructional methods inspired by Waldorf education are utilized through a balanced coordination of site based instruction and home study. LVCS also believes that learning best occurs when children are in an environment where they feel safe, happy and respected. The staff at LVCS successfully creates such an atmosphere, in combination with stimulating lessons, so the student's learning is optimized. LVCS also emphasizes creating and maintaining a strong, cooperative and mutually supportive working relationship with its sponsoring School District. This relationship builds upon the mutual goals of providing the best possible educational opportunities for all children in the Mendocino County area. In addition, LVCS finds that learning best occurs for its students when strong, collaborative relationships with professionals and other community resources are formed. An involved community of parents and teachers will actively and visibly support the children. Parents will be involved in governance, the school program, events and activities, the establishment, beautification and maintenance of the school facility, linkages with the larger community and the ongoing evaluation of the school program, and students are encouraged to have input and involvement in these areas. Periodic evaluations of student progress combining State and Waldorf-methods measurements and of the curriculum and teachers will ensure the best possible educational program. Information gleaned from the evaluations will be used for ongoing planning of the curriculum and staff development process. LVCS will employ highly qualified teachers who hold a California teaching credential, in addition to a combination of Waldorf training, education, and/or experience which meets Charter Board standards.

## **STUDENT ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **The Master Agreement and Educational Coordinating Meetings**

An entry interview is required with the administrator or designee before prospective students are enrolled. The purpose of the interview is to get acquainted, to find out what the special interests and needs of the child are and finally, if independent study is an appropriate placement.

Admission to the La Vida Charter School will require a written contract between the parent, student, and teacher agreeing to the goals, objectives, and mission of the school as set forth in the charter and expanded upon in this handbook.

Each student will be evaluated upon entry into the school to identify the appropriate level for the student. Each student will be evaluated in the spring semester of the school year to assess skill level and growth, and the adequacy of the program in meeting the students' individual needs.

Upon admission to La Vida Charter School, each student and his/her parent(s) will be required to meet with a teacher and

1. Discuss the child's program/curriculum.
2. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the La Vida Charter School philosophies.
3. (Parents) Sign a contract that will stipulate the following:

- Parent or Guardian’s availability to be the primary teacher of the student
  - Parental involvement in academic teaching and support
  - Mandatory parent and student attendance at scheduled progress meetings every 20 school days for kindergarten through 8th grade, and a minimum of every 10 school days for grades 9 through 12.
  - To help develop, implement, and follow through with a personalized education plan for the student.
4. (Students) Sign a contract committing to the following:
- Independent Study or Home schooling.
  - Completing the required schoolwork as assigned/agreed upon.
5. Parents allow and student’s agree to take the STAR test and or the La Vida alternative assessment (MAP test)

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **20 hours per week is the minimum**

State law requires independent study students to complete at least 20 hours of work per week.

High School students need to complete about 30 hours a week in order to be successful. High School students submitting less than 30 hours per week will be placed on probationary status.

At the Educational Coordination meeting, once every 20 school days for K-8 and every 10 school days for grades 9-12, parents and students will submit a log recording the daily educational activities. The charter teacher will supply forms to assist in this recording. Students and parents may also keep a journal. Keeping a log or recording the work done at home is a crucial part of the documentation for attendance purposes. We recommend that the elementary parent home-teacher purchase a Waldorf style main lesson book and create a beautiful academic journal of the homeschool experience. This can be copied as part of the documentation pages.

Parents and students will know they are on track if they are progressing in:

- Oak Meadow- One lesson per week, for all grades.
- Odysseyware - Five lessons per week.
- Saxon- 3 lessons per week.
- Steck-Vaughn Science- 25 pages per week.

## **HOW STUDENTS ARE ASSESSED**

The goal of LVCS, to develop compassionate and contributing members of community with skills to meet the world’s challenges, will be demonstrated through several measures. Student mastery of cognitive skills, social-emotional skills, psychomotor skills and core subject knowledge will be measured through LVCS’s triangulated assessment model. This model allows for the measurement of meaningful learning, as well as content standards and state compliance. The authentic student centered assessment of the student’s own meaningful learning will primarily be demonstrated through a student selected *portfolio and self-assessment* based on appreciative inquiry formats. California State Content

Standards will be measured through the *MAP, Measured Academic Performance test*, published by Northwest Evaluation Association, NWEA. This formative test is designed to show what the student has mastered and is precisely ready to learn next. It is a tool for teachers and parents to focus instruction. LVCS shall offer the MAP short survey at the beginning of the year as a diagnostic, and the larger content area goals test in the fall and spring. The *STAR test* is the third point on the triangle as a summative test and provides additional information on California standards achievement and national norm reference data.

