



STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

LA PAZ COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Our mission is to cultivate informed,
mindful citizens of the world

COMPASSION
CURIOSITY
CONNECTION

2026-2027

Asociación Escuela Comunal La Paz de Brasilito de Santa Cruz de Guanacaste.

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Board of Directors

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Introduction

Our mission is to cultivate informed, mindful citizens of the world.

Our innovative, bilingual, experiential learning program empowers students to develop the analytical skills, cross-cultural empathy, and creativity necessary for fostering harmony within our local and global communities

Objectives

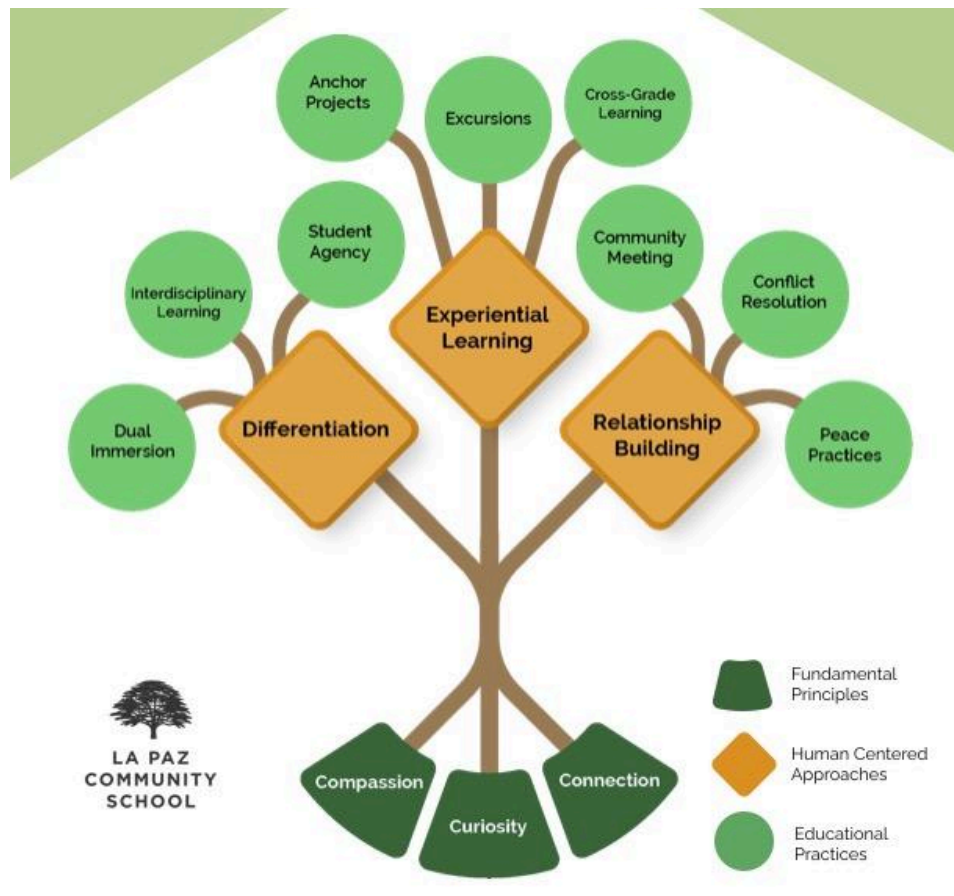
1. To form an educational cooperative that integrates the members of a community in creating a collective, bilingual learning environment.
2. To implement meaningful service learning that empowers students to become stewards of their communities.
3. To develop skills and nurture values that cultivate the well-being of self, family, community, and world.
4. To emphasize place-based, experiential learning and discovery.
5. To uphold high academic standards through authentic assessment and grade level benchmarks.
6. To educate the whole child by incorporating the outdoors, the arts, and physical education.

School Characteristics

- A. International Baccalaureate (IB) - Diploma Program
- B. Non-Profit Association
- C. Private

- D. Dual Immersion
- E. Experiential Learning
- F. Preschool - 12th grade (Ages 1-18)
- G. Cooperative
- H. Co-educational

La Paz Core



The La Paz Core provides a framework for how to create an educational environment that unites humans across different ideological, sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts, paving the way for a new generation of informed, mindful citizens of the world. The La Paz Core focuses on programming and skills that value and promote our shared humanity through the fundamental principles of Connection, Compassion, and Curiosity.

The International Baccalaureate Community Profile

La Paz Community School focuses on the characteristics described in The IB Community Profile for all school community members, including students, staff/faculty, parents, and volunteers: we strive to be individuals described as: **inquirers; knowledgeable; thinkers; communicators; risk-takers; principled, open-minded; caring; balanced; and reflective.**

The Peace Practices

La Paz students analyze, reflect upon, and continuously live the four Peace Practices outlined on their uniform they have been wearing since they arrived at La Paz. The practices are the essence of a La Paz education and the goal is upon graduation, all students internalize and understand the complex meaning behind each “practice”.

- A. Develop the self into a peaceful, lifelong learner by improving physical and mental well being through critical thought and extension of comfortable limits.
- B. Cultivate peace amongst family and community by disseminating and sharing love and compassion.
- C. Create peace within the community by caring for the natural environment and valuing the cultural diversity that enriches us.
- D. Spread peace throughout the world by effectively communicating thoughts and ideas as well as actively listening to all perspectives.

Belonging and Human Dignity

Our commitment to loving and supporting our students for who they are is unconditional. At La Paz Community School, we wholeheartedly embrace our diverse community; valuing and celebrating all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, faith, neurodiversity, nationality, sexual orientation, physical ability,

socioeconomic status, and other personal characteristics given by both nature and nurture. We honor human dignity by extending a warm welcome to all, fostering an environment of respect and encouragement for our employees, students, and families to share their unique cultures and stories. By doing so, we cultivate a greater sense of cultural understanding, enriching the experiences of everyone who participates in and engages with our community. At La Paz, we understand that our diversity unites and strengthens us as a global learning community.

Mindfulness

La Paz Staff and Students practice Mindfulness on a regular basis which allows community members to explore:

- A. An understanding of how their brain works
- B. Attention skills
- C. Sensory awareness
- D. Emotional management skills
- E. Compassion & Empathy
- F. Ecological awareness

Accreditation

La Paz Community School is accredited through the Costa Rican Ministry of Education for Preschool, I, II, III, and Educacion Diversificada; Resolution Number C.P. 003-2008-MEP. If there is an occurrence that falls outside of the explicitly stated standards, practices, and protocols in this document, the school will adhere to the official guidelines and protocols established by the MEP.

M.Sc. Mainor Villalobos Rodríguez
Ministry Director of Private Schools

M.Sc. José Leonardo Sánchez Hernández

Ministry Director of Public Education

La Paz Community School is accredited through the International Baccalaureate World School Program (www.ibo.org), specifically for the Diploma Program (grades 11 and 12).

La Paz Community School is a [Cognia](#) candidate with the intention of receiving final accreditation in 2026.

Master Calendar

The 2026–2027 calendar will be published by the end of the second trimester, in March 2026. Below are the 2025–2026 calendars for reference.

[Tempisque \(2025-2026\)](#)

[Cabo Velas \(2025-2026\)](#)

The La Paz experience creates a vibrant school community that encourages consistent community involvement outside of school hours. In addition to the variety of national holidays, professional development half-days, mid-trimester breaks, trimester vacations, and extracurricular activities, La Paz offers the following enrichment experiences, demonstrating the school's commitment to encourage an all-inclusive community based organization.

Regularly Scheduled Special Events/Activities

Please note that all dates are subject to change.

A. Coffee House (once per year)

Secondary students' share their variety of talents including dancing, singing, poetry, comedy, and more.

B. La Parrandera (once per year)

K to 5th grade students' share their variety of talents including dancing, singing, poetry, comedy, and more.

C. Night of the Arts - (once or twice per year)

Experience the Campus curriculum through the lens of the arts and the IB Program

D. Museums - Once per trimester

View the projects and activities developed by the Explore, preK through 5th grade students during their thematic units. This provides an authentic opportunity for students to showcase their hard work and they are extra motivated to produce exemplary work because they know there will be an audience!

E. La Paz Board Meetings - Fourth Tuesday of each month

Participate in the open public sessions of the La Paz Board

F. Parenting in Community - Once per trimester

An opportunity to learn specific parenting skills from expert school representatives

Annual Events

A. Annual General Assembly (virtual meeting) - September

Annual meeting of the governing body of the Association

B. Estadio Lleno (Tempisque) - First Trimester

A sports day at La Paz Tempisque featuring recreational and sports activities for the entire family.

C. Día de las Mascaradas (La Paz Costume Party at Cabo Velas) - October

An opportunity to enjoy an evening of costumes and good food with La Paz families

D. Grandparent and Special Friend Day - November

E. La Paz Bingo - First Trimester

School fundraiser

F. Full Moon Party (Cabo Velas) - Second Trimester

Social event and fundraiser for the scholarship program

G. Field Day (Cabo Vela) - Second trimester

A sports day at La Paz Cabo Velas featuring recreational and sports activities for the entire family.

H. Beach Olympics - March

School-wide friendly competition on the beach, celebratory of the end of the *Wellness* unit.

I. Ruta La Paz - Third Trimester

Annual walk/run supporting the scholarship program

J. Kinder, 6th, 9th, 12th Graduations - May/June/July

We celebrate important milestones during the students academic journey including preschool, cycle 2, cycle 3 and high school graduation

K. Anchor Fair

An opportunity for students to share their Anchor Projects with their families, providing more insight into the year-long, hands-on learning experience.

Academic Programs

La Paz Community School's core curriculum, based on [International Baccalaureate](#), US and Costa Rican standards and benchmarks, is supplemented by the following philosophies and programs. For more detail about specific curricular details, please click on the appropriate link or peruse the philosophy of the program below:

<https://www.lapazschool.org/en/student-life#programs>

Academic Calendar

La Paz Community School operates on a single track modified year round calendar that focuses on minimizing extended vacations to improve student performance and retention of knowledge/skills, including practice in both English and Spanish.

Philosophy

The La Paz curriculum development philosophy is an evolving process where professional educators build on the content, skills, and experiences created in previous years in an organized and transparent manner. Through a carefully developed, authentic, thematic curriculum La Paz educators utilize experiences and the place of Guanacaste to drive the student's learning. Clearly defined expectations combined with an inquiry based approach guide each child's learning journey and discovery of their self, family, community, and world.

"Curriculum Mapping" is the process of connecting all content in grades prek-12 through a comprehensive yearly study plan that includes content, skills, inquiries, resources, excursions, and assessment for each of the subjects. The school utilizes the program ManageBac to help electronically track and further develop the La Paz Curriculum Map as well as manage classroom communications, attendance, and grades.

General Standards

International Baccalaureate (IB) - While La Paz is accredited by the IB Diploma Program for grades 11-12, our teachers are also trained to deliver the curriculum using the core philosophies and learning outcomes set by the IB Middle Years Program (MYP for grades 6-10) and the IB Primary Years Program (PYP for Grades k-5). The content and skills for the IB Programs allow for professional educators to teach higher order thinking skills through meaningful curriculum.

Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education (MEP) - La Paz is accredited by the MEP and as such each of the core subjects Math, Science, Social Studies, Civics, Spanish, and English in all grade levels are required to adhere to the standards set forth by the MEP for the five "cycles" of learning in Costa Rica which include Preschool/Kinder, Ciclo I (grade 1-3), Ciclo II (grade 4-6), Ciclo III (grade 7-9), and Educación Diversificada (grade 10-11).

Dual Language Program

Language is taught through theme-based content planned between English/Spanish teacher grade level teams. Content learned mainly in one language is supported through sheltered instruction techniques ([SLOP](#)) and transfers over to the other language through purposeful "bridging" techniques (Beeman & Urow, 2013), in which students are taught to analyze the similarities and differences between the languages, followed by an application of the concepts in the other language.

La Paz's Two Way Immersion Program continues to evolve based on the language dynamic in our community. Approximate percentages of English and Spanish are as follows:

- Preschool-12th: 50% Spanish-50% English

Service Learning, Anchor Projects, Pre-CAS, CAS

La Paz Community School firmly believes that service learning is an essential component of a community-based school. Through the use of individual strengths and cooperation, service enhances the students' connection between self, community, family and world. Students utilizing their time, talents, energy, and other resources reflect the school's commitment to benefiting the local and global community. Anchor Projects, Pre-CAS, and CAS classes (Creativity, Action Service) also teach the students how to balance the rights of citizenship with the

responsibilities of community membership while integrating the current educational reform recommendations with critical community concerns. These year round experiences engage students in meaningful co-curricular classes that improve our school and local community.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning requires a focus on projects and place to create a motivating and engaging learning environment.

In terms of Project-based Learning, we base our academic planning and curriculum work on the principles outlined by the Buck Institute for Education, which states that “project-based learning engages students in deep learning that is enduring and inspires a love of learning through a personal connection to create powerful learning experiences to support the academic achievement and personal growth of students”. Our teachers develop motivating questions that are engaging to students, open-ended, and aligned with learning objectives in order to create powerful projects that are tangible and practical, as well as engaging to students, both intellectually and emotionally.

“Placed-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students’ appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens.”

- David Sobel, Place-Based Education; Connecting Classrooms & Communities

On the other hand, Place-based Learning allows students to address the questions: Where am I? What is the nature of this place? What sustains this community? It fosters not only knowledgeable, but responsible, contributing citizens in both the local and global community. In order to accomplish this, children must focus on self at a younger age, and broaden that focus to family, community, and eventually

world, as they grow older. "Love of nature, one's neighbor, and community is a prime motivating factor in personal transformation." (Sobel ii)

Cross-Grade Learning Opportunities (CGLO)

CGLOs lie at the heart of the La Paz learning experience as they represent a balance of both socioemotional and academic learning. Through intentional planning, teachers collaborate across grade levels to identify curricular overlaps so different grade levels can experience the enriching experience of learning/teaching/collaborating with each other. Included in the cross-grade learning experiences is the Big-Buddy/Little Buddy program where students have the opportunity to form a unique bond with a student from another grade level.

Extra Curricular Activities and Athletics

La Paz Community School offers a variety of after school activities to the student body to enrich the academic experience. We strongly believe that student involvement in extracurricular clubs and activities greatly improve a student's social, emotional, and physical well-being while at the same time teaching them invaluable life skills such as sportsmanship, teamwork, and open-mindedness. Illustrated below are some of the unique examples of these programs. Some examples of activities that may be offered each trimester (this varies depending on trimester) are: swimming, yoga, basketball, soccer, dance, art, cooking, music, robotics, chess, taekwondo, baseball. This is an ideal avenue for parents/guardians, teachers, and other community members to share their talents and passions with our students by leading an after school activity!

Special Education (Behaviour and Education Support Team - BEST)

Philosophy: The BEST welcomes and celebrates the diversity of our students' learning needs by offering equal access to education for all enrolled students, in

accordance with the Costa Rican Law 7600 y 8661. The BEST in collaboration with our Administrative Team are committed to doing everything possible to set up all students for success in an inclusive La Paz learning community. La Paz Community School has a comprehensive admissions process that is dedicated to proactively identifying the extent to which the BEST can serve the needs of all learners.

Scope: At La Paz, we are committed to providing a holistic approach to support the well-being and development of our enrolled students. We recognize that each child is unique, influenced by both nature and nurture. While we celebrate these differences, we also understand that in certain cases, they may impact the overall learning environment of our school community.

1. Wellness and Belonging (Counseling):
 - a. Our bilingual Wellness and Belonging counseling department is well equipped to address a wide spectrum of emotional support needs using a comprehensive approach that combines remedial and preventive psychoeducation strategies. We offer a variety of services and modalities to cater to these needs, including one-on-one counseling, small group counseling, and group guidance sessions.
 - b. In certain situations, our BEST professionals may recommend that a student seeks external psychological or psychiatric support to ensure their overall well-being. In such cases, we will provide a referral to a qualified specialist. It's important to note that in accordance with MEP regulations, we do not offer psychological, psychiatric, or therapeutic services on-site.
 - c. Should a student's well-being be seriously at risk, we may request families to seek external services. In these instances, our BEST specialists are committed to collaborating with external professionals to ensure the best possible support for the student. Please be aware

that failing to adhere to BEST recommendations may impact a student's enrollment status for the upcoming school year, with due process being followed.

- d. In situations where cases present a genuine threat to the physical or emotional well-being of a student or other community members, La Paz has a legal obligation to report such cases to MEP and/or PANI, or any other relevant legal entities. Alternatively, we may collaborate with private services to support the child's development, always with a primary focus on the best interests and well-being of the student.

2. Behavioral Support:

- a. Our BEST team, in collaboration with our teaching staff, has extensive experience in developing and implementing Individualized Behavior Plans tailored to each student's unique needs. La Paz maintains a zero-tolerance policy for uncontrolled violent physical or socioemotional behaviors directed at any member of the educational community, as it jeopardizes the well-being of our school community. In cases of complaints or inappropriate behavior, the school reserves the right to initiate a disciplinary due process.

3. Academic Support:

- a. By implementing established best practices in Differentiated and Dual Immersion Instruction, our BEST Learning Case Managers and La Paz educators are well-prepared to assess and cater to a diverse range of learning needs including those of gifted and talented students as per Costa Rican law 8899. We have carefully developed a Response To Intervention (RTI) protocol that empowers our teachers and support staff to address the unique needs of all our students.
- b. In cases where pre-intervention strategies prove ineffective within a predetermined time frame, our specialized BEST team steps in to identify and address the student's learning requirements, providing

teachers with effective accommodations and individual support plans. If, despite these efforts, a student's learning needs remain unmet, we have the option to collaborate with the student's family and request a comprehensive pedagogical assessment from an external specialist, along with any necessary external academic support.

- c. La Paz Community School is committed to identifying and supporting high-potential students, in compliance with Law No. 8899: *Law for the Promotion of Giftedness, Talents, and Creativity in the Costa Rican Educational System*, its update through Law No. 10080: *Promotion of Quality in the Educational Care of Students with High Potential*, as well as Regulation No. 38808: *Regulation for the Promotion of Giftedness, Talents, and Creativity in the Costa Rican Educational System*. It is also based on the document *Educational and Administrative Guidelines for the Application of Law No. 8899 and Regulation No. 38809*.

Families have the responsibility to inform the school of any situation, diagnosis, or update that may influence their children's academic or socio-emotional performance. This information is essential to ensure that the school can provide the most appropriate and effective support and strategies for each student.

The ultimate goal of the BEST is to unlock the student's full potential and identify areas for improvement, always with a primary focus on the student's best interests and overall well-being. It's important to note that not adhering to BEST recommendations may have implications for a student's enrollment status in the upcoming school year, subject to thorough due process.

Career and College Counseling

The Career and College counseling service focuses on an exhaustive analysis of each student's vocational profile, covering their interests, skills, working values, and

personality. For this evaluative purpose, counselors implement among other platforms and resources, BridgeU for local and international college admissions and the Computerized Vocational Counseling System (SOVI), a suite of career assessments from the University of Costa Rica. Through one-on-one sessions, individualized advice is provided to deeply explore and understand each student's talents, passions, and future career goals. In addition to this personalized support, specific assistance is offered in the application and admission process to colleges and universities, both local and international. The main goal is to provide students with the support necessary to successfully address this crucial process on their path to higher education.

Student-Athlete and Artist Support Program ([AACP](#))

Students participating in athletics and the arts may need specific support to ensure they meet academic commitments due to demanding extracurricular schedules. These supports could include, among others, academic tutoring provided by teachers, modifications to the school schedule, and reorganization of assigned tasks. Students may apply to the AACP program through their counselor with acceptance to the program contingent upon authorization by the relevant academic director.

Study Abroad Program

If feasible, a 9th or 10th grade student from La Paz may meet with the counselor to consider participation in a study abroad program that may be selected by the family. The program has to be approved by the administration and the family of the participating student always has to pay the annual / monthly fee of La Paz during their absence to maintain their place. Families who do not enroll their child may not be guaranteed a space upon their return.

Volunteer Homestay Program

Since our foundation in 2007, La Paz Community School has created a thriving volunteer program. At any given time there is a volunteer somewhere on campus working in small groups with students or helping us with the day to day projects. The program has been so successful because of the caliber of carefully vetted volunteers that have chosen La Paz to dedicate their time, talents and creativity to. Volunteers can also earn college credit while volunteering. All volunteers are coordinated through the Discover La Paz program. .

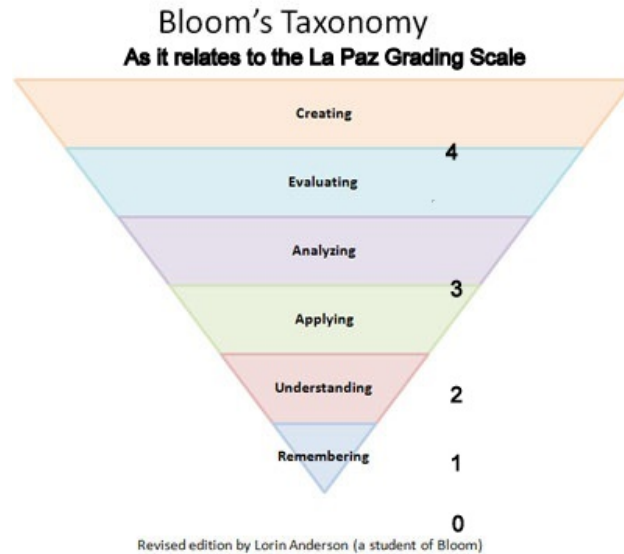
Assessment/Grading Scale

PreK through 5th grade

La Paz Community School's assessment focuses on process as well as product in student development of knowledge, attitude and skills. Students are responsible for creating assessment portfolios with samples of student work, student and group reflection, and student self-assessment in addition to teacher and peer feedback. Preschool assessment is primarily narrative, and Kindergarten–10th grades include both numerical evaluation, narrative assessment and portfolios. From Kindergarten through 5th grade, student work and socioemotional development is assessed with a grading rubric from zero to four (0: No Evidence, 1: Emerging, 2: Developing, 3: Proficient, 4: Exemplary) with final trimester grades rounded to the nearest $\frac{1}{2}$ point.

