



Spero Academy Family/Student Handbook

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Welcome to Spero Academy!

This handbook is designed as a communication tool to clarify the policies, procedures, and services at Spero Academy. Please read through the handbook and keep it in a convenient place for reference. Read the handbook with your child and discuss sections for shared understanding of the information. When you have read and discussed the handbook, sign and return the signature page at the end of the book.

Please direct all questions and concerns to the Director of Spero Academy. Questions about current programs, activities and policies may be researched by visiting the school's website at www.spero.academy.

At Spero Academy, we strive to create excellent relationships with students and their parents/families. We seek to be responsive, cooperative, and collaborative. The team approach is a strong component in the Spero Academy education program with parents as key members of the team. Teachers welcome planned parent visits to the school as well as participation in the opportunities provided in the parent teacher conferences. The school/home teamwork contributes to increased success for students.

Best wishes for a successful school year!

Philosophy

Spero Academy is a Minnesota charter school with a unique purpose and design as outlined below. Our motivation is driven by ensuring every student has the opportunity to learn and grow individually, intellectually, and socially together, as well as from a solid substantial learning core. The philosophy is to assist in developing a student who is interested and intimately involved in the learning process. Spero Academy serves students of all abilities who learn, work, and play together throughout the school day in order to support each other and become the best each child can possibly be.

Spero Academy Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide students with a personalized and adaptive education to grow academically, emotionally, and socially.

We believe every child can learn, grow, and succeed when given the opportunity to reach his or her individual potential. We focus our resources and energy on developing our core capabilities to develop our strategic intents:

1. Create differentiated programs that integrate academics with social and emotional learning;
2. Comprehensively identify individual education needs and learning styles;
3. Utilize collaborative teaming among staff, specialists, and families to integrate and coordinate personalized education;
4. Structure learning environments with small student-to-teacher ratios; and
5. Assess student progress across all learning areas

Values and Guiding Principles

1. We believe that the development of the “whole child” is essential to success and central to the premise that being educated in an inclusive educational environment, including students from diverse backgrounds and learning needs, enriches all children;
2. We believe that continuous progress as the instructional model is essential to optimum student learning;
3. We believe that the delivery of broad-based content, in a personalized learning environment, best meets the educational needs of students of all abilities;
4. We believe in the importance of incorporating character development in the educational setting;
5. We believe year-round instructional time results in more positive academic and developmental outcomes for all students; and
6. We believe that ongoing evaluation of program and practices, in light of current research, is essential to maintain the highest quality of educational program.

The Founders

Spero Academy was founded by Fraser, a Minnesota nonprofit with a nationally renowned reputation for serving children of all abilities. The University of St. Thomas, the current authorizer, is responsible for oversight of learner outcomes and fiscal accountability. The school and authorizer partnership assures that current best practices and up-to-date program models are in place for Spero Academy students.

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I. SCHOOL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Absence/Attendance

Regular and punctual daily attendance is important for promoting school interest, social adjustment, and academic achievement of a child. Children should not be kept home from school unless they are ill or the family is faced with an emergency. Continuity in learning is seriously disrupted by excessive absences.

Excused Absence Procedure

If a child is to be absent, notify the school office no later than 8:50 a.m. If a child is going to be absent for an extended period of time, please notify the school office of the duration on the first day of the absence. If the absence extends longer than anticipated, notification to the office is required. When an absence has been reported by phone, an excuse note is not required. The parent or guardian must make the absence call. The attendance line is 612-465-8600.

Please give the following information when making the absence call:

1. Day of the absence being reported;
2. Student's full name;
3. Name of the student's teacher and grade;
4. Reason for the absence, including symptoms.
5. Name and relation of the person reporting the absence.

Parent/Guardians/guardians wishing to have a child excused at any time **during** the school day must notify the school at least **two hours** prior to the student's departure. Unscheduled departures can lead to classroom/academic disruption. Staff will assist the student to the main office for pick up.