Below is a list of ongoing pupil outcomes and assessments which help support and track student growth throughout the year in addition to the three assessments listed above.

- ***The Learning Record:*** the key document and record of assignments and attendance for independent study. It represents a maximum 20 school days for elementary students and a maximum of 10 school days for High School students. Learning Records report work completed (such as books read, field trips, classes attended and lessons accomplished in curriculum), progress toward goals, parent and teacher evaluative comments along with samples in the four core area, plus arts and electives.
- ***Goals:*** the basis for pupil outcomes, are created as a focal point of personalized academic study for each semester. Parents are requested to follow the learning guidelines for grade-level requirements at LVCS and will be provided a copy of learning guidelines appropriate for the grade level of their student.
- ***Main Lesson Books:*** from site based classes or from home are created by the students and demonstrate knowledge of core content through illustrated essays, charts, maps etc.
- ***Semester Written Evaluations:*** This evaluation format has been replaced by the Standards Based Report Card, but may be used in certain situations such as with Special Ed students. It is a document with written observations by the Educational Coordinator with specialty teacher and parent input for the elementary student. These evaluations include anecdotal evidence of emotional, social and cognitive development, and a record of lessons completed by the pupil. It will list the key outcomes for the semester and how well the goals were met. Statements about growth achieved and recommended areas for future focus are integrated.
- ***Standards Based Report Cards:*** at semester end. Achievement of grade level content standards in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science as well as Social Skills are ranked from emerging, developing to mastery. A ranking of “developing” is considered passing.
- ***Progress Reports*** for High School students at mid term and semester end ***Report Cards*** are issued with traditional grades, units and comments.
- ***Quizzes and chapter review tests:*** are incorporated as part of the curriculum. Educational Coordinators quiz the student on the periods work, either orally or written, during the regular meetings.
- ***MAP:*** Measures of Academic Performance published by NWEA, Northwest Evaluation

Association, a non-profit corporation, is a California State adopted alternative standardized test for the ASAM schools which is aligned with California Content Standards. However, its purpose is to help focus instruction in Reading, English Language Usage, Math and Science.

- **Portfolios:** a year end presentation and discussion in which the student, parent, and teacher choose examples of the student's work based on certain criteria that demonstrate how and what the student has learned over the past year.
- **Student Self-Assessment:** a survey in which the student identifies the meaningful learning that has occurred through the year, as well as, if appropriate, a reflection on their own effort.
- **Performances and Open House:** performances in the music, drama, dance and all-school open houses are held once or twice a year, where parents and members of the community have the opportunity to observe student work. School district members, administrators, and teachers may attend these events, assessing the quality of work for themselves.
- **Surveys and questionnaires:** are completed by pupils, staff and parents providing feedback on both established and developing programs.

**California Standardized Test and California High School Exit Exam:** The Charter School shall meet the statewide performance standards and shall conduct annual pupil assessments required pursuant to Education Code Sections 60605 and 60851, including the STAR test and the CAHSEE. The STAR is comprised of the writing test for 4th and 7th graders offered March and the multiple choice for 2nd through 11 grade usually conducted for two weeks at the end of April and first of May. The CAHSEE, for 10th graders and above until passed, is a high stakes exam required to required for a California High School Diploma. The test is conducted each spring for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, twice for 11th graders and up to three times per year for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

## **LEARNING RECORDS AND DAILY ENGAGEMENT LOG**

Learning records are documents provided by the EC which recognize and include the student's participation in the primary core academic areas as well as dance, music, drama, sports, field trips, family trips, and community involvement. It is the parent's or students (depending on age) responsibility to submit Learning Records for each student to the Educational Coordinator every 20 school days for grades K-8, and every 10 school days for grades 9-12. The main purpose of a completed Learning Record is to

- Document a student's school attendance
- Document a student's progress towards his/her goals and objectives.
- To recognize and commend the learning achievements of each student.

An excellent Learning Record:

1. Is complete and well organized.
2. Reflects a student's progress toward his/her goals.
3. Salutes learning achievements, breakthroughs and insights.
4. Includes evidence of learning (e.g. activities and events, beyond a list of topics).
5. Includes parent and educational-coordinator comments.

A Learning Log are a record showing daily engagement, Monday through Friday, in educational activities. It is a required form in addition to the Learning Records. It must be signed by the parent. The charter school has stock forms of the daily engagement log, or the parent and student may use their own calendar, or plan book and list the assigned educational activities that are accomplished each day. The daily engagement log must be turned at the end of each learning period when the student's work is submitted.

Student independent study folders are kept for three years. At the end of that time we will make an attempt to return them to you first, if all fails then they will be destroyed.