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom created a classification of learning objectives known as Bloom's Taxonomy, which consists of three categories: cognitive, which focuses on mental skills (knowledge); affective, which focuses on growth in feelings or emotional areas (attitude); and psychomotor, which focuses on manual or physical skills (skills). According to Bloom's Taxonomy, after a learning episode, the learner should acquire new knowledge, attitude, and/or skills: the learning happens more

easily/readily based on creating, evaluating, analyzing, applying, understanding, remembering.



4: Exemplary

A "4" signifies that the student's work exceeds the standard and expectations, and can be used as an example to show other students how to appropriately complete the task at hand. It not only demonstrates mastery of the content, but also demonstrates a careful, thoughtful, analytical and/or creative completion of the task. All the necessary components of the assignment are included.

3: Proficient

A "3" signifies that the student's work is adequately meeting the standard and expectation, however there is room to grow. It demonstrates a general, but not necessarily profound, understanding of the topic at hand. The task is completed in an appropriate and accurate manner, and all of the necessary components of the assignment are included.

2: Developing

A "2" signifies that the student's work is approaching the standard and expectation, however, the student is still developing in this area. It demonstrates a vague understanding of the topic at hand. The task is completed in a less than adequate manner and is missing some of the necessary components of the assignment.

1: Emerging

A "1" signifies that the student's work is below the standard and expectation, and that the student is at the very beginning stages of development in this area. It demonstrates little to no understanding of the topic at hand. The task is completed in an inadequate manner and is missing the majority of the necessary components of the assignment.

0: No Evidence

A "0" signifies that the student's work is non-existent, therefore the student's performance is non-assessable. This may denote that the student is not completing his/her/their work, or the student has missed multiple days of school resulting in incomplete assignments.

The above rubric focuses on various forms of mastery from Bloom's Taxonomy at La Paz including application, evaluation, and creativity as it relates to content. The grading scale can be translated into a traditional 0-100% grading scale for transcript purposes, but only if necessary using the scale below. Note that the nature of both the IB and La Paz grading system is such that content knowledge and skills are not finite, thus the traditional % scale is not an accurate depiction of exceptional work at La Paz.

6th through 12th grade IB evaluation

In grades 6-12 La Paz utilizes a grading system of 1-7 that is aligned with the IB MYP and DP Programs.

In order to best prepare students for IB expectations and their post-secondary learning, two grades will be awarded per trimester that will then be combined for one final grade rounded to the nearest tenth. One will be academic, represented by a combination of summative assessments (including tests, unit projects, and presentations) based on IB expectations and rubrics. The other “task and habits” grade will holistically assess overall performance through a rubric based on behavior, homework, participation, self-evaluation, and formative assessments. The final grade earned for transcript purposes at the end of the year will be an average of the three academic grades (one per trimester) representing 60% and the three tasks and habits grades representing 40%.

This system focuses on understanding and skills development, rather than memorization or standardized testing, encouraging a holistic view of student learning. The final grades reflect not only what students know, but how they apply and engage with that knowledge.

1. Student example (Grade 6-12)

	1 TRI	2 TRI	3 TRI	Average	Weighted Average	Final
Summative Assessment	4	5	5	4.7	$.6 * 4.7 = 2.8$	5.2
Tasks and Habits	6	7	5	6	$.4 * 6 = 2.4$	

- 2.** The following chart may be used to convert IB grades to specific traditional grading systems for transcript purposes only. Note that the IB provides specific quantitative grade bands and qualitative rubrics to define the 1-7 marks. The IB percentage grade bands are not aligned with those mentioned in the table below.

IB DP and MYP Scale	% Scale	A-F scale
7	100	A+
6	97	A+
6	95	A
5	93	A
5	91	A-
4	89	B+
4	85	B
4	81	B-
3	79	C+
3	75	C
3	71	C-
2	69	D+
2	65	D
2	61	D-
1	59	F
1	55	F
1	51	F
1	40	F
1	35	F
1	30	F
1	25	F
1	20	F

1	0	F
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Academic Promotion

Students must earn an average grade of a minimum of “2” in grades K-5 and “3” in grades 6-12 in each subject in order to advance to the next grade level. If a student earns less than a passing score in one or two of the core subjects, they can try to pass the class by doing extra work during the July/August vacation. If a student earns an average final grade of less than a passing score in more than two of the main subjects, they have the right to take a maximum of two retake exams per subject before the start of the next academic year in order to earn credit for the previous academic year. Otherwise they must repeat the grade and cannot advance to the next grade level.

Student-Led Conferences and Passages Program

Parents/Guardians and students are obligated to attend Student-Led Conferences on the last day of the trimester with either the teacher (K-5th) or advisor (6th-10th). Parents/Guardians of preschoolers will have conferences with their child's teachers.

The 10th grade La Paz Passages Program aims to assess students' readiness for the IB Diploma Program (DP) or, in certain cases, an individualized path for their 11th and 12th grade years. To meet the requirements, students must deliver a panel presentation.

Homework

Homework is introduced starting in Kindergarten to authentically reinforce or extend knowledge and learning practiced in school, primarily based on literacy, math, and/or academic projects. Beginning in Kindergarten, homework will be assigned on a weekly basis and as students advance in grade level it will take longer to

complete. Homework in secondary school varies by subject and grade level and time of year, but remains an essential part of student responsibilities to reinforce learning and develop independent study habits. Students are expected to complete homework when it is assigned. A quiet place to study with no interruptions and encouragement from parents/guardians when needed is the best help a student can be given. Homework may be adjusted to meet individual and family needs. Assignments are intended to promote self-discipline, practice and reinforce classroom work, develop good study habits, and expand learning opportunities for the family.

Parent/Guardian, Student, Faculty Roles and Expectations

All La Paz Community School students and parents/guardians must read the Student and Family Handbook and sign, either by hand or digitally, the contract and the media release before the first day of school.

Cooperative Hours

In addition to financial commitments, all families are expected to collaborate with a minimum of 18 hours per year to the school cooperative program. [Cooperative hours should be registered using this form](#). This type of volunteerism fosters an enriched academic environment for our students as well as builds strong community connections in our area. Family donation time can be categorized in the following ways:

- A. Office/Admin Support: this may include organizing our storage, offices, making uniform inventory, making community connections, fundraising events.
- B. Academic Support: preparing material for teachers, helping with projects, cleaning/organizing classrooms, Parent Representative, etc.

- C. Special events: leading activities that parents are passionate about or that coordinate with classroom studies, assisting with the Special events (Cultures Day, Coffee House, Ruta La Paz, Beach Olympics, etc), leading a Creative Block, etc.

Student Rights

In accordance with the Ministry of Education, La Paz recognizes the rights of all students:

- The right to education
- The right to express themselves
- The right to their own identity
- The right to integrity
- The right to medical or professional support
- The right to be protected
- The right to be respected
- The right to be different from others
- The right to not be discriminated against and learn in an environment free of harassment

Bathroom Access

La Paz will maintain access to gender specific and unisex (gender non-specific) bathrooms from grades K-12 with preschool having access to individual unisex bathrooms in their classroom. In accordance with the MEP Anti Bullying Protocol for the LGBTQ+ community, students may use the single stall bathrooms or the bathroom of the gender with which they identify and is corroborated by their parents.

Parent/Guardian Participation

Parents/Guardians are the single most important influence in a child's life. A child's success in school directly relates to parent/guardian participation both on and off campus.

How can parents/guardians help their child?

- A. Listen to and validate their child's emotions so that they feel heard
- B. Parents and guardians may request a meeting with their child's teacher to discuss any concerns.
- C. Check and discuss schoolwork. Engage your child about their school day.
- D. Read and respond to correspondence or calls from the school.
- E. Encourage daily homework/reading/project time; turn off the computer, TV, tablet or cell phone.
- F. Read to and with your child, and encourage reading at home.
- G. Support learning. Do not do the work for your child.
- H. Attend school meetings (parent/guardian/faculty meetings, conferences, school activities, committee meetings, etc.)
- I. Language Support at home learning second language
- J. Use school [Problem Solving Strategies](#) and [THINK philosophy](#) at home
- K. Create clear technology use policies at home to minimize cell phone and social media addiction

Parent/Guardian and School Communication

Students will receive mid-trimester progress reports that indicate the student's performance half way through the trimester through the ManageBac platform. Students will also receive final report cards at the end of each trimester through the same platform, indicating their grades for that trimester. Conferences and Learning Portfolio presentations are mandatory and will take place at the end of each trimester. They are a fundamental aspect of the learning process of each child and

provide an opportunity where they can lead a presentation and dialogue about their learning with parents/guardians and teachers present. Parents/guardians and teachers also communicate via phone and/or email when necessary. In some cases parents/guardians may ask or be asked to come to the school for an additional meeting.

Communication Agreements

In a school that values open communication with parents, it's important to establish clear boundaries rooted in mutual respect. While we encourage active involvement and dialogue, it's essential that all interactions are conducted in a respectful and professional manner. This ensures a positive, productive partnership that supports the well-being and growth of our students. Maintaining this balance helps us create a collaborative and respectful learning environment for everyone.

Curricular Transparency

Our families are essential to student success and thus we will provide the following tools and channels so they are *informed* about the curriculum their children are learning so they can be *mindful* of how to continue the conversation at home. Here are some of the manners by which families can access the curriculum at La Paz.

1. Educators will share thematic newsletters two times per trimester that provide an outline of the topics and objectives in each subject in addition to important dates, events, and activities.
2. The academic administration team will make themselves available for one forum per trimester to engage in dialogue and answer any questions regarding academics at La Paz.
3. Educators and Administration will be available to meet with families upon request to further help clarify any aspects of the curriculum.

The academic team commits to proactively communicate the curriculum to parents/guardians so that they may best support their child's learning.

Parents/guardians have the right to know in advance what is being taught and if they have any questions or concerns they should communicate directly with the relevant teacher or administrator. This will be the first step in a dialogue between family and school, focused on ensuring that a child is meeting grade level objectives and parents/guardians are aware of how these objectives are being met.

The La Paz curriculum will respect MEP guidelines and IB objectives while honoring and respecting the diversity of belief systems in our community. The preschool and primary school (preK-6) resources and instruction will avoid direct reference to topics revolving around sexuality. In the grade 7 through 12 program, any age-appropriate content that may be considered sensitive due to the sociocultural context of the school community will be shared in advance so that parents/guardians may have the option for their child to participate. The school commits to providing students with motivating, engaging, and relevant learning experiences that prepare them to be "informed and mindful citizens of the world".

About Unbiased Teaching

La Paz is committed to unbiased teaching practices. Sensitive topics may arise during the learning process through student driven questions/comments or through contextually relevant characters, historical figures/events, and/or concepts. The school recognizes that there are a variety of beliefs within the local and global community, and as such, will approach all topics in an objective manner that respects and honors the dignity of all community members.

Parent Communication Channels

If a parent/guardian needs to express a comment or concern, they should first ask themselves if perhaps time and/or their child can resolve the issue on their own. If

not, they should first communicate directly with the child's teacher. If a resolution was not achieved, the parent/guardian may contact the school's Primary and Secondary Principals directly. All teacher or principal communication should occur via email. We request that teachers do not communicate with parents via WhatsApp. You can find the emails of your child's teachers and principals here:

- [Cabo Velas Staff Directory](#)
- [Tempisque Staff Directory](#)

Institutional Communication Channels

La Paz is a vibrant and active bilingual, multicultural, two campus learning community developed to meet the learning needs of very young children through 12th graders. There is always a lot going on! For this reason, it is vitally important that parents/guardians are actively following and regularly reviewing the La Paz communication channels to stay up to date and informed.

