



Monica Ros School

WHERE LEARNING IS AN ADVENTURE

Parent & Caregiver Handbook 2023-2024

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I. INTRODUCTORY POLICIES

A. MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to expand a young child's natural passion for learning in a setting that celebrates Ojai's natural beauty. Our curriculum builds a child's confidence both in the classroom and out in the world, inspiring a lifetime of discovery.

B. HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MONICA ROS SCHOOL

It was a long, circuitous route that led Monica Ros from her native Australia to the East End of Ojai. Monica Horder grew up in Australia with her two sisters. Their childhood was filled with wonderful family experiences involving music, dance, drama and art. In 1927, Monica married Ricardo Ros, a Cuban who was traveling through Australia. Their mutual interest in Theosophy and the teachings of Krishnamurti led them first to India and then to Ojai.

Monica and Ricardo Ros quickly became part of the Ojai community. Ricardo taught Spanish at The Thacher School and Monica taught music to local children. They continued traveling, and Monica refined her natural talent for teaching by taking college courses at Columbia Teachers College in New York.

Recognizing Mrs. Ros' talent with children, Mrs. Anson Thacher, wife of The Thacher School's headmaster, encouraged her to broaden her teaching to the general instruction of young children. She did so, and the current school site on McNell Road was acquired in 1941. Mrs. Ros was thrilled with the site. Outdoor "classrooms" and the homelike atmosphere of Monica Ros School have provided generations of children with a happy, safe and secure setting so important for learning.

"I have always maintained that "right beginnings" were essential to ensure understanding of a subject and to develop necessary skills. I vowed that I would learn to teach with skill and understanding. I wanted my students to have an education that reflected not only appreciation of things to be learned, but to have good values, good relationships and of the finer responses brought about by the exposure to music in particular and all its related interests and skills. These skills spoke for themselves in the happiness that was reflected in the children's flowering during their early years."

Several new buildings have been added, but many classes are still held in the original small bungalow cottages on the campus. The daily interweaving of classroom activity and outdoor experience continues to be a strong feature of the program.

In its pursuit to preserve this distinctive ethos, Monica Ros School concludes its journey at the 3rd Grade level. This intentional choice grants older students the mantle of leadership, allowing them to nurture and guide their younger peers while savoring the

innocence of childhood. Stepping beyond Monica Ros, these children exude self-assuredness and embark on their onward educational ventures with aplomb.

Mrs. Ros retired in 1967. Nancy Hey, Alice Meyer, Andrea Gleysteen, Nathan O. Reynolds, and Susan Hardenbergh have followed her in service to our beloved school. The current Head of School is Mrs. Kate Spiva.

Today, we are still inspired by Mrs. Ros' words:

"To learn with a love of learning, without competition, to take responsibility, to appreciate another's ability, to cooperate in the enjoyment of the marvelous make-believe of play-acting with costumes and music and dancing, was my wish for all the children to experience."

Our commitment echoes in the resounding belief that each child is a unique explorer, navigating the realms of learning and growth. Tailored, age-appropriate activities serve as catalysts for curiosity and understanding, anchored in a philosophy that champions experiential learning. The arts are not merely subjects but vibrant conduits of knowledge. Our nurturing embrace fosters not only creativity but also the delicate process of social integration, seamlessly connecting children, peers, and caregivers in a harmonious educational symphony.

We extend an open invitation to all parents and caregivers, inviting them to journey alongside us in shaping each child's educational voyage. An unbroken dialogue between home and school is our foundation. With creativity as our compass, we treasure this magical juncture in the lives of young visionaries.

C. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monica Ros School is a non-profit California public benefit corporation, governed by a Board of Trustees with up to seventeen members. Each Trustee serves for a minimum of one three-year term, and a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms. The Parent Caregiver Organization Chair serves a one-year term. Any vacancies on the Board of Trustees are filled by the Board. Current members include parents and caregivers of students, alumni, and interested members of the community.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of Monica Ros School, making important decisions that impact the school's policies, finances, operations, and long-term goals. Their primary duties include:

- **Strategic Planning:** The Board helps establish the school's mission, vision, and long-term strategic goals. They provide guidance and oversight to ensure that the school's activities align with its mission and that it continues to grow and adapt to changing educational needs.

- **Financial Oversight:** The Board is responsible for the financial health of the school. This includes approving budgets, setting tuition and fee levels, managing endowment funds, and ensuring the school's financial sustainability.
- **Policy and Governance:** The Board establishes policies and procedures that govern the school's operations. This may include admission policies, code of conduct, faculty hiring and evaluation processes, and more. They also ensure that the school complies with legal and regulatory requirements.
- **Hiring and Evaluation of Leadership:** The Board oversees hiring, evaluating, and, if necessary, replacing the school's leadership, such as the head of school. They ensure that the leadership team is effective in implementing the school's mission and achieving its goals.
- **Fundraising and Development:** The Board is involved in fundraising efforts to support the school's programs, facilities, and initiatives. They engage in campaigns to secure donations, grants, and other forms of financial support.
- **Community Relations:** The Board serves as a link between the school and its broader community, including parents, alumni, donors, and local organizations. They may engage in public relations efforts to promote the school's image and foster positive relationships.
- **Risk Management and Legal Compliance:** The Board is responsible for identifying and addressing potential risks that could affect the school's reputation, finances, or operations. They ensure that the school is compliant with relevant laws and regulations.

D. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING STATEMENT

At Monica Ros School, we strive to instill a deep sense of community and belonging through celebrating the beautiful differences and similarities in all of us. We are dedicated to creating a safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environment in which all feel welcomed and respected. Our core belief is that students who are seen and appreciated for their whole selves will thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

Monica Ros School commits that our parents, guardians, staff, and board will pursue policies to eliminate bias and prioritize equity in our organizational structures, curriculum, and instructional practices. We will continue to examine and grow our practices by actively engaging, listening, and responding to the voices and needs of all families, while uplifting those who have been historically marginalized.

Monica Ros School students learn about and reflect on the various facets of social identity, starting with their own, all the way from Green Room to Third Grade. Through a “windows and mirrors” approach to exploring similarities and differences, students continually build a compassionate understanding of a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences. We believe that this philosophy will prepare creative, brave children who advocate for themselves and others in our diverse and ever-changing world.

E. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Monica Ros School is a non-profit public benefit educational corporation. Monica Ros School admits students of any race, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational programs, admission and tuition assistance policies, and athletics or other school-administered programs.

F. HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND RETALIATION POLICY

Monica Ros is committed to maintaining a working and educational environment that is free of harassment, including sexual harassment, as well as discrimination or retaliation. This may include behavior that occurs off-campus or via social media, or other electronic communications, that impacts or affects the school community. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated and will result in corrective action, up to and including expulsion from the school.

This policy prohibits harassment based on actual or perceived sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), military and veteran status, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law ("Protected Classifications"), as applicable, or association with an individual who has an actual or perceived protected classification. This policy prohibits both harassment by students and parents/caregivers towards students and employees, and harassment by others in the community towards students and employees. Harassment violates this policy and will not be tolerated.

Harassing conduct by students, or parents, or caregivers will result in appropriate corrective action, which includes discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from school. Harassment of students, parents, or caregivers by employees will result in appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of employment, which is addressed in a separate policy in the Employee Handbook.

Examples of Harassment

Harassment can take many forms, and may include verbal, physical or visual conduct. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal, written, and visual harassment includes: making disparaging statements, telling jokes, using epithets, slurs, stereotypes, insults, or labels based on an individual's Protected Classification(s), threats of physical harm or statements designed to intimidate, abuse or humiliate another, whether communicated

verbally, in writing, electronically or in posters, cartoons, drawings or gestures. This may include comments on appearance including dress or physical features, or dress consistent with gender identification, or stories and jokes focusing on race, national origin, religion or other Protected Classifications identified above in this policy.

- Physical harassment includes: intimidating conduct, such as touching of a person or a person's property, hazing, assault, grabbing, stalking or blocking or impeding a person's movement.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

California Education Code section 212.5 defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions:

- Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or a condition of an individual's employment, academic status, or progress.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of employment or academic decisions affecting the individual.
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through the educational institution.
- Sexually harassing conduct can occur between students of the same or different gender.
- Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
 - Unwelcome verbal or written conduct, including by notes, letters, emails, text messages, social media postings, such as suggestive comments, derogatory comments, sexual innuendos, slurs, or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments, pestering for dates, making threats, spreading rumors about or rating others as to sexual activity or performance.
 - Unwelcome visual conduct such as displays of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, posters, written material, cartoons, or drawings, graffiti of a sexual nature, or use of obscene gestures or leering.

