

# LA PAZ COMMUNITY SCHOOL

## Student/Family Handbook



## 2011-2012

Educating the culturally diverse youth of Guanacaste, Costa Rica through experiential learning and enrichment that integrates the local community and environment, while preparing students to become thoughtful, contributing citizens in the global community.

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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, admissions policies, financial aid programs, or any other school administered programs.

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## Introduction

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to educate the culturally diverse youth of Guanacaste through experiential learning and enrichment that integrates the local community and environment, while preparing students to become thoughtful, contributing citizens in the global community.

### 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.

### History/Rationale

The past 10 years have seen enormous development in the Guanacaste region of Costa Rica, many times at the expense of the local culture and ecology. Community members have expressed concern about the disconnection between Costa Ricans and foreign residents, and its impact on the social, political, and ecological structure of the region. It is with these concerns that La Paz Community School was created. Focusing on high academic expectations while emphasizing the importance of bilingual education, La Paz Community School integrates the children of local families into the school community at a young age. With a dedicated group of teachers, students, parents, and community members, La Paz Community School acts as a model for the multinational Guanacaste region. The cooperative school works with the surrounding communities to proactively create strategies that encourage sustainable development and conservation. Together, the knowledge of the past, vision of the future, and awareness of the present foster a responsible community of life-long learners.

### School Characteristics

- Non-Profit
- Private
- Bilingual
- Pre-school-12
- Cooperative
- Co-educational

### Elementary/Primary

- 130-140 students grades Pre-school-6

- Certified teachers
- Integrated Dual Language program with native language teachers
- Curriculum enrichment through service learning, physical education, field studies, art, drama

#### Secondary

- 50-60 students grades 7-11
- Certified teachers
- Integrated Dual Language program with native language teachers
- Curriculum enrichment through service learning, physical education, field studies, apprenticeships, journalism, Spanish, the arts, drama

#### Values

La Paz Community School focuses on the core values below in order to develop life long learners who grow to appreciate the dynamic relationship between self, family, community and world:

#### The Peace Practices

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

- Develop the self into a peaceful, lifelong learner by improving physical and mental well being through critical thought and extension of comfortable limits.
- Cultivate peace amongst family and community by disseminating and sharing love and compassion.
- Create peace within the community by preserving the environment and respecting the delicate balance between local and foreign cultures.
- Spread peace throughout the world by effectively communicating thoughts and ideas as well as actively listening to all perspectives.

#### Accreditation

La Paz Community School is accredited through the Costa Rican Ministry of Education for Cycles I, II, III, and Educacion Diversificada; Resolution Number C.P. 003-2008-MEP.

M.Sc. Minor Villalobos Rodriguez  
 Ministry Director of Private Schools  
 Dr. Leonardo Garnier Romolo  
 Ministry Director of Public Education

#### Academic Programs

La Paz Community School's core curriculum, based on North American and Costa Rican standards and benchmarks, will be supplemented by the following philosophies and programs.

#### Academic Calendar

La Paz Community School operates on a single track modified year round calendar. Much research has been conducted regarding the importance of minimizing extended vacations to improve student performance and retention of information, including practice in both English and Spanish.

#### Year Round Projects and Programs

Recycling, Compost – care, maintenance, and promotion of the La Paz community recycling and compost programs, including collecting community recycling

La Paz Garden – planting, monitoring, and caring for the La Paz flower, herb and vegetable garden

Community Meeting – daily morning meetings attended by most or all of the students/teachers and open to the public; provides a forum for: making announcements; recognizing students, teachers and community members; sharing individual and class work/projects; reflecting; public speaking; building community

Students Sponsoring Students – a student centered club focusing on raising scholarship money for La Paz scholarship students

Bandera Azul Ecological Program – an environmental club that focuses on environmental awareness in daily life at La Paz while working with the Costa Rican government to achieve “Blue Flag” status  
Volunteer Homestay Program – a La Paz volunteer program that connects classroom/office volunteers with home stay opportunities in our local community  
Club Blue – A program dedicated to encouraging students to enjoy and respect the ocean as one of nature’s most important resources and playgrounds.

### Dual Language Program

Our dual language program integrates Spanish and English in a meaningful, authentic way that supplements and correlates with the classroom curriculum. La Paz follows a dual language model entitled “90; 10”. This model begins instruction in the local language (in this case Spanish) at 30% and the non-local language (in this case English) at 70% starting in Kinergarten. Each academic year, the Spanish instruction increases and the English instruction decreases: 65% English, 35% Spanish; 60% English, 40% Spanish; and so on until students are immersed in a dual language program (55% English; 45% Spanish) by 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The students have ongoing opportunities for natural language usage and expression, in addition to daily formal Spanish instruction time. Pre-Kinder and Kinder focus on more conversational and play-based integration while the older grades incorporate a more thematic approach based on language arts/social studies curricula. Spanish and English teachers collaborate together to plan academic content by using essential questions.

Spanish is integrated through our Specials program as well. When La Paz teachers or community members are leading Specials activities, those who can will lead the sessions in Spanish. Spanish is also integrated through our community outreach and service learning programs due to the necessity of Spanish when interacting with the local community.