## **NON-COMPLIANCE**

### **Missing Work and Missed Meetings**

When a student fails to turn in the assigned or agreed upon work, they are out of compliance with the Independent Study Contract. The student only has three chances which are documented by the teacher and noted by the administrator. The student will be dis-enrolled after the third incident of missed work. The formal steps of this procedure are listed on the master agreement and the acknowledgement of responsibilities.

It is extremely important that students and parents attend the scheduled Educational Coordination meeting. If circumstances interfere so that a the student/family can not be present then the students work should be mailed to the teacher and the meeting be re-scheduled.

**Important Note:** If the student/ parent depending upon the responsibility agreement, fails to **give twenty-four hour notice** to the teacher about a meeting cancellation three times through out the year, then the student will be dis-enrolled.

There are very strict state laws governing independent study which La Vida must comply with because we are a public institution.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **Curriculum and Materials & Supplies**

La Vida Charter School is a free public school, no tuition is charged. Each student, by his or her daily attendance, generates funds from the state of California that are appropriated for educational purposes. A portion of these funds is allocated to each student to be used for educational expenses.

**Curriculum:** Everyone gets curriculum, The school recommends and provides Oak Meadow as its core K-12 curriculum. Other choices are also supported such as

Live Education. Limited supplies of other curricula, such as Core Knowledge and Story of the World, are available. Alternate curriculum may be given to Special Education Students.

For Math, Sadler Oxford's Progress in Math is a California Standards based curriculum for grades K-8. La Vida also recommends and provides Saxon Home School Math for all grades K- Calculus.

This year the school will be offering an incentive for families to return all of their curriculum on time. Families with on time returns will be able to choose an incentive gift that includes the beautiful and long lasting Yorik colored pencils, or a \$10 gift certificate at various local book stores.

**Students taking on site classes:** get curriculum only. .

**Homeshcool Only Students:** With La Vida curriculum, students will also have a small stipend of \$50 per trimester for added curriculum. Students without a La Vida curriculum will have a small budget of \$85 each trimester, to be spent by December 8<sup>st</sup> for the Fall and Winter trimester and by March 15 for the Spring trimester.

Under no circumstances may a parent be reimbursed for materials purchased independently. All instructional materials must be purchased from an approved vendor by authorized purchase order through your educational coordinator the office ordering personnel. All non-consumable materials purchased by La Vida Charter School by law belong to the State and must be returned at the end of the school year, or when they are no longer being used by the family in the education of an enrolled student. You will be expected to treat the non-consumable materials as you would library books on loan.

You will be expected to replace lost or negligently damaged items.

Curriculum is expensive. La Vida pays on the average between \$400 to \$600 per student for a curriculum package. Book covers will preserve the life of the book and make it convenient to write their name clearly on the outside. We encourage you to cover your books right away as part of your independent study program. We will provide you with book covers as long as the supply lasts.

La Vida tote bags are provided, supply permitting, to help keep your curriculum together and in good condition.

## **MATERIALS RESTRICTIONS**

### **Nature of Materials: Charter Schools and Religious Instruction**

There has been great confusion regarding the use of religious materials in independent study programs. A recent study of this issue resulted in guidelines that seem to accurately reflect the rights and opportunities of parents and students in a Charter School. This study included intensive discussions with legislative representatives, legal counsel, parents and religious groups, and the California Department of Education. It is very clear that by

applying the following guidelines of Charter School instructional programs the schools will operate lawfully, and, of equal importance, with maximum respect for individual rights.

1. The parent/guardian acting as a co-facilitator, or in any other manner assisting in the instruction of their child, is NOT considered an agent of the State of California and, therefore, is not bound by those laws that guide the teachers who are paid by the State of California. The parent/guardian, as provided by the constitution of the United States, is provided the right to freedom of expression of religion and may at any time use religious content in the instruction, guidance, and care of their child.
2. The State of California and subsequently its agent, the Charter School, is not permitted to purchase or otherwise provide materials containing religious content for students or for any other purpose.
3. A Charter School may not require or maintain any student achievement records, including transcripts, report cards, portfolios, or any other documentation regarding the student that contains religious content.
4. The Educational Coordinator/Teacher of a State of California Charter School may not, during the course of instruction, use materials or expressions deemed to contain religious content.
5. Small Group Instructors, who are paid by the State of California through a Charter School, are considered an agent of the State during their course of instruction and, therefore, may not teach using materials or expressions deemed to contain religious content.

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

In order to provide a school environment that fosters cooperation, responsibility, and respect, children will be expected to follow several basic rules:

- Students should come to school with an attitude of readiness and willingness to participate. La Vida's on-site classes are optional, therefore only students who want to attend should be enrolled. If a child refuses to cooperate with the group, then the parents will be called to pick up the child.
- Courtesy is always expected towards other children, teachers, and parents. Pushing, hitting, kicking, fighting, teasing, swearing, talking back, spitting, and biting are prohibited.
- Students are expected to participate in classroom activities in a respectful manner. Students are not allowed to bring inappropriate objects to school. This includes handheld video games, toys that promote violence, candy, illegal substances, or any other material deemed detrimental by the teacher.
- Students may be required to surrender their cell phone until the end of the day.
- Activities that are damaging or hurtful to the property of the school and others will not be allowed.