Parent/Guardians/guardians have the responsibility to read and understand Spero Academy's Attendance Policy. The policy in its entirety is located in the school office and on the website at www.spero.academy. Updates to policy are distributed to all families when the circumstances require it. Spero Academy will contact parents/guardians by a phone call/letter after their child has three unexcused absences, notifying them of the requirements of the Minnesota attendance law, Minn. Stat. §260A.03. Spero Academy will also contact parents/guardians if a child's attendance drops below 90%.

Missed Homework

Please make arrangements for planned absences with the child's teacher and the Director at least one week prior to the absence. All assignments and tests given or due during the student's absence must be completed to the teacher's satisfaction. Upon parent/guardian request, teachers may, but are not required, to give work prior to the absence.

Tardies

Students should be on time for school. If a student arrives after 8:50 a.m., they are considered tardy and must check in at the office before going to class. Front desk staff will notify classroom and staff will escort the student to their classroom. Please refrain from walking your student into the room as it interrupts important lesson time.

In addition, Ten unexcused times of arriving tardy to school equal *one* unexcused daily absence.

Excused Absence

Excused absences from school include, but are not limited to: illness, a death in the family/ funeral, family emergency, doctor's appointment or a religious holiday. Excused absences for a family vacation must follow the requirements of the Spero Academy Student Attendance Policy.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to: oversleeping, missing the bus, shopping, play day or parent choice. We ask families to make every effort to support good school attendance; to make good progress at school, students need to be present for instruction.

Temporary Guardianship

If a student is temporarily under the care of another family member or guardian, notify the school office with the name of the temporary caregiver's name, address, phone number, and emergency information including the length of the temporary care, emergency rights, and permission to take the child from school. The school will hold all information in confidence.

Achievement Testing/Data-Driven Assessment

Assessment of student achievement involves a full range of measures to ensure the most comprehensive picture of student progress. Student outcomes in the following areas are priority areas at Spero Academy: academic, personal and social and emotional development.

Various assessments are used to ensure the reliability and validity of assessment results. Students have Personalized Learning Plans that include individual goals in the area of Language Arts, Mathematics and Social and Emotional skills.

All students are assessed in reading and math through a menu of assessment instruments that best fit the student, including The Bridge, Spero Academy's Reading Readiness Assessment, Spero Academy's Math Readiness Assessment, The Early Reading Scoring Instrument, Whole to Part, the Northwest Association Evaluation's Measures of Academic Progress and Spero Academy's Skills Inventory. Students, grade three and above, participate in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA II) or the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) each year as well. Testing occurs throughout the year, but is more focused in fall and spring of each school year. Questions about assessment may be directed to the classroom teacher, the Academic Coordinator, or the Director.

Asbestos Management

Spero Academy reviews the condition of the facility semi-annually to assure that the building's condition is safe for students (as required by law). The review includes a careful analysis of materials containing asbestos to assure that the material is contained and not disturbed.

Bikes/Walking

Students are permitted to ride their bicycles or walk to school at the discretion of their parents/guardians. All bicycles are to be locked. Students are not permitted to ride bicycles during school hours or on school grounds either before or after school. A letter from the parent/guardian granting permission for the student to ride to school must be submitted to the school office before permission is granted for the student to ride their bicycle to school.

Busing

(see Transportation Heading in Parent/Guardian/Student Handbook)

Calendar

The school calendar is provided to parents/guardians at the start of school each year. It is also posted in the school office and on the website www.spero.academy. You may also add the Spero Academy Google calendar to your current calendars. See "Website" heading in this handbook for more information.

Change of Address

The school office staff needs to be notified immediately of any changes to pertinent addresses, telephone numbers, and place of employment of parents, guardians, or emergency contacts. Please complete an Information Change form and submit to the office, which can be found on the school website www.spero.academy.

Computer/iPad Usage Policy

In making decisions regarding student access to the Spero Academy computer system, iPads and the Internet, Spero Academy considers its own stated educational mission, goals, and objectives.

Spero Academy faculty will blend use of the school district computer system, iPads, and the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in their use. Spero Academy limits activity on our computer system and iPads to educational purposes which includes use of both for classroom activities. The use of the school's system and access to the Internet is a privilege, not a right.