Within each grade level, those students who are native speakers in both English and Spanish become more natural peer teachers through play, conversation, projects, and other activities. Through curriculum that promotes academic instruction in English and Spanish, students receive a bilingual and bi-literate education. This also develops cross-cultural understanding, and provides a variety of opportunities for positive interactions among families. Sharing cultural heritages cultivates friendship and respect among the diverse ethnic and linguistic groups represented in the school, and therefore local, community.

### Service Learning

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. Service learning also teaches 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. According to experiential education philosopher, John Dewey, the mind is social, not individual, and thus learning comes from social activities. Dewey also believes that students who physically do things – who engage in activities related to school subjects – learn more efficiently, more effectively, and remember what they have learned much longer than students who don’t. This allows students to apply what they’re learning in the classroom environment to authentic experiences. Service learning includes classroom generated ideas as well as individual service projects that include; identifying the needs and objectives, as well as developing a time-line, method and evaluation to address the issues at hand.

### Place-Based Education

“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

Place-based education 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)

## Assessment

Our assessment focuses on process as well as product. We use assessment portfolios with samples of student work, student and group reflection, and student self-assessment in addition to teacher, and sometimes peer, feedback. Kindergarten-2nd grade assessment is primarily narrative, and 3rd –12th grades have numerical evaluation in addition to narrative assessment. Across grade levels, student work and social development is assessed with a grading rubric from zero to four (0: No Evidence, 1: Emerging, 2: Developing, 3: Proficient, 4: Exemplary).

### 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 demonstrates mastery of the topic, as well as careful, thoughtful, and thorough 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 a somewhat appropriate and accurate manner, and all or almost 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 work, or the student has missed multiple days of school resulting in incomplete assignments.

## Specials Program

The La Paz Specials program truly relies on volunteers and community members to create an after school culture at La Paz. This is one ideal avenue for parents, teachers, and other community members to share their talents and passions with our students. For example; a volunteer could sign up to teach yoga to 10-12 year olds for an hour each week over the duration of one trimester (about 3 months). Another community member could come in for a special mural project that would only last one week. This is flexible, based on the volunteer's needs and schedule. Parents in the La Paz community are strongly encouraged to share their skills and experiences with the students; participation in the Specials program will aid in fulfilling the 18 hours per year cooperative donation requirement. (See page 10 for more details.)

Some possible activity ideas include: yoga, sports, drama/theater, music (singing and instruments), arts (painting/drawing/collage/mural/photography), pilates, dance, gymnastics, science experiments, crafts,

snorkeling, creative writing, journalism, technology, keyboarding/typing, storytelling, language study, cooking, photography, graphic art design, nature studies, rock climbing, sewing, etc.

## Areas of Study

### Language Arts/Lectura y Escritura

The study of literature in both English and Spanish recognizes the basic skills of reading, writing, and speaking which are essential to both continuing education and the development of important communication skills. As the student's mind matures, profound analysis and complex thinking skills will be incorporated. Spelling, grammar, comprehension, and word processing skills are developed through both traditional means and during project-based learning. Journal-keeping and the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing (which focus on evaluating a student through ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions) provide a way to develop writing skills while also fostering self-reflection and creativity.

Reading and writing instruction is given in both English and Spanish beginning in Pre-K. Learning to read and write primarily in one language first avoids phonetic confusion and focuses the acquisition of comprehension skills. As the child moves through the grades, Spanish is progressively infused allowing the transfer of his/her knowledge base from one language to the other. The ultimate goal: for all students to become bilingual and bi-literate with an emphasis on cultural understanding.

### Mathematics

Our experiential and integrated learning philosophy encourages teaching math using real-world situations and applications, such as: gardening and composting activities; sailing; science experiments; social statistics. Emphasis is placed on a strong foundation and skilled execution of arithmetic, logic, and analytical thinking skills.

### Social Studies/Estudios Sociales

In-depth social studies content is taught primarily in Spanish starting in Kindergarten, focusing on Guanacastecan and Costa Rican history and culture in the younger grades and expanding that focus to Latin American and World History as the students progress through the Social Studies program. As students explore the complicated issues that face all cultures, emphasis is placed on problem-solving skills, as well as knowledge of world and local geography, world and local history, culture, and economics. Multi-culturalism and social responsibility are also explored, and an emphasis is placed on local culture.

### Sciences

Students explore the natural world through physical, life, and earth sciences. Grade appropriate field research, laboratory experiments, careful observation, data collection and analysis help students learn about the dynamic geology, flora, fauna, and environmental resources of the unique Guanacaste Ecosystem and beyond.

### Visual and Performing Arts

Students are given opportunities to express themselves through music, drama, dance and visual arts in an integrated, thematic learning environment. Visual and Performing Arts are employed as vital tools for exploration of the natural world and the creativity of each individual.

### Technology

At La Paz Community School students utilize technology as a research tool for inquiry based projects, and interactive learning. Older students may also be required to submit word-processed essays and other assignments involving a variety of templates and skills. Keyboarding skills will be practiced in the upper grades. Media Literacy and "netiquette" is also integrated into the technology program.

### Health & Life Skills

Physical health is encouraged through daily outdoor exploration. In addition, students receive formal P.E. instruction 3-5 times per week. Each student's emotional, social, and physical well-being is promoted in the community-oriented context of the school. Some of these important life skills include self-management, healthy communication, conflict resolution, leadership styles, teamwork, healthy lifestyles and community involvement.

