


# Middle School Parent Handbook

Argo Navis / Middle School

*A Resource and Guide for Parents*

Version 4.4



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Argo Navis! We are excited and grateful to have captured your imagination for what is possible for your child. Thank you for taking the time to read and review this policy guidebook. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## WELCOME TO ARGO NAVIS!

### ARGO NAVIS VISION

Our Vision is simple— taking students beyond rote memorization to find their passions and become life-long learners and global leaders.

### ARGO NAVIS MISSION

**“To create a learning environment that prepares students to become future innovators, globally responsible citizens, and mindful individuals.”**

Our aim is to care for the world we live in, from the students we teach to the ways in which we give back to the community. At Argo Navis, we empower students to explore their world while setting examples for environmental sustainability; we embrace the concept that every student is both a teacher and student, and we ensure that each student is provided with stimulating educational opportunities.

### OUR PHILOSOPHY

- Focus on the children and everything else will follow
- Play is messy... so get dirty
- Ask Questions, Seek Answers, Discover and Repeat
- Take Risks
- Our campus IS the city of Los Angeles
- Take the time to breathe... lots of time... in the grass rain or shine
- Eating vegetables can change the world
- Go Barefoot
- Create
- Be Kind, Be Thoughtful, Be Generous, Be Open
- Take care of our planet
- Read Stories, Tell Stories, Listen to Stories

### GOAL

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and creative environment that emphasizes environmental responsibility, social-emotional learning, and project-based global education experiences. We value diversity and actively celebrate individuality. We promise that every child will know they are valued at our school and in the world. We are devoted to implementing age-appropriate programs that are culturally relevant and tackle real-world problems with a commitment to helping our community.

## METHOD

Every student learns differently. Linguistic and logical-mathematical instruction are the most common methods used in schools yet it is only two of eight intelligences that our children may possess. Argo Navis believes every student is unique and intelligent. It is our job to discover how each student learns and create a learning environment that supports every student's learning style. At Argo Navis we are devoted to your child and their success.



We conduct a range of behavioral, emotional, academic, and social assessments three times a year to ensure we are meeting the needs of your child and supporting their individual learning style. We include your child and partner with parents to create an individualized learning plan that guides our work and helps your child reach their full potential.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Our programs are research based and promote the social, emotional and physical development of every student by utilizing culturally and developmentally appropriate methods and practices.
- We provide hands-on learning in an eco-healthy environment because all students are unique with different skills and interests.
- Our school is staffed with experienced teachers in various fields of studies.
- We provide personalized daily feedback to help you understand what activities your child participated in during each school day.
- We encourage students to progress at their own pace according to their individual needs and abilities.
- Teachers are open-minded and become part of your child's daily experience. We facilitate exploration, reflect on "how the world works", and create lessons around students interests and learning objectives.

## PROGRAMS & PARENT POLICIES

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

To provide a warm, nurturing environment that encourages the development of the “whole child.” Argo Navis seeks to provide a physically safe and emotionally secure setting, while simultaneously valuing a philosophy akin to “*As safe as necessary, not as safe as possible.*” This is to say that we adhere to reasonable standards of safety in both our physical and emotional environments yet believe there is tremendous learning value in age-appropriate and calculated risk-taking for our students to explore their physical boundaries and capabilities. Students explore and experiment with a variety of materials and experiences, in and out of nature, in a supportive atmosphere that promotes physical, emotional, intellectual, creative, and social growth. Our staff is responsible for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum for each grade level.

- To offer an environment that encourages students to explore and develop their capabilities and interests at their own individual paces and according to their individual needs.
- To provide an environment that provides the student with the opportunity to learn by doing.
- To encourage social development by providing opportunities for resolving conflicts, solving problems, helping others, recognizing and accepting others, recognizing differences and uniqueness in others, and building self-esteem.
- To encourage emotional development through verbal expressions of thoughts and feelings, experiencing rules and limits, experiencing kindness, justice and empathy, and recognizing and accepting emotions in others. To develop a respect for other individuals.
- To develop responsibility for one’s own actions in self-help, health, safety, and interpersonal areas, and to exercise appropriate independence.

### POLICIES FOR THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Children are chosen from an internal Waiting List which is composed, in part, from parent submissions via the AN website. Families are chosen based upon their availability at the time when slots become available, as well as other criteria based upon the needs of the school.

### PRE-ENROLLMENT INFO FOR PARENTS

We are so excited that you have chosen Argo Navis as your child’s new school! We understand the weight behind this decision you’ve made, and we don’t take that responsibility lightly. We are driven by a passion to provide the greatest education possible using the most progressive, documented, and proven teaching methods

available to us and we work tirelessly to continue to expand our programs and curriculum to be of the greatest service to your child.

As with anything new, there's a lot to take in. Here are a few of the basics to help answer some of the most common initial questions:

### AGES SERVED

- Elementary
  - TK
  - Kindergarten
  - 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Middle School
  - 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### WEBSITE

The Argo Navis web address is: [www.TheArgoSchool.com](http://www.TheArgoSchool.com)

You may visit this location for numerous purposes, including a calendar of daily events, field trips, and holidays, registration forms, Advisory Board updates, and so much more.

### HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

We operate each weekday Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. We are open for business year-round with several "Break" periods throughout the year (*\*see "Holidays" below*)

The official school day **begins at 8:30am and ends at 4:00pm** each weekday. Students arriving after 8:30am are marked as "Tardy" for the day. Students leaving before 4:00pm are marked as "Skipped" for the day. Tutoring time and additional classes are offered from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm daily.

#### After & Before School Programs

For students not fully enrolled, Before and After School Programs are available throughout the year:

- Before School Program: From **8:00am - 8:30am**, Monday thru Friday.
- After School Program: From **1:30pm - 6:00pm**, Monday thru Friday.

### ENROLLMENT CONTRACT

All families are required to complete and sign an Enrollment Contract for the school year, committing to a full school year of enrollment (September through August) or a full enrollment through the end of August commencing from the date of enrollment. This contact commits the family to full tuition due for the entirety of the school year.



