

Larchmont Schools
Board of Directors
Parent Involvement Policy

Introduction

Larchmont Charter School (“the School”) is committed to excellence in education and providing a safe and nurturing environment for our children. We encourage and expect the dedicated support of our parents to continue to achieve this goal. The School counts on all our families to contribute to ensuring an excellent educational experience for our students.

Parents are partners in schooling by virtue of their role as the central provider and overseer of their child’s learning and development. Parents are expected to be actively involved in all aspects of their children’s education. One of the most important things we can do for children is to allow them to see parents and teachers working together. This helps children realize that there is a bond between home, community, and school. Additionally, parents who work with the School come to understand their child’s education better. Research clearly shows that student achievement and school success is positively impacted by parent involvement.

Parent involvement can take many forms including, participation in decision making at the School; representation on committees and groups; and involvement in the School and classroom programs. Parent participation contributes to better outcomes for all students; enables the School to respond more effectively to student and family values; develops a partnership between parents and teachers; and enhances the strength and vibrancy of our school.

Policy

Participation from the entire community

Family participation and community involvement in the educational process is essential to our mission. All parents are encouraged to volunteer 50 hours per school year (75 hours per year if they have more than one child at the School) to support the growth and development of the School. Volunteer participation will not impact any decisions regarding admissions, continued enrollment, class placement or participation in any school-sponsored activities. We seek to work with students, faculty, staff, and parents in providing a high quality education for our students.

General Volunteer Guidelines

Hours requested of families are to assist in the operation of the School by completing tasks that are directly or indirectly related to the School program under the direction of school staff and/or volunteer coordinators to meet the needs of students. Parents may choose from a variety of tasks and activities. Tasks can be shared with other family members and/or a friend provided that adherence to the Volunteer and Visitor Policy is followed. There may also be tasks that can be completed at home and/or during non-school hours. Also subject to the Volunteer and Visitor Policy, the classroom teacher has full discretion as to their use of volunteers and the time and duration of in-class volunteer participation.

Classroom volunteers are there to benefit the entire class and are not in class solely for the benefit of their own child. Classroom volunteers must follow the instructions

provided by the classroom teacher. Classroom rules also apply to parent volunteers to ensure minimal distraction to the teacher. If a volunteer is uncomfortable following the direction of the teacher the volunteer may leave their volunteer position for that day.

Information gained by volunteers regarding individual students (e.g. academic performance or behavior) is to be maintained in strict confidentiality. Questions or comments concerning a child's academic performance or behavior must be done in a separate meeting between parent and teacher, as arranged with the teacher. Student discipline is to be left to the teacher, even for a parent volunteer's own child, with the exception of light reminders to students to stay on task.

Parental and community involvement is one area of evaluation for Heads of School's annual performance.

Involvement in School Governance

Per Ed. Code B 47605 (b)(5)(D) "The governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement."

Larchmont Charter School seeks to ensure parent participation by the establishment of the Larchmont Charter School Site-based Councils, the Larchmont Charter School Advisory Council and the Larchmont Charter School Site Council.

Site-based Councils

The Site-based Councils are the site-based groups designed to assist the School's leadership in decision making by providing grassroots input from all constituents regarding issues of budget, scheduling, enrichments, facilities, community outreach, and more. The parent representatives serve an important role as they are the voice of the parent community in decision making at the site level and, also, a means to disseminate information regarding some of the bigger picture issues that interest our community, such as charter school policy, applicable LAUSD processes, and state budgetary issues. The K-8 Site-based Councils include at least one parent representative from each grade level at each site, the site Dean of Students and the Head of Elementary or Head of Middle. The 9-12 Site-based Council will include the Head of 9-12 and the Director of College Planning, along with at least one parent representative from each grade level. Site-based Council positions are nominated and elected by parents at each site. Nomination and election of Site-based Council representatives will be completed no later than the end of the first month of the school year. Positions are open to any parent or guardian of a child entering that grade level for the 2013-2014 school year. One-year terms will be served.

Larchmont Charter School Advisory Council

The Advisory Council (formerly called LCS Council or Principal's Council) will consist of at least one representative from each of the Site-based Councils and will be chaired by the Heads of K-8 and 9-12.

The Advisory Council will be the main school-wide venue for parent input on a number of issues, including, but not limited to:

- Budget priorities and areas of focus
- Annual review of LEA Plan, Single Plan for Student Achievement, School Accountability Report Card (SARC)

- Outreach, recruitment and volunteering
- Safety, behavior and discipline programs and feedback (i.e. anti-Bullying programs, No Name Calling week, safety committees, phone trees)
- Room Parents
- Community issues and opportunities (i.e. carpool, fundraising, technology)
- Families shall be notified of their progress toward meeting their volunteer commitment in the last term of the school year.

In order to serve on the Advisory Council, representatives must be willing and able to attend regular meetings, which will be held monthly on Thursday evenings from September through June, and understand and support the charter of the School. It is also strongly encouraged that representatives routinely attend other parent gatherings including site-based coffees, parent education sessions, town hall meetings and other all-school or site-based activities. Advisory Council members may also be asked to serve as an at-large member of the School Site Council.

School Site Council

Pursuant to federal law and California Department of Education policy, the School also constitutes a School Site Council ("SSC"). The School adheres to the law applicable to school districts regarding SSC composition, which states, "The SSC shall be composed of the principal; representatives of teachers selected by teachers at the school; other school personnel selected by peers at the school; parents of pupils attending the school selected by such parents; and, in secondary schools, pupils selected by pupils attending the school."

The School's SSC shall be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers and other school personnel; (b) equal numbers of parents or other community members selected by parents, and pupils. Classroom teachers shall comprise the majority of persons represented under category (a). (Education Code Section 52852)

Furthermore, Education Code Section 52852 states that parents or community members on the SSC may not be employed by the School.

The purpose of the SSC to:

1. Measure effectiveness of improvement strategies at the School.
2. Seek input from school advisory committees.
3. Reaffirm or revise school goals.
4. Revise improvement strategies and expenditures.
5. Recommend the approved single plan for student achievement (SPSA) to the governing board.
6. Monitor implementation of the SPSA.

Family Meetings

Family meetings are held at least quarterly, culminating with the State of the School Address in May. Family meetings include: regular parent meetings, including coffees with school leaders, parent education seminars, grade-level meetings and Back to School activities. All families are encouraged to attend these meetings and to participate in the life of the School.

Acknowledgement of Policies

All parents will be required to sign an acknowledgement of the School Handbook, which will delineate school policies, procedures, and expectations; student behavior codes; rights and responsibilities; and the parental involvement expectation.