Students at Spero Academy have adult supervision while using computers, iPads, and the Internet to ensure appropriate educational use.

Concerns and Complaints

It is Spero Academy's goal to respond to concerns and problems raised by the Spero Academy community as soon as possible after they are brought to our attention.

We would like to see those problems resolved in an amicable manner. It is necessary for the success of the school, and for the community and the staff to always seek a resolution of problems within the framework of the school's organizational structure. In the event someone

has a concern or a complaint that cannot be resolved on a one to one basis with the party directly involved, we encourage that individual to put their complaint or concern in writing using the [Concern/Complaint Form](#) provided on the school website and in the school office.

The following procedure will be used to address concerns and/or complaints:

1. Any complaint or concern, which falls within the scope of another policy adopted by Spero Academy, will be addressed in accordance with that policy as stated in the Spero Academy Parent/Guardian or Staff Handbook;
2. Any complaint or concern that does not fall within the scope of another adopted policy shall be referred to the Director, unless the complaint or concern is about the Director, in which case it may be directly referred to the Board Chair. A Director Complaint is defined as one that alleges unlawful Director conduct including, but not limited to, harassment and discrimination;
3. The Director or Board Chair will contact the complainant or concerned individual within a reasonable period of time to discuss the complaint or concern and to determine whether further action is required;
4. The Director has broad discretion to resolve the complaint or concern and to determine what if any further action is required. The Director's decision is final; and
5. If the Complaint is about the Director, the Board Chair will contact the Board's legal counsel to determine the appropriate course of action based on the nature and severity of the complaint allegations.

Curriculum

Spero Academy utilizes a variety of research-based curricula and practices to provide a high-quality learning experience for its students. The curriculum reflects learning in a multi-age, cooperative and developmentally appropriate manner, where individual growth is emphasized. Each student's progress is created by programming at an individual level to reflect his or her learning styles, strengths, and personal goals and align with the Spero Academy mission. Spero Academy takes pride in small classroom sizes for small group or individual learning to implement curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners.

During core-academic times students learn with peers closest to their instructional level—on grade level, advanced, or remedial. Teachers provide instruction through a rotation model with students moving to various stations for instruction tailored to their level or need.

Continuous Progress Instructional Model. The school adopted a continuous progress approach to instruction to address the needs of each student. The model is well suited to the school's focus on individualized instruction. Each classroom is organized for teachers to guide the individual learning progress, which is then monitored to determine when mastery has occurred. Students are then instructed in the next set of standards, moving at their own pace. The following approaches are used to implement the model.

1. A rotation model for the class and school that allows students to work at stations within the classroom individualized to their instructional level;
2. Non-graded reading;

3. Progress monitoring; and
4. Differentiated instruction for all students.

Broad-based Content Approach. Believing in the value of developing the “whole child,” Spero Academy provides instruction across a broad array of content. The school’s commitment to instruction in the core content areas and also in music, physical education, and art. The following underlying principles guide the choice of curricular content.

1. Instruction is based upon Minnesota’s Academic Standards;
2. Dedicated instructional time for each content area; and
3. district assessment measures for content areas.

During core-academic times students learn with peers closest to their instructional level—on grade level, advanced, or remedial. Teachers provide instruction through a rotation model with students moving to various stations for instruction tailored to their level or need.

Data Privacy

The Minnesota Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) relates to the collection, security, and dissemination of data on individuals by the state and its political subdivisions. Data on individuals includes all records, files, and processes, which contain any data in which an individual is or can be identified, and is intended to be kept on a permanent or temporary basis. It includes information that is collected, stored, and disseminated by manual, mechanical, electronic, or other means. This Act gives parents/guardians the right to be informed about the information maintained by Spero Academy. Any person who willfully violates the provisions of this act is guilty of a misdemeanor.

No private or confidential data on individuals, or summary of this data, shall be used or disseminated outside of Spero Academy unless such information is requested in writing and has the approval of the individual (family/legal guardian) and the responsible authority of an administrative staff member. School personnel, including Spero Academy Board member and our Authorizer, have access to student records for information purposes and for use in monitoring student progress.