## TUITION AND FEES

- **Middle School Tuition.** Tuition is set as an annual amount of \$34,800. Tuition is an annual rate (September through August) that is paid using one of the below schedules selected by parents:
  - A. Paid in full at the beginning of the year and receive a discount of \$800; or
  - B. Paid 60/40 (60% of total tuition paid before the first day of the school year, and 40% of total tuition paid after five months) and receive a discount of \$400; or
  - C. Paid monthly - divided equally into 12 monthly installments, no discount.
- **Before & After School Program Tuition.** For students exclusively attending the Before and After School Program, tuition is scheduled on a month-to-month basis:
  - A. Before & After School Program: \$1,450 monthly
  - B. *\*Tuition for the Before & After School Program for fully enrolled students is included in regular tuition.*

Tuition is not pro-rated for holidays, vacation or sick days, or for any other reason.

**Application Fee (Waiting List).** (\$35) For families wanting to be considered for an available spot at Argo Navis, a non-refundable \$35 Application Fee gains the child a spot on our waiting list for consideration.

**Initial Deposit.** For new families, an initial deposit must be made within the first seven days upon signing the enrollment contract. For Schedules A and B, the initial deposit must be 10% of the full school year annual tuition amount. For Schedule C, the initial deposit is the Security Deposit (see below).

**Security Deposit.** (\$2,900) For families selecting Schedule “C”, a one-time deposit is used to pay for the final month of your child’s enrollment at Argo Navis. The Security Deposit is due before your child’s first day of enrollment.

**Admission Fee.** (\$0) No admission fee.

**Field Trips & Field Studies.** (\$0) Field Trips, Field Studies, and associated transportation costs are included in the price of tuition.

**Extracurricular Activities.** Pricing based on activity. Extracurricular activities are offered occasionally throughout the year and are entirely voluntary.

**Food and Snacks.** (\$0) Food and snacks are included in the price of tuition. \*We kindly ask that parents do not give their children meals or snacks to take with them to the facility (unless required by a physician).

**Tuition Assistance & Multiple Children Discounts.** We offer tuition assistance for families who provide documentation to indicate financial need. Financial Aid

Applicants are required to fill out a “FAST” application form (found on our website). Enrollment or tuition assistance are not guaranteed by filling out a FAST application. There is an annual FAST application fee of \$43 per application.

There is no tuition discount for children who have siblings attending Argo Navis.

## HOLIDAYS

Argo Navis observes most Federal and State holidays. There are occasional “Teacher Development” days throughout the year when the school is also closed. There are three major extended holiday periods each year:

- **Spring Break.** Generally occurring around late March and early April. Typically, a 14 day break period of no school.
- **Winter Break.** Generally occurring from mid December through early January. Typically, a 14 day break period of no school.
- **Summer / Transition Break.** Generally occurring at the end of August. Typically, a 21 day break for Teacher Development and staff break.

School Holiday calendars are distributed to parents each year. Tuition is not pro-rated for months in which there are holiday periods.

## TRANSPORTATION, FIELD TRIPS & FIELD STUDIES

Our students participate in learning experiences across the City of Los Angeles! Weekly field trips and field studies allow for an infinite number of exciting possibilities for discovery and experiential learning, becoming actively engaged in the tapestry of cultural diversity within our massive city we call “home”.

Parents are asked to sign a “Field Trip Permission” form before enrolling. All field trips and field studies are listed on our online Calendar which outlines the dates, times, and locations of each of the planned field trips for each month. Parents may choose not to send their children on individual field trips by contacting AN management in writing at least one week prior to the field trip or event date.

- **Field Trip.** A one-time exploratory adventure which may serve a variety of functions to inspire wonder and creativity while learning about the world in which they live.
- **Field Study.** An on-going series of learning experiences designed to complement active coursework or curriculum objectives.
- **Field Excursions.** Exciting trips across the state, country, and even internationally! Excursions happen once or twice a year and are planned well in advance so that parents have plenty of time to prepare. Families are also welcome to join in on many of the excursions offered. Excursions can last between 1-3 weeks, depending on the location and grade level.

Argo Navis transports students via company vehicles as well as LA public transportation (Metro buses and trains). Argo Navis strictly observes all vehicle safety regulations and practices extensive safety procedures to ensure the safety of our

young passengers. All parents accept that there is inherent risk involved in transporting children upon enrolling their child(ren) at Argo Navis.

*\*Read more about Field Trips and Field Studies in the “City Exploration” section below.*

### CONTACT INFO

The facility direct number is (323) 447-KIDS (5437). For emergencies please contact teachers directly through Brightwheel app. Please do not call to talk with the teachers during school hours unless it is an emergency. All other communication and correspondence can be made directly to the Argo Navis general email address ([info@theargoschool.com](mailto:info@theargoschool.com)) or to the company administrative staff emails, or through our Brightweel smartphone app.

### BRIGHTWHEEL

Argo Navis uses an online private social media application called “Brightwheel” which can be accessed by parents through a smartphone app as well as through the general internet. Brightwheel is used extensively by Argo Navis for multiple purposes:

- **Tuition Payment.** Parents may choose to pay monthly tuition through Brightwheel’s easy-to-use payment system. Payments may be sent electronically by connecting a bank account and transferring money to Argo Navis (no additional fees), or by paying from a credit or debit card (3.25% fee is applied).
- **Status Updates.** Teachers may communicate directly with parents regarding the status of your child throughout the day. If parents have Brightwheel downloaded to their smartphones, alerts will “pop up” relaying the status of your child throughout the day. Status updates include nap times, incidents, meal periods, and many other options.
- **Photos & Videos.** Perhaps the most popular feature among parents, digital photos of your child are sent through Brightwheel each day allowing parents to be actively engaged in the daily activities and learning experiences of your child. All Parents must sign a Photo & Video Release Agreement on behalf of their children before any image can be shared via Brightwheel. This release is mandatory for any child enrolled at Argo Navis.
- **Sign In / Sign Out.** Teachers sign students in and out each day through the Brightwheel app. Parents are asked to send messages each day through Brightwheel if their child is going to be absent or late, or for emergencies and time-sensitive matters.