Teachers will communicate further expectations to their students. Teachers and Administration will determine appropriate consequences if a student disregards these expectations. A more detailed explanation and process will be found in the school's Discipline Policy and Procedures at the end of this handbook.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

All students attending La Vida Charter School are provided an academic environment free from sexual harassment. The Board of La Vida has established a written policy against sexual harassment in all forms. School policy supplements existing laws including the State Education Code, which defines sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual conduct including advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature”. Any unwelcome sexual conduct that interferes with a student’s academic performance or creates an offensive or intimidating academic environment is against school policy and should be reported immediately to the teacher or administrator. Unwelcome sexual conduct need not be intended to harass. Harassment is determined on the basis of how the conduct is received. La Vida’s sexual harassment policy applies to students, teachers, staff, parents, visitors, volunteers, and all others on campus or elsewhere involved in any formal school-sponsored activity.

## **PUNCTUALITY & ATTENDANCE**

When one signs up for a class or program, students and parents are making a commitment to attend a class which means agreeing to arrive on time. and on a regular basis. Entering during the middle of a class session interrupts the flow of the class and is detrimental to the individuals and the group.

Attendance for both of the two day classes is expected. Although if space is permitting, it may be possible to set up a one day attendance schedule, however it is discouraged.

Of course, excused absences due to illness and certain unavoidable circumstances will occur from time to time.

Consistent tardiness and or absences will cause the student to lose his/her space in the class to make room for someone waiting to attend. If a student misses three (3) classes in a trimester, they may be dropped from the class. Two (2) tardies count as one absence. Anyone arriving after 9:15 am will be considered tardy.

Picking up children before the class is over is very disruptive and often important activities or information are missed. Please wait until students are dismissed.

## **RIDGEWOOD RANCH**

La Vida Charter School leases the school building at Ridgewood Ranch, south of Willits, in Mendocino County. Ridgewood Ranch is owned and operated by a Christian Community, Christ Church of the Golden Rule. It is legal for a public school to lease from a church, and the school’s attorneys have provided some operational guidelines for Charter Schools sharing space with a religious institution.

These guidelines are available for everyone to read. The major point is that a clear separation from any church is maintained, prohibiting: prayer, religious studies or displays (unless secular in nature), on school grounds.

Please be aware that a violation of the church and state requirement can be extremely costly, accordingly, strict compliance with the guidelines will be maintained. Please feel free to discuss any concerns that you have regarding this issue with the Administrator or the Board.

Ridgewood Ranch is a quiet community with many elderly residents. It was a great gift of generosity and openness to allow La Vida a place on the ranch. Please be aware that the school's traffic has a major impact on the ranch. Obey traffic signs. Drive slowly and with caution; 20 miles per hour down from the highway and 5 miles per hour in the parking lot. Carpool whenever possible.

There is no smoking on the ranch and no alcohol consumption allowed. Please do not play music loudly on the ranch.

**Parking:** The school has fifteen designated parking spaces across the front and up the Seabiscuit statue side. The school's parking spots do not include the side facing the road under the tree. Children are never allowed to run in the parking lot. Please be very cautious at drop off and pick up times.

**Kindergarten Parking:** The Golden Rule management has determined that parents park in the main school building lot, Not at the kinderhaus. This applies to both drop off and pick up. No exceptions.

Honor and respect our host community by showing courtesy, and hopefully La Vida will enjoy a long-term relationship and home on the precious piece of land called Ridgewood Ranch.

## **DRESS CODE**

Students are expected to wear clothes suitable for an active day of study and play. Safety, simplicity, and appropriateness should be considered. These guidelines may not cover all situations and teachers may need to address particular attire. Please feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about specific articles of clothing.

To ensure a safe environment for our children,

1. Leave dangling jewelry and earrings at home;
2. Come appropriately dressed for the weather; and
3. Come wearing comfortable, practical, flat-soled shoes that are firmly attached to the feet. These shoes are required for hikes during science classes.
4. Bring an extra pair of "house" shoes to leave at the school for indoor wear.

To create a wholesome and appropriate environment,

1. Outer wear should be simple, modest, and not distracting;

2. Children should use clothing, backpacks, lunchboxes, etc. that are free of references to drugs, alcohol, violence, or any media, sports, or cartoon images or slogans; and
3. Makeup is discouraged
4. Clothes should cover the body, with no belly buttons showing and no underwear visible.