Parent/Guardians’/Guardians’ Right to See

When parents/guardians are asked by Spero Academy to give information:

1. They are told the purpose and use of the information;
2. They are told if the data is required, or if they may refuse to give it;
3. They are told the consequences of giving or not giving information; and
4. They are told what other persons or agencies will use the information.

The Data Practices Act gives parents/guardians the right to see any information about themselves or their child that is not confidential and to have its meaning explained.

Parent/Guardians/guardians may request the following:

1. To see any information about them or their child that is public or private;
2. An explanation about the information on them or their child; and
3. Copies of papers in their child’s file. (Spero Academy will furnish copies within five working days or explain why additional time is needed. Copying charges may apply.)

Parent/Guardians’/Guardians’ Right to Control Disclosure

Any information classified as private may not be shown to persons outside Spero Academy. Parent/Guardians/guardians have a right to be fully informed about who has access to their information

(see “Parent/Guardians’/Guardians’ Right To See”). Parent/Guardian/guardian written permission is required before that information may be shared. Such permission will:

1. Be expressed in plain language;
2. Be dated;
3. Say exactly who is authorized to give out the information;
4. Say exactly what information can be given;
5. Say how the information is used, now or later; and
6. Say when permission to give out information ends.

Spero Academy will notify parents/guardians, in writing, before their child or their child’s records may be used in a research study, case study, or a public relations activity specific to that child.

Information Release

1. No information on a child can be released without parents’/guardians’ written consent. Only the information requested on the signed release form shall be released.
 - a. Information that has become part of a child’s file from other agencies (medical, psychological, or educational) cannot be released by Spero Academy. This information must be obtained from the source agency. Please note that school personnel, including our board members and authorizer, have access to student records for information and monitoring of student progress.

Parent/Guardians’/Guardians’ Right to Challenge

Parent/Guardians must notify Spero Academy in writing if any information on file about them or their child is not accurate, correct, or complete. Within 30 days, Spero Academy will correct the information and attempt to notify everyone who has received the information in the past. Or, if Spero Academy thinks the data is correct, the parents/guardians will be notified and thereafter Spero Academy will attach an explanation when using the data that was challenged.

Discipline Policy and Procedures

Good behavior, centering on self-discipline and consideration for others, is encouraged and expected. Maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning is a priority for everyone at school.

The School Discipline Policy summarized here is intended to comply with the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and current School Board policies. Spero Academy’s Policies and Procedures comply with federal and state requirements to notify parents of these policies. The complete policies and use of Restrictive Procedures are available in the school office and on the Spero Academy website.

Responsibilities for School Discipline

Director/Administration:

1. Supports and assists staff members, parents, and students in situations involving conflict;
2. Informs the School Board of serious behavior problems in the school and efforts made to correct or resolve these problems;
3. Establishes all necessary procedures, rules, and regulations for effective School Board policies relating to the standards of student behavior;
4. Maintains responsibility for all discipline in the school and ensures that disciplinary measures are handled objectively and fairly; and
5. Provides good communication with staff, parents, students, and the community.

Teachers:

1. Provide the best possible education by creating and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning;
2. Respect all students and parents as individuals; and
3. Provide good communication with staff, parents, students, and community.

Parent/Guardian/Guardian:

1. See that their child attends school on a regular basis;
2. Support school rules. Work together with the student and school personnel; and
3. Accept legal responsibility for the behavior of the student as established by law and common practice.

Students:

1. Attend school daily;
2. Be on time;
3. Pursue and attempt to complete all assignments;
4. Assist the school staff in making the school a safe place for all students;
5. Be aware of school rules and behave accordingly;
6. Care for school property;
7. Dress and groom to meet safety and health standards; and
8. Express ideas in a manner that will not offend or slander others.

Behavioral Expectations

Spero Academy is a school that is a physically and emotionally safe environment for all. Each individual has the right to learn and develop to his or her full potential. This right applies to students, as well as adults, in our school community. To foster and maintain a positive climate, expectations are clearly communicated and clarified. Behaviors that interfere with a positive climate will be handled consistently and fairly, with the main goal being to regain appropriate behavior.