- [ManageBac \(Institutional Academic Learning platform and portal\)](#): Please note that only parents and guardians registered in ManageBac will be granted access to student information including grades, behavior notes, attendance, etc. To add a guardian to a student's account, please contact the academic assistants at the corresponding campus.
- WhatsApp Groups
 - Parent group chat per grade level (managed by parent representative per grade)
 - Comunicados WhatsApp (For Emergencies and Important information Only)
 - Cabo Velas:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/ILB4QdIIGuiHWYIxsZSMhZ>
 - Tempisque:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/JXtExDUqexngCMPTtHjGOQ>

- Weekly Newsletter via Substack (Celebrations, detailed information regarding upcoming events, important information regarding policy changes, etc.)
 - Sign up here:
 - [La Paz Cabo Velas](#)
 - [La Paz Tempisque](#)
- LinkTree (Important Links, forms, and information that can be easily accessed at any time)
 - Cabo Velas: <https://linktr.ee/LPCaboVelasFamilies>
 - Tempisque: <https://linktr.ee/LPTempisqueFamilies>
- Social Media Accounts
 - Facebook
 - Cabo Velas:
<https://www.facebook.com/LaPazCommunitySchool/>
 - Tempisque:
<https://www.facebook.com/LaPazSchoolTempisque/>
 - Instagram
 - Cabo Velas: <https://www.instagram.com/lapazschoolcabovelas/>
 - Tempisque:
<https://www.instagram.com/lapazschooltempisque/>
 - LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/la-paz-community-school/>
- Extracurricular groups
- Bus WhatsApp Chats
 - Each bus route has its own WhatsApp chat and at least one parent or guardian of every student using the bus service should be in the chat

Fundraising

La Paz is a non-profit organization with robust financial aid and scholarship programs. For this reason, annual fundraising efforts are required to meet our

financial objectives and secure funding for capital projects. Scholarship, annual and capital campaign funding is raised each year through fundraisers, private donations, and our US non-profit partner [La Paz Global](#). The remainder is raised each year through various fundraising projects that involve the entire school community. Families are expected to help with fundraising and other activities designed to benefit the school and its programs.

Please note that families are not permitted to fundraise for any La Paz cause (sports teams, arts, supplies, etc.) without the direct approval of the Advancement Department. Any fundraising initiatives must first be approved via email by contacting donations@lapazschool.org and cash donations may only be received via official La Paz accounts.

Behavior Expectations for Teachers, Staff, Parents/Guardians and Volunteers

Appropriate adult behavior covers a wide spectrum and includes:

- Kindness
- Care
- Good Communication
- Sensitivity
- Safety consciousness
- Cultural Empathy
- Confidentiality

Inappropriate adult behavior similarly covers a wide spectrum and includes:

- Verbal abuse, including bullying, belittling, demeaning, shaming or blaming
- Cyberbullying including publication of videos of children and/or community members without parental/guardian consent
- Drunkenness/Substance Abuse
- Physical and/or Sexual abuse or harrasment

- Destroying property
- Any form of violence
- Lying
- Stealing/Theft
- Any other act that can put the well-being of the school community at risk

If adults engage in inappropriate behavior, they will be:

- A. Informed that their behavior is inappropriate
- B. Requested to stop
- C. As a preventative measure the relevant adult may be asked to leave the school premises for the security of the rest of the educational community
- D. The school reserves the right to remove parents from any and all school related social media and/or online platforms
- E. The school reserves the right to refuse entrance or access to the facilities by any parent, guardian, or community member if any behavior is observed that threatens the security, best-interests, or well-being of the general educational community.

Behavior Expectations for Students

Resolving conflict involves the use of logical and realistic consequences that assist students with their understanding of responsibility and self-control. La Paz Community School helps students learn to take responsibility for their own actions. In order to do this, we provide a system of support that assists students in creating their own plans of behavior including negotiation, mediation, and exploration of the cause of the problem. The following expectations apply to all members of the La Paz Community School community:

- We display courtesy and kindness to one another.
- We show respect to each other, to ourselves, to our community, and to our environment.

- We are responsible for our own actions and words.
- We maintain honesty and truthfulness.
- We sustain a safe physical and emotional environment.
- We respect both personal and school property.

Individual teachers may have age appropriate guidelines for their specific classrooms. Students who develop interpersonal conflicts are encouraged to first try to solve their own problems using a series of 8 Problem Solving Strategies:

- wait it out/cool off
- find other people to be around
- choose to just ignore it
- compromise
- use your sense of humor to calm the situation
- find another area or activity
- talk it over
- tell the other person what is bothering you and ask them to please stop

If these strategies aren't successful, faculty members will work with the student(s) to solve the problem. Faculty members will promote conflict resolution by offering spaces for reflection and dialogue. During this process parents/guardians will be informed and/or involved.

On such occasions that the school becomes aware that students have participated in inappropriate, dangerous or illegal behavior at non-school sponsored events, the school may communicate its concern to parents to ensure the lessons of safety, health and character. If necessary for the safety of the school community, the school will take further action.

Behavioral Boundaries

The following behavioral infractions may result in disciplinary action if observed during any La Paz sponsored activity, experience, or event both in and out of school.

- A. Academic Honesty:** The academic world considers ideas and ways of expressing ideas to be of great importance. Presenting the ideas of another as if they were one's own, or using the words of another author without giving credit to that person, is considered serious academic misconduct, usually treated under the title plagiarism or cheating, and will not be tolerated at La Paz.
- B. Alcohol and Drugs:** There will be no possession or use of tobacco products, alcohol or other licit or illicit drugs by any member of the school community while involved in any student-attended event including all academically related activities, all school sponsored trips, athletic events and school business functions.
- C. Appropriate Dress:** Students must dress in the required La Paz Community School attire each school day, as per Costa Rican law. All pieces of the La Paz uniform must be school-issued. This includes a uniform polo shirt and black shorts, skirts, pants, or skorts issued by La Paz Community School. Sweatshirts must also be school issued. If students arrive at school without the appropriate uniform, they will be provided a uniform and the family will be financially charged for the respective cost of the new uniform. Students must wear closed-toed shoes (not sandals or Crocs), and gym shoes during Movement class. On trips or excursions, students may be required to wear their La Paz uniform. If not, students are expected to dress appropriately and in accordance with the respected excursion.
- a.** Students in grades 3+ must wear the appropriate PE uniform which includes a gray La Paz Movement shirt, Ruta La Paz shirt, or other La Paz sanctioned athletic shirt. If a student chooses to use Spandex or lycra for movement, they must be worn underneath La Paz issued PE shorts. Students may wear their Movement uniform to school on the day they have Movement, and they must change into their regular

school uniform after PE class, unless PE is the last class of the day.

Athletic shoes and socks are required for PE.

- D. Interpersonal Conflict:** Students who have interpersonal conflicts are expected to try to resolve the problem through negotiation or seek a mediator and work through the process of conflict resolution.
- E. Public Displays of Affection (PDA):** Any PDA beyond hand-holding, quick hugs, and a quick kiss on the cheek is not permitted. This includes (but is not limited to) sitting on laps, kissing on the lips, long embraces.
- F. Bullying and Intimidation:** Bullying includes physical, verbal, and/or emotional overpowering or belittling, and will not be tolerated. Bullying may be face to face, behind someone's back, or via media outlets such as the internet (cyberbullying) or any other form of media. Intimidation and Bullying include any act of discrimination against a person(s) because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, color, ethnic origin, or country of origin. Acts of racism, homophobia, and/or transphobia are considered bullying and will be considered "very serious infractions".
- G. Vandalism/Theft:** Acts of destruction or theft of property belonging to either La Paz Community School or another student will be regarded as a violation of the spirit of the community. Students who destroy or damage the property of fellow students, staff or the institution will be held responsible for repairs or replacement.
- H. Weapons:** Any item that could be construed as a weapon is not allowed on campus. This includes guns, knives (including pocket knives), etc. Toys that simulate weapons (toy guns, swords, knives) will also not be allowed on campus without explicit permission from administration.
- I. Violence:** Acts of violence, such as but not limited to harassment, hate speech or forms of physical aggression, against members of the school community including peers and staff will be regarded as a violation of the code of conduct and result in a disciplinary process.

Athletics and Interscholastic Participation Policy

All students who participate in extracurricular activities or athletics must follow all Behavior Expectations as stated in the handbook. In order to participate in games and tournaments, students must be passing all classes with a minimum grade of "2" (on the 0 through 4 La Paz Scale).

Students must be present in school or have a justified absence the day of the event to participate in the games, practices and extracurriculars.

Technology and Media Literacy

Technology and the internet are invaluable academic tools when utilized appropriately. At the same time, when utilized inappropriately they can cause severe harm. Students will respect and honor the privilege of using technology at school such as laptop computers and cell phones. The right to use technology at school is restricted to only academic purposes. Students will make appropriate decisions regarding the physical treatment and usage of technological devices. Any abuse of technology that causes physical or emotional harm to La Paz Community members will be cause for disciplinary action as per the La Paz disciplinary policies.

Use of cell phones, tablets, video games, music players, headphones, or other electronic devices (excluding computers) is not permitted during school hours or on field trips/excursions unless otherwise indicated by a teacher or administrator. Time in school and during excursions is meant for students to interact with each other as well as the environment around them with minimal distractions. The school reserves the right to store student cell phones in a safe place.

In case of lost or stolen items, the school will assist students and families in finding and recovering the items when possible, but the school will not be financially responsible for replacing any items.

Virtual Private Network (VPN)

It is expressly prohibited for students to install, configure, or use any type of VPN on school and personal computers while at school. Failure to comply with this rule will be considered a violation of the institution's policies and may result in disciplinary action.

Artificial Intelligence

We encourage our community to responsibly and safely use Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool to enrich and enhance learning, teaching, and collaboration across all areas of school life. AI should be used to support our mission of cultivating informed and mindful citizens of the world while maintaining a human-centered focus on curiosity, compassion, and connection. All use of AI must uphold the school's commitment to data privacy and academic integrity, ensuring originality, transparency, and ethical responsibility in every learning experience. For details on how AI is implemented across grade levels and community roles, please review our full [Approach to Artificial Intelligence document](#).

Student Drivers

To ensure safety and order, the school has established the following guidelines for students driving their own vehicles:

- 1. Driver's License:** Any student driving their own car must present a copy of their valid driver's license recognized in Costa Rica. Please note that in Costa Rica, all drivers must be **at least 18 years of age**.
- 2. Vehicle Information:** Parents or guardians must provide the vehicle's information, including make, model, year, and license plate number.
- 3. Arrival and Departure Times:** Students must adhere to the regular school entry and exit times. Late arrivals will not be allowed.

4. **On-Campus Remain:** Once a student enters the school grounds, they may not leave again during school hours. If they forget something in the vehicle, it will be treated as if they left it at home.
5. **Transporting Other Students:** If a student is driving another student, the passenger's parents or guardians must send an email to the reception office authorizing their child to arrive or depart with another student.
6. **Parking Areas:** Students must park their vehicles in the designated areas to avoid disorder.

Additionally, it is required that all students register as student drivers of La Paz by completing the corresponding form: <https://forms.gle/c4Xw5KvKtqSMA2Ls8>

The school is not responsible for any damage, theft, or incidents that may occur within the campus related to student vehicles.

Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in the revocation of the privilege to drive onto campus. These rules are intended to promote a safe and organized environment for all students.

Bus Policies and Behavior

La Paz works with external bus companies to offer a safe and dependable transportation option for our families. All families who require regular bus service should first fill out the annual bus form to request service. Once a family's request is approved, the parents/guardians are asked to join the corresponding bus route's chat, which is managed by the bus nanny, an employee of the bus company. Riding the bus to school is a privilege and benefit for La Paz Community School students, therefore the Bus Behavior Policy is as follows:

- A. Students are expected to behave in a way that is safe at all times and that is respectful towards the driver and other passengers. Students must remain seated with seat belts fastened for the duration of the ride.

- B.** Bus stop safety is the parent/guardian's responsibility. The school office must be informed if someone other than a parent/legal guardian is picking up a student.
- C.** Bus Behavior
 - a.** First Incident: The first time a behavior incident is reported to the school, the corresponding academic director will give the student a warning
 - b.** Second Incident: The second reported incident will result in another intervention by the academic director and parents will be notified.
 - c.** Third Incident: The third incident will result in the student being given an assigned seat on the bus for 1-2 weeks. Parents will be notified.
 - d.** If behavior does not improve, the student will not be permitted to use the transportation service until the next trimester.
 - e.** In the event of an extreme incident that violates La Paz's Behavior guidelines, an immediate suspension of bus privileges by the administration may occur with no reimbursement.
- D.** Parents or authorized guardians must drop off and pick up their students at the designated bus stop on time. Buses are instructed to give no more than a 3 minute grace period in the morning. Buses leave the school at 3:15 in the afternoon. If a child misses the bus due to tardiness, it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to coordinate transportation for the child to or from school. Recurring issues with punctuality may result in the suspension of bus services.
- E.** If a student who is not a regularly paying customer needs to ride the bus, the parent/guardian must first contact the La Paz receptionist to make sure there is space for the child. If there is space, the parent/guardian will be informed and then the child is permitted to use the requested route for that day. Occasional bus fares are set annually and are always charged per trip

(morning only, afternoon etc.) The student account will be charged at a cost of \$7 per trip.

- F. Regular and extracurricular bus routes are reserved exclusively for students who are officially enrolled in school or extracurricular activities and have parent/guardian permission. Students not enrolled must be picked up by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult.

School Resources

Any proven lost, damaged or stolen resources or materials belonging to the school must be replaced within one month's time period at the expense of the student responsible. Failure to treat school resources and materials with respect may result in user privilege loss. Additionally, parents will be held financially responsible and will be asked to pay in order to adequately replace the lost, damaged, or stolen item.

Administrative Policies

For any school related issue not covered by the policies and protocols below, the school will utilize policies and/or protocols from the Costa Rican Ministry of Education.

Discipline Policy

Parents/guardians, students and school staff will be responsible for creating an environment that promotes positive behavior, respect and problem-solving skills at both school and home.

The following is a partial list of offenses that could lead to suspension of educational services via a Due Process that results in the cancellation of the contract for educational services and/or the conditioning of enrollment.

- A. Threatened, attempted or actual physical injury to another person

- B.** Possessed, used, sold or furnished any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object
- C.** Possessed, used, sold, furnished or has been under the influence of any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, intoxicant of any kind or drug paraphernalia
- D.** Committed robbery or extortion
- E.** Caused or attempted to cause damage to school or private property
- F.** Committed an obscene act (including those motivated by bias or prejudice) or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity
- G.** Engaged in harassment or bullying of any kind defined as any action or words that may provoke an emotional or violent response or inflict distress
- H.** Failed to abide by the Academic Honesty Policy
- I.** Any other infraction that merits a corrective action

La Paz Community School will open a Due Process for a student upon finding that the student committed one or more of the offenses listed above and that: (a) other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct or (b) that due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical and emotional safety of the other students and/or staff.

Conflict Resolution Philosophy

Conflict is an inevitable part of life and school is no exception. What defines a community is not the conflicts that it faces, rather the manner by which these conflicts are resolved. La Paz Community School practices restorative justice as its principal form of conflict resolution and mediation in order to maintain an inclusive school environment. Restorative and inclusive practices require the following in order to be successful.

- A.** A community culture that is trusting in the belief that all humans can learn from their mistakes

- B.** A community culture where all members are unwavering in their belief that a safe community requires everyone to honestly and transparently communicate about situations that compromise the physical and emotional well-being of community members and places a priority on the welfare of the educational community in general.
- C.** A community culture open and willing to actively engage in a transparent and unbiased process that respects the privacy and rights of the students involved as well as the rest of the community
- D.** A firm belief that when student conflicts, infractions, or inappropriate conduct arise, open dialogue and communication amongst community members is the prevailing resolution strategy
- E.** A steadfast commitment to a reintegration process that involves restorative and inclusive practices that always recognize the equal human rights of all parties.
- F.** An incident review and follow-up process where independent mediators from the faculty are offered the opportunity to ensure that inclusive, respectful, and restorative practices have been implemented through a Due Process.

Examples of Restorative Justice and Inclusionary Practices at La Paz

- A.** The application of problem solving strategies
- B.** Grade level circle meetings to share ideas, feelings, emotions, and brainstorm solutions
- C.** The teaching of learning strategies with thematic approaches in order to proactively support student behavioral and academic needs in a group setting such as morning meeting, jumpstart, or advisory
- D.** The realization of advisory activities that include individual and group workshops as well as self-reflection opportunities
- E.** Scheduled periodic meetings with school counselor, administration, teachers, and advisors for socioemotional support

- F.** Behavior and Education Support Team proactive interventions including Superflex and socioemotional awareness workshops
- G.** Meetings with families to discuss issues, brainstorm solutions, and actively involve them in the educational development of their child.
- H.** Student to student mediations to openly share feelings and emotions will be held provided that the dignity, privacy, confidentiality, values, equity, equality between the parties are respected and there is a mutual consent between those involved and their parents or legal guardians.
- I.** Projects, essays, etc. related to the behavioral issues including next steps to learn from through a process of reflection with the expressed intent of improving behaviors
- J.** Desired positive behavior - student is put in a position to observe/look for particular positive behaviors among other students and call attention to them in order to reinforce these in the student as well as seek to improve the common good of the school community
- K.** Authentic consequences that identify a meaningful corrective action that is directly connected with and proportional to the student infraction

Disciplinary Committees

The institution will have two Disciplinary Committees: one for primary and one for secondary. Each committee will consist of the respective academic director and one teacher and one member of BEST.

These committees will meet upon receiving a report or a request for investigation from any faculty or administrative member of the institution. The Director of the respective area (primary or secondary) will act as the superior authority of each Disciplinary Committee and will be accompanied by the BEST coordinator and a teacher. The teacher members of each committee are fluid based on schedule and availability. The General Director will handle appeals from parents or students

against decisions made by the disciplinary committees. based on schedule and availability.

In cases of conflict of interest involving directors, the director of BEST or the other academic director will lead the disciplinary committee.

Types of Offenses

For conduct and adherence to institutional norms and respect for all members of the educational community, La Paz has defined three types of offenses: minor, serious, and very serious. Each type has corresponding sanctions and effects on the conduct grade.

Minor Offenses

Due to the nature of infractions considered "minor," it is expected that they will be resolved immediately by the relevant staff member. There will be no formal notification; however, the student's home will be informed of the consequences of the conduct (deduction of conduct points, etc.), with a copy added to the student's file. Minor offenses are not subject to appeal. Minor Offenses Include:

- A.** Incorrect uniform use. If the issue persists, the teacher will notify the Disciplinary Committee for escalation to a serious offense.
- B.** Unauthorized personal accessories as defined by the institution's guidelines.
- C.** Violations of student responsibilities as outlined in this regulation, provided the offense does not qualify as serious or very serious.
- D.** Disrupting the learning process in class.
- E.** Leaving class or school activities without permission.
- F.** Use of vulgar language, if not classified as a serious offense.
- G.** Unjustified absences from mandatory school events.
- H.** Accumulating 3 tardies (including late arrivals at the start of the day or each class).

- I. Deliberate destruction of school property or belongings of other community members, individually or in groups. If damages exceed 25,000 colones, the offense will be considered serious.
- J. Publicly displaying behavior contrary to the institution's rules, public morals, or decency.
- K. Impeding others from participating in regular school activities or inciting others to do so.
- L. Inciting peers to engage in actions that endanger health or individual or group safety.
- M. Any behavior considered minor based on institutional philosophy and regulations.

Corrective Actions for Minor Offenses

The teacher, BEST member, or staff member handling the minor offense will determine the corrective action, which may include but is not limited to:

- A. Verbal or written warning, with a copy sent to the parent or guardian.
- B. Written reprimand requiring effective and verifiable restitution for any damage caused.

Conduct Grade Deduction for Minor Offenses

If a student receives three documented minors (with both student and parents notified), 5 points will be deducted from their conduct grade. Accumulating six or more minors in a trimester may result in a 10-point deduction in conduct.

Serious Offenses

Serious offenses affect the moral or physical well-being of peers, teachers, or any other community member, as well as the learning process. Serious offenses include:

- A. Repeated minor offenses within the same term.

- B.** Serious disrespectful actions or attitudes toward the Director, teachers, students, or any other community member, within or outside the institution.
- C.** Intentional damage to school property, equipment, or facilities.
- D.** Theft of institutional or personal property.
- E.** Insulting or disrespectful language or behavior toward any community member.
- F.** Persistent use of disrespectful language or treatment toward others.
- G.** Altering, falsifying, or plagiarizing academic work or evaluations.
- H.** Unauthorized possession, reproduction, distribution, or disclosure of evaluation materials.
- I.** Defacing institutional property.
- J.** Possession of vaping devices, tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or drugs prescribed to others.
- K.** Entering the institution under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- L.** Possession of weapons or dangerous objects unless authorized for educational purposes.
- M.** Discriminatory actions based on creed, gender, disability, or human dignity.
- N.** Possession or transmission of pornographic materials or images of community members with pornographic or sexual content.
- O.** Unauthorized access or hacking of personal information or accounts.
- P.** Using technology to harass or disrespect other community members.

Corrective Actions for Serious Offenses:

When imposing a sanction for a serious offense, the Disciplinary Committee will also decide on the corrective action to be applied. In addition to other possible actions that may be developed according to the corresponding offense, the following are corrective actions for committing a serious offense:

- A.** All corrective actions available for minor offenses, if so decided by the Disciplinary Committee.

- B.** Repair or replacement of any materials or equipment that were damaged.
- C.** Repair of verbal or moral offense to individuals or groups, whether internal or external to the institution, through a timely public retraction and appropriate apologies.
- D.** Loss of authorization to represent the institution in any official delegations.
- E.** Loss of credentials in the Student Government, Assembly of Representatives, section leadership, and any other institutional committee.
- F.** Suspension from the educational center for a maximum period of twenty (20) calendar days.
- G.** Engagement in educational actions or activities of institutional or community interest that are verifiable and proportionate and relevant to the offense committed.
- H.** Transfer of the student to a different section.
- I.** Loss of the opportunity to apply for enrollment in subsequent academic years.