**Cleanliness:** Dressing appropriately and being ready for school includes **personal hygiene**. Students should be physically clean with clean clothing appropriate for the day. Underwear should be changed daily. Creating a rhythm of personal care helps students in numerous ways; A person care regime is healthy while it also prepares one mentally, and physically for the day ahead. Socially the students benefit as well. Dirty students get teased and rejected by peers which can influence one's self esteem for life. Students not befit to be a part of the group will be presented with hygiene basket and clothing options from the closet.

### **Shoes**

Shoes must be available to all students on-site. Only students with appropriate shoes covering their feet will be allowed on walks and hikes on the ranch.

## **LUNCH AND SNACKS**

Please make sure your child has an adequate breakfast at home with something warm to eat or drink. All students, including high school students, need to bring a mid-morning snack and lunch. Learning does not occur while a student is hungry. Lunches and Snacks should be nutritious and well balanced foods, avoiding gum, candy, and sugary foods or drinks. **No sodas.** Teachers are happy to supply lists of healthy snacks ideas.

Pack lunches appropriately with ice packs in the hot weather. Yogurt and string cheese can spoil in the course of a morning. Students may not use the tiny school refrigerator. Prepare lunches with health and nutrition in mind.

## **MEDIA AND YOUR CHILD**

The Waldorf educational philosophy of the La Vida Charter School is based upon a deep understanding of child development. The school is committed to nurturing each child's unique qualities so that their cognitive, social/ emotional, and psychomotor skills may flourish. To that end, we request that our families put forth a conscious effort to significantly reduce or even eliminate the use of media (television, videos, video games, computer games, and feature movies) especially for young children's entertainment and education

This educational philosophy is reinforced by the brain studies that have been done on the effects of radiant light on the brain. Radiant light is the term to describe the light emitted from television and computer screens. Reflected light is more easily used by the brain, such as the light from movie screens and overhead projectors. However the best and deepest long term learning takes place through physical experience with active mental

involvement. Joseph Chilton Pearce has been publishing information on the brain for thirty years and is a wonderful resource for parents trying to sort all of this out.

For the oldest students, La Vida may include a class on how to use the computer. The dominant thought here is that the computer is a tool much like a paint brush is a tool for a painter. Computer projects will come from an imagination base with the student actively researching, creating and problem solving to produce a unique product. Nonetheless, limiting the time in front of a video terminal is recommended even for high school students.

## **TOYS**

We believe that children's toys should leave them free to create their own imaginary worlds. We recommend choosing products that are free of media heroes (e.g., Power Rangers, Ninjas, Barbie's, and Disney princesses). Toys that allow children to play, explore, build, create, and imagine can be the most fun and satisfying of all.

Toys are not to come to school unless arrangements have been made with the teacher. Often toys from home cause too much distraction and stress if they are lost. Students are not allowed to bring inappropriate objects to school. This includes hand held video games, toys that promote violence, candy, illegal substances, and any other material deemed detrimental by the teacher.

**CD Players: MP3 Players and Cell Phones:** During school hours, plus 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after school, playing music devices shall not be permitted. Cell phones and ring tones must be turned off during school hours, this includes texting. Students may make necessary phone calls at lunch break and may use the office phone for necessary calls.

## **RHYTHMS**

Another way that families can enhance the educational experience is by understanding the rhythms of the day. Children of all ages flourish in environments that are not only loving but also orderly and predictable. With external senses of order and routine, children feel comfortable living in the moment. Just knowing what is expected at different intervals in the day can help children feel secure in the world. As an example, a bedtime ritual can help to calm and soothe children and prepare them for restful sleep. Once this routine is established, the ritual may become parents' most treasured time with their children.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

La Vida is a Parent participation school.

Parents considering La Vida Charter School need to understand that the success of the school is based in large part on a strong parent body dedicated to helping the school meet its objectives in all areas.

Parents placing a child in the school have responsibilities not necessarily associated with other public schools. First and foremost is a commitment to being your child's primary teacher. Parents who embrace and support the educational philosophy at home enhance the student's experience. Parents are encouraged to attend the Parent Education Seminars, and parent class meetings that will be held throughout the year.

Parents are asked to volunteer 4 hours per month, or 40 hours per school year. Hours should be noted in the volunteer binder on the counter in the kitchen. Families who fulfill their hours have a guaranteed space in the onsite program for the following year. All existing students have a place in the independent study program and do not participate in the lottery.

Numerous opportunities to be involved with the school are listed on the following pages. Parent Committees, helping in the classroom, providing snack, office work, etc. all count and are valued contributions to the school.

### **Parent Committees:**

Sign up for only one committee please.

