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Admissions Conference Form

Before attending Sunset Sudbury School’s Admissions Conference, please go through the following materials at home with your child. We ask this for the following reasons:

- Parents and children will be very clear on Sunset Sudbury School’s philosophy and operation and will be more sure of their decision to enroll.
- Parents and children can go through the material over a time period that works for them rather than being overwhelmed by a flood of new information all in one session.
- More time can be focused on answering questions.

It is best if both parents (or legal guardians) go through this material and also attend the Admissions Conference together. In the event that any interview needs to be repeated for the benefit of a second parent, an additional \$50 fee will be charged.

Please be sure to print and bring these forms with you to your Admissions Conference!

Write any questions you have in the spaces provided.

Sunset Sudbury School’s philosophy and operation are based on the following:

EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM

- Students Pursue:
 - What they want
 - When they want
 - With whom they want
 - For as long as they want
 - To the depths of their interest
 - In the way that best suits them
 - As long as the chosen activities are respectful, responsible, and reasonable
- Sunset Sudbury School does not follow any prescribed curriculum.
- Sunset Sudbury School does not provide any form of assessment unless it is requested by a student.

Questions _____

ADJUSTMENT PERIOD and the VALUE of BOREDOM

- Because Sunset Sudbury School is different from traditional schools, some students go through an adjustment period when they first come to Sunset Sudbury School.
- Students may experience short or extended periods of boredom.
- At Sunset Sudbury School, we celebrate boredom because it forces students to look within and determine who they really are, what truly interests them, and what they want to do with their time and their lives.
- Sunset Sudbury School does not make value judgments concerning how students choose to spend their time.

Questions _____

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Students aged 10 and above are required to be in attendance at least 5 hours a day on all days that school is in session. Students aged 7 to 9 are required to be in attendance at least 5 hours a day for at least 4 days per week, and students aged 4 to 6 are required to be in attendance at least 5 hours a days for at least 3 days per week.
- Students may request an exception to this at School Meeting (e.g. apprenticeships, off-campus study, travel).
- If a student’s lack of participation in the school community becomes an issue, it will be referred to School Meeting for resolution.
- Contact the school by phone or email no later than 11am if you are not going to be in attendance on that day.

Questions _____

SCHOOL MEETING

- School Meeting is held every week.
- It is run using Parliamentary Procedure based on “The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure” by Alice Sturgis.
- All students and staff in attendance at the meeting have one vote.
- Students learn to make motions, debate issues, and vote.
- An agenda is posted prior to the meeting – students and staff are free to list any item they wish to bring up with the School community.
- Attendance is optional; students may come if they wish but don’t have to. There is no vote by proxy, meaning students must be present in order for their vote to count.
- Although each person has an equal vote, this does not guarantee that an individual will always get what s/he wants, as the majority rules.

Questions _____

LAW BOOK/RULES

- The School Law book consists of rules created by the School Meeting.
- Transgressions of rules are referred to the Judicial Committee for resolution.

Questions _____

JUDICIAL COMMITTEE (JC)

JC Basics:

- JC consists of the entire school body, students and staff.
- JC meetings are held as needed.
- Every student enrolling at Sunset Sudbury School is expected, and must be willing, to serve on the JC.
- A JC Clerk is elected for a term specified by School Meeting.
- The JC Clerk determines when meetings need to be held and the time and date of meetings.

JC Process:

- A student or staff writes a JC complaint because s/he feels someone has broken a school rule.
- At the JC meeting, the person who wrote the report and the person written up tell their sides of the story. The JC clarifies exactly what happened to the satisfaction of both parties.
- If JC votes to charge, the person written up is asked to plead guilty, no contest, or not guilty.
- If the person pleads guilty or no contest, s/he is invited to determine his/her sentence. If s/he doesn't know what to suggest, JC will discuss various other sentences.
- If the person pleads not guilty, the case goes to trial.
- A sentence must be passed by a majority vote of the JC.
- It is a student's responsibility to fulfill their agreed upon sentence.

Questions _____

CLERKSHIP AND OFFICER POSITIONS

- Many tasks have to be performed to keep the School running smoothly.
- Some jobs can be done only by Staff members; all other positions can be taken by willing students.
- Students and staff are nominated to positions by School Meeting. All positions are then voted upon and held for a duration defined by School Meeting.

Questions _____

CHORES

- All Sunset Sudbury School, students and staff must sign a contract taking ownership of a particular area or chore in the school, which rotates on a monthly basis.
- Newly enrolling students must be willing to abide by the terms of this contract.
- Everyone must make sure his/her chore is completed each day.
- Chores and requirements for completion are defined by School Meeting.