- Unwelcome physical conduct such as unwanted touching, pinching, kissing, patting, hugging, blocking of normal movement, assault, or interference with work or study directed at an individual because of the individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.
- Threats and demands or pressure to submit to sexual requests in order to keep academic standing or to avoid other loss, and offers of benefits in return for sexual favors.

Complaint Procedure

Students, parents, or caregivers who believe that they have experienced, witnessed, or have relevant information about harassment should immediately report the matter to the school, either orally or in writing. Students, parents, or caregivers may report the matter to the Head of School, teacher or any administrator. Alternatively, students and parents may choose to report harassment or retaliation to any other employee of the school with whom they are comfortable, all of whom must report the matter to the Head of School under this policy. While the school does not limit the time frame for reporting, immediate reporting is important as the school may not be able to investigate as thoroughly or consider as wide-range of corrective actions the longer the time that has passed between the alleged misconduct and the report.

Interim Measures

Monica Ros School may provide appropriate interim support and reasonable protective measures, if and as needed based on the particular applicable circumstances, to protect against further acts of harassment or acts of retaliation, to provide a safe educational environment, and/or to protect the integrity of an investigation. The school will, in its sole judgment and discretion, determine the necessity and scope of any interim measures.

Investigation Process

Upon receipt of a report of alleged harassment and any related initial inquiries, the school may request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, to determine whether the oral report or written complaint alleges a potential violation of this policy. To request clarification and/or conduct an initial inquiry, the Head of School, or her designee, may meet with the individual(s) who made the report and/or that was reportedly subjected to conduct that violates this policy. If the school has determined that the report pertains to behavior that may be in violation of this policy, the school

will undertake an investigation related to the reported conduct. Any investigation may be conducted by designated school personnel or by an outside investigator, in the school's sole discretion. Students and parents are expected to cooperate in any investigation as needed. Any individual who is interviewed during the course of an investigation is prohibited from discussing the substance of the interview, except as otherwise directed by the investigator or the Head of School, as necessary in relation to any administrative or legal proceedings or as otherwise required by law. Any individual who discusses the content of an investigatory interview or who otherwise fails to cooperate with the investigation may be subject to corrective action.

Confidentiality

Reports of harassment will be kept confidential, except as needed to conduct an investigation, to take interim measures, to take corrective action, to conduct ongoing monitoring, or as necessary in relation to any administrative or legal proceedings or as otherwise required by law.

Discrimination

Discrimination is treating an individual differently because of the individual's actual or perceived membership in a Protected Classification as defined in this policy, by taking an adverse action against or denying a benefit to that individual. Students and parents who believe they have experienced, witnessed, or are otherwise aware of discrimination, should immediately report the matter using the same complaint procedure provided for in this policy under the above section on harassment and the above sections on interim measures, investigation and confidentiality for harassment reports, will also apply to reports of discrimination. Discrimination by students and/or parents will result in appropriate corrective action, and corrective action includes discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from the school.

No Retaliation

The school prohibits retaliatory behavior against anyone who complains in good faith or participates in the complaint and/or investigation process pursuant to this policy, regardless of the outcome of the investigation. Retaliation constitutes a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary or other corrective action. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, taking sides against an individual, spreading rumors about or shunning or avoiding an individual, or making real or implied threats of intimidation towards an individual, because that individual reported harassment or discrimination or participated in an investigation related to a report of harassment or discrimination.

Remedial and Disciplinary Action

Monica Ros School will determine if the conduct violates school policy and if so, the appropriate corrective action. Any student determined to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

G. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Monica Ros School adheres to the requirements of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits unlawful discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in public accommodations. This law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, as well as the exclusion of qualified individuals with disabilities from participation and/or the benefits of any school program or activity solely by reason of the individual's disability. As part of this policy, students with qualified disabilities, or their parents, may request reasonable accommodation that would permit the applicant or student full and equal access to the goods, services, and operations of the school, which include both physical and programmatic (academic services) access and school-sponsored activities, such as field trips.

Request for Accommodation

A student with a disability who desires a reasonable accommodation in order to access the goods, services or operations of the school, or his or her parents, should make a request in writing to the Head of School. The request must identify: a) the goods, services, or operations to which the student requests full and equal access; and b) the desired accommodation(s).

Reasonable Documentation of Disability

Following receipt of the request, the Head of School may require additional information, such as reasonable documentation of the existence of a disability.

Possible Discussions with Students or Parents

After receipt of reasonable documentation of a qualified disability, the school may arrange for a discussion with the student and/or the student's parents. The discussion may include other individuals who may be helpful for the school to better understand the student's limitations and/or the need for accommodations. The purpose of the discussion is to work in good faith to fully discuss all feasible potential reasonable accommodations.

Case-by-Case Determination

The school determines, in its sole discretion, whether reasonable accommodation(s) can be made, and the type of accommodation(s) to provide. In exercising its discretion, the school will consider input and information the applicants, students, parents and/or representatives may provide regarding potential reasonable accommodations. The school will not provide accommodation(s) that would pose an undue burden upon the school; that would endanger the health or safety of the student or others at the school; or fundamentally alter the nature of the school or its goods, services, or operations. The school will inform the parents of its decision as to reasonable accommodation(s) in writing.

II. STUDENT, PARENT, AND CAREGIVER CONDUCT

A. PARENT AND CAREGIVER BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

A positive and constructive working relationship between Monica Ros School and a student's parents or caregivers, or other individuals interacting with the school and/or school community by virtue of their relationship with a student, is essential to the fulfillment of Monica Ros' mission, educational objectives, and operations. For these reasons the school requires parents, caregivers and other individuals interacting with the school and/or the school community by virtue of their relationship with a student to support the school's philosophy of education and its implementation and operation of the day-to-day school and classroom programs, as well as the school's community expectations and guidelines, as expressed in this policy and other policies and procedures.

The school expects parents or caregivers to model respectful and courteous behavior in their communications with others at the school. The school reserves the right to suspend, expel, or otherwise remove a student from the school, or decline to re-enroll the student, if the Head of School concludes, in his/her sole discretion, that the actions of the student's parents or caregivers, or other individuals interacting with the school and/or the school community by virtue of their relationship with the student, impede the school's ability to meet its educational objectives or mission, disrupt school operations, are uncooperative, unreasonable, or unsupportive of the school, its administration, its faculty or staff, philosophy, rules, regulations, policies and standards, or make it difficult to have a positive or constructive relationship with the parents or caregivers.

B. COMMUNICATION

Regular communication between parents, caregivers and the school is critical. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to request an in-person conference or to call whenever they have questions or concerns. In addition to speaking with teachers, parents and caregivers are encouraged to meet with the Head of School to discuss issues of interest or concern. **In order to maintain clear boundaries, parents and caregivers' communication to the school and any employees must be through ParentSquare and not via text messaging.**

C. PARENT/CAREGIVER AND TEACHER CONVERSATIONS

In order to allow teachers to focus on your children during the school day, long conversations between parents, caregivers, and teachers should not happen at drop-off or pick-up. Teachers are always willing to schedule mutually convenient times to discuss issues that may arise.

D. DISCIPLINE POLICY

Monica Ros School expects students to behave in a courteous and appropriate manner and to follow all school rules, guidelines, and policies. Our program is designed to encourage and nurture positive behavior and kind responses to others. Part of childhood (and adulthood) is making mistakes, learning from them, and doing better. We recognize that children occasionally have problems with peers or exhibit inappropriate behavior, and this is dealt with in a supportive yet firm manner. We see this process as a joint responsibility between parents, caregivers and teachers and we inform parents and caregivers of any pattern of misbehavior or any serious breach of conduct.

We strive to influence behavior in children through discussion, explanation, limit setting and enforcement of consequences. We avoid the use of punishment to the extent possible – the intent to control rather than guide children often creates angry, aggressive behavior and can humiliate and embarrass children as well. Based on observation, our knowledge of the individual child and understanding of the situation at hand, we work to create equitable outcomes and to empower the children to become involved in the resolution of their conflicts.