### Homework

Homework is introduced in the early grades to reinforce or extend skills and learning practiced at school. As students advance in grade level, homework becomes more rigorous. Students are expected to complete homework when it is assigned. A quiet place to study without interruptions and with encouragement when needed is the best help parents can provide. Homework loads may be adjusted to meet individual and family needs. Assignments are designed to promote self-discipline, practice/reinforce classroom work, develop good study habits, and extend learning opportunities to the family.

### Parent, Student, and Teacher Roles and Expectations

In support of La Paz Community School's community culture, please read and discuss with your family the Student/Parent Roles & Expectations listed below. All La Paz Community School students and parents must review and sign the parent/student contract at the end of the handbook and return before the first day of school.

### Cooperative Program

Each family will contribute 18 hours per year (6 hours per trimester) of volunteer time. Family donation time can be categorized in the following ways:

- Office/Logistical Support: this may include answering phones, making community connections, fundraising, organizing business logistics, translating, etc.
- Transportation/Errands: organizing/attending field trips, running errands for materials and/or supplies, etc.
- Classroom Support: in classroom assistance, project help, one-on-one support with students, cleaning/organizing classrooms, etc.
- Specials: leading activities that you are passionate about or that coordinate with classroom studies, assisting with the Specials program, etc.
- Committees: active participation in committees allows for open communication and collaboration amongst families and teachers, and creates the opportunity for critical reflection and analysis of ideas, problems and policies. Some committees include: library committee; uniform committee; family outreach committee; etc.

### Parent Participation

Parents are the single most important influence in a child's life. Your child's success in school directly relates to your participation both on and off campus.

### How can you help your child?

- Speak with your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns about his/her progress at school.
- Check and discuss schoolwork. Engage your child about his/her school day.
- Ask for any notices that have been handed out at school. (Check student's take-home folder, if applicable).
- Read and respond to correspondence or calls from the school.
- Encourage a daily homework/reading/project time; turn off the computer, TV and/or radio.
- Read to and with your child (in your native language), and encourage reading at home.
- Support learning. Do not do the work for your child.
- Attend school meetings (parent/faculty meetings, conferences, school activities, committee meetings, etc.)

### Parent/School Communication

Students will receive mid-trimester progress reports that indicate the student's performance half way through the trimester. Students will also receive final report cards at the end of each trimester, indicating their grades for that trimester. Conferences and portfolio presentations will take place at the end of each trimester. This is an opportunity for parents, teachers, and students to discuss the child's progress as a learner and member of the school community. Parents and teachers will also communicate via phone and/or e-mail when necessary. In some cases, parents may be asked to come to school for a meeting. Additionally, La Paz publishes a weekly parent update on Wednesdays to inform parents of happenings within the La Paz and local community.

## Fundraising

Scholarship, annual and capital campaign funding is raised each year through fundraisers and private donations. 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. Our annual goal is for 100% of our families to financially contribute to our scholarship, annual, and/or capital fund.

## Behavior Expectations for Teachers, Staff, Parents and Volunteers

Appropriate adult behavior covers a wide spectrum and includes:

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

Inappropriate adult behavior similarly covers a wide spectrum and includes:

- Verbal abuse, including belittling, demeaning, shaming or blaming
- Drunkenness/Substance Abuse
- Physical abuse
- Destroying property
- Lying
- Stealing

If adults engage in inappropriate behavior, they will be:

- Informed that their behavior is inappropriate
- Requested to stop
- Requested to leave school premises

## Academic Expectations for Students

La Paz Community School is committed to providing its students with the tools necessary to become active citizens in our global society. We expect students to demonstrate their progress in becoming knowledgeable persons; complex thinkers; skilled information processors; effective communicators; self-directed learners; collaborative workers; and responsible citizens. We use these Academic Learner Expectations, along with our Assessment Program, to accurately determine each student's appropriate grade level from both an academic and social standpoint.

The student will earn an overall average of a 2 (Developing) in all academic areas for the school year. If the student does not achieve this, a meeting between parents and teachers will take place to decide the best possible solution for the student. The solution may involve repetition of the grade level, mandatory tutoring sessions, or another specific method that fosters this student's academic growth and success.

## 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 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 this is not successful, they are given the opportunity to find a solution with adult mediation. If this is not successful, an adult will determine a solution for the student(s). This may include removal from class, recess, and/or an activity, and counseling time with a teacher. During this process, the parents may be notified and/or involved.

On such occasions that the school becomes aware that students have participated in or are participating 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.

### Boundaries

The following behaviors are inappropriate and may result in disciplinary action as described on pages 14 and 15.

- **Academic Dishonesty:** 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.
- **Alcohol and Drugs:** There will be no possession or use of tobacco products, alcohol or other 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. Exceptions may be made for social events, including but not limited to the annual Scholarship Fundraiser, at which cash bars may be present.
- **Inappropriate Dress:** Students must dress in the required La Paz Community School attire each school day, as per Costa Rican law. This includes a La Paz Community School shirt and beige-colored shorts, skirts, pants, or skorts (with appropriate length). Students must wear closed-toed shoes (not sandals), and gym shoes during P.E. class in the gym. 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.
- **Interpersonal Conflict:** Students who have interpersonal conflicts are expected to try to resolve the problem or seek a mediator and work through the process of conflict resolution. See page 12 for further description.
- **Bullying:** 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). Students are taught problem solving strategies to encourage conflict resolution amongst the students themselves. Teachers and staff will oversee the conflict resolution and become involved when appropriate.
- **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.
- **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.