### PETS & ANIMALS (SPECIAL FRIENDS)

- **Pets.** Throughout the school year, it is likely that we will have a special guest regularly inhabiting the facility as our school “pet”. We intentionally choose animals that are non-aggressive and are not easily spooked from loud noises and the dynamic energy that multiple young bodies can produce. And yet,

we recognize that even though our pets are docile, they are still animals and that bites, scratches, and stings can occasionally happen without warning. We expect that all parents assume this risk when enrolling their child at Argo Navis and that any allergies to animals or insects of any kind is made known to Argo Navis before the child's first day.

- **Animal Shelters and Habitats.** We frequently visit animal shelters and rescues across LA as it provides a powerful opportunity to learn respect and compassion for animals.

## ATTIRE

We ask parents to dress their children in clean, comfortable clothing that is appropriate for the weather of the day. As our philosophy is largely focused on “learning in nature”, we do spend quite a bit of time outdoors, rain or shine. Here are the fine points on preparing your child for his/her daily learning adventure:

- **Learning Is Messy Business.** Our students learn by doing and will often return home with messy clothes. Please send your child in clothes they are able to explore in.
- **Some Like It Hot.** We spend as much time outside and in nature as we can, and sometimes this means days of inclement weather: hot, dry days or wet, cool, and rainy days—we learn the world around us by being in the world!
- **Preparation Is Key.** We ask parents to prepare their children at the beginning of the day by applying 30spf or higher sunblock to their child's exposed skin. We apply another layer in the afternoon when needed. Please also be sure that your child is appropriately dressed for the weather and has “backup” clothing each day.
- **Not the Easy Road.** We hope that parents take a deep breath and a plunge with us. We know this means a little extra washing, and perhaps clothing that wears out a bit quicker. But the benefits, we believe, are worth it by far. But don't take our word for it—ask your child at the end of the day what they discovered...

## SNACKS AND MEALS

### NUTRITION

We are HUGE believers on the impact that nutrition has on our students and their rapidly growing bodies. In an environment as active as our school, nutrition plays a fundamental role in the positive development of expanding young minds. In the US, the common diet has been surrendered to so many processed foods and unnatural, low-nutrient ingredients. Which is why we have chosen not to take the “easy road” by preparing each meal on site from fresh ingredients and mostly organic produce purchased each week and prepared individually each day! Easy? No. Worth it? Absolutely.

- **Vegetarian.** We are a Vegetarian school! We are strong believers in the power and nutrition of plant-based foods, and that by learning to enjoy a Vegetarian diet at an early age not only increases awareness about nutrition but truly helps children to learn to enjoy those veggies (our Brussel Sprouts are almost always the most desired item, if you can believe it). Yet we certainly recognize that many of our families are not Vegetarian, and thus we do not teach Vegetarianism to our children or make any attempt to contradict family philosophies. Our modest focus on food is primarily about health and nutrition.
- **Sugar.** Though we hold a strong focus on the importance of nutrition, we are not a sugar-free school. However, we do remain conscious and steadfast in limiting the amount of sugar and processed foods our children have on a daily and weekly basis.
- **Balance.** Do we place great importance on the power of nutrition? Yes, most certainly. Yet we also recognize the simple joy and beauty in a moment of sharing a cupcake with friends on occasion or enjoying some cake and ice cream on a birthday. For us, as in life, it's about balance and moderation.

### MEALS SERVED

We provide three distinct meal periods throughout the course of the day:

- **Breakfast.** Served between 8:00am - 8:30am. Light and healthy, such as multi-grain cereal, fruit, and almond milk. \*Please arrive before 8:20am if you wish for your child to eat breakfast at school.
- **Lunch:** Served between 11:30am-12:30pm. A powerhouse, homemade meal packed with nutrition and goodness! Lunches are often photographed onto our Brightwheel app for parents to enjoy as well. And since the culinary arts are a part of our curriculum, there is often a good chance that each meal is made, in part, by the students themselves.
- **Afternoon Snack:** Served between 3:00pm-3:30pm.

A child arriving after a meal period is completed will not receive any prior meal for the day, so please try to be on time if your child has not had breakfast or lunch at home.

\*We do make special dietary considerations for children who have documented medical needs regarding nutrition. Parents are required to inform Argo Navis Administration of all food allergies and medical needs prior to enrollment.

### OUTSIDE FOOD

We kindly ask that parents do not bring food to the facility for their child, unless there is a dietary need outlined by a doctor.

For special occasions such as birthdays or holidays, we make a special exception by allowing parents to provide outside snacks at the discretion of Argo Navis Administration. In such instances, we ask parents to kindly consider that we often

have a number of children who have medical considerations with heavily processed foods or highly sweetened treats. Please be sure to consult with the Administration team for guidance.

\*We ask parents not to bring meat products into the school.

## ADMISSIONS

### FORMS

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL FORMS

There are three types of forms that are required at Argo Navis: General, Policy, and Medical forms. All types are required to be filled out completely and turned into our administration before a child begins his/her first day:

##### **Policy Forms**

- Photo and Video Release
- Illness Policy
- School Termination Policy
- Registration

##### **Medical Forms**

- Immunization Records
- Emergency Policy
- Emergency Consent
- Allergies & Medical Information

##### **General Info**

- Parent Info
- Household Info
- Child Info
- Education History
- Additional Family Info
- Emergency Contact Info

All forms can be accessed online from the school website. All forms listed above are required to be completed and digitally signed by parents or guardians in order to be enrolled at Argo Navis.

## HEALTH & MEDICAL

### ILLNESS POLICIES

Our “Illness Policy” form details all the illnesses for which we call parents to pick up their children from school. In general, we ask that a child with a fever is fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Children who show mild symptoms of illness, such as intermittent coughing or a lightly runny nose are not usually sent home. However, teachers maintain full discretion in the decision when a child is not well enough to participate in school.