Monica Ros School reserves the right to impose consequences and impose discipline on any student, in the school's sole discretion. Consequences and disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, a student-teacher conference, a parent/caregiver-teacher conference, loss of privileges, sending the student home, suspension, and dismissal or expulsion.

Parents and caregivers must communicate with their teachers if questioning an incident at school. Please do not reach out to other parents and caregivers prior to confirming information with your student's teacher.

E. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A large part of early childhood development takes place on the playground when children learn how to adapt in the social world. Conflicts will occur and learning to work through them is an important skill for children to master. Parents and caregivers should encourage a communicative approach to conflict and avoid telling children to simply abandon the conflict, particularly when it involves a group activity. When one child leaves a game or activity due to a conflict, oftentimes all the children pay the price as the game or activity is forced to dissolve. Conversely, when a child learns to voice their concerns they all learn from the experience. The playground is well-staffed and parents and caregivers should advise children to use the staff as a resource in order to resolve a conflict. A physical expression of anger is never acceptable.

F. SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN

During the course of the day, children in school experience a range of emotions. At the end of the day, a few children relate only their negative interactions to their families. While validation is important, it is also important to remember that your child is safe at school and should be encouraged to remember some positive moments as well. Parents, caregivers and teachers should be in close communication. Children are not always fully reliable narrators and teachers don't always see everything that happens. Setting your child up for a rewarding experience each day goes a long way in allowing your child to focus on the positive aspects of life. If there is a persistent issue, please discuss it with your child's teacher.

G. EMBRACING THE SPIRIT OF INCLUSION

Not all children like all other children. However, all children should respect other children's right to comfort and joy at school. Therefore, parents and caregivers should encourage their children to be inclusive in their play and discourage them from turning another child away for any reason. We are experienced in helping children learn to accept differences of opinion, expression, priorities, and expectations between themselves and their classmates, while also allowing each child to develop reasonable boundaries to protect their own sense of self and physical well-being. Please see the Policy Against Bullying for prohibited behaviors.

H. POLICY AGAINST BULLYING BEHAVIOR

At Monica Ros School, we believe that all students should have a safe and inclusive school environment. Bullying is inconsistent with the values and principles of the school. This policy covers conduct that occurs both on and off of the school campus, and includes use of technology that is not owned by the school. It applies to all students and prohibits other students, and any other member of the school community, including

teachers, staff, parents, caregivers, and volunteers from engaging in conduct towards students that is prohibited under this policy.

Prohibited Conduct

Bullying behavior is defined by this policy as:

Any physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically (including, but not limited to, e-mail, direct messaging, text messages, mobile phones, online games, and posting on social media), directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to that student's person or property;
- Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health;
- Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance; or
- Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school.

While the education code defines bullying behavior as conduct meeting the above requirements that is severe or pervasive, conduct need not be severe or pervasive in order for the school to determine that there has been a violation of this policy.

Examples of bullying behavior may include, but are not limited to:

- Severe or pervasive social exclusion;
- Threats and intimidation;
- Stalking;
- Direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving, or attempting to make physical contact or inflict physical injury;
- Theft;
- Public humiliation;
- Destruction of property
- Verbal or written insults, teasing, or name-calling;

- Creating a false profile on a social networking website, for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above.

Student Reporting

Students are encouraged to and should immediately report any incidents of bullying that they either observe or that are directed towards the student or others, to the Head of School, or to any staff member, teacher or administrator.

Investigation

After the school receives an oral report or written complaint, or otherwise learns of an alleged potential violation of this policy, and also receives any clarification requested, the Head of School or designee, will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include initiation of an investigation. If Monica Ros initiates an investigation, it will conduct the investigation, as it deems appropriate, in its sole discretion.

The school will make reasonable efforts to protect students' privacy and confidentiality. Information reported will be shared only on a need-to-know basis with school personnel directly involved in an investigation or to the extent necessary to conduct an investigation and/or to take effective corrective action and any appropriate remedial action including any interim support or protective measures.

Remedial and Disciplinary Action

Any student determined by the school, in its sole discretion, to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Any violation of this policy by a parent or caregiver will be considered a violation of the school's parent or caregiver behavior expectations, and may be grounds for expulsion of the offending parent's/caregiver's child(ren).

I. TOYS FROM HOME

Toys from home are a distraction to all students and they can get lost. Unless pre-arranged with your child's teacher, please have your child leave their toys at home or in the car.

J. SEPARATION

Separation can cause strong emotions in both children and adults. However, please remember that your response to your child is a reflection of your confidence in us. When you are able to hug, kiss, say farewell to your child, and leave school, it demonstrates that you trust us. Children most often recover from the separation process and become engaged with their friends and teachers within a short time. If you have concerns or need assistance with the process, please do not hesitate to ask us.

K. ACCEPTABLE TECHNOLOGY USE

Monica Ros School recognizes the importance of integrating technology as a valuable tool for learning, but also acknowledges the need for prudent and thoughtful implementation to maintain a balanced and effective educational environment. The following are typical uses of technology at Monica Ros: projectors, short educational videos, audio books, and iPads in the grade school classrooms with curriculum based applications. The use of any Monica Ros technological resources is a privilege, and not a right. If a student is unable to treat the school's technological resources in a respectful manner, as determined in the sole discretion of the Head of School, the student may have their privileges revoked.

L. CELL PHONE USE

The school strives to have an engaged and present student, parent, caregiver and staff environment. While we recognize that cell-phones are a staple in our daily lives, we ask that their use be limited to the greatest extent possible while on campus.

Please help us maintain this environment. When you walk in the school gate, please turn your phone off and put it away. Students are not allowed to have phones on campus; should your student have a phone please have them drop it off in the office each morning. They may pick it up when they leave campus for the day.

Staff members may periodically use cell phones for emergency communication and taking photos.

M. CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS AND RIGHTS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

Monica Ros School assumes, unless notified otherwise, that both parents have equal rights with regard to their child. Monica Ros requires all parents/guardians to keep the school informed about changes to a student's home location, family contact information, custody arrangements, or other changes that might impact the student's educational experience.

When custody arrangements or disputes among the parents regarding the child's educational experience impede maintaining a positive and constructive relationship between the school and the parents, the school may terminate the student's enrollment or ban one or both parents from entering school property or participating in school-sponsored events.

N. CLOTHING

Children play actively and frequently get dirty. Please send your child to school in comfortable, washable play clothes. Children must wear clothes that they can manage independently. For example, elastic waistbands are often easier for young children to handle than zippers and buttons.

Please label your child's coats, sweatshirts and sweaters! Children often take their warm layers of clothes off on the playground and leave them where they are playing. Labels will help us ensure their return.

Children's shoes must be safe and comfortable. Rubber-soled, closed-toed shoes are most appropriate. Flip flops and other types of backless shoes make it impossible to run or climb safely so are not permitted. Shoes with Velcro closures are preferred but not required.

All preschool and kindergarten children should have a clean set (or two) of clothing at school at all times. These are kept in a classroom container in case your child needs a change during the day. When clothes become wet from water play or a bathroom accident, children prefer to change into their own clean clothes.

O. BIRTHDAYS

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at school. Each Monica Ros classroom has a unique and special way to celebrate at school. Your teacher might reach out to ask for a favorite book to read, or for a photo of your student as a baby.

Kids love to celebrate with sweet treats. As delicious as treats can be, too much sugar often is not supportive of a healthy learning environment. In our hot valley of Ojai, we think a great way to celebrate your child's birthday is with an ice-cold popsicle! Please do not bring treats other than *no-sugar-added* popsicles. Please bring them for the entire class. Or, please reach out to the office if you need the school to provide them.

P. INVITATIONS TO HOME PARTIES

Young children are very much aware of impending parties and want to be a part of them. Please plan to mail or telephone invitations to invited guests, rather than distribute invitations to children at school unless all the children in the class are invited. Parents and caregivers are also invited to use the "post" feature in ParentSquare to directly invite the entire class. We discourage students from speaking about parties at school.

Q. PLAY DATES

We kindly request that play dates be arranged prior to school pick-up. Spontaneous play date arrangements at the gate can inadvertently exclude other children, causing unnecessary discomfort. To promote an inclusive environment, we strongly discourage discussing play dates during school hours. Our primary aim at Monica Ros is to foster inclusivity and ensure every child feels valued and engaged.