Conduct Grade Deduction for Serious Offenses

A serious offense results in a conduct grade deduction of 6 to 20 points for the term. The Disciplinary Committee will reference the number of points deducted and the reasoning.

Very Serious Offenses

These offenses correspond to an offense that contradicts the institution's philosophy, values, and principles, significantly harming the integrity of community members and the institution's reputation. Very serious offenses include:

- A.** Theft or alteration of official documents.
- B.** Repeat destruction of school property.
- C.** Physical aggression against any community member.
- D.** Cyberbullying, harassment, or spreading defamatory rumors.

- E. Repeated serious offenses within a single term.
- F. Consuming alcohol or drugs at school or school events.
- G. Facilitating or distributing drugs within the institution.
- H. Distribution of morally offensive materials or pornography.
- I. Bringing or using weapons within the institution.

Corrective Actions for Very Serious Offenses

When imposing a sanction for a very serious offense, the Disciplinary Committee will also decide on the corrective action to be applied. Among other possible actions that may be developed by analogy, the following are corrective actions for committing a very serious offense:

- A. All corrective actions available for minor and serious offenses, if so decided by the Disciplinary Committee.
- B. Requirement to repair, in a verifiable manner, the material, moral, or personal harm caused to individuals, groups, or the institution.
- C. Engagement in educational actions or activities of institutional or community interest that are verifiable and proportionate and relevant to the offense committed.
- D. Suspension from the educational center for up to thirty (30) calendar days.
- E. Permanent expulsion. In such cases, the Institution considers that the student's behavior constitutes an indirect resignation from being a member of our Educational Community and a complete breach of our regulations and philosophy. Therefore, the Disciplinary Committee is not imposing a sanction but rather declaring this indirect resignation, ordering the student's expulsion and immediate removal from the regular student roster. In these cases, the institution will issue a certification of the grades the student has obtained to date, allowing them to enroll in another institution without interrupting their educational process.

Conduct Grade Deduction for Very Serious Offenses:

A very serious offense results in a conduct grade deduction of 21 to 40 points for the term.

Disciplinary Procedure

Any disciplinary procedure for the alleged commission of serious or very serious offenses will begin with a report or complaint to the Committee on Coexistence/Disciplinary Committee by the person(s) reporting the offense.

The Committee will conduct a preliminary summary investigation, and if, after completing the preliminary investigation, the Committee determines that there is sufficient evidence to open the disciplinary process, it will proceed to draft the COMMUNICATION OF ACCUSATIONS and CONSEQUENCES and notify in writing or via email to the family (and student if they are of legal age). If the COMMUNICATION OF ACCUSATIONS and CONSEQUENCES is notified electronically to the student and/or parents, the original signed by one or all members of the Disciplinary Committee must be included in the disciplinary file.

The COMMUNICATION OF ACCUSATIONS and CONSEQUENCES thus marks the beginning of the disciplinary procedure. This document will contain:

- A.** Brief Description of the Incident: (whether it was a complaint or report from a teacher or administrative staff);
- B.** Possible Consequences: that the student faces if found responsible, in accordance with these Regulations;
- C.** Right to Legal Counsel: the student/family has the right to have a legal professional advise them during the process;
- D.** Presumption of Innocence: the student's right that their silence not be interpreted as evidence of guilt;
- E.** Response Period: a clear indication that the student/family has 3 business days starting from the next business day after the COMMUNICATION OF

ACCUSATIONS and CONSEQUENCES notification to present their response (statement), if they choose to do so. This means it is not mandatory, and omission does not imply presumption of guilt;

- F.** Access to Disciplinary File: providing the student/family with the complete disciplinary file starting from the day the COMMUNICATION OF ACCUSATIONS and CONSEQUENCES is notified, which must contain the initial report or complaint, copies of testimonies if any, copies of evidence, etc.;
- G.** Notification Method: the possibility to designate a means to receive notifications for the process. If not, the Committee will notify the contractual address indicated at the time of enrollment by the family or through the Institution's digital system.

Once the COMMUNICATION OF ACCUSATIONS and CONSEQUENCES has been timely responded to by the parents of the minor or by the student when they are of legal age, the Disciplinary Committee will analyze the statement and all evidence offered by the parents, as well as those existing in the file, and will make a decision regarding the student's responsibility, either exonerating them or imposing the corrective action and Conduct Grade deduction as stipulated in these Regulations, as appropriate.

The Committee's resolution must at least contain a brief analysis of the legality of the procedure, the evidence, and the defense arguments. The Committee will then proceed to notify the decision to the interested parties (students, parents). In cases where the student or the family chooses to remain silent once the COMMUNICATION OF ACCUSATIONS and CONSEQUENCES has been delivered, the Disciplinary Committee will proceed to analyze the existing evidence in the file and will issue the corresponding resolution. This resolution must be delivered to the student's parents (and student if of legal age), informing them that if they disagree with the resolution, they have 3 business days from the next business day following the notification date to file an appeal before the General Director.

APPEAL AGAINST THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION

In its resolution, the Disciplinary Committee will inform the family or student, as applicable, that if they disagree with the decision and sanctions imposed, they have 3 business days from the next business day following the notification to file an Appeal, which will be reviewed by the Institution's General Director. The Appeal may be submitted physically at the Institution's reception, directed to the Director's office, or sent directly by email to the address indicated in the Disciplinary Committee's resolution.

If the deadline for filing the Appeal passes without submission, or if an untimely Appeal is submitted, the Disciplinary Committee's resolution will become final, and the sanction will be applied.

If the appeal is received within the designated time frame, the Disciplinary Committee will forward the file to the General Director, who will then, as the final authority, assess the arguments presented and issue the final resolution. In cases where the General Director's office identifies a Conflict of Interest requiring recusal from participating as the final authority, the Appeal will be reviewed and resolved by the Disciplinary Committee of the other campus. No further recourse is available following the appeal resolution, and the institutional process will be considered exhausted, with the resolution implemented immediately.

Conduct Grade

Student behavior is an essential component to success at La Paz. If, after Due Process, a student is found to be culpable in any form of "Severe" (including the sum of 3 Minor), "Very Severe", or "Most Severe" incidents, then the school may elect to deduct the following points off of the student's end of year Conduct Grade. The school reserves the right to condition enrollment for the following school year for any student who has a final conduct score of below 70. The Conduct Grade does not reset to 100 each trimester and as such, represents the accumulation of all

conduct deductions throughout the school year. In accordance with MEP policy, if the student conduct grade is less than 70, the school may offer them service projects that are aligned with the best interests of the school and/or community in order to recuperate points. If the project is completed in accordance with clear expectations and timelines established by the academic evaluation team, the student may earn the necessary points to be eligible for re-enrollment.

- A. Minor = 5 points for every 3 offenses
- B. Severe = from 6 to 20 points
- C. Very Severe = from 21 to 40 points

Searches and Expectations of Privacy

For the safety and well-being of the school community, La Paz Community School reserves the right to inspect and search all school property and buildings for weapons, stolen goods, alcoholic beverages, controlled or illegal substances or any other substances. Refusal to submit to any such inspection or refusal to cooperate in any investigation may lead to disciplinary actions as per Due Process. The school monitors closed circuit video streams at all entrances and in all hallways. The data from these video cameras may be used as evidence under any circumstances.

Attendance

It is very important that students arrive to class ready to learn between 7:45-8:00am and attend school each day. Parents/guardians must notify the school of all student absences via the platform ManageBac, and regardless of the type of absence, students are responsible for making up the work. The school will record the absence as excused or unexcused. Excused absences are those which have been verified by a parent/guardian and which may include illness, unavoidable personal/family situations or student activities off-campus. Unexcused absences are those which do not meet the above criteria or have not been verified by a

parent/guardian. Office staff will make an effort to verify the absence, but in the event an explanation is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.

Every absence that is not absolutely necessary negatively impacts a child's learning experience. Students must attend at least 80% of a year and successfully complete all corresponding work for the absences in order to receive credit for that year.

Although La Paz Community School is understanding of unavoidable absences, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to make up for work missed due to absences. Parents/guardians need to be aware that La Paz Community School's curriculum includes much group work, class discussions, and experiential activities, all of which are impossible to recreate or replicate.

For absences such as illnesses, parents/guardians must report the absence in ManageBac by 8:30 a.m. on the morning of the absence. For absences such as unavoidable personal/family obligations, the parent/guardian must notify administration and the student's teacher(s) directly in addition to reporting the absence in ManageBac. For all planned absences, students and parents/guardians should communicate with the teacher to determine a plan that will guarantee that the student completes all make-up work or replacement work in a timely and satisfactory manner.

Tardiness

All students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m. ready to learn. If a student arrives late more than five times in one trimester, the family may be required to meet with the student's teacher to create a plan to address the issue. Additionally, 3 tardies will be counted as 1 absence on the Report Card. It is important that parents arrive on time to pick their children up in the afternoon by 3:00 p.m. Parent pick-ups after 3:00 p.m. cannot be accommodated and parents are responsible for their children after school hours.

Lice/Nits Policy

- A. No student will be sent home in the middle of the day if they have lice or nits because it is an unnecessary interruption to the learning experience and causes unnecessary socioemotional harm.
- B. If a student is seen to be repetitively and visibly itching then the classroom teacher may send them to the nurse's office during recess or lunch for a lice/nit check if it is not readily obvious.
 - a. If a student has lice or nits then they will remain in class and the school will do the following.
 - i. Send a ManageBac letter to the grade of the child indicating that a case of lice has been identified at grade level. The letter will include a series of solutions that parents can follow if their child has lice. The letter will remind parents that lice are not a public health hazard but they are a preventable annoyance. It will include important information about how to prevent/eliminate lice.
 - ii. Send a letter directly to the child's parents that indicates that the child has live lice and/or nits and that the child will be checked by the nurse upon their return to ensure that they have no live lice. The letter will request that parents confirm receipt of the message. If a child has nits or lice upon their return then they are allowed to continue with their studies; however, the school will send a letter home followed by a phone conversation from the front office.
- C. If a child has lice on three occasions during the school year then the school may call a meeting with the parents to share more detailed information about lice treatment.
- D. On a monthly basis, the maintenance coordinator will ensure that the classroom pillows are washed by maintenance staff.

- E.** On a weekly basis, the maintenance coordinator will ensure that the classroom carpets are vacuumed.
- F.** Teachers will remind students on a regular basis to keep their hair up and avoid unnecessary contact with each other's hair.
- G.** If there is an obvious risk to the community and to the health of the students, the educational institution may establish immediate precautionary actions in the best interests of the students.

Pick-Up/Drop-Off

Students must take their predetermined mode of transportation to and from school (bus, private car, walking, etc.). If a child will be taking an alternative ride to or from school on any given day, the parents must call or email the school to give their son/daughter permission to do so. Parents must give express written permission to the front office to authorize any non-parent or non-guardian to pick up a student. Students are not permitted on school grounds more than 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day unless authorized by a faculty member. Students may only stay after school if they are registered for a school authorized extracurricular program unless they are in 10th-12th grade.

Admissions Policy

La Paz Community School does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, color, ethnic or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid programs or any other school administered programs.

Admissions decisions are based on student academic performance, effort, ability, behavior, and attendance. Also considered is the commitment of the student and family to the school program and philosophy. As a guide, Admissions will also consider whether: 1) La Paz Community School has an appropriate program to meet

the student's needs; 2) the student is interested in a unique school community where scholarship, leadership, bilingualism, and service are essential; 3) the parents/guardians are interested in supporting both La Paz Community School's mission and its students, staff, faculty and administration; and 4) the parents/guardians fully understand the financial and time commitment expected.