Every so often, as in any school, there are communicable illnesses that seem to run rampant. We work very diligently with parents to identify and stop the spread of contagious illnesses as quickly as possible.

### IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with California State Law, we maintain that all parents entering their child(ren) must show either:

- Medical vaccination record along with dates for each dosage received; or
- A medical waiver signed by a physician

As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, Personal Belief exemptions are no longer permitted in the State of California as a legitimate cause for refusal of immunizations.

### VACCINE LAWS

For more information regarding vaccine laws in the State of California, please visit the State Legislator website at:

[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160SB277](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB277)

### MEDICAL ASSESSMENT & TB REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with California State law, we are required to collect information regarding your child’s health to include a schedule of vaccines administered.

### MEDICATION POLICY

We do not administer medication unless prescribed by a doctor and also have written authorization from the parent. Over-the-counter medicines will also not be given, except in cases when the parent has given prior written authorization to do so.

Parents are required to inform Argo Navis management regarding all known allergies, to include specific allergies to any type of medication.

Medication of any kind may not be stored at the facility unless previously approved by a physician in writing and in coordination with Argo Navis Administration. Medicine or medication may not be stored in a child's cubby or locker at any time or under any circumstances.

## CLEANLINESS AND SANITATION

We recognize the importance and value in maintaining a clean and healthy environment for our children. Each day, staff members are responsible for cleaning and organizing materials used, and we additionally employ cleaning staff to perform general cleaning of the facility each day.

We teach our children about the importance of general personal cleanliness and hygiene. We use a "green" hand dryer in the bathroom to help prevent excessive paper waste.

## SAFETY

### EMERGENCY POLICY & PROCEDURES

There are numerous kinds of emergencies for which we are trained and prepared. Our main focus in the event of any emergency is ensuring the safety of the children in our care. Communication with our parents, if possible, is of vital importance once children are secure in a safe location.

Here are our standard practices in the event of the following emergencies:

#### FIRE

In the event of a fire at the facility, a teacher immediately activates the audible Fire Alarm. A teacher calmly assembles all children and guides them out of the building following a pre-set fire exit route. Fire Drills are conducted monthly with students and staff to ensure effective and timely evacuation.

#### EARTHQUAKE

In the event of an earthquake, teachers guide students to their Safety Positions, crouching under tables and other stable protective furniture pieces and "hold on", while avoiding windows, fireplaces, and other heavy falling objects. Once the "rolling" has stopped and teachers determine there are no more after-shocks, teachers evaluate each child for injury and applies first aid techniques as necessary. Earthquake drills are held monthly. If the building is unsafe to inhabit, the teachers will escort all children to the nearest neighboring building (ideally Galaxy Car Wash next door) and inform all families of the new location through Brightwheel or any available means of communication.



## INTRUDERS

In the rare event of an aggressive or otherwise unwelcome intruder, staff will immediately call 911 for police assistance.

## COMMUNICATION IN EMERGENCIES

Once children have been accounted for and made as safe as possible, Argo Navis staff will make every reasonable attempt to contact families as quickly as possible. In the event that standard communications are unavailable due to the nature of the emergency, staff will continue to make attempts until communications have been restored.

## ACCIDENTS / INJURIES

On occasion, there are accidents that result in physical injury. We categorize injuries to belong to one of three categories:

- **Mild-to-Moderate Injury.** This is perhaps the most common type of injury, which includes scrapes, small cuts, mild bruises, bumps, etc. These injuries are determined as non-serious and non-life-threatening. Parents are typically contacted once basic medical attention has been administered, and teachers log the event in Brightwheel.
- **Serious Medical Situation.** This is treated as a serious injury which requires immediate medical attention, but is not determined to be life-threatening such as: broken bone, deep cut, concussion, allergic reaction, continuous vomiting, etc. Parents are immediately notified. If parents cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time, staff will call 911 for medical assistance.
- **Life-Threatening Medical Emergency.** In the event of a life-threatening medical emergency, such as: choking, trouble breathing, seizing, severe bleeding, etc., the staff will immediately call 911 for emergency medical assistance. Parents will be contacted *after* the child is made as safe as possible and 911 has been contacted.

## FIRST AID & CPR

All staff are required to be up to date on Pediatric and adult First Aid and CPR techniques. Each year, staff members are re-trained and re-certified to stay current on techniques and practices.

To become certified, teachers must receive training from an instructor certified by the American Red Cross. Classes must be taken in person (not online).

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS / REPORTING SUSPECTED PHYSICAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Our teachers and staff members are obligated by law to report any suspected child abuse to include neglect, physical or sexual abuse, or any indication that a child has been violated in any way.

## RIGHT TO PROTECT CHILDREN

In addition to reporting suspected physical abuse or neglect, we retain the right to protect any child in our care against any perceived threat or scenario in which a child may be endangered. This includes restricting the release of children to parents or guardians who are under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

## PICK UP POLICY & PROCEDURES

Only parents and authorized persons listed in Brightwheel are authorized to pick up children from any facility.

A parent who cannot pick up their child must immediately contact Argo Navis management to arrange authorization of another adult to pick up their child in their stead. Authorization must be in writing (email or text is acceptable, provided it is from the parent's recorded email or phone number). Under no other circumstances will a child be released to any individual who is not authorized by parents in writing, except in the event of a medical or police emergency and only to medical or police personnel.

Parents are required to ensure that their children are picked up and signed out by no later than 6:00pm each day.

## IDENTIFICATION & EMERGENCY INFO

All adults picking up their children must provide a State ID, such as a Drivers License, to validate their identity as an authorized person for pick up. Any individual unable to produce proper identification will not be allowed to pick up any child.

In the event of an emergency, staff will always contact parents through phone and then Brightwheel messages once conditions are safe to do so. If the parents cannot be reached within a reasonable period of time, individuals listed on the "Emergency Contact" list will be notified.