### 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 the laptop computers and other devices. 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 and must sign the attached technology usage contract. Any abuse of technology that causes physical or emotional harm to La Paz Community Members

will be cause for immediate disciplinary action as per the La Paz disciplinary policies. For more detailed policies, refer to the "acceptable use policy" for the appropriate grade level.

#### Bus Behavior

La Paz contracts bus services through reputable local companies. For student drop off in the morning and pick up in the afternoon, the buses park on campus while embarking or disembarking. Riding the bus to school is a privilege and benefit for La Paz Community School students, therefore the Bus Behavior Policy is as follows:

- Students are expected to behave in a way that is safe at all times and that is respectful towards the driver and other passengers. This includes: keeping hands to him/herself; keeping voices down; remaining seated with seat belt fastened for the duration of the ride.
- If a student misbehaves, he or she will receive a warning the first time. A record of this warning will be kept on file.
- If a student has a second incident, the student's teacher will contact parents about the problem.
- A third incident is considered serious and will result in a Student/Parent/Teacher meeting to discuss bus privileges and an appropriate bus riding action plan will be put in place.
- Bus stop safety is the parent's responsibility. Drop off and pick up of students must be reliable or transportation other than the bus must be arranged.
- Parents must drop off and pick up their students at the designated bus stop on time. Failure to do so may result in loss of bus riding privileges for the student.

#### School Resources

Any lost 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.

#### Electronics

Use of cell phones, beepers, video games, music players or other electronic devices is not permitted during school hours or on field trips/excursions unless otherwise noted by a teacher for a specific project or exhibition. (Excursions are meant to be a time for students to interact with each other as well as the environment around them with minimal distractions.) If music is permitted, lyrics containing inappropriate subject matter or language will not be tolerated.

### Administrative Policies

#### Discipline Policy

Parents, 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. In addition, counseling services may be suggested that will help to address behavioral and social problems as they arise. The discipline policy of La Paz Community School is such that suspension and expulsion of students will be used only as a last resort.

The following is a partial list of offenses that could lead to suspension or expulsion.

- Threatened, attempted or actual physical injury to another person
- Possessed, used, sold or furnished any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object
- Possessed, used, sold, furnished or has been under the influence of any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, intoxicant of any kind or drug paraphernalia
- Committed robbery or extortion
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school or private property
- Committed an obscene act (including those motivated by bias or prejudice) or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Engaged in harassment of any kind defined as any action or words that may provoke an emotional or violent response or inflict distress
- Failed to abide by the Academic Dishonesty Policy (see page 12)

La Paz Community School may expel 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 safety of the other students and/or staff. There is no refund of tuition money to an expelled student. If a student is suspended, he/she will not be allowed on the school campus unless authorized by a teacher. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a suspended student will meet with the teachers to attempt to bring satisfactory resolution to the suspension.

#### Attendance

It is very important that students arrive at school ON TIME (8:00 a.m.) and attend school EACH DAY. Both campuses will start at 8am; high school students should be dropped off at their campus first by buses and parents. Parents/guardians must notify the school of all student absences, 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, family vacations or student activities off-campus. Unexcused absences are those which 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.

For absences such as illnesses, parents/guardians must call the office by 8:30 a.m. on the morning of the absence. For absences such as vacations, the parent/guardian must notify the student's teacher directly. For all absences, students and parents should meet 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.

After 5 unexcused absences, the student and his/her parents/guardians will meet with school officials in accordance with the Attendance laws of Costa Rica. Students must attend at least 80% of a trimester in order to receive credit for that trimester. Although La Paz Community School is supportive of meaningful absences and understanding of unavoidable absences, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to make up work missed due to absences. Parents need to be aware that La Paz Community School's project-based curriculum includes much group work, class discussions, and experiential activities, all of which are impossible to recreate or replicate.

#### 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. Also, 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.

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

#### Application Process

Interested applicants and families should complete the following admissions sequence:

1. General Tour: Interested families and/or applicants will complete a tour of La Paz Community School's campus, preferably when school is in session.
2. Application: Applicants will complete and return the application form along with the necessary documents specified on the application form.
3. Family Interview: In the event that appropriate grade-level space becomes available, the applicant and his or her family will be called for an interview with a member or members of the La Paz Community School staff. The student will be evaluated on all five core subject in order to determine their level of academic preparedness.

### Acceptance Procedures

1. Sign an Enrollment Agreement, Medical Release Form, Student/Family Handbook Contract, and Cooperative Contract by a specified date (before the first day of school).
2. Pay the appropriate deposit.
3. Provide a copy of your child's passport or cedula.
4. Provide a copy of the parent's/guardian's passport or cedula.

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

### Matriculation Process

The matriculation process starts in April of each academic school year. Non-scholarship families are asked in late April to pay the \$1,000 matriculation fee (applied towards the total tuition cost) to ensure enrollment for the following school year. Returning families who neglect to 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.