Un-enrolled students who were previously enrolled at La Paz must follow the same application process as all new applicants within the allotted time frame. The same aforementioned criteria will be taken into consideration during the re-application process. Students who choose to study abroad for up to one year may reserve their place by paying the enrollment fee and corresponding tuition. Upon returning to La Paz, the student must demonstrate successful completion of an accredited program by submitting official transcripts for the time of period they were abroad.

Application Process

Interested applicants and families should complete the following admissions sequence:

- A. General Tour:** Interested families and/or applicants will complete a tour of La Paz Community School's campus, preferably when school is in session.
- B. Application:** Applicants will complete the online application form along with the necessary documents specified on the application form.
- C. Diagnostic Evaluation and Academic Performance:** La Paz Community School values academic diversity and recognizes that each student learns at their own pace and in their own way. As part of the admissions process, the Admissions Committee may:
 - Invite the student to participate in a trial day.
 - Request a diagnostic evaluation in key areas, but not limited to Mathematics, Reading, and Writing (in English and/or Spanish, depending on grade level).
 - Request an interview with a BEST team member.

- Determine that none of the above are necessary.

All information provided during the enrollment process, including verbal statements, attached documents, and written details in the forms, must be truthful and complete. The school reserves the right to deny admission if any part of the information is found to be false or incomplete.

Acceptance Procedures

- A.** Sign the Commitment and Authorization form via Open Apply by a specified date (before the first day of school).
- B.** Pay the appropriate, non-refundable deposit.

Failure to pay or fill out an agreement/contract by the designated deadline may result in loss of the student's place in school.

Please note that only after the required payments are made will families receive important school-related information, such as class schedules, school contacts, and other relevant details.

Re-enrollment Process

The re-enrollment process starts between December and January of each academic year. Early enrollment fees are due by the end of December (Cabo Velas) or January (Tempisque). Regular enrollment fees are due by the end of January or February (respectively). Returning families who do not pay by the given date will no longer have a priority during application consideration, and may lose their student's place for the following year. In addition to paying the annual enrollment fee, the re-enrollment process is completed via the parent/guardian's Open Apply account for each student where families will be asked to update their information, read and sign the handbook, and sign the photo release.

Financial Aid Program

The Financial Aid Program at La Paz was created to meet the financial needs of families who do not have sufficient resources to pay the full tuition at La Paz Community School, covering up to 50% of the monthly cost. Families who need financial aid must apply and present the necessary application information every year during the designated application period. The application information provided is confidential and will only be shared with members of the Financial Aid Committee and the Board of Directors. Both will review each case based on the information provided, and the school reserves the right to accept or deny any application without providing a reason.

Scholarship Program

La Paz Community School's Scholarship Program was developed in order to celebrate the diverse cultural community and socioeconomic diversity in the region of Guanacaste. The parents/guardians, educators, and community members who founded La Paz Community School have a common goal and vision; to bridge the cultural gap between the Costa Rican population and the expatriate population in the area. Because several regional families are unable to pay for their child to attend La Paz Community School, scholarships funded by individuals, families, organizations, corporations, the Students Sponsoring Students Program, and La Paz itself have been created to assist eligible students with their school tuition and fees. Scholarships are awarded based upon a student's economic need as well as academic potential.

Once a Scholarship Application Form has been completed, each scholarship applicant undergoes an interview and home visit by an educator on the La Paz Community Scholarship Committee before the child is accepted into the program. Since La Paz operates as a non-profit co-operative, each sponsored family is asked to contribute a determined percentage of the tuition in order to ensure a sense of

ownership and investment in their child's education. In addition to financial commitments, all families (including sponsored families) are asked to donate a set number of hours to the school cooperative program each term. This type of volunteerism fosters an enriched academic environment for our students as well as builds strong community connections in our area. The La Paz Community Scholarship Committee will conduct home visits with the scholarship families to support the student's and family's well-being as members of La Paz. Scholarship applicants must have Costa Rican citizenship or residency in order to apply.

If at any time, the scholarship student and/or family requirements are not being met, the Scholarship Committee reserves the right to terminate a scholarship. These requirements include: financial responsibility; donations to the Cooperative Program; proficiency in academic and social behavior; and, consistent attendance.

Tuition

The Board of Directors approves the 2026-2027 La Paz Community School tuition structure during the November 2025 board meeting. Tuition includes the student insurance policy, major school supplies for grades Explore-5 and books for all grade levels, but excludes a laptop computer and graphing calculator. Additionally, the tuition will include field trip transportation expenses with the exception of any excursions outside of the country. It does not include other field trip fees like entry, lodging, food, and others that may apply. Once approved, details can be found on the La Paz website here: <https://www.lapazschool.org/index.php/en/info/tuition>

Payment

Payments will be made on a trimester or monthly basis (as agreed upon in the signed enrollment agreement) via wire/bank transfer, check deposit, or credit/debit card. La Paz Community School will not accept cash or check payments in the school office. **Payments of enrollment, non-resident, new student, and**

annual/trimester/monthly fees made to La Paz Community School are non-refundable. If a parent/guardian does not pay school fees on time, the school has the right to suspend educational services of the corresponding student in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Private School sector of the Ministry of Public Education.

Bank Transfers

Nombre del Banco: Banco de Costa Rica

Nombre de la Cuenta: Asociación Escuela Comunal La Paz

Cuenta Corriente Dólares: 325-00018309

Cédula Jurídica: 3-002-498041

SWIFT: BCRICRSJ

IBAN: CR27015201325000183099

Dirección del Banco: San José, Avenida Central y Segunda Calle 6 y 8

Nombre del Banco: Banco Nacional de Costa Rica

Nombre de la Cuenta: Asociación Escuela Comunal La Paz

Cuenta Corriente Dólares: 200-02-193002651-6

Cédula Jurídica: 3-002-498041

SWIFT: BNCRCRSJ

IBAN: CR20015119320020026517

Dirección del Banco: San José, Avenidas 1 y 3 Calle 4

Banco BAC San José

IBAN: CR98010200009499906188

SWIFT: BSNJCRSJ

Dirección: Avenidas 3 and 5, San José Costa Rica, CA

In order to ensure the effective operation of the school, the business department has established the following protocol that will be strictly followed. La Paz has the right

to deny access to educational services to any student who is not up to date with their payments as per Ministry of Public Education decree #24017.

- A. Two weeks prior to payment due date:** Formal invoice sent electronically to all La Paz families
- B. Sending statements** as a reminder three days before due date
- C. Reminder of outstanding invoices** one day before the due date, with attached invoices.
- D. Three days late:** Email notice of late payment with invoices attached
- E. Five days late:** Invoice with 2% late fee
- F. Two weeks late:** Reminder phone call from collections department with a commitment to pay
- G. Four weeks late:** Email showing new balance owed with 2% late fee
- H. Five weeks late:** Invoice with 2% late fee.
- I. Eight weeks late** (halfway through the trimester): Phone call and email sent to parents requesting obligatory meeting with the collections coordinator and Finance Director. At the meeting the following points are discussed and agreed upon:
 - a.** Specific structure to eliminate this balance over a 6 week period (by the end of the corresponding trimester)
 - b.** Signed agreement with new payment structure that ensures payment of invoice and late fee within 6 weeks of meeting
 - c.** If at any point during the 6 week period the payment structure is not met then an immediate meeting is called with parents, Finance Director and General Director to discuss the potential end to student enrollment at La Paz
 - i.** Outcome A: Committee decides to terminate student enrolment at La Paz at the end of the trimester due to the inability of the parents to adhere to the established adjusted payment schedule.

- ii. Outcome B: A new 6 week payment agreement is reached between the family and school.
- d. If Outcome B is chosen and the new payment structure is not followed then the student will not be permitted to matriculate at La Paz for the following trimester.

Departure from the school for any reason does not exempt the responsible party from outstanding debt owed to the school.

Procedures and Operations

Lunches and Snacks

Students and families have several options for lunch including signing up for the monthly lunch program, buying lunch via the occasional/drop-in plan or bringing their lunch from home. La Paz Community School operates its own lunch program, La Cocina de La Paz, that operates Monday through Friday. In Cabo Velas, the meals are prepared onsite by the staff kitchen team. In Tempisque, the meals are prepared by an external catering company. Families will be provided with a monthly menu and anyone purchasing lunch through the monthly or drop-in plan must fill out the form prior to starting any lunch services to authorize billing and to report food allergies or intolerances.

All students are asked to bring a reusable water bottle labeled with their name, several snacks, and lunch (if not purchased through the Cocina La Paz Program) every day. Nutritious and balanced meals are essential for children. Food deliveries from external providers are prohibited. Candy, gum, and soda are not permitted. In the event a child forgets his or her lunch, parents/guardians should bring a replacement lunch to the front desk prior to the child's lunch time or coordinate with the receptionist so that the child eats with La Cocina that day. Reusable containers are encouraged, and utensils should be packed with the students' lunches. Please

label your child's lunch box, water bottle and all personal items. Microwave ovens are available in all Casas.

While the school lunch program will make accommodations when feasible for food allergies and intolerances that are made in advance, it might not be possible to accommodate all requests due to logistical constraints. Please note that the daily vegetarian option may include egg or dairy products on certain days. The La Paz Cocina program is not recommended for individuals with Celiac Disease at this time. Please email lacocinacabovelas@lapazschool.org (Cabo Velas) or lacocinatempisque@lapazschool.org (Tempisque) with any questions.

Field Trips

Field Trips and excursions are an important extension of the learning process that occurs off campus. All members of the La Paz Community School community must conduct themselves in an appropriate and respectful manner during excursions as well as on campus (failure to do this will result in disciplinary action). In the event a student crosses a behavioral boundary as outlined in the handbook (see "Behavioral Boundaries"), chaperones have the responsibility to take action and the academic director will be notified immediately. Parents/guardians will be informed and may be required to make arrangements to pick up their student in order to preserve the safety and well-being of the child and/or the group.

Families will be informed of a general annual Field Trip schedule at the beginning of the school year. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of upcoming field trips via Field Trip Permission Forms. Transportation is included in school fees with the exception of international trips. Families are expected to pay for non-transportation costs (such as food, accommodations, entry fees, etc.), depending on the nature of the planned excursion. Families will be given the opportunity to distribute payments throughout the school year. Students who have not signed the Field Trip Permission Form will not be allowed to participate in the

field trip, and may need to engage in make-up work that they missed by not attending the excursion.

Sustainability

We promote a conscious use of the resources in our environment, thus encouraging eco-friendly and responsible practices that will contribute to create a more sustainable environment for our school community. For better environmental practices during activities and celebrations, we suggest avoiding the use of balloons for decorations, disposable containers, plates, and single-use plastic.

Instead, we recommend using paper decorations, paper balloons, or lanterns. For serving beverages and food, we encourage the use of reusable cups and cutlery. To eliminate the use of plastic bottles for drinks, we suggest using coolers with dispensers for water or beverages. It is essential for all students to have a reusable water bottle for daily consumption.