R. CAMPUS VISITORS

Monica Ros School welcomes and encourages parents and caregivers to be involved in the school day. Monica Ros School has many opportunities for parents and caregivers to be involved, including through the role of Room Captain, or on celebration and activities days. We do ask that parents or caregivers contact the classroom teacher prior to a classroom visit so that the visit does not conflict with the education program. For safety and security, all volunteers must check in at the main office prior to entering the campus. Name tags will be given to you and should be worn throughout your visit.

S. DOGS ON CAMPUS

While we recognize the important role that dogs play in many families' lives, we prioritize maintaining a secure and focused learning environment for our students. We kindly request that all individuals refrain from bringing dogs onto the campus premises at all times.

T. HELP US BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Please help us be a good neighbor. Parking spaces are limited at Monica Ros, especially during drop-off, pick-up and performances. Please make sure your car is not parked in our neighbor's driveways, walkways or blocking mailboxes.

III. ACADEMICS AND ATTENDANCE

A. CURRICULUM

Monica Ros School serves children ages 3 years to 9 years old. As children grow, our academic expectations change.

In preschool, we provide a developmentally appropriate program with emphasis on hands-on learning opportunities designed to enhance development in all areas: moral, social-emotional, intellectual, artistic, and physical. Skilled, nurturing teachers support the children in the development of their socialization skills and in their quest to learn about the world. Working in pairs, our teachers are dedicated to establishing a relaxed, friendly routine to ease the separation process between child and parent/caregiver, and they help children experience success in interactions with their peers and other adults. Students are cherished and valued by their teachers and the staff of Monica Ros during

this impressionable time of discovery in their young lives. We recognize each child as a unique individual engaged in the process of learning, and our dedicated staff seeks to fully support this individual growth. Our preschool curriculum is organized to allow for hands-on experiences with a rich variety of materials. A multitude of art projects are created in the classrooms, using various mediums such as paints, textiles, clay, and natural materials. Preschool is offered for three and four year olds.

In kindergarten and grade school, the same kinds of hands-on learning opportunities continue to be important. In every class, they are integrated with skill-developing activities and a challenging curriculum.

Our language arts curriculum in preschool is Happily Ever After and, in kindergarten and grade school, Superkids and Linda Mood Bell. We use Everyday Math, developed by the University of Chicago, as our math curriculum.

Our programs meet and exceed the Common Core State Standards adopted by California in the core subjects: reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.

Our students' intellectual lives are also enlivened by a strong commitment to the arts:

- Performing arts enlivens social studies and develops confidence in public speaking.
- Music and art classes develop an appreciation for art which brings a new awareness to all forms of communication and expression.
- Each year the school adopts a year-long theme, which all the classes explore and develop. This year we will explore connectivity and communication: *"Let's Communicate!"*

The school's broad program is supported by special subjects teachers trained in art, music, performing arts, Spanish, PE and library. Every teacher at Monica Ros genuinely loves teaching young children. That is what makes the curriculum work to the benefit of every child. We know that if we do our job well our students will leave here with internalized values and acquired skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives. In this type of environment, students acquire greater confidence in their ability to be independent learners.

Beyond carefully and systematically teaching the skills that enable children to observe, gather data, decode words, appreciate music and dance, understand the language of numbers, express themselves with line and form and color, begin to acquire a second language, and to understand the basic workings of the physical and biological world, the school is also dedicated to develop skills children need to work well with others.

Teachers and staff help children understand that they choose how they interact with others and that there are consequences, wonderful and not so good, which follow their words and deeds.

B. HOMEWORK

The concept of homework is introduced during the kindergarten and first grade years and is present in meaningful ways in our grade school program. Homework during these first years is an opportunity to link the academic side of school to home.

Homework assignments are often collaborative in nature, involving parents, caregivers and children in an educational experience that is hands-on or exploratory. Homework is relatively short and expands or reinforces concepts and skills worked on in school.

If your child is struggling or taking far more time to complete the work than they should OR if they really enjoy this aspect of school, please inform the teachers so that they can modify the assignments.

All children should read independently, read aloud to a family member or be read to every evening. Reading is the most important assignment. Families are expected to support their children in this important work. We have a fantastic library. Please check in to have reading material available at home.

C. READING AT MONICA ROS... WE LOVE TO READ!

In addition to expanding a child's knowledge and their excitement to read, reading is also the cornerstone of success in school. Young children begin building foundations for reading very early in life. Preschoolers begin the task by learning to recognize and copy different shapes, types of lines and, ultimately, some or all letters. Kindergarteners learn to associate letters with sounds and sounds with words and words with stories. First graders begin the long journey from sounding out words to the fluid reading we all prize. Students first must learn to read and, then, read to learn.

Reading is a skill like any other. Some find it easy, some struggle. All skill acquisition requires practice. Fortunately, the practice of reading to and with your child is a wonderful opportunity to relax and enjoy each other.

- Snuggle up and read aloud to your child every day. Let them choose the book if they aren't open to suggestions. This is not a place you want to inadvertently create a control issue.
- Be sure to talk about the book, too, even if it's Pat the Bunny or The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Don't give a quiz about content unless you are very clever at camouflaging your intentions. Instead ask about relationships, feelings, conflicts, and information that the story reveals. Remember to let your children answer rather than pepper them with restated queries. Let them tell you if they don't understand. Then try again.

- Let your children see you read for pleasure. It's OK to let the grass grow or the laundry pile up while you sit down with a good book — you're setting a good example.
- As soon as your children can recognize one word, have them join you in reading aloud. Move your finger along under the words as you read and let them shout out the words they know. The mystery of the squiggles will be unlocked! Plus, reading aloud is one of those very important exercises for brain development.
- As soon as your children are able, listen to them read aloud every day. Happily help with the words they stumble on. They struggle over words all day at school; let your time reading together be pleasurable.

It is not important for children to have a mastery of reading in early childhood. Brain research has shown that the ability to read depends in large part on reaching a certain physical level of brain development. It is important to lay proper foundations and positive attitudes so that when children are ready to read, they approach it with confidence and eagerness. Give reading a prominent place in your home. Lay the foundation for future academic work by helping your child make reading effortless.

Until third grade, children are learning to read. Third grade marks the time when students begin to read to learn. While mastery at an early age is not essential, early intervention can lay the foundation for future learning. In addition to our regular classroom teachers, we have a Learning Specialist in residence and collaborate with local speech and language pathologists that can provide students individualized support and/or enrichment. Pull-out support and/or enrichment for students is billed on an hourly basis and varies by type of support and provider. A full list of support services and costs can be obtained in the office or from your teacher.

If you have any concerns about your child's reading or academic progress, please talk to their teacher.

D. DAILY SCHEDULE

Following is our daily schedule for preschool and grade school classrooms.

Preschool:

Green Room - 3-year-olds Class:

8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	Children arrive at school
8:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Preschool class
12:45 p.m.	Dismissal

Three year olds may attend for three, four, or five days a week.

Blue Room, Red Room – 4-year-olds class:

8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	Children arrive at school
8:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Preschool class
1:15 p.m.	Dismissal

Blue Room students may attend for three, four, or five days a week.
Red Room students attend five days.

Kindergarten:

8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	Children arrive at school
8:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Kindergarten class
1:45 p.m.	Dismissal

Grade School: (First, Second, Third Grades)

8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	Children arrive at school
8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.	grade school classes
2:45 p.m.*	Dismissal

*Note: Friday is early dismissal: 1:45

Before and after school care (Green Room through Third Grade):

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. for all children enrolled at Monica Ros.

E. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES

Children must be signed in and out each day using your family identification number at the FACTS digital kiosk at the front gate in the morning and with staff or teachers in the afternoon. The office manager will provide you with your unique family identifier before the start of school.

California state law requires that preschool children are signed in and out of school. Parents or caregivers must sign their preschooler in and out at drop off and pick up using the FACTS digital kiosk.

Please deliver your child to school on time each morning. Grade school students may arrive at 8:15 a.m., kindergarten students at 8:30 a.m. and preschool students at 8:30 a.m. without incurring charges for early morning care. At the start of class, a bell rings and children are escorted by their teachers into the classrooms. In addition to being a disruption to the class, a late child often finds it difficult to slide into the routine and pace of the day. Children who routinely come late miss a valuable part of the educational experience.

If you arrive late, please check your child in at the office so that they are properly signed in. If you must collect your child during school hours, please be sure to check them out at the office.