### Scholarship Program

La Paz Community School's Sponsorship Program was developed in order to celebrate the diverse cultural community in the region of Guanacaste. The parents, 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 3-4 home visits per year with the scholarship families to ensure the sponsored student's and family's success and 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 reserves the right to maintain a fixed exchange rate of Colones to US dollars depending on inflation.

Tuition for Prekinder; \$2,750 (including the \$1,000 Matriculation Deposit)

Payment Plan (excluding the \$1,000 Matriculation Deposit):

Three non-refundable trimester payments: \$750 by September 2, 2011; \$500 by November 11, 2011; \$500 by March 9, 2012.

Tuition for Grades Kinder through Six; \$4,850 (including the \$1,000 Matriculation Deposit)

Payment Plan (excluding the \$1,000 Matriculation Deposit):

Three non-refundable trimester payments: \$850 by September 2, 2011; \$1500 by November 11, 2011; \$1500 by March 9, 2012.

Tuition for Grades Seven through Eleven; \$5,000 (including the \$1,000 Matriculation Deposit)

Payment Plan (excluding the \$1,000 Matriculation Deposit):

Three non-refundable trimester payments: \$750 by September 2, 2011; \$1625 by November 11, 2011; \$1625 by March 9, 2012.

Monthly payments due on the first of every month from September 1<sup>st</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup>; this only applies to those families on Scholarship and/or families who petition the school.

Payments can be made via wire/bank transfer, check deposit, or cash deposit to the Asociacion Escuela La Paz account with Banco de Costa Rica (Dollars account: 32518309; Colones account: 32518295). La Paz Community School will not accept cash or check payments in the school office. Late payments will be charged a 5% late fee.

All trimester payments are non-refundable. Teacher contracts and school commitments are made on the basis of enrollment contracts; therefore, families of students enrolled shall be responsible for making the appropriate tuition payments in a timely manner. Dismissal for disciplinary reasons does not exempt the responsible party from tuition obligations. If a tuition payment is more than 60 days past due, the student may not be allowed to attend classes. In the case of extraordinary circumstances, specific arrangements to modify these requirements may be made with the La Paz Community School Administrators and Board of Directors. La Paz Community School does not release transcripts, credits, progress reports, report cards, portfolios and/or grades until all financial obligations to the school are satisfied.

(Please note, the tuition does not include: bus service; uniforms; hot lunches; some field trips; some school supplies. Read the appropriate section for questions regarding these additional payments.)

#### Searches and Expectation of Privacy

La Paz Community School reserves the right to inspect and search all school property and buildings for 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 will lead to disciplinary actions, including suspension or expulsion.

## Procedures and Operations

#### Lunches and Snacks

La Paz Community School has a lunch program that operates Monday through Friday. Families will be provided with a monthly menu and students can choose and pay for those lunches they wish to partake in, which cost \$3 each (cost is subject to change). All students are asked to bring a reusable water bottle, snack, and lunch (if not purchased through the Hot Lunch Program) every day. Nutritious and balanced meals are essential for children. Candy and soda are not recommended. Reusable containers are encouraged (reusable sandwich wraps are sold in the school office), and utensils should be packed with the students' lunches. Please label your child's lunch box, thermos and personal items. Microwave ovens and refrigerators are available.

#### 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 should conduct themselves in an appropriate and respectful manner (see Behavior Expectations starting on page 12) during excursions as well as on campus. Students and parents will be notified of upcoming field trips via Field Trip Permission Slip Forms, and may be expected to pay for the trip, depending on the nature of the planned excursion. Students who do not bring in their Field Trip Permission Slip Form and money (when applicable) will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. Parents who would like to attend the excursion should communicate with the teacher in charge of that particular trip.

#### Birthday Celebrations

In lieu of class parties and treats to celebrate a child's birthday, each student will donate a book of their choice to the La Paz library, and share it with the school community during Community Meeting on his/her birthday. The student will fill out a sticker to place on the inside cover of the book with his/her name and birth date.

### School Library

Thanks to La Paz parents, the school has a library with a wide variety of literary genres. Students have the opportunity to check out library books every Friday and/or during various class projects and activities. If a student checks out a book and loses it, the family is expected to replace the exact book as soon as possible.

### 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 cannot be responsible for personal items brought to school.

### School Supplies

La Paz Community School provides basic school supplies, however, individual teachers may ask for specific supplies or donations of special project supplies. Families will receive a grade-level supply list at the beginning of each year. We strongly recommend the use of backpacks for the safe storage of personal belongings and homework assignments.

### Disaster Preparedness

La Paz Community School has classroom and campus evacuation procedures for fires, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, 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.

### Medication

No medication may be administered by any school personnel without written direction from the physician, parent or guardian. Any medications brought to school are to be submitted to the appropriate teacher who will place the medication in a secure location. Medications must be in their original containers or prescription bottles, including over-the-counter medication. Parents/Guardians must fill out and sign the Medical Release Form in order for medications and/or non-prescription medication to be administered.