STAR Student Expectations

Spero Academy believes that optimal student achievement (academic and behavioral) can be attained by utilizing a proactive systematic approach for creating and maintaining an effective and safe learning environment. Spero Academy has implemented a research backed, School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports Framework (also referred to as

PBIS) for school culture and student support at school. STAR expectations are:

S = Safe Choices

T = Try Your Best

A= Acceptance

R = Respect and Responsibility

Each teacher has STAR student guidelines for their classroom, as well as shared rules for common school areas. Each student is expected to do her/his BEST at managing her/his own behavior.

Challenging Behavior

If a child has serious difficulty following a behavior guideline, parents/guardians may receive a phone call or written communication from their Case Manager or the Director. A collaborative team effort between Spero Academy staff and parents is necessary to determine an appropriate behavior plan. Disciplinary actions include loss of privileges, in-school suspension, or suspension from school. Spero Academy's goal is to stop behavior difficulties before they rise to a serious level. This goal is attainable when the school and family work together.

If a weapon, chemical abuse, bullying, or harassment is involved, the situation is handled following Spero Academy's Student Safety and Conduct policy and procedures mandated by state law.

Dismissal During the School Day

If a student becomes ill and must go home, s/he will go to the office. When students are excused during the school day, the following procedures are used:

1. Parent/Guardian or guardian (or an individual who has been authorized in writing by the parent/ guardian or direct verbal permission to school personnel) signs the student out at the office;
2. Students leaving school early for any reason will not be transported by school personnel to home, after-school childcare, or other destinations, unless a direct emergency warrants or the Director approves it;
3. When a student becomes sick or injured, school personnel will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact via phone, electronic means, or other forms of direct communication;
4. Injury Reports are completed and the parents are notified in a timely manner when a student injury occurs; and
5. School staff will assist students who are visibly upset on school property or during school hours/programs and notify parents and/or administration for support in resolving the concern in a reasonable and prudent manner.

Dress Code

The dress and personal appearance of students should be a positive reflection on the family, student, school, and community. We ask students to take care to dress in an appropriate,

acceptable manner. A clean and well-groomed appearance is to be maintained at school, as well as outside of school functions (example: field trips). Students need to wear appropriate footwear for the weather and safe outdoor play. Students may wear hats to and from school and at recess; however, hats must remain in the student's locker during school-time.

Dressing for the Weather

Students should assume there will be outside recess opportunities every day, throughout all seasons, weather permitting. During the winter, each child should have a warm hat, coat, gloves, and boots. During the summer, a hat and water bottle are appropriate for outdoor play. Notification to the school staff is necessary if a child is recovering from a condition that warrants staying inside. Spero Academy is not responsible for lost and stolen articles. Please see Lost and Found heading.

Electronic Signatures

Spero Academy is dedicated to increasing the efficacy of communication between our families and the school. In order to increase the convenience for families filling out the necessary forms and updating Spero Academy on information changes, we are beginning to move from paper to online forms. All forms will continue to be available in a paper format, but if you would like to complete them electronically, please be aware that you will be asked to type your name in an act of providing an electronic signature. Electronic signatures are as legally binding as manual signatures, as established by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA, 1999) and the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESign, 2000).

Emergency Contacts

Unexpected events happen to families and to students. It is imperative to provide the front office with an emergency contact in case an unforeseen event does occur. Customarily it is advised that you provide contacts your children already know and trust (family members, relatives, friends). These contacts can be changed at any time by notifying the office. The contact will need to show identification to office personnel at the time of the first pick up.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

Spero Academy is committed to equal treatment of all students, and fair and equal consideration of all prospective students, without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, or any other factor prohibited by law. Spero Academy complies with all federal, state, and local requirements in connection with equal access regulations. Spero Academy has a written affirmative program in which it commits to administering all actions in compliance with such regulations. Refer to the Equal Opportunity Policy on the Spero Academy website.