1. Recommended Early Drop Off

Arrival and dismissal are important transition times for children. Parents, caregivers and teachers must work together to make separating and reuniting times as comfortable and positive as possible. Your child's school experience will be maximized if they arrive at school early enough to spend at least 15 or 20 minutes connecting with their friends while running and playing on the playground before the bell rings for the start of school.

In the mornings, staff members are in the parking lot from 8:00 a.m. to welcome families and assist children from their cars. If you are arriving between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., please check in at the Blue Room with your child.

2. Daycare

Grade school children arriving at school before 8:15 a.m. must attend early morning daycare. Kindergarten and preschool children arriving before 8:30 a.m. must be signed into early morning care.

3. Dismissal and Pickup

At dismissal time, the teachers will walk their students to the gate area. Children are asked to stay seated on the benches or rock wall until a teacher can take them to a waiting parent or caregiver. Parents and caregivers are asked to wait on the parking lot side of the fence for a teacher to bring their child to them. This process teaches our children patience, self-control and more importantly enables us to know we have safely handed each child to their parent or caregiver.

When picking up your child, please park your vehicle in a designated parking spot or along the street and walk with students from the designated pick-up location to your car. Teachers will assist you in signing out students at dismissal.

Parents and caregivers have a fifteen-minute grace period in which to pick up their children. Any child at the gate past that grace period will join the Stay & Play Program and the drop-in daycare rates for the hours in attendance will be assessed.

Parents and caregivers picking up children from aftercare must check in with staff and sign students out on the kiosk.

4. Alternate Pick Up

If there is any change in normal routine, please let us know at the gate or phone the office. Please do not text teachers on personal devices with this information. We cannot release a child to someone other than individuals listed on the student's annual Parent & Caregiver Permission Form. If someone not listed on the student's annual Parent & Caregiver Permission Form will be picking up the student, the school must receive a signed written note from the Parents prior to pick up by the unauthorized individual. Names of other adults with permission to pick up children may be listed on the Identification and Emergency Form and Parent & Caregiver Permission Form.

F. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Student attendance is critical to student development. Students are expected to be in school for the duration of the school day, unless they are absent for an authorized reason. Authorized reasons include student illness, bereavement, and religious holidays.

In the event a student will be absent, or late for school, or needs to leave early, a parent or caregiver must notify the front office. Notification should include the reason for the absence and the time and duration.

Parents and caregivers should avoid making travel plans that take place during school days and travel plans should only be made for weekends, school holidays, and school recess periods. Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours if possible.

When a student is absent, parents and caregivers should contact their teacher regarding homework or makeup assignments.

G. STAY & PLAY PROGRAM

We provide daycare for our students in the mornings from 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m., and in the afternoons from 12:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition to art, games and sports activities, children are able to engage in free play activities as well. Our daycare teachers work to ensure that the children are able to pursue their individual interests and that they enjoy themselves while in daycare. Children may participate in the daycare program on a regularly scheduled basis, or may drop in occasionally.

Preschool students staying in aftercare will nap from 1:15-1:45 daily. Students are not required to sleep during this time, but are required to rest on a provided nap mat. Students sleeping beyond 30 minutes will be allowed to continue to nap. We do not wake up sleeping students, even for after school classes.

Daycare is billed in quarter hour increments at a rate of \$12 per hour per child.

Other nuts and bolts about Daycare:

- All preschool children will have an opportunity to rest or sleep in the afternoon.
- Children should pack a snack from home to enjoy during Stay & Play.
- Parents and caregivers must sign-in their child on the FACTS kiosk at the beginning and at the end of each day.
- Minimum charge is one hour per day for Stay and Play.
- Students not picked up by 5:00 p.m. will immediately incur a \$20 fee and \$20 for each additional quarter hour late.
- If your pick-up plans change during the day, please notify the office. There is always room for more friends in Stay & Play.

H. AFTER SCHOOL CLASSES

An optional program of enrichment is offered to children periodically throughout the year. Class offerings are broad and include arts, STEM, cooking, mindfulness and much more. Charges for participation in these programs vary based on the topic and are in addition to normal Stay and Play programming costs. These classes fill up fast and are signed up for on a first come, first served basis in ParentSquare. Information for classes will be delivered through ParentSquare.

I. FIELD TRIPS

Monica Ros teachers offer some amazing field trip opportunities during the school year. In addition to the medical release form signed at the beginning of school, parents and caregivers sign a field trip permission form in their digital enrollment packet. Information about trips, including cost, is sent to parents and caregivers in advance. Field trip costs will be billed through FACTS. If you are receiving financial aid, field trips are included in your financial aid package. If your child is unable to participate in a class field trip, they are welcome to join another class and stay on campus.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Parents and caregivers are encouraged to volunteer to drive on field trips. Parent and caregiver drivers will be asked to fill out a Private Vehicle Use Authorization form, provide a copy of their DMV record, driver's license and an insurance declaration page showing a minimum of \$100,000/\$300,000 liability coverage.

Parents and caregivers are held to the highest standard when driving for a field trip. While California Law permits "hands free" cell phone use, for safety reasons, we do not. If cell phone use is needed, please pull over while talking or have a non-driver make the call. Likewise, the children in the car are expected to behave properly. Car seats and seatbelts are to be used in accordance with the law. Double buckling is never allowed. While driving on field trips please drive directly to and from school. No stopping in between events; no picking up food etc.

J. Food

Children bring both morning snacks and lunch from home unless signed up for Hot Lunch Tuesdays and/or Thursdays. Snack is at approximately 10:00 a.m. Lunch is at approximately 12:00 p.m. Children who are in Stay & Play must also bring an afterschool snack from home to be eaten around 3:00 p.m.

If your child is on a special diet or has allergies, please let the teacher and the office know. Monica Ros School is not a nut-free campus.

In an effort to support each family's dietary decisions, we ask that families not bring food or treats for other students except as follows:

1. At one of our parent and caregiver-hosted parties and barbeques.
 - a. At these parties we ask that parents coordinate with teachers about specific dietary needs and choose healthy snacks and party foods along with one sweet treat (e.g., a cookie, brownie, mini cupcake, popsicle, etc.) Children, parents and caregivers may not bring candy, gum or soft drinks to school.
2. Birthdays: Please see Birthday Policy.

Please do not send treats or food for other students on Halloween, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day or other holidays.

From time to time our teachers do cooking activities or teacher-led celebrations that involve food. Teachers will notify you ahead of time so that alternate arrangements can be discussed as needed.

We encourage well-balanced lunches and snacks. Please send ample food and remember that your children are growing every day. Whatever your child does not eat, we repack and send home so that you can see what was consumed.

While sugar is not an every-day facet at Monica Ros, we are not a completely sugar-free campus. Students, unless the school is instructed otherwise, will be offered sweet treats periodically at celebrations and in some teacher-led activities.

We keep some additional snacks on campus which could include fruit, cheese, Goldfish crackers, pretzels, and/or carrots for students who consume their entire lunch or snack and are still hungry. Staff or teachers will send you a note if additional snacks are provided. If your child has dietary restrictions, please notify us as explained above. We will keep a list of dietary restrictions with these snacks.

The school supports a zero-waste lunch program and encourages all families and staff to participate. We recommend sending food in storage containers or 'bento box' style lunch boxes, using cloth napkins, reusable utensils, and insulated lunch boxes/bags.

We have hydration stations on campus, so please send a reusable water bottle to stay hydrated.

K. HOT LUNCH

On Tuesdays, students are able to have a Jim and Rob's burrito or quesadilla lunch. On Thursdays, we offer pizza from Ojai Pizza. This lunch includes carrots, ranch and organic milk for older students (kindergarten - third grade.) Parents and caregivers may sign-up for the year in August, or may indicate occasional Tuesdays and Thursdays they are interested in hot lunch for their student. A mention at the gate at drop-off or a phone call to the office will suffice in signing your child up for hot lunch on any given day, but must be completed before 10:30 a.m. Please contact the office with any questions.

L. LIBRARY

Monica Ros enjoys an extensive library with many fiction and non-fiction offerings. It is updated each year and enjoys a fine selection of classics and new children's literature in our beautiful new library. Families are responsible for the safe return of books that are checked out. When a book is lost or damaged, the family will be charged a \$15 fee to replace the book.

M. SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Monica Ros has school counseling services available for students in all classes. Students can work one on one or in peer groups depending on their needs. Parents and caregivers may request services by filling out a permission slip and contract in the office.