### Medical Information

All parents must fill out and return the appropriate medical release forms before school begins. Additional release forms may be sent home throughout the year to cover long-term or special outdoor education, field trips, and/or specific projects. A medical release form is kept on file for each child. Please notify the office of any changes in your address, telephone number, place of business, emergency contact information or changes in your child's medical needs.

### Accidents

Every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of students at school and on excursions. Immediate first aid will be given and parents or the family doctor will be notified promptly should an accident occur. If we are unable to reach the family, emergency contact, or doctor, the student will be transported and treated at the nearest medical facility; Pacific Life or Emergencias 2000.

### Inclement Weather and Circumstances

In case of heavy rains, lack of water or electricity, or other unsafe weather conditions, La Paz Community School may choose to close school, delay the start of the school day, or have the school day end early. In any of these cases, parents will be notified via phone tree. Whenever possible, these announcements and the notification of the cancellation of other on-campus activities will be posted on the school's website.

### School Calendar

La Paz Community School operates on a modified year round academic calendar, and observes and celebrates Costa Rican holidays. The exact calendar is available online at [www.lapazschool.org](http://www.lapazschool.org). Click on the Academic Calendar page.

### School Hours

All grades, Kindergarten and up, attend school from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m; pre-Kindergarten attends school from 8:00 a.m. - 1 p.m. School buses and parents drop off the high school students at their campus first, and then proceed to the primary school campus to drop off the younger students. In the afternoon, primary students will be picked up at their campus first at 3pm, followed by the high school students directly after.

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 3:00 p.m. will not be supervised unless previously arranged.

La Paz will have bi-weekly early release days during first trimester (every other Wednesday, students will be dismissed after lunch at 12:45pm) so La Paz faculty can engage in meetings and professional development activities. The dates for the early release days are: September 14<sup>th</sup>, September 28<sup>th</sup>, October 12<sup>th</sup>, October 26<sup>th</sup>, November 9<sup>th</sup> and November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### Transportation

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

1. Students may pay for the private bus system that operates under parent and faculty collaboration and organization. (See page 13 for more details.)
2. Students may travel in family or neighborhood car pools using family vehicles.
3. Students may ride a bike or walk with the parents' consent.

Please send a note or call the school 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 office and receive a Visitor Pass. He/she then must report to the appropriate teacher.

Appendices:

## **La Paz Community School Material List 2011/2012**

### **Pre-Kindergarten**

3 glue sticks

- 2 boxes 24ct. thick/grande Crayola brand crayons
- 2 boxes large size colored pencils
- 2 pairs quality child scissors, Crayola is best again (lefty if necessary)
- 1 watercolor set with only primary colors (4 large paints)
- plastic cup (to keep at school)
- 1 toothbrush and toothpaste (to be kept at school)
- 1 box baby wipes
- 1 box large ziplock freezer bags
- 1 individual whiteboard (can be purchased at Universal in Liberia)
- 1 package assorted colors of whiteboard markers
- 1 tissue box
- 1 reusable water bottle (to keep at school)
- 1 change of clothes (to keep at school in case of bathroom accidents)

### **Kindergarten**

- 3 glue sticks
- 2 large white liquid glues
- 1 box 24 ct. crayons
- sticky notes
- 3 pencil sharpeners
- 2 boxes colored pencils
- 1 pair child scissors
- 2 large erasers
- 1 package white computer/copy paper
- 2 boxes lg. size markers
- 2 watercolor sets
- 2 boxes large size ziplock freezer bags
- 2 study folders (one of which will go to and from school daily)
- 1 reusable water bottle (to keep at school)
- 1 pair of gym shoes to be left at school
- 1 raincoat

### **1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

- 1 pair scissors
- 1 box #2 pencils
- 24 colored markers
- 24 colored pencils
- 24 colored crayons
- 3 erasers
- 1 package computer paper
- 4 pencil sharpeners
- 6 glue sticks
- 1 big bottle white glue
- 1 box large or small ziplock freezer bags
- 2 box of tissues
- 2 durable folders for homework and in class work
- 1 reusable water bottle for everyday use
- 1 pair of gym shoes to be left at school

- 1 watercolor set
- Old shirt for art activities
- 1 pair of gym shoes to be kept at school
- 2 100 page Composition Journals (normal lines)

### **2<sup>nd</sup>/ 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

- 1 pair of gym shoes (to be left at school)
- 1 reusable water bottle
- 1 package computer copy paper
- 1 large bottle of liquid glue
- 3 glue sticks
- 1 clipboard
- 3 boxes #2 pencils
- 3 large size erasers
- 2 pencil sharpeners (with case for pencil shavings if possible)
- 3 boxes 24 count crayola or faber castel brand crayons
- 1 box 12 count crayola or faber castel brand markers
- 1 set water colors crayola or faber castel brand
- 1 small thin notebook (for homework agenda)
- 1 ruler
- 1 pair good quality non pointed scissors (fiskar is a good brand)
- 1 LARGE size box of ziploc brand freezer bags
- 2 folders with pockets inside

### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- 1 box #2 pencils
- 1 pair of pointed scissors
- 12 colored markers
- 12 colored pencils
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 3 pencil erasers
- 2 bottle glue
- 1 ruler with inches and centimeters
- 1 package white computer/copy paper
- 1 pencil case (to keep some of your materials in at your table)
- 1 simple function calculator
- 1 clipboard
- 1 reusable water bottle
- 1 Homework Agenda
- 1 pair of gym shoes to be left at school

### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- 10 #2 pencils
- 2 pencil sharpeners
- 2 erasers
- 2 black pens, 2 blue pens
- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 package of blue-lined writing paper
- 1 package of white computer paper
- 3 glue sticks
- 1 set of colored pencils
- 1 box of washable markers
- 1 calculator
- 6 spiral notebooks
- 1 agenda/assignment book

- 1 pencil case
- 1 small Spanish dictionary
- 1 Reusable Water bottle
- 1 pair of gym shoes to be left at school

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- 10 #2 pencils
- 2 pencil sharpeners
- 2 erasers
- 2 black pens, 2 blue pens
- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 package of blue-lined writing paper
- 1 package of white computer paper
- 3 glue sticks
- 1 set of colored pencils
- 1 box of washable markers
- 1 calculator
- 6 spiral notebooks
- 1 agenda/assignment book
- 1 pencil case
- 1 small Spanish dictionary
- 1 Reusable Water bottle
- 1 pair of gym shoes to be left at school

### **7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- 1 Laptop Computer
- 1 Plastic Accordion Folder
- 3 1-inch binders or 1 large binder with appropriate 3 holed paper, folder, and dividers
- 10 #2 Pencils
- 2 Erasers
- 1 Box of Colored Pencils
- 1 Box of Markers
- 2 Highlighters
- 2 Black Pens, 2 Blue Pens
- 2 Glue Sticks
- 1 Package of White Lined Paper
- 1 Agenda/assignment book
- 1 Ruler
- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 Reusable Water bottle
- 1 pair of gym shoes to be left at school
- 1 package of white computer paper
- 3 spiral notebooks
- 1 Compass
- 1 Protractor
- 1 Spanish Dictionary (not Spanish/English dictionary)
- 1 (for grades 10-11) TI-83 calculator (or calculator on this list:  
<http://ibmaths.pbworks.com/f/Approved+Calculators+IB.pdf>)

## PARENTS/STUDENT HANDBOOK CONTRACT

All parents and students in each family must sign the following contract and return it to school acknowledging the receipt and the understanding of the policies in the La Paz Community School Parent/Student Handbook. If your student isn't old enough to read and understand all the regulations and policies in the handbook, please discuss the relevant contents of the handbook with him/her, and have him/her sign the contract below.

Parents:

I/We have read and understand the La Paz Community School Handbook and all of its contents. I/We am/are aware of the roles and expectations of all members of the La Paz Community School community, including our family. I/we agree to abide by the policies and regulations stated in the La Paz Community School Handbook.

_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Cedula/Passport Number	Date
_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Cedula/Passport Number	Date

Students:

I/We have read and understand the La Paz Community School Handbook and all of its contents. I/We am/are aware that I/we am/are an important part of a school community at La Paz Community School, and I/we will do all I/we can to positively contribute. I/we agree to abide by the policies and regulations stated in the La Paz Community School Handbook.

_____	_____	_____
Student Signature	Cedula/Passport Number	Date
_____	_____	_____
Student Signature	Cedula/Passport Number	Date
_____	_____	_____
Student Signature	Cedula/Passport Number	Date



## La Paz Family Cooperative Contract

Each family will contribute a minimum of 18 hours/year (6 hours/trimester) of volunteer time. Also, each grade/age level will have a parent representative to assist in class trips and experiences; this can change each trimester or each year. Family donation time can be categorized in the following ways:

- Office/Logistical Support: this may include answering phones, making community connections, fundraising, organizing business logistics, etc.
- Transportation/Errands: organizing/attending field trips, running errands for materials and/or supplies, etc.
- Classroom Support: in classroom assistance, project help, one-on-one support with students
- Specials: leading activities that you are passionate about or that coordinate with classroom studies

How your family chooses to contribute the 18 hours/year is up to you. Perhaps you spend an entire day at the school once per trimester; or perhaps you donate your time in 30 minute increments, depending on what works best with your schedule.

To be signed by one or both parent(s):

"I understand the above terms and agree to donate the 18 hours/year minimum to the La Paz Community School Cooperative Program."

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ced./ID: \_\_\_\_\_

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

"I understand that my parents/guardians agree to donate 18 hours/year minimum to the La Paz Community School Cooperative Program."

Student Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_



# La Paz Community School Medical Release Form

www.lapazschool.org  
email: paz@lapazschool.org  
tel/fax: (506)2654 4532/ cel 8350 9102  
Flamingo, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F  
Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_  
Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: Does your child have any allergies to food, medications, insects, etc.? YES NO

If "yes", please list \_\_\_\_\_  
Does your child require any special medications for this allergy? YES NO

Health Conditions: Has your child, currently or in the past, been diagnosed with any of the following conditions? (Circle all that apply.)  
Asthma                                  Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder                                  Vision/Hearing Problems  
Diabetes                                  Frequent/Migraine Headaches                                  Chronic Ear Infections  
Heart Problems                                  Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity                                  Autism

If "yes", please explain \_\_\_\_\_

List any other health conditions not listed above \_\_\_\_\_

List any medication(s) currently taken by your child \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child's Physician \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_ Clinic/Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, child will be taken to nearest Medical Centers: Pacific Life in Flamingo or Huacas, or Emergencias 2000 in Huacas.  
Additional person(s) authorized to pick up my child and/or contact in case of an illness or an emergency:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Non-prescription medication listed below is available at school after initial evaluation of your child's symptoms. All medications are given in accordance with the packaging label on the product, by age and weight-appropriate strengths. I hereby authorize La Paz Community School to administer medication checked below to my child while on campus and/or during school-sponsored activities off campus. (Circle all that apply.)