Questions _____

CORPORATIONS and CERTIFICATION

- Corporations are groups that take responsibility for the materials and equipment that support particular student interests. They are formed by students as the need arises.
- Examples of Corporations are: Computer Corporation, Art Corporation, etc.
- Students create Corporation guidelines and determine certification procedures.
- Students present their Corporation to School Meeting and ask to have it approved.
- Once approved, Corporation members vote on a Director who is responsible for certifying the students who wish to use the Corporation's room and equipment.
- Students new to the school are responsible to find out from Directors how to become certified when they want to use materials belonging to a Corporation.
- It is the job of the corporation to make materials available for students.

Questions _____

ROLE of STAFF

- Along with direct involvement with students, the Staff at Sunset Sudbury School have many tasks which include the work of keeping the School going: helping to clean it, public relations, meeting with parents, doing administrative work, etc. When staff are not needed by students, they focus on making sure all other aspects of the school's operations are looked after.
- Staff's primary role is to practice non-interference with students. Staff interact with students, talk to them, play with them and care about them, but primarily staff practice "availability without continuous presence", listening and responding to students' needs as they arise, but otherwise leaving students to find and create their own way.
- At Sunset Sudbury School, staff members are not responsible for the constant and direct supervision of students although they will intervene immediately where safety or legality is an issue.
- Sunset Sudbury School students must be capable of being responsible for themselves, and whether under the direct supervision of adults or not, students are expected to be responsible for themselves and to look out for each other.

Questions _____

STAFF ELECTIONS

- Every Spring, all current and aspiring staff members' names go on a secret ballot and students and staff vote to determine which staff members' contracts will be renewed for the following year.
- Staff are elected based on their usefulness to the students, how well they fit within the School's philosophy, and how well they help to manage the school's affairs.
- Staff are elected by students because only the students of Sunset Sudbury School can determine who best serves them.

Questions _____

VOLUNTEERS, MENTORS, and APPRENTICESHIPS

- When students express an interest in subjects outside the staff's scope of expertise, staff are available to help students find the resources they need to pursue their interests.
- Volunteers may be brought in to work with students, or students may connect with a mentor via phone, e-mail, etc.
- Students may also want to work off-site with a person who specializes in their area of interest; in this case, where possible, an apprenticeship will be arranged with the help of staff.

Questions _____

ROLE of PARENTS

- At Sunset Sudbury School, it is essential that we have parent support. This means we need parents to support the school philosophy.
- This includes understanding the freedom the school gives your child(ren) to make mistakes and bad decisions, and the value of learning from them.
- It is normal for parents to go through times of uncertainty. During these times, we encourage parents to connect with other parents, talk with staff, or participate in a parent support group.
- Students have the opportunity to be present if staff are speaking with their parents about them.
- Conferences may be requested by students, staff, or parents and may be scheduled at any time during the year. Students are required to be present at these meetings.

Parent visitations:

- Parents wishing to spend “non-service related” time at the school (i.e. to join a planned activity or observe for a few hours) are asked to have their visit approved by the School Meeting.
- When dropping off and picking up their child(ren), parents are welcome to come into the school and spend time with their children, talk with other children, and/or talk with staff.
- Parents wishing to be more involved with the school are invited to go through the Volunteer process or have their names added to the mentor database.

The Assembly:

- The Assembly is the name given to Sunset Sudbury School’s student, staff, and parent group and other interested, elected members of the community.
- The Assembly decides broad policies for Sunset Sudbury School, and advises School Meeting when asked.
- The Assembly meets bi-annually and as need arises.
- The Assembly is also the group involved in the Sunset Sudbury School Diploma procedure.
- The Assembly approves the annual budget.

Questions _____

DIPLOMA PROCEDURE

- At Sunset Sudbury School, students graduate when they decide they’ve gotten all they can from the school and are ready to pursue their interests in the greater community.
- Students may choose to go through the Sunset Sudbury School Diploma procedure; it is fully optional and, at this time, **the diploma is not recognized by the State of Florida.** (Note: The school does not provide any transcripts, so academic information may not be transferable to another school.)
- Students write a thesis in which they show how they are responsible people, and they detail what they plan to do when they leave the school.
- The draft is reviewed by the Thesis Committee (interested students and staff) and then a final copy is written.
- A copy of the thesis is mailed to all Assembly members.
- The student sets a thesis defense evening; all interested students, staff, and parents are welcome to attend.
- Attending students, staff, and parents ask questions of the diploma candidate. The candidate must “defend” his/her thesis.
- At the end of the evening, all people present vote on whether or not they feel the candidate has demonstrated that they are ready to leave the school and assume the responsibility of a member of the larger community.
- Sunset Sudbury School embraces many paths and definitions of success and happiness.

Questions _____

The above policies and practices are non-negotiable unless changed by the school meeting. Do not sign until completion of conference.

I have read and understand the above information about Sunset Sudbury School.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(applicant)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(parent/legal guardian)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(parent/legal guardian)