If teachers identify a need for additional support, parents and caregivers will be contacted and a permission slip will be sent home. Families will be billed through FACTS for services they sign up for. For more information, please contact the front office.

IV. HEALTH AND SAFETY

A. ABSENCE AND ILLNESS

Please call the office if your child is going to be absent from school. If your child is sick, please keep them home until well. Our program is an active one, and a child who does not feel well is usually miserable at school. Keeping your child home allows for a quicker recovery and protects classmates and teachers from contagion.

If your child has a fever or has vomited they must stay home for at least 24 hours. A student may return to school if it has been 24 hours since they last vomited or they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours.

B. COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Reporting: Monica Ros is required by law to report to the local Health Office the presence or suspected presence of any communicable disease, including but not limited to: measles, mumps, rubella, polio, whooping cough, or in some cases COVID-19. Reportable events or diseases may change from time to time and will depend on the laws, statutes, or orders from the California Department of Public Health and local public health departments in effect at that time.

Prevention and Exposure: Monica Ros may exclude from school any student with a disease, or that has been exposed to a disease, that is presumably communicable until that student's doctor has given written permission for them to return to school or until the expiration of the prescribed period of isolation for that particular disease as dictated by a state or local health authority.

Monica Ros will require that an individual who is suspected to have a communicable disease is immediately picked up by a parent or caregiver. Monica Ros may need to inform the community that someone in the community, without disclosing that student's identity, has been diagnosed with the communicable disease and recommend others in the community speak to their doctor if they have any concerns about exposure.

In the event that there is an epidemic in the city or Ventura County or the state of California, such as COVID-19 or any future epidemic, pandemic, or outbreak, that relates to a communicable disease, including but not limited to measles, mumps, rubella, polio or whooping cough, COVID-19 or other viruses, and the Department of Health requires an individual to remain away from the school or take certain precautions because either that person has contracted one of those conditions, or has not been immunized against them, or cannot provide a written record of immunization against them, then that person must adhere to the Department's requirements.

Safety Protocols: From time to time, certain communicable diseases may require additional safety protocols. They may also require distanced or online learning or small group cohort learning. Monica Ros may be required to institute such protocols due to a public health order or as a best practice, and will require all employees, students, and families to comply with the requirements of such safety protocols.

C. DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN

The school has a disaster response plan in place to deal with emergencies such as fires or earthquakes. Fire and earthquake response drills are conducted at school throughout the year. In the event of an emergency, the school's ParentSquare communication system will send an automated text and phone message to every parent. Please be sure your phone number is updated in the ParentSquare system.

To prepare for the possibility of a natural disaster such as an earthquake, which might cut the school off from town, **each child needs to bring a disaster relief bag**. Packed in a zip-lock bag, each child should have: a complete change of clothes (long pants, socks, long-sleeved shirt, underwear) a love note, and photo from the parent or caregiver.

The school has food and bottled water on hand in case of an emergency.

D. LICE POLICY

Children with lice and/or nits are asked to stay home from school for two days in order to remove the lice and nits. Before they can return to school, one of our staff members will double check to make sure no nits are present. Staff members will also check all classmates and siblings (that are also students) of a student who is found to have lice. This policy helps lessen outbreaks at Monica Ros School. Parents and caregivers will be asked to keep their children at home for as long as it takes for them to come to school without lice or nits.

E. MEDICATION

A school employee may administer **prescription medication** during school hours only upon written request of both the physician and the parent. This rule applies to prescription medications only. Please use the medication form included in the August mailing or ask the office for a copy. Bring the medication directly to the office--do not send it to school in a lunchbox.

If you think your child might need a **non-prescription medication** at school (usual requests are Tylenol or Benadryl), please return the medication form, signed by you. In each individual instance, we contact you before administering any medication to your child. We cannot administer any medication without this form on file.

In case of **severe allergies which require prescription medicine**, especially bee-stings, please be sure we have explicit written instructions on how to handle an incident. These instructions must also be signed by your family doctor (use the medication form).

F. IMMUNIZATION FORMS

California law requires students to be immunized from certain communicable diseases in order to enroll in school. Immunization records, or a valid medical exemption, must be provided for the following diseases: (1) Diphtheria (2) Haemophilus influenzae type b (3) Measles (4) Mumps (5) Pertussis (whooping cough) (6) Poliomyelitis (7) Rubella (8) Tetanus (9) Hepatitis B (10) Varicella (chickenpox) or (11) any other disease deemed appropriate by the local Health Department.

In order to comply with the requirements of the law, the school requires that all students must have a current official California Immunization Record (signed, dated and stamped) or immunization exemption form, on file with the school on or before the first day of enrollment.

A student may be conditionally admitted if the student is scheduled to be fully immunized within the time limits set by the California Health and Safety Code. (Health & Saf. Code § 120340.)

Immunizations Records constitute private medical information and will not be shared without written parental consent except that the School retains the right to share information as needed with local health officials in case of exposure to a communicable disease or as otherwise required by law.

V. TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

A. CARPOOLS

Carpools are encouraged at Monica Ros! In order to reduce traffic congestion, we encourage parents to carpool to school.

B. PARKING LOT ETIQUETTE

For reasons of safety, courtesy, and efficiency, you should NEVER leave your car unattended or running in the circular driveway. If parents and caregivers wish to socialize with one another, they should do so out of the circle. There is also no idling allowed in the parking lot. Please turn off your car when waiting to pick-up your child. It makes the air much healthier for our students who are playing near the parking lot on the playground.

Playing in the rock circle in the parking lot is prohibited due to safety and insurance reasons.

VI. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A. THE ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

As a non-profit, independent school, Monica Ros receives no financial support from local or federal taxes – we rely on tuition dollars and fundraising to support our operations. Tuition covers approximately 80% of our annual costs, the rest we fundraise for. Beyond closing the gap between tuition and the cost to educate each student (between \$1,700-\$3,000 per student), the Annual Fund provides an important vehicle for the community to support the Monica Ros School mission. The strength of Monica Ros and its programs is a direct result of the collective effort of alumni, parents, faculty, staff and friends who participate every year in the Annual Fund. As you budget expenses for the coming year, please include an Annual Fund donation in your plans. All donations are tax-deductible.

B. AUCTION

The annual Monica Ros Auction is the school's biggest event-fundraiser of the year. With generous donations from our Monica Ros families, staff, local artists and business, donated artwork, goods, services and experiences are auctioned off to help fund our school. Parents, caregivers and friends of the school bid on the items during a lively auction evening complete with great drink, delicious food, and a live auctioneer. This is an all hands on-deck event! We ask that all families donate, volunteer, attend and/or invite guests to the auction. Many hands make light work and raise much needed funds for our school.

Auction Class Projects

Each classroom creates a project with support from volunteer parents and caregivers. Room Captains will reach out early in the year to coordinate projects with you. Parent and caregiver volunteers can coordinate project time with teachers.

Start thinking of amazing ideas now! Proceeds from the auction go towards the Annual Fund.

C. FIESTA

Fiesta is not just an event – it's a delightful blend of fun and fundraising, thoughtfully orchestrated by Monica Ros to embrace the entire Ojai community. Set against the backdrop of early fall, on the Monica Ros Campus, Fiesta stands as a vibrant cultural tribute to Hispanic Heritage Month. This festive occasion unfolds with an array of games, performances, activities, shopping and food.

Fiesta is run by Monica Ros staff and lots of volunteers from the PCO and the greater community who begin planning and preparing for the event at the beginning of the school year. Every parent and caregiver is asked to donate time and/or resources to ensure a successful Fiesta. The proceeds of Fiesta help meet the school's operating budget costs as part of the Annual Fund.

D. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Each February, the re-enrollment process begins for the following year. Preference is given to currently enrolled children for whom the school intends to offer re-enrollment, before enrollment is offered to children on the waitlist. To reserve a place for the following fall, parents and caregivers need to return the re-enrollment form with an enrollment deposit by the beginning of March.

E. PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

In order to enroll in the preschool program, students must be potty trained. Students entering the Green Room must be at least three years of age on or before September 1 of the enrolling school year. Red and Blue Room students must be at least 4 years of age on or before September 1 of the enrolling school year.