No medications may be administered	Tylenol/Children's Tylenol for fever or pain	Ibuprofen for fever or pain
Antibiotic ointment for cuts and scrapes	Itch Stopping Cream for bug bites	Tums/PeptoBismal for upset stomachs
Throat Lozenges/Cough Drops	Sterile Eye Wash for dirt in eyes	Benadryl for allergic reactions

If, in the judgment of any responsible person employed by La Paz Community School, the student named above needs immediate care and treatment as a result of any injury or sickness, I do hereby request, authorize and consent to such care and treatment as may be given to said student by any medical personnel or school representative. I do hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless La Paz Community School and any school representative from any claim by any person whomsoever on account of such care and treatment of said student.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# La Paz Community School

## Consent to Release Photo/Image

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

During the current school year, your child's image/photograph or work may be included in a classroom or school project that could be used in one of the following ways: La Paz website, newsletters, promotional materials, annual report on development, or any other school project that is designed to promote the advancement of La Paz Community School and adheres to our school mission statement.

While your child's name may accompany the photo, no last name or address will be included with your child's picture when publishing on the Web.

Your permission grants us approval to publicize without prior notification and remains in effect until revoked.

Thank you!  
Release Form

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We DO give permission for \_\_\_\_\_'s  
Child's full name

image/photograph or work to be used as described above. We are willing to release this into the public domain and understand that no monetary compensation will be given for the use of the materials.

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We DO NOT give permission for \_\_\_\_\_'s  
Child's full name

image/photograph or work to be used a described above.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print clearly

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## La Paz Community School Calendar 2011-2012

### Trimester 1 (67 days – 14 weeks):

September 5: First Day of School  
September 14: Early Release Day (12:45pm dismissal)  
September 15: No School (Costa Rican Independence Day)  
September 28: Early Release Day (12:45pm dismissal)  
October 12: Early Release Day (12:45pm dismissal)  
October 21: Progress Reports  
October 24: No School (mid-trimester break)  
October 26: Early Release Day (12:45pm dismissal)  
December 6: Early Dismissal (12:45pm)  
December 9: Last Day of Trimester 1 (Conferences)  
December 10 – January 8: First Trimester Break (4 weeks)

### Trimester 2 (58 days – 12 weeks):

January 9: Back to School  
February 17: Progress Reports  
February 20: No School (mid-trimester break)  
March 27: Early Dismissal (12:45pm)  
March 30: Last Day of Trimester 2 (Conferences)  
March 31 – April 22: Second Trimester Break (3 weeks)

### Trimester 3 (56 – 12 weeks):

April 23: Back to School  
April 30: No School (Costa Rican Labor Day observed)  
June 1: Progress Reports  
June 4: No School (mid-trimester break)  
July 9: Early Dismissal (12:45pm)  
July 12: Last day of Trimester 3 (Conferences)  
July 13 – September 2: Third Trimester Break (7 weeks)

Total = 181 days

Important Costa Rican Events/Days while we're in session (including World Events/Days recognized by Costa Rica):

September:

September 8: World Alphabet Day  
September 9: National Children's Day  
September 15: Costa Rican Independence Day  
September 20: International Student Day  
September 21: International Peace Day  
September 27: Crush a Can Day

October:

October 1: National Values Day  
October 5: World Teacher's Day  
October 13: National Race & Culture Day/Thanksgiving Day (Canada)  
October 16: World Hunger Awareness Day  
October 27: International School Library Day

November:

First week of November: National Special Education Week  
November 10: Costa Rican Schools' Day  
November 16: International Tolerance Day  
November 19: National Child Abuse Prevention Day  
November 25: National No Violence Against Women Day  
4<sup>th</sup> Thursday: Thanksgiving Day (US)

December:

December 1: National Army Abolition Day & World AIDS Awareness Day

January:

January 5: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

February:

February 4: Chinese New Year begins  
February 14: Valentine's Day  
February 21: Love Your Pet Day

March:

March 2: Dr. Seuss's Birthday (1904)  
March 8: International Women's Day  
March 22: World Day for Water  
March 30: National Sports Day

April:

April 1: International No Violence Day  
April 4: School Librarian's Day  
April 7: World Health Day  
April 11: Juan Santamaria Day  
April 19: Costa Rican Indigenous Population Day  
April 22: Earth Day  
April 23: National Book Day

May:

May 1: National Labor Day  
First Week of May: National Health & Nutrition Week

May 15: National Day of Agriculture  
Third Week of May: National Resource Conservation Week

June:

June 1: International Children's Day  
June 5: World Environmental Day  
Second Week of June: National Peace Week  
June 15: National Tree Day  
June 26: International Drug Prevention Day

July:

July 1: Canada Day  
July 4: US Independence Day