## GENERAL POLICIES

## TECHNOLOGY

We proudly boast the use of technology in our schools, as we exist in a rapidly growing world of technological advancement. Introducing age-appropriate technology to students not only offers comfort and familiarity with common technological devices and ideas, but also allows us to use many of the incredible tools that have been developed over the years to enhance learning in so many ways.

Yet we also set boundaries on the extended use of technology in our facilities, and we never use any piece of technology to personally disengage with any student. We use technology to enhance a learning experience in a powerful and engaging way. Here are a few examples:

- **Tablets.** These tablets by design and by content are used to accelerate learning through imaginative tools and systems designed to make learning more engaging. Even students who struggle with mathematical or reading concepts often overcome mental obstacles in these research-driven exercises and games which teach almost without the student even knowing that they're learning!
- **Learning Games.** "Technology" games are an introduction into the world of technology and computers. Students learn coding and computer logic, robotics and circuitry construction through games and different technological tools. These are a huge hit with our students as it requires a great deal of imagination with so many possibilities.
- **Audio Tools.** For both listening and speaking, we use digital recording devices for students to listen to audio stories and lessons, but also for recording and listening to their own voices while learning languages. A very powerful method for advancing language skills.

And yet, with all this technology, we continue to believe in balance as we incorporate many of the more standard tools and methods which have proven successful in research. We do not use technology exclusively as a teaching tool, but we certainly do not shy away from it either.

## DAYS OF ABSENCE

On days when a child will be absent from school, we ask that parents submit a note before 9:00am through Brightwheel notifying teachers of the absence. A brief description is also helpful (ie: "Staying home sick today.").

If a family is planning a vacation or an extended leave of absence, parents must notify Argo Navis Administration with a 15-day advance notice in writing.

## BEHAVIORAL POLICIES

Argo Navis teachers and parents work together to create consistency at home and school, so every child feels safe and learns healthy ways to express emotions and solve problems.

We believe in:

- Creating a culture that is mindful of teaching and modeling social and emotional learning and skill development.
- An environment that is nurturing, supportive, and inclusive.
- Positive reinforcement: we highlight and praise children when they make good choices, deal with difficult emotions in healthy ways, ask for help, use their words, are kind to peers and teachers. This philosophy provides children with positive attention which raises their self-esteem and confidence.
- Logical consequences: we teach children that if they break something by accident or intentionally the consequence is that they must help to fix it. This teaches children to take responsibility for their actions and allows them to gain pride in helping find positive end results.
- Break Time: when children reach an emotional state where they have trouble calming their bodies we empower them to step away to a calm space and regulate their emotions. Break time is *not* “time out”. Students are given the power to decide how long they need to take a break before they come back and work out the situation that was upsetting. Students are taught different strategies to help them deal with intense feelings such as physical activity, art, kinesthetic play, music, and animal therapy.

**We do not adhere to or believe in:**

- Consequences and/or punishment that shames or belittles a child.
- Corporal punishment which is a violation of a child’s personal rights (CCR, Title 22, Section 101223.2).

## PROVISIONS FOR CONTACTS / CONFERENCES WITH PARENTS

Each school year, parents are asked if they wish to participate in a “Family Directory” which is used by all active families across the school to contact each other for a variety of purposes to include: babysitting, birthday party invites, events, etc.

Several times each year, Argo Navis conducts Parent / Teacher Conferences which is a one-on-one meeting between parents and teachers to review your child’s accomplishments and progress, as well as challenges and plans to address them. Parents and teachers work together on a strategy for each child’s development and Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

## GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL

- 1) Refusing to have a child vaccinated with all required health vaccinations as recommended by the State of California.
- 2) If a child is continuously dangerous to him/herself or his/her peers.
- 3) Parents who display hostility and/or extreme disrespect to other parents, students, or any member of the staff.
- 4) Students with excessive tardiness or unplanned absences.
- 5) Disregard for or refusal to adhere to Argo Navis policies.
- 6) For any reason Argo Navis decides this school is not helping a child reach their potential and find success.

Argo Navis teachers, parents, students, and administrators work very closely with each other to create behavioral teaching and learning environments that are consistent at home and school. Argo Navis values the diversity of every family and respects family's traditions, religions, and beliefs. Through a close partnership parents and teachers work together for each child's success. At least two parent teacher conferences are scheduled each year and communication on a regular basis occurs through one-to-one contact and Brightwheel.

For other than financial reasons, the grounds for dismissal is individually assessed for each student and for each unique circumstance surrounding the decision to dismiss a child.

Regardless of the terms of release / dismissal, we work with parents to provide appropriate solutions for the child and make recommendations to the family for schools and other services which may cater to the child's specific needs.

## CHILD COMMUNICATION

Communication is key to every relationship we have as humans. Argo Navis students learn in an environment where they are considered important and their voice matters. Every child is treated with respect and their feelings, ideas, and opinions are valued.

Argo Navis School values intentional and mindful communication and provides every child with communication classes taught through visual and performing arts. Argo Navis has also partnered with a range of organizations who offer their expertise in supporting training in social and emotional skill development.

## MATERIALS, SUPPLIES, AND WORKBOOKS

Argo Navis Middle School will provide all necessary classroom materials to include books and workbooks for each student enrolled. All materials and supplies are ordered by Argo Navis as needed and cannot be ordered per parent's request. Workbooks and other tools are ordered solely at the discretion of Argo Navis and based upon the need as determined by Argo Navis Administration. Workbooks and other materials are not ordered or delivered based upon any parent's request.

## WATER BOTTLES

All students are required to arrive each day with a reusable, stainless steel water bottle between 12oz - 18oz for drinking water throughout the day. At the end of each school day, students are required to take water bottles home to be cleaned and ready for the next school day. Water bottles which are left unattended at the school for a period of time will be discarded by Argo Navis Administration and without compensation to families.