F. WAITLIST POLICY

The school maintains a waitlist of children wishing to be enrolled in the school. Parents and caregivers may put their child on the waitlist at any time after birth, by filing an application form and paying an application fee of \$50.00. **Parents and caregivers of children currently enrolled are strongly encouraged to put siblings on the waitlist immediately, as preschool classes fill up quickly.**

G. FINANCIAL AID

Monica Ros routinely awards over \$100,000 in financial assistance each school year. Any family may apply and new applications are due for each school year. Unlike loans, the recipient is not required to pay back these funds. Financial awards are a reduction in tuition fees. The purpose of financial aid at Monica Ros is to provide monetary assistance to those who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend.

FACTS (or the current school admissions/enrollment software) completes an analysis of need by using a formula that takes into consideration all areas of a family's financial situation, verified by tax documentation, including:

- Income of both parents (taxable and non-taxable)
- Number of dependents
- Living expenses
- Retirement
- Medical expenses
- Debts and unusual expenses

In addition, the school may consider that some financial circumstances are not present in previous year's tax documentation, such as changes in employment, family status, etc, and will attempt to incorporate those considerations in the final award, where appropriate.

The Head of School receives the financial results, which include a recommended award amount, by email. This analysis, along with available budget, guides the school in determining whether a family qualifies for assistance and if so, the award amount.

Procedure:

- The Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee approve a Financial Aid amount annually as part of early-Spring budget approvals for the following fiscal year. This amount should be approved by March 1st each year.
- Applications for Financial Assistance are due by March 1st, annually.
- The Head of School reviews all applications and the recommended award based.
- Decisions regarding Financial Assistance are completed and granted by March 15 for all those who apply by the deadline March 1st.
- Decisions on applications following that date are executed as quickly as possible, and as available based on remaining budget if applicable.
- Applicants receive a letter of decision from the school through the school admissions/enrollment system.
- The amount awarded for each student ranges, based on the school admissions/enrollment system application criteria. The applicant is then responsible for tuition minus the financial assistance amount awarded.
- Once granted financial assistance, applicants secure their spot with a paid deposit for the next school year. Families who have applied but do not receive assistance will still need to submit a paid deposit to secure their child's spot for the next school year. If a family does not complete the application or pay a deposit, their child's space will be released.

Families may apply using the link provided on the website and on Parent Square. FACTS charges a \$40 application fee that covers their cost of screening applications.

Families receiving financial aid may also qualify for reduced fees for student support services and counseling.

H. MONTHLY BILLING PROCEDURE

Monica Ros School uses an online tuition management system called FACTS. Prior to the start of the school year, each child must be enrolled in FACTS and must have paid an Enrollment Deposit (due in March through FACTS), a Material and Book Fee (due May 1 through FACTS) and the first of nine equal tuition payments (due in August through FACTS). Tuition may be paid in July of the enrolling year in full or in nine

monthly payments at the beginning of each month (August through April) as scheduled during your FACTS enrollment. Additional charges relating to such services as the Stay & Play program, after-school classes, hot lunch, student support, field trips, and miscellaneous fees are added to your incidentals account in FACTS as they occur and will be due on the 15th of the following month. A \$30 service charge is assessed to all balances 30 days past due.

I. TUITION INSURANCE

All families agree to pay tuition for the entire year in their enrollment agreement. Families who do not pay tuition in full by July 1 of the upcoming school year, are required to purchase tuition insurance for \$150 per student. If a student leaves the school before the end of the school year, tuition insurance covers 80% of any unpaid tuition balance due to the school. The departing family is responsible for 20% of any unpaid tuition balance and 100% of any other incurred costs or fees.

Families who pay tuition in full prior to the beginning of school do not need to purchase tuition insurance.

VII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A. PARENT AND CAREGIVER ORGANIZATION OF MONICA ROS (PCO)

Parents and caregivers of enrolled children are automatically members of our school's Parent and Caregiver Organization of Monica Ros (PCO). The PCO is dedicated to helping Monica Ros School in a variety of ways. The goal of many PCO activities (e.g., Fiesta, Book Fair, Auction) is to raise funds for the school's operating budget. **Meetings are typically scheduled on the first Thursday of every month at 8:45am.**

B. PARENT AND CAREGIVER-LED CELEBRATIONS / CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Here at Monica Ros School we believe in bringing joy and wonder to learning through celebration. In the interest of honoring traditions that are unique to our school and creating a sense of excitement around our values, we have carefully curated the following parties that we invite families to be a part of. Parents and caregivers can sign up to "host" these parties for the class. If your student does not normally attend school on the day of a celebration, reach out to your teacher if you would like to be included. For the 2023-24 school year the classroom celebrations are:

- Friday, September 8, 2023 at 10:00am – Green Room Hello Party
- Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 10:00am – Red Room Hello Party

- Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 10:00am – Blue Room Hello Party
- Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 5:30pm – 3rd Grade Cast Party
- Friday, December 22, 2023 at 10:30am - All School: Winter Cookie Exchange
- Friday, February 9, 2024 at 10:00am – Red Room Hibernation Party
- Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 10:00am – Green Room Butterfly Party
- Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 5:30pm – 1st Grade Cast Party
- Friday, March 22, 2024 at 10:00am – Blue Room Dinosaur Party
- Friday, April 19, 2024 at 10:00am – All School: Mad Hatter's Tea Party
- Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 5:30pm – 2nd Grade Cast Party
- Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 5:30pm – Kindergarten Cast Party

A sign up for parent and caregiver involvement will be circulated at Back to School Orientation. Thank you for supporting our programming in this fun way! Your ability and willingness to host a class celebration is a valued donation to our school. Please note that when you sign up to host a celebration, it is at your own expense. Many hands make light work. We encourage families to work together to keep the costs down and the fun up!

Decorations can certainly make a celebration more festive. As our school continues its effort to be more environmentally conscious, we encourage everyone to consider this when decorating for any parent and caregiver hosted event. Our PCO Shed (located in our main parking lot and always unlocked) is a great resource for recycled/repurposed decorations. Please help yourselves to any decor you might find in the shed and kindly, when taking down decorations after your celebration, return them to the shed in an organized manner.

Most of our parties happen during the first snack break of the day. Please ask the teacher several weeks before the celebration when it is the best time of day to have the celebration. Plan accordingly with the time given by your teacher.

Please help us to offer an equitable experience for every student at school...for these class celebrations we must insist upon no goody bags or favors.

Ask your teacher for a list of class allergies/dietary needs and student roster. Please choose healthy snacks and party foods (i.e., fruit, veggies, cheese). Limit any sweet treats (cookie, brownie, mini cupcake) to one small item per student - taking into consideration all dietary needs from the class roster. Lightly sweetened lemonade or water are great drinks. Please limit high-sugar beverages. No candy, gum or soda.

Monica Ros highly supports other opportunities for families to connect with their student's classroom. Please contact your classroom teacher if you would like to share a holiday or other culturally-relevant family experience, craft or other fun activity you would like to share.

C. ROOM CAPTAINS

The role of a Room Captain is multifold. First and foremost it is to assist teachers in creating a supportive and inclusive environment for their students and classroom families. One or both Room Captains also attend monthly PCO meetings and facilitate communication from these meetings to their classroom parents and caregivers. Room Captains also play a vital role to rally their classroom's families to support the school's magical mission and yearly fundraising goals.

Monica Ros School typically will have two Room Captains per class, rotating the responsibility from year to year in order to give many parents and caregivers the opportunity to participate at this important level.

Room Captains are absolutely vital to our school's community; they are important communicators, spirit-energizers and fund-raisers!

D. PARENT, CAREGIVER AND TEACHER CONFERENCES

Regularly scheduled parent, caregiver and teacher conferences occur twice each year. Please consult the year's calendar for specific dates. During Conference Week, school is on an early dismissal schedule all week with Stay & Play offered all afternoons.

Conference Week Dismissal Schedule (Stay & Play Available as usual until 5:00 p.m.)

Monday - Friday

Green Room	11:30 a.m.
Blue & Red Room	11:45 a.m.
Kindergarten	11:55 a.m.
grade school	12:00 p.m.

***Hot lunch is not available the week of conferences.**

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to speak to teachers at any time with questions or problems. Please avoid lengthy conversations at the gate or in front of students. Extra conference times are scheduled as needed. The Head of School is also available for

conferences at any time--please call or drop into the office to arrange an appointment. We also welcome your comments in written form. Confidentiality will be observed.