Field Trips

Spero Academy will take advantage of the cultural and community events that the surrounding area has to offer. Field trips are used to enhance the educational programs. Students are expected to conduct themselves in the same fashion during these trips as if they were in school. Teachers will notify parents/guardians of planned field trips and often give the opportunity for adult

participation and donation, both of which are optional. Students may not attend field trips without a properly signed permission form.

Fire and Emergency Drills

Fire and emergency drills are practiced throughout the year to prepare students for where to go and what to do in case of an emergency. All students are required to participate. Spero Academy has tailored building-specific crisis management plans for lock down procedures, evacuation of the building, and sheltering in place. These procedures are set forth in the Crisis Management Policy listed on school website. Questions about specific step-by-step implementation of these procedures should be directed to your child's teacher.

Governance

The Spero Academy Board of Directors governs Spero Academy. The Board is responsible for policy development, financial management, school growth, and general oversight of the school management. Their work includes determining the method under which educational services are delivered, the curriculum being followed, and the budget. The Spero Academy Board members include individuals from the community. They have a variety of backgrounds in education, including Spero Academy teachers, law, business management, community, parents of current students, and higher education. Their expertise, experience, and commitment establish a solid foundation for Spero Academy and provide guidance in creating a vision for the school's future and policy oversight.

Spero Academy Board meetings are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of every month at Spero Academy from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The Board and Committee meeting schedules are posted in the school office and on the school website. Modifications to the schedule are posted in the office and on the website as well.

The Board schedules time during each meeting for public comment. Persons who wish to address the Board may do so during this period. Each speaker is asked to limit his or her time to three (3) minutes.

Parent/Guardians and students are invited to attend board meetings. If a parent/guardian has a specific agenda item for the Board, this item must be presented two weeks in advance in order to be approved for the meeting agenda. These items will then be added to the agenda when approved. To add an item to the board agenda, please contact the Spero Academy Director at 612-465-8601.

A copy of all minutes of Board and Board Committee meetings are posted on the website at www.spero.academy and are available at the school office for review.

Grading System

Students are graded according to their demonstration of skills and understanding in the content area, as well as their personal and social skills/development. Grade level report cards reflect academic and developmentally appropriate skills. Questions related to report card information

may be discussed at conference time or by contacting the child's teacher anytime.

Hazing Prohibition

Spero Academy is dedicated to maintaining a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school and are prohibited at all times. Hazing activities include bullying and exclusion of any student. Hazing is a term used to describe various rituals and other activities, including bullying which use harassment, abuse or humiliation as a way of initiating a person into a group.

General Statement of Hazing Policy

1. No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing;
2. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school shall permit, condone, or tolerate hazing;
3. Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy;
4. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and after school hours;
5. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or state law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act; and
6. The school will investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school who is found to have violated this policy.

Homework Assignments

Homework activities are a natural follow-up to many in-school assignments. Homework is an extension of daily school activity. Some assignments may be completed in a short time while others may be of longer duration. The quantity of homework will vary from class to class based on a child's need and ability.

Homework affords parents/guardians an opportunity to participate and collaborate in the educational process by allowing them to monitor accuracy, neatness, and application of study skills. Parent/Guardians/guardians are encouraged to establish a specific time each evening for their child to study and complete assignments. Assignments may be modified to accommodate the needs of each individual child. Specific questions regarding homework should be directed to the child's teacher. Parent/Guardians can find their child's teacher contact information in the appendix.

Homework Educational Objectives

1. Teach the student to work independently and to assume responsibility for completing work;
2. Reinforce lessons by practicing skills and repeating facts;
3. Enrich school study units;

4. Teach the use of out-of-school resources, such as the library;
5. Enable a child to learn to organize time and materials; and
6. In addition to regular classroom assignments, each child should read, or be read to, at least 15 minutes daily. Contact your child's teacher for ideas of what to read if you are unsure.

Kindergarten

Children five years of age on or before September 1 are eligible to enter kindergarten. All students entering kindergarten must have completed kindergarten screening. Parent/Guardians or guardians need to contact the student's resident district office to set up kindergarten screening if this needs to be done.