## PARENT & TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Teachers consistently communicate with parents / guardians each day about the status and events of their child's day. Mostly, this communication is in-person when the parent / guardian picks the child up from school in a brief description of the child's day. Throughout the day, parents may use the Brightwheel app to view photos, status updates, napping schedules, incident reports (minor), and individual notes or comments from Teachers.

Several times a year, we conduct Family / Teacher Conferences for both Parents and Teachers to meet.

We kindly ask Parents to refrain from contacting Teachers directly throughout the school day (unless there is an emergency). Teachers are instructed not to use their cell phones throughout the day, unless using Brightwheel, so as not to be distracted from supervising students.

Parents may reach school administrators at any time by emailing the general school inbox at: [info@theargoschool.com](mailto:info@theargoschool.com) or by leaving a message on the main school phone at 323.447.KIDS (5437).

## CITY EXPLORATION

### FIELD TRIPS/FIELD STUDIES

Students travel to field trips and engage in different field study opportunities multiple times per week. We visit museums, parks, galleries, staged events, government facilities, factories-- anything that provides a stimulating learning experience and provokes wonder and a sense of imagination in this wildly diverse city we call "home". We believe that this kind of experiential learning is vastly powerful and meaningful and is thus instilled as a fundamental core value in our program. Our students are mavericks who experience the world around them. They are truly *Argo Navis*.

Families can follow the field trip and field study schedule from an online (members only) calendar. We recommend families check this schedule daily for the most up to date schedule. On occasion, due to weather changes, transportation, or new

opportunities, trips may be canceled or scheduled in a short period of time. Argo Navis administration does its very best to schedule all trips within a month notice.

## TRANSPORTATION

To make this unique experience possible means transporting our students each week with a great deal of focus on SAFETY. We take this responsibility seriously and plan rigorously to abide by the highest safety standards.

### VEHICLES

#### ○Argo Navis Vans.

- We have four Ford Transit vans for the sole purpose of transporting our kids!
- We maintain a commercial vehicle full coverage insurance policy.

#### ○Car Seats.

- Teachers visibly review each car seat before setting students in them. Car seats are tested by the Teacher by attempting to move the seat from side-to-side, and front-to-back to make sure that the seat is firmly in place.
- We additionally ask parents to test car seats for their students (since they are often more familiar with the seat), but Teachers always test the seats before each ride regardless.
- Belts. Our Child Safety expert explained to us that the "lap belt" is by far the best defense and is capable of restraining up to 225 lbs. The "Child Safety latches" located in the fold of the seat cushion are secondary measures of protection, only capable of restraining a child passenger for up to 65 lbs (including the weight of the car seat). It is not necessary to have both the lap belt and child safety latches fastened to the car seat (225 lbs + 60 lbs), but it also doesn't hurt to have both. At Argo Navis, we will use lap belts for all our car seats and will not accept car seats which do not allow for lap belts.
- Tether. Some car seats have the ability to be anchored from a long strap (tether) extending from the back of the car seat. This strap can extend down the back of the vehicle seat itself to an anchor beneath the vehicle seat. Our Child Safety expert explained that this wasn't a necessary feature, though it does provide some additional stability for the car seat. In many cases, vehicles do not provide a proper anchor. We do attach the tether strap whenever available.
- Car seats from foreign manufacturers can only be accepted if they have a US manufacturer sticker (example below). Argo Navis cannot accept the use of any car seat which does not contain this sticker.
- Booster Seats. If a Booster seat is used, then Booster seats which have a "5-Point Harness" are highly recommended (this is a seat that buckles from both shoulders and both legs, connecting in the

- center). Booster seats will soon be required by law to have a "back" (not just the bottom seat portion) which also allows for the shoulder strap to be passed through a shoulder strap adjuster so that the shoulder strap runs across the child's chest and not the child's neck.
- 5-Point Harness. Booster seats (and perhaps *all* car seats) will soon be required by law to have a 5-Point harness. These types of seats are proven to provide a significant difference in safety.
  - On occasion, we remove car seats from the van for a variety of reasons. Each car seat is reinstalled using the installation methods taught by our Child Safety expert. We welcome and encourage parents to visually and physically test car seats to insure the safety of our kids.
  - Additional child seat guidelines we follow:
    - Shoulder straps should be above or even with child's shoulder
    - Proper tightness of the straps is determined by "pinching" the straps: if you can pinch and hold the strap, it is not sufficiently tight enough
    - Remove strap pads: sliding pads reduce effectiveness
    - The front buckle should be in the center of the child's chest and even with the arm pits
    - The center bottom buckle and strap should be as close to the child's groin as possible without the child sitting on it.

○ **Additional Transport Vehicles.**

- Since our vans only seat 8 and 13 students, we sometimes require an additional vehicle or two to move all the kids. While this is a temporary solution until we acquire additional vehicles, we are intent on maintaining safety in each additional vehicle. Vehicles and drivers for us must:
  - Be owned by an Employee or Officer of Argo Navis
  - Provide us with a copy of a valid vehicle registration
  - Provide us with a copy of a current and valid CA Drivers License
  - Provide us with a copy of a current vehicle insurance policy card
- Vehicle seat belts are checked for proper use and functionality.
- We do not use any vehicle that has apparent excessive wear or damage.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

○ Buses and Trains.

- As in any large metropolis in America, public transportation is a major factor in the lives of so many people. Teaching our kids first-hand about the usefulness and purpose of public transportation is directly in line with our philosophy. We believe in this, yet we are vigilant in maintaining security and safety for our kids at all times while walking down busy streets, waiting at bus stops, waiting at train stations, entering and exiting buses and trains, and while riding inside buses and trains.



- On these occasions, we typically have one adult for every eight students. Kids are VERY eager to learn and understand how the public transportation system works and take much pride in learning that passengers "must hold on to the bars if standing" or "to brace yourself when the train begins moving".
- On nearly every occasion, other passengers on the buses and trains are delighted by seeing the students climb onboard and go out of their way to be very accommodating by giving up their seats, or by merely asking them about their day. It's a great joy to watch solemn faces of strangers open up with expressions of love and kindness at the sight of our kids.
- In public, we utilize the buddy system and maintain a philosophy that teachers and students must remain aware and vigilant about their surroundings. We practice traveling safety procedures in school on a regular basis.