Birthday Celebrations

During community meetings, the student body recognizes those that are celebrating birthdays (or celebrated birthdays during vacations/weekends) by singing Happy Birthday in both languages as well as giving the student who is celebrating the birthday an opportunity to share a math problem to solve for their corresponding age. The school does not permit birthday parties, gifts, activities during the school day.

School Library

The school has a library with a wide variety of literary genres. A full time Library Specialist works at organizing and improving the Library collection and resources while also working with students on research and citation skills. Also, a Library Committee assists and supports the Library Specialist.

The Library Checkout Policy is as follows: Students are permitted to check out 1 to 2 books each week when they visit the library, depending on their grade. Students must return their books before they are allowed to check out any new books. For all books 3 weeks overdue, the book will be considered lost and the student account will be charged accordingly. Any student who has lost a book and not paid the fee will not be permitted to check out books until the fee is paid. If a student has lost / failed to return a certain number of books, even if they pay the fees, they can lose library checkout privileges.

Money and Valuables

Students need to consider carefully what they bring to school. We expect honesty and respect for others' property, but it is an unnecessary risk to bring expensive jewelry, watches, toys or large amounts of money. La Paz Community School is not responsible for the loss or replacement of personal items brought to school.

School Supplies

In order to ensure an inclusive and equal opportunity learning environment for all students, La Paz will be purchasing the majority of school materials for children in grades Explore through 5th with the exception of a few particular items. The lists of items that are expected to be provided by families will be shared in July each year.

Disaster Preparedness

La Paz Community School has classroom and campus evacuation procedures for fires, floods, earthquakes, and other emergencies that the children practice and are familiar with. Evacuation plans and maps are laminated and posted in all rooms of the school. The school has regular drills to prepare for these events.

Nurse's office and Administration of Medication

La Paz has a nurse's office on each campus that is staffed by nurses who are employed and supervised by local, reputable medical facilities and their physicians. The nurse is present on campus during the entire school day and during extracurricular activities. The purpose of the nurse is to support our students and staff in the event of an accident, injury, suspected illnesses or other health and wellness needs. The nurse is supervised by an offsite physician team and cannot provide any treatment without the indications of the physicians or the consent of the parents/guardians.

The nurse is the only person at school authorized to administer medication to students and will not provide any treatment without a doctor's instructions and parental authorization. Students should not carry/possess prescription medications at school and are not permitted to self administer prescription medication. All prescription medications must be dispensed through the nurse's office. In order for the nurse to administer medicines prescribed by a pediatrician or family doctor, whether occasional or chronic, parents must send an email to nursecabovelas@lapazschool.org or nursetempisque@lapazschool.org attaching the corresponding medical prescription and instructions. The nurse's office has a refrigerator for any medicines that may require refrigeration.

Medical Information

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, families are responsible for informing the school of any medical condition or diagnosis that requires monitoring. Parents must also provide an updated copy of their child's vaccination records through the re-enrollment form each year.

Additional release forms may be required throughout the year for long-term or special outdoor education activities, field trips, or specific projects. Families are

asked to notify the office of any changes in address, telephone number, place of work, emergency contact information, or the child's medical needs.

Accidents and Insurance

Every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of students at school and on excursions. Immediate first aid will be given by the school nurse at school and parents/guardians will be notified promptly should an accident occur. If the school is unable to reach the parent/guardian, emergency contact, or doctor, the student will be transported and treated at the nearest medical facility for their well-being and best interest. All students are required by law to have school accident insurance and thus will be registered with the school INS policy. Parents will be given the opportunity to purchase additional coverage for their child beyond the basic plan covered by tuition at the beginning of each school year.

School Cancellations and Dismissals

In case of heavy rains, earthquakes, wildfires, lack of water or electricity, or other unsafe conditions, La Paz Community School may choose to close school, delay the start of the school day, or have an early dismissal based on the following guidelines. In any of these cases, families will be notified via WhatsApp using the Comunicados Chats and Email via OpenApply. In the case of school cancellations or early dismissals, all school events, activities, and extracurriculars will also be canceled on the corresponding day.

Power Outages

The school does not have generators on campus, thus limiting our ability to safely operate in the case of extended power outages.

- If there is a scheduled power outage for more than 2 hours between 8am and 3pm, school will be canceled.

- If there is an unscheduled power outage for more than 2 hours during the school day and no indication of power restoration from the authorities, students will be let out of school according to the early dismissal policy.

Water service interruption

The Cabo Velas campus does not have a back-up water supply, however, it is located at the lower end of a gravity fed water system, thus yielding ample water in the case of a water line break. The Tempisque campus has a back-up water supply that requires electricity. If a line break or water interruption occurs that will interfere with campus water flows the school will take the following measures.

- If there is a scheduled water service interruption for more than 3 hours, then we will cancel classes.
- If there is an unscheduled water service interruption for more than 3 hours, then we will schedule an early dismissal as per the below policy.

Inclement Weather

The weather in the tropical dry rainforest of Guanacaste ranges from extremely windy and/or dry (December to April) to extremely humid and/or wet (May to November). The most common reason for school cancellations or early dismissals is due to heavy rains and flooding. The school reserves the right to suspend classes due to situations deemed unsafe; however, will use the following as a decision making guide. As a private school, La Paz is not obligated to follow MEP school closure requirements, although we do take their recommendations into consideration with our decision making. However, we are obligated to comply with relevant Ministry of Health and/or Government Executive Decree closures.

- If the National Emergency Committee declares a yellow or orange alert in the region where the school is located, classes will continue as regularly scheduled.

- If the National Emergency Committee declares a red alert in the region where the school is located, classes may continue as scheduled, however, the school will carefully consider suspending classes or scheduling an early dismissal depending on school accessibility and teacher/staff availability.
- If a State of Emergency is declared in the region where the school is located, school will be canceled and/or an early dismissal will be scheduled (if students are in classes).

Other circumstances and evacuations

Earthquakes, Brush Fires, and Health Emergencies are the other circumstances that may require an early dismissal or school closure. If the environment in and around the school facilities is deemed unsafe to learn in, the school will engage in an immediate evacuation. Evacuations will involve a safe and orderly departure via bus and/or parent/guardian pick-up.

Early dismissals

Both campuses provide safe haven for students and families during inclement weather and are not prone to flooding. The school will do everything possible to keep students at school. If there is a need to dismiss early as per the examples above, the school will provide families with at least 2 hours notice so that they may plan accordingly. We ask all families to ensure that at least one parent or guardian is in the WhatsApp Comunicados chat that is reserved for urgent, school wide communications.

- Join the Cabo Velas chat via this link:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/ILB4QdliGuiHWYIxSZSMhZ>
- Join the Tempisque chat via this link:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/JXtExDUqexngCMPTtHjGOQ>

Make-up days

If more than 2 total school days are missed in a year due to a combination of early dismissals* and canceled school days, then the school will program make-up days by reducing either trimester or mid-trimester vacations accordingly. *8 lost learning hours from a combination of early dismissals equals one canceled school day.

School Hours

All grades, Kindergarten and up, attend school from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m with the exception of Explore and preschool students who can opt for the 8am-1pm program.

Students should consistently arrive on time. The first greetings and sharings of the day have positive emotional and psychological value that should not be underestimated. Some of the most important communication and instructions are given during the first few minutes of the school day. Students who come late miss this and are at a disadvantage. Students should arrive no earlier than 7:45 a.m. Supervision is not available prior to this time, and La Paz Community School is not liable for student safety during non-school hours. Students not picked up by 3:10 p.m. will remain in the main office until they are picked up.

Transportation

Various methods for student transportation to and from La Paz Community School are possible:

- A.** Students may pay for the private bus system that is contracted by La Paz.
- B.** Students may travel in family or neighborhood car pools using family vehicles.
- C.** Students may ride a bike or walk with the parents' consent.

Please contact the school's receptionist if your child's ordinary dismissal routine is altered.

La Paz is not responsible for any accidents that may occur arriving to or departing from the school campus.

Visitors

All visitors to La Paz Community School campus must sign in at the main office and receive a Visitor Pass.

Student Expediente (File):

Upon leaving the school every parent/guardian has the right to request a certified transcript from the school as well as their child's file. A signed parent/guardian solicitation for a file or transcript must be presented to the central offices at which point the requested files will be delivered in no more than 5 business days. The student file includes all Report Cards, Secondary School Transcripts, curricular modifications, and documentation provided to the school by the student's previous school during the application process.

Board Complaint Procedure

The Board of Directors does not act as an arbitrating body for academic or disciplinary matters. Additional parent/guardian concerns should initially be brought to the attention of the corresponding faculty member(s). If the parent/guardian is still not satisfied with the school response and has exhausted all communication avenues, then the parent/guardian may lodge a formal complaint with the school Board of Directors through the following procedure. Written complaints may be hand delivered to the board at a meeting or sent via email to board@lapazschool.org.

- A. Once a formal complaint is received, the Secretary of the Board shall disseminate such complaint to each Board member for their review and understanding.

- B. At the subsequent scheduled meeting of the Board, the complaint will be agendized for a closed session discussion.
- C. The initial meeting to discuss the complaint will result in an approved Action Plan that is specific to the nature of the complaint.
- D. A subcommittee shall be formed to spearhead the investigation and return their findings and recommendations to the Board.
- E. The Action Plan will include objectives, timeframes, and specific actions that the subcommittee will undertake to issue written findings to the complaint.
- F. The President of the Board shall, within 48 hours of the approved Action Plan, communicate such Action Plan directly to the parents who submitted the complaint.
- G. The established subcommittee will effectively conduct all such interviews, document reviews, and meetings necessary and as outlined in the Action Plan.
- H. The subcommittee shall draft Findings that will be presented to the Board of Directors in closed session at regularly scheduled, or an extraordinary, Board meeting following the completion of the subcommittee's findings.
- I. The Board of Directors shall review, modify if necessary, request the subcommittee to conduct further information gathering, and ultimately approve the findings of the subcommittee.
- J. The Secretary of the Board of Directors shall formalize and send the findings of the Board of Directors to the parents who filed the complaint.
- K. The Board will make every effort to respond in writing to all complaints within 30 days of written receipt of such complaint. If circumstances require more time for review, the Board shall notify the parents, indicating the reason for any delay in written response and an estimated date of when the Board intends to send a formal response. Under no circumstances will the Board delay more than 60 calendar days before issuing a formal response to the parents.

Action Plans shall be developed according to each unique situation that may be presented in a complaint, however the following guides may be used by the Board of Directors in developing such plans.

- A.** Establish a subcommittee comprised of three or more Board Members responsible for the management and completion of the Action Plan and reporting back to the Board of Directors
 - B.** Inform the General Director of the complaint to ensure that all avenues of communication have been exhausted
 - C.** Establish reasonable timeframes and schedules based on the availability of all parties to investigate the complaint
 - D.** Notify those teachers, staff, and/or administrators that are identified in the complaint that the Board of Directors is investigating a parent's complaint that involves them.
 - E.** Conduct in person, closed session meetings with the parents to fully understand the context and issues that comprise their complaint
 - F.** Conduct in person, closed session meetings with every individual that is directly or indirectly associated with the complaint and who has first hand knowledge of the facts surrounding such complaint
 - G.** Request, collect, and review all pertinent documentation from parents and staff that are applicable to the review of the complaint
 - H.** Conduct subcommittee meetings in private to consider and draft findings for review by the board of directors
 - I.** Prepare formal findings and present such findings to the Board for review, discussion, and approval
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