### **Fundraising Committee:**

Goal is to raise money for playground and operations. The Golden Rule has asked us to move the swing set to a new area. Raise at least \$5000.00 this year.

The Group will stage the Scholastic Book Fair in December and the Cinco De Mayo Family Fiesta & Dinner in May. Other small fundraisers are encouraged as well.

8-10 members,

Work with the Director, and a representative to report to the La Vida Board four times during the year.

Meet monthly or more often when event is imminent.

### **Outreach Committee**

Task : Coordinate and implement ways in which La Vida can become known as a positive presence in the communities of Ukiah, Willits and Mendocino County in general. Possible actions include getting brochures out and restocking when necessary, call in to appropriate programs on KZYX, coordinate La Vida booths at public events such as Pastels on the Plaza, Mothers Day Parade, Frontier Days Parade Float, Peace Day etc.

7 members,

Work with the Director, and a representative to report to the La Vida Board twice during the year.

Meet monthly or more often when event is imminent.

### **Site and Playground Committee**

Task : Coordinate and implement site / playground improvement projects including safety concerns such as the emergency management plan.

Stage clean up days etc.

7 members,

Work with the Director and representative report to the La Vida Board three times a year.

Meet monthly or more often when event is imminent.

**Parent Support Committee**

Task : Coordinate and provide a monthly forum for home teachers to gather , share, ask questions and gain information to meet the challenges of homeschooling.

Design other ways to support parent educators.

Experienced home teachers with successful programs are asked to join this committee, as well as new members of the La Vida community.

7 members,

Work with the Director and a representative to report to the La Vida Board twice during the year.

Meet monthly or more often when event is imminent.

**Parent Taught Specialty Class Committee**

Task : Coordinate and implement parent taught specialty classes for Thursdays at 1:30, Spring Semester.

7-10 members,

Work with the Director and representative report to the La Vida Board twice a year.

Meet monthly or more often when event is imminent.

**Curriculum Advisory Committee**

Task : Gather suggestions of useful curriculum and resources for all grades. Create a data bank of useful websites and community education resources.

Review and comment on new curriculum options.

Stage Curriculum Fair in June.

7 members,

Work with the Director and representative report to the La Vida Board twice a year.

Meet monthly or more often when event is imminent.

# La Vida Charter School Volunteer Sign Up

La Vida offers a rich program that depends on parent involvement. We need each family to volunteer 40 hours per year, or 4 hours per month. Keep track of your time in the volunteer binder in the kitchen. Contributing food and snack count toward volunteer time. Volunteer time is worth \$15 per hour to La Vida. A regular Classroom snack would count about one half hour. Please Sign up by **checking off the jobs and events** that interest you for up coming school year. Thank You.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Office Assistant

- Phone Calls
- Mail Prep
- Photocopying
- Book Check in
- Legal
- Gardening
- Sprinkler Systems
- Games/Puppetry
- Foreign Languages
- Hamm Radio
- Other

### General Help:

- Playground Supervision
- Flowers for Special Events
- Food for Special Events
- Classroom snack
- Volunteer for Special Events
- Volunteer Co Coordinator
- Volunteer Binder Coordinator
- Library/ Resource Help
- Newsletter Assistance
- School Scrapbook
- Class Parent
- Grounds Clean Up
- Maintenance Projects
- Maintain First Aid Kits
- Update MSDS Binder
- Gather Emergency Supplies

### General Skills:

- Sewing
- Handwork
- Costuming
- Stage Props
- Carpentry
- Photography
- Medical
- Electrical
- Mechanical
- Computer Graphics
- Computer Repair/
- Programming
- Computer Word Processing

### La Vida Events:

- Field Trips
- Peace Day- Ice Cream Social (Sept)
- Scarecrow City (Sept)
- Thankfulness Feast & Performance (Nov)
- Scholastic Book Fair (Dec)
- Talent Show/ Open House (March)
- Cinco de Mayo (May)
- Bagged Lunches for the
- Hungry (every 6 wks)
- Parent Workshop Help
- Star Test Snack Coordinator
- Cahsee Test Snack Coordinator
- Science Fair (April)
- Open House
- & Talent Show (March/April)
- Graduation (June)
- Golden Rule Appreciation
- (May)
- Parking Attendant for events

### La Vida Parent Committees:

- Fundraising (events)
- Outreach (booths at events)
- Playground & Site
- Parent Run Specialty Classes
- Parent Support
- Curriculum Advisory