E. SPECIAL EVENTS

Monica Ros School hosts many wonderful events throughout the year. Below is a brief description of events in roughly chronological order.

1. Back to School Orientation

Back to School Orientation is an event giving parents, caregivers and their students the opportunity to gather in their classroom and talk with the teacher about the upcoming year. Additionally, parents and caregivers meet with the Head of School and administration to go over the “nuts and bolts” for the school year asking any questions they may have. This event takes place just before school starts.

2. Theme Week

Every year students and teachers examine a different theme. Previous themes have included: *Ancient Greece, Patterns, Around the World with Monica Ros, Building, The Chumash, Night, Books, Ocean, The World of Beatrix Potter, Fairytales & Folklore, Flight, and Wonders of Water* among many others. This year’s theme is *Let’s Communicate!*

Monica Ros teachers develop age-appropriate activities for all of the students. On Monday of Theme Week, the school is closed (to students!) while staff prepares the campus. On Tuesday, the students arrive at a magical place and spend time exploring different aspects of the theme. We read about *it*, talk about *it*, wonder about *it*, examine specific aspects of *it* in exploration stations set up around school, creating the opportunity for immersive play for everyone!

3. Ojai Day

Ojai Day is a wonderful opportunity to share the magic of Monica Ros with the greater Ojai community. Staff and PCO volunteers will be in Libbey Park hosting a Monica Ros booth, answering questions and sharing our love of all things Monica Ros. Typically, Monica Ros students are invited to perform on the Ojai Day Children’s Stage.

4. Halloween

We celebrate Halloween with a costume parade! Students arrive at school in their costumes. At 9:00, the 3rd Grade begins a progressive parade that collects everyone and ends in a circle of costume appreciation. **No masks or weapons are allowed** so that even our youngest students can enjoy the excitement without being frightened. Parents and caregivers are asked to please respect the “no candy at school” rule. Please keep an

ear out for ways to help decorate the outside of campus as this celebration of imagination unfolds here at MRS!

5. Adopt-A-Family/Senior

Each year parents and caregivers volunteer to help organize our annual Help of Ojai Adopt-A-Family food and gift drive.

6. Book Fair

We are trying something new! Our annual book fair is online this year and will take place at the end of November.

7. Winter Program

All students participate in a winter program. Grade school students perform the Thursday evening before the winter break. Preschool and Kindergarten perform the Friday morning before the winter break.

We sing songs celebrating the spirit of the season. Following each performance we invite families to bring homemade (or store bought) cookies/treats for a cookie exchange. Be ready to have a plate of treats to bring home. This is a great opportunity to share a special cookie/treat recipe with friends and school family!

8. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

We join the Libbey Park celebration put together by the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation's youth committee and raise our voices in song to honor the spirit of Dr. King.

9. Founder's Day

On Founder's Day we celebrate the birthday of Monica Ros. We gather and offer performances and art projects to honor Monica Ros. MRS families and friends old and new join in the festivities. This is an open-house event and all families, alumni and interested community members are welcome.

10. Valentine's Day

At Monica Ros we celebrate the love we have for our family, friends, community and selves with distinct celebrations at each grade level on Valentine's Day. Classroom teachers curate the celebrations for the day. Valentine cards are encouraged but we ask that parents and caregivers please respect the "no candy and no favors at school" rule.

Please keep an ear out for ways to help decorate the outside of campus as this celebration of love unfolds here at MRS!

11. Poetry Night

In a heartwarming evening performance, grade school and kindergarten children recite poetry from memory. Kindergarten performs as a group while all grade school students perform individually. Some students choose to present their original works.

12. St. Patrick's Day

Each year on St. Patrick's Day students arrive to a campus that has been visited by leprechauns. Light-hearted fun ensues. This is a teacher-led day, but do be sure to come with a camera in hand.

13. Arts Month

For an entire month, preschool, kindergarten and grade school students immerse themselves in the world of art. The emphasis varies year to year... from painting inspired by the great masters to the great outdoors – and everything in between! We end the month-long exploration with a gallery showcase of all the wonderful student and class art. Projects will be revealed at our Founder's Day celebration.

14. The Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Grade Plays

Each classroom offers a play which takes place during the school year. The subject, nature and type of dramatic performance vary depending on the interests of the class. The performance is followed by a Cast Party with a pot-luck celebration offered by and for the performing classroom's families. Parents and caregivers, this is a student centered event; please do not bring alcohol to the Cast Party.

15. Science Fair

Students and their families are invited to an early evening school wide science fair. Kindergarten and grade school students exhibit and demonstrate various science projects they have created in their classrooms. A grand scientific finale on our turf will leave everyone in awe.

16. Wax Museum

In early spring every Third Grader picks an important historical figure to portray. The students examine the life of their subject, then compose and ultimately perform biographies explaining their impact on history. On the night of the event, third graders transform into their subjects and "come alive" to tell you all about themselves.

17. Mad Hatter's Tea Party

Parents and caregivers host literary themed tables for groups of students. There are Harry Potter Tables, Hungry Caterpillar Tables, fairytale tables – you get the picture. Well, you really can't until you've been there! A few rules, like all classroom celebrations: no candy, no party favors, and just one small sweet treat. Everyone is encouraged to wear a hat - whether you make it in art class or you bring it from home. Great fun is had by all!

18. Kindergarten Performance

The Kindergarten sings its way through a story of grand proportion in the spring. The subject, nature and type of dramatic performance varies depending on the interests of the class. The performance is followed by a Cast Party, a potluck celebration, offered by and for the performing classroom's families.

19. The Grade School Play

Considered by many to be the year's big extravaganza, the Grade School Play features third graders in leading roles with our Second Grade and First Grade rounding out the cast. Everyone is feeling like a pro after their class performances and this show is always a big hit! As this is a longer show, there will be no potluck following.

20. Preschool Performances

Red and Blue Room students perform for their schoolmates, parents and caregivers during the spring in the form of a choral concert or dramatic production or combination of both.

21. Field Day / Fun Day

With the great support of parents and caregivers, school staff organize a fantastic day of physical games and contests for kindergarten through third grade. Similarly, preschool has a whole day dedicated to the pursuit of fun. Field Day is traditionally held at the Thacher School while Fun Day is held on our very own transformed campus!

22. Graduation

Graduation is an opportunity to celebrate each of our third graders as individuals and as a community. Students sing, dance, share special thoughts with family members and listen to accolades shared by their teachers. It is a joyous event as we celebrate our

students' promotion to the next chapter in their childhood. All MRS students and families are welcome (and encouraged) to attend!

23. Summer Camp - June 24 to August 9, 2024

Calling all families and adventure seekers! Join us for seven weeks of non-stop FUN starting in late June, where laughter, friendships, and unforgettable memories await at our epic summer camp! Join for one week or all seven.

Each week is a unique adventure, exploring thrilling themes like gardening (watch those green thumbs!), cooking (hello, mini master chefs!), camping (get ready for s'more fun!), and so much more! Sign up on our website to secure your spot now!

24. Winter Wonderland Camp - January 2 to January 5, 2024

NEW! Are you ready to experience the ultimate winter adventure filled with crafts, fun activities, and baking galore? Look no further because our Winter Wonderland Camp is here to make your winter break absolutely unforgettable!

Sign up on our website to secure your spot now!

25. FUN-tastic February Break Camp - February 19 to February 23, 2024

NEW! Get ready for an action-packed and laughter-filled February Break like never before! Our Fun-tastic February Break Camp is here to keep the excitement alive and spirits soaring high during the school break!

Spaces are limited, so secure your spot now on our website and get ready to experience the most FUN-tastic February Break Camp ever!

26. Spring Fling Camp - April 1 to April 5, 2024

NEW! Get ready to spring into action and embrace the blooming beauty of the season at our Spring Fling Camp! Whether you're a nature enthusiast, a budding chef, or just looking for an adventure, we've got the perfect springtime extravaganza for you! Let your creativity bloom as we dive into a world of spring-themed crafts, activities and fun!

This is the most delightful springtime adventure in town! Spaces will fill up fast, so don't miss your chance to be part of the Spring Fling Camp! Sign up on our website now.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Parent and Caregiver Handbook. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the 2023-2024 edition of the Monica Ros School (“MRS”) Parent and Caregiver Handbook. I agree to read the Handbook and to follow the policies and procedures described in it.

(Parent/Caregiver Signature)

(Date)

(Parent/Caregiver Signature)

(Date)