## OTHER POLICIES

### COURTESY & PROFESSIONALISM

We expect that all parents speak and interact with our staff in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner. Likewise, we expect all staff to treat all parents with the same level of courtesy and respect. We expect all parents to work with other adults to creatively and constructively resolve any conflicts which may arise.

### FAMILY VACATIONS AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE

We are a year-round school, and one of the many benefits is that families can plan and take vacations throughout the year! Gone are the days when families were limited to planning vacations in the summer and winter break season.

Parents who are planning extended time away are expected to communicate their plans to Argo Navis Administration 15 days prior to the first missed day.

Please keep in mind that regardless of the length of time of your vacation or leave of absence, tuition payments are not pro-rated for time away.

### TARDINESS AND EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Though we highly encourage family vacations and extended family time, we also ask that students participating in our school program are active participants throughout the year, taking full advantage of the benefits of all our wonderful programs.

Students who miss an unplanned and excessive number of days throughout the year may be subject to review by Argo Navis Administration and may ultimately be dismissed from the school. Students who arrive to school consistently and excessively late (after 8:30am) or leaving school consistently and excessively early (before 4:00pm) may be subject to review by Argo Navis Administration and may ultimately be dismissed from the school.

## LATE PICK UPS

It is very important for our staff to be relieved from their duties by the end of the work day, and timely arrival by parents ensures that staff are enabled to rest properly at the end of the day.

Parents are required to pick up (or provide arrangements to pick up) their child(ren) from the school facility by no later than 6:00pm each school day. Parents who may be late should immediately contact the school via Brightwheel to inform teachers.

For pick ups that occur after 6:00pm, Late Fees will apply incrementally and may additionally include increased restrictions on pick up times:

- 1-2 late occurrences in a single trimester:
  - \$1.00 per minute charged after 6:00pm
- 3-4 late occurrences in a single trimester:
  - Pick Up time changed to 5:30pm for the duration of the school year
  - \$1.00 per minute charged after Pick Up time
- 4-5 late occurrences in a single trimester:
  - Pick Up time changed to 5:00pm for the duration of the school year
  - \$5.00 per minute charged after Pick Up time
- More than 5 late occurrences in a single trimester:
  - Social Services is contacted
  - Additional disciplinary actions may also apply

*\*See “Vanshare” for pick up policies for students riding in Vanshare vehicles.*

## VANSHARE

Argo Navis may supply transportation for some families who are not geographically close to the McConnell Ave facility.

There are presently three Vanshare vehicles in use by Argo that transport students to / from the Mid City area to Playa Vista and back to Mid City at the end of the school day. Parents participating in the Vanshare program are required to meet with their assigned Vanshare vehicle each morning at the designated time and location, and are required to meet at the assigned time and location at the end of the day for pick up.

All Vanshares leave at precisely their designated times each morning, and there are no exceptions (other than emergencies). Parents may not request vans to be stopped en route for any reason, other than emergencies. For the return at the end of the school day, parents are required to meet at the designated location and time frame given to them for their specific vehicle and schedule. Parents who are late to pick up their children from the designated Vanshare time and location will follow the same Late Fee schedule as outlined above (“Late Pick Ups”).

Vansharing by Argo is not guaranteed and is based upon the availability of the vehicles on a set monthly basis.

## NO GUARANTEE OF PLACEMENT

All classrooms are equal in regard to programs and curriculum, and we work hard to create a balanced learning environment in each class. All classes are “mixed-age” classes, meaning that in each class there are students in at least two different grade levels. Research has shown that mixed-age classes are highly beneficial for both younger and older students as younger students “look up” to older students for guidance, and older students enjoy sharing what they have learned by helping younger students.

The placement of each child into a class is determined solely at the discretion of Argo Navis Administration based upon the academic and social-emotional assessment of every child. While we take family suggestions regarding class placement into consideration final placement is decided by Argo Navis Administration.

## FIELD TRIP MEET-UPS AND FIELD TRIP PICKUPS

Students who *arrive to school after* a scheduled field trip departure will not be allowed to participate in the field trip event on the day of the scheduled trip. Please do not attempt to have the vans turned around or arrange to meet the class at the destination location.

We also do not allow parents to make arrangements to pick up their students while on a field trip, except in cases of emergencies. Please do not attempt to coordinate with teachers on a field trip to pick up your child.

Parents who choose not to participate in any given field trip may do so by contacting Argo Navis Administration within at least one week before the departure date. Children not participating in a field trip or who arrive after a field trip departure are not allowed to be dropped off at any school facility for the duration of the field trip.

## UNWANTED PROGRAMS

On occasion, a parent may wish for their child not to participate in a specific program, field trip, or event for a variety of personal reasons. While we respect all parents’ rights to participate in any belief system and set of personal values, as a progressive institution we actively pursue and work hard to maintain a strong advocacy for tolerance, respect, and dignity of all human beings from all walks of life. We consistently engage in students’ programs which reflect those values.

It is the responsibility of all parents of Argo Navis to be consistently aware of all programs, field trips, and events to which their children may participate each day by accessing our online school calendar every day for a description of upcoming events. We may also send newsletters, informational brochures, and posted notices for unique events, but make no commitment to ensure every parent is aware of all programs and events beyond the online school calendar.

Parents may choose to have their child exempt from any event or program. Parents wishing for their child not to participate in any event or program must submit the

request in writing to the Argo Navis Administration with a three-day advance notice before the event or program date.

## ARGO NAVIS ADVISORY BOARD

Argo Navis works with an appointed Advisory Board consisting of Argo Navis parents as well as other members of the community. The Advisory Board meets monthly, actively and directly supporting the school and Administration in fundraising, implementing creative and innovative concepts for growing the school, resolving school-wide issues including the elevation of individual parent or family concerns or confrontations, addressing school-wide concerns, connecting with the Argo Navis community, and providing a voice and perspective from the viewpoint of families and community members invested in the school.