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

1. First prospective parents have an interview with the Administrator or designee. If after the interview it seems that La Vida and independent study would be a successful situation for the child and family, parents should read the Parent- Student Handbook. After reading they will submit the Parent Agreement and Enrollment Form to the school and participate in an orientation. Group orientations are offered at the beginning of the school year. Individual orientations are provided by the educational coordinator.
2. If the charter school has more applications sent in than there are openings, a lottery will be held according to the following procedure:
  - Applications are sent in.
  - Deadline is set for acceptance and lottery.
  - Lottery is held, drawing all names.
  - Each child is put on a list in the order drawn.
  - If there are siblings, they are added to each respective class at the same time.
  - People are called in order from the list. If a family refuses their spot in class, we will continue down the list until the class is filled. If a family accepts, the family will be sent the Parent Handbook and Enrollment form. After maximum enrollment has been reached, the remaining names will establish the waiting list.
  - It is possible that there will be an opening in La Vida for a student, but the appropriate site classes are full. In this instance the student will be given the option of registering for a full home study program and may go on the waiting list for site based classes.
  - Priority for placement in on site classes will be based on all volunteer hours completed, order on the list, and those wanting to attend the whole day rather than a partial day.

## **PARENTS IN CLASSROOMS**

La Vida would benefit to have parent volunteers at the school each day. The classrooms are small and have an occupancy limit, so scheduling with the teacher is very important. There are many activities that parents can help with everyday. Some ideas are: class aides, site hosts, playground supervision, setting up snack, housekeeping, gardening, office work, poster making, organizing etc. The school will have a schedule for parents to sign up for the tasks they are interested in. Please understand that the cannot accommodate all of the parents on site each day.

**Observations;** Parents/ Guardians who wish to observe must get permission through the administrator who will consult the teacher as to when is a good time. Those who wish to observe should be prepared to articulate why they wish to observe the class and also have a follow up session with the teacher and administrator or designee.

**Parent Observers and Volunteers must sign in each and every day in the office.**

## **PLAYGROUND RULES & ETIQUETTE**

- All children are included in games. Inclusion not Exclusion.
- Any play that is potentially dangerous to one-self or others is prohibited. Some examples are: aerodynamic stunts off the swings, sitting or standing on top of the lateral bars, tying ropes on the bars, climbing trees, throwing sand or sticks, throwing things over the power wires and on or over the roof.
- Play ground boundaries in the west field are the big tree in the middle dubbed “the boundary tree” across to the south telephone pole.
- The Seabiscuit Statue can be viewed and not climbed.
- The parking lot is off limits except for the area in front of the basketball hoop within the orange cones.
- Students may go outside during recess when it is raining only if they have appropriate outerwear that will keep their clothes and bodies dry.
- Students beyond the courtyard must be supervised at all times.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire Drills will be conducted pursuant to Education Code Section 32001: at least once every calendar month in the elementary level; at least four times a year at the intermediate level; and at least twice a year at the secondary level. Earthquake drills, Lockdown and Shelter In Place drill will also occur.

## **PANDEMIC FLU**

In recent years there is great concern about the spread of H1N1 and other flus. It affects children more than other flu's and comes on fast. Mendocino County Public Health Agents have directed all parents, and staff to stay home if fever is over 100 degrees and exhibits one other symptom, such as sore throat. Stay home until there is no fever for 24 hours, that is without fever reducing medication. Up to date information about responding to the flu can be found at [www.mcoe.us](http://www.mcoe.us).

## **TDAP VACCINATION**

This year all students in grades 7 through 12 must have the Tdap, tetnis, dyptheria AND pertussis booster, **before** the first day of school. After this year only 7<sup>th</sup> grades will need to get the booster. More detailed information can be found on the county schools website, [www.mcoe.us](http://www.mcoe.us).

## **YEAR END SELF ASSESSMENT AND PORTFOLIO**

All La Vida students are required to complete the following self assessment and portolio to the best of their ability. The self assessment was designed by parents and faculty in a year long process in 2005 through the use of the Appreciative Inquiry process. It is the third prong of our triangulated assessment which includes the STAR and the MAP tests. A copy printed on green will be sent out by early May. To receive the final report card and transcripts, this form must be completed and turned in.



LA VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL  
Year End  
Student Self- Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents and Students:

Please review the learning year together and answer the following questions in whatever way seems appropriate for your student's age and ability. **Note:** For younger students, parents may scribe their child's response. Use this sheet for your responses.

**The Student Self Assessment and Portfolio are to be turned in and discussed at your last EC, Educational Coordinator meeting of the year.** These reflections will be part of the year end evaluation and are **required** to complete the year's studies.

**What I Have Learned This Year**

1. When did you feel the best about your learning this year: such as; when you did you have the most fun; or what were you most proud of; or what did you feel good about; or when were you pleasantly conscious of your growth or development of new knowledge and new skills?

2. Think about something that was hard or difficult or challenging to learn. How did you work through it? How did you figure it out? What strategies did you use? What helped? What would have helped?

3. How are you different now from how you were at the beginning of the year? What is different?



LA VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL

Trimester End  
 Conference Sheet and  
 Student Self- Assessment  
 for Grades 6-12

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle a response on a scale of One (strongly disagree) to Five (strongly agree)

	<u>strongly disagree</u>		<u>agree</u>		<u>strongly agree</u>				
I paid attention in class & at EC meetings.	1		2		3		4		5
I put effort in my home study work.	1		2		3		4		5
I studied and put effort on tests.	1		2		3		4		5
I participated in class.	1		2		3		4		5
I practiced good behavior.	1		2		3		4		5
I feel that I am learning and growing academically.	1		2		3		4		5
I am organized.	1		2		3		4		5
I am on time with assignments.	1		2		3		4		5
I ask questions when I need help.	1		2		3		4		5
I do school work 4 hours a day or more.	1		2		3		4		5
I did my best.	1		2		3		4		5
I am happy with my progress in school.	1		2		3		4		5

I am strongest in (fill in which subject) \_\_\_\_\_

One of my strongest skills is (fill in) \_\_\_\_\_

I need to improve in (fill in which subject or skill) \_\_\_\_\_



# LA VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL

## Year End Portfolio

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

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

For your portfolio, pick out at least three samples of your work from the whole year to share at your last EC meeting. Write down what you have chosen and what you learned on the Table of Contents below. Be prepared to talk a little about the work examples you chose and why you chose them.

Choose at least one example for each of the following questions.

1. Pick out something you created that you felt good about and where you learned something. What did you learn?
2. Pick out a sample of your work where you learned the most (or something important) but looks the worst.
3. Pick out something that you enjoyed doing so much that you were lost in the fun of it.

### Portfolio Table of Contents

Date	Identify or Describe Item	What I Learned
		Use other side
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
You can stop here. Keep going only if you want to.		
4.	_____	_____

# La Vida Charter School

## Negative Behavior & Consequences

\*Be Safe

\*Be Respectful

\*Be Responsible

### Type A Offenses:

1. Disrupting Class / wasting class time
2. Inconsiderate / disrespectful to others
3. Throwing dangerous / objectionable items
4. Provoking behavior /cutting remarks
5. Vulgar language
6. Failure to clean up after yourself
7. In unauthorized areas on school grounds.
8. Tardy to class
9. Not prepared for class

### Consequences:

#### Individual

First Time = warning

Second time = take a “timeout”

Third time = stay in at break / lunch

Fourth time = call parent

#### Group

First time = warning

Second time = take a “timeout”

Third time = stay in at break / lunch

\*Three calls home initiates a parent / teacher / administrator conference (next day if applicable)

### Type B Offenses:

1. Beyond control of school authority
2. Defiance (refusing to do what is asked by school personnel)
3. Verbal or Physical threat or assault on others
4. Fighting or intimidation, including sexual harassment
5. Malicious vandalism of school property
6. Extortion or stealing
7. Possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, knives, weapons, or dangerous objects
8. Lewd conduct
9. Off school grounds without permission

### Consequences:

Student will be sent home immediately. There will be a parent / teacher / administrator conference, and possible suspension / expulsion from the on-site program or possibly the independent study program.

**LA VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL  
PARENT HANDBOOK AGREEMENTS**

Families of La Vida Charter School students are expected to be active participants in their children’s education and in the life of the school community. To that end, I am aware of the following:

1. I understand that this is a school of choice. Parents and children choose to attend and support the La Vida Charter School. I am encouraged to contribute time, four hours per month, to ensure the continued well-being of the school.
2. I have received and read the La Vida Charter School Parent Handbook and understand the school’s philosophy and policies.
3. I understand the importance of participating, when possible, in scheduled orientations, school meetings, parent-teacher conferences, extra curricular school education events, festivals and activities.
4. I am aware of the school’s recommendation of limiting the viewing of television, videos, computer games, and movies by my child.
5. I will ensure that my child will abide by school rules of behavior, dress and hygiene.
6. I will ensure regular and punctual attendance of my child(ren) at those classes we have agreed to attend. I understand that it is best that children arrive about 10 minutes before class begins, and that they are picked up promptly at dismissal time. I understand that my child can be bumped from onsite classes if absent four times a semester and for excessive tardiness.
7. I understand that toys should stay at home unless special arrangements have been made with the teacher and that cell phones are to be turned off during school hours.
8. I understand that canceling three educational coordination meetings with out twenty-four hour notice can result in my student being dis-enrolled.
9. I agree that my child will take the STAR test and / or the La Vida Alternative Assessment. (MAP test)

I have read the Parent Handbook and the Parent Information Sheet.

**Signature of Responsible Guardian**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please sign and return one copy to the office. Keep one copy for your records.*

**LA VIDA CHARTER SCHOOL  
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