### PURPOSE OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

- To support the mission of the school;
- To grow and support Argo Navis School to educate students from all walks of life and maintain the unity of the community of families;
- To both initiate and support Argo Navis' fundraising efforts;
- To be involved, and have a voice, in our kids' education;
- To be part of creating a community in a large city like Los Angeles, which is special and rare;
- To support each other and the school, and to be involved in the school in a direct way

### MEMBERSHIP

Any person can be eligible to join the Advisory Board who meets the following conditions:

- The Board shall reflect the diversity of Argo Navis as a whole;
- Argo Navis teachers cannot be Board Members, but may be invited to individual sessions / meetings as appropriate;
- All Argo Navis parents are eligible to join the Board, once their child has been enrolled at Argo Navis for at least one year;
- Any individual outside Argo Navis may also be eligible to join the Board upon invite and approval;
- The Advisory Board will be limited to 15 members;
- Board Members must be at least 18 years of age;
- Any Member of Leadership or a current member may propose a new Member at a Board Meeting;
- Current Board will vote on a new Member. If the proposed Member receives 66% of the vote, she/he will be inducted at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting

Feel free to contact the Advisory Board with any ideas you have!

[AdvisoryBoard@theargoschool.com](mailto:AdvisoryBoard@theargoschool.com)

## COVID-19

Argo Navis Covid-19 policies work in conjunction with the policies as set by the Los Angeles Department of Public Health. As data is obtained, the policies may be updated. Argo Navis administration works to be consistently updated with current practices and policies outlined by the DPH and will consistently inform the community with applicable policies as situations may arise.

## APPENDIX I

### IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

#### Students Admitted at TK/K-12 Need:

- **Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap, or Td) — 5 doses**  
(4 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday. 3 doses OK if one was given on or after 7th birthday.)  
For 7th-12th graders, at least 1 dose of pertussis-containing vaccine is required on or after 7th birthday.
- **Polio (OPV or IPV) — 4 doses**  
(3 doses OK if one was given on or after 4th birthday)
- **Hepatitis B — 3 doses**  
(not required for 7th grade entry)
- **Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) — 2 doses**  
(Both given on or after 1st birthday)
- **Varicella (Chickenpox) — 2 doses**

These immunization requirements also apply to students entering transitional kindergarten.

California schools are required to check immunization records for all new student admissions at TK/Kindergarten through 12th grade and all students advancing to 7th grade before entry. Parents must show their child's Immunization Record as proof of immunization.

## BRIGHTWHEEL DESIGNATIONS

| Contact                                  | Parent | Family    | Approved Pickup | Emergency Contact |
|--|--------|-----------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Able to create an account                | ✓      | ✓         | ✓               | ✗                 |
| Able to see child's feed                 | ✓      | ✓         | ✗               | ✗                 |
| Able to see child's profile              | ✓      | ✗         | ✗               | ✗                 |
| Access to billing, invoices/payment info | ✓      | ✗         | ✗               | ✗                 |
| Can send and receive messages            | ✓      | Send only | ✗               | ✗                 |
| Has Check-in/out Permissions             | ✓      | ✓         | ✓               | ✗                 |

## CAR SEAT MANUFACTURER STICKER

Examples of car seat stickers:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>USA Model No.: JD15-XXXxxx</b><br><b>Korea Model No.: JK15-XXXxxx</b>   | <b>EU Model No.: JE17-XXXxxx</b>  |
| This Travel Vest has been tested to all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. Approved for use in motor vehicles.   | This Travel Vest has been tested to relevant European Safety Standards for use in Motor Vehicles. Travel Vest <b>MUST</b> be used with RideSafer® Booster Seat Model No. <b>GE17010</b> . |
| <b>Model Name:</b> RideSafer® Travel Vest<br><b>Manufactured In:</b> (Print Year/Month here) (YYYY/MM)<br><b>Do not use after 7 years from the "Manufactured In" date printed</b>  | <b>Factory Code:</b> ST502  |
| <b>Manufactured By:</b><br>Safe Traffic System, Inc.<br>10201 Pacific Avenue<br>Franklin Park, IL 60131 USA  | <b>Designed And Engineered In The USA</b><br>Patent No. 6,902,193 B2<br>Other Patents Pending<br>Made In Vietnam  |
| <b>This restraint is NOT approved for Use in Aircraft.</b><br>Products can be recalled for safety reasons. You must register this Travel Vest to be reached in a recall. Send your name, address and the vest's model number and manufacturing date to Safe Traffic System Inc., 10201 Pacific Avenue, Franklin Park, IL 60131 USA, register on-line at <a href="http://www.safetrafficsystem.com">www.safetrafficsystem.com</a> or <a href="http://www.saferider.net">www.saferider.net</a> or call 1-847-233-0365. For recall information, log onto <a href="http://www.safetrafficsystem.com">www.safetrafficsystem.com</a> or <a href="http://www.saferider.net">www.saferider.net</a> . |   |
| <b>Cleaning Instructions: Refer to the instruction manual for more information.</b>  |   |
| <b>Vest:</b><br> Lightly surface wash with mild soap and water.   |  <b>DO NOT</b> tumble dry. Air dry.  |
| <b>Buckle:</b><br>Wipe clean with wet cloth only. <b>DO NOT</b> lubricate.   |   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>MODEL NAME: KEYFIT 30</b> MCODE:10840<br><b>MODEL NO. 00 079021 430 070</b><br><b>SERIAL NO. 11 03 17 0419</b><br><b>MANUFACTURED IN: MAR 2011</b><br><b>DO NOT USE AFTER: MAR 2017</b><br><b>ARTSANA USA, INC.LANCASTER,PA 17601</b> | US Patent # 7597396<br>Made in CHINA<br>20071-02 |
|--|--|