Lock Down Procedure

Spero Academy lock-down procedures will be used in situations where harm may result to persons inside the school building, such as a shooting, hostage incident, intruder, trespass, disturbance, or when determined to be necessary by the building administrator or his or her designee. For further questions about the procedure, please see your child's teacher or the school Director. Parent/Guardians can also review the Fire and Emergency Drills provision in the handbook and the Crisis Management Policy on the website.

Lost and Found

Labeling garments, boots, gloves, etc. and bringing money to school only when necessary can prevent losses. Losses should be reported to the teacher or office staff immediately. All found items are to be turned in to the school office. Spero Academy staff is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

Lunch Program/Snacks

Spero Academy has adopted a wellness policy and plan to assist our students to develop healthy, strong bodies and minds and to promote healthy decision-making and behaviors.

Lunch temperatures

Families are asked to provide a cold lunch from home for children. We ask families to provide nutritious, healthy, and appropriate serving size lunches. To prevent the risk of food borne disease, lunches must be cold and packed with a cold pack if food needs to be refrigerated. Refrigeration of lunches is not available at Spero Academy.

Milk

Spero Academy provides milk to children through the MN Kindergarten Milk Program and the MN Special Milk Program. Any special accommodations for lunch beverages must be provided for by the parents/guardians. Students are not permitted to drink soda (pop) during school hours.

Snacks

Every class has a "snack time". Families are responsible for providing a healthy snack for their child on a daily basis. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles for use in the classroom, at

lunch, and during snack time.

Sharing

Students may bring a store-bought item for the class to share on special events such as a birthday. The classroom teacher needs to be notified in advance on these occasions. Please be prepared to share the ingredients list if there is an allergy for which the classroom must make provisions. We ask that use of candy and sweet products be limited to support the Spero Academy Wellness Plan. The Wellness Plan is located on the Spero Academy website in the policies section

Messages for Staff

Spero Academy staff will return all phone calls or messages within 24-48 hours with the exception of messages left on a Thursday or the day before a holiday. Prompt communication between both parties will facilitate solutions and help to avoid misunderstandings.

Parent/Guardian/teacher communication may take place via a daily notebook, Spero Academy e-mail, voice messages, or other agreed upon methods. Refer to the staff directory on the school website for more information.

Messages for Students

The school staff will relay “urgent” messages to the pertinent student as long as it is received no later than 2:45 p.m.

Money

All additional money for field trips, book orders, etc. should be placed in a sealed envelope with the student’s name, teacher’s name, and purpose stated on the front of the envelope and delivered to the classroom teacher. All purchase and donation requests made by Spero Academy are optional and students will participate, regardless of ability to pay in all school-authorized and required activities.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Spero Academy complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, including, without limitation, the constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, age, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

Non-Sectarian Policy

Spero Academy operates as a non-sectarian, non-religious, non-home-based public school. The school is not affiliated with any non-public or sectarian school or religious organization.

Any person having questions concerning the school’s compliance with these requirements should contact the Spero Academy Director at the school address.

Office

The office is the place where school business is transacted. Students/parents/guardians should go to the office to sign in, to obtain permission to leave school, to make arrangements to withdraw

from school, and to conduct other appropriate business. Office hours are 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. when school is in session. Notify the office at (612) 465-8600 in the event of an absence, tardiness, or when a student must leave school early.

Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences

Parent/Guardian-teacher conferences are scheduled during the school calendar year, one in the fall and the other in the spring. Parent/Guardians/Guardians should check the school calendar for specific dates. Drop-in conferences are often hurried and lack privacy because there is no time afforded to the teacher to prepare for the conference. Scheduling conference times is important to the quality of the meeting. Parent/Guardians and/or guardians are required to attend. Conferences are scheduled with the classroom teacher and are an opportunity to discuss target goals for student learning. Scheduling consideration is given to families who have more than one child attending the school. If needed, additional conferences may be arranged with the child’s teacher.

Parties and Celebrations

Spero Academy allows celebrations only with the permission of the Director and the teacher. Individual classrooms may schedule culminating events/activities around specific areas of study. Examples of these types of activities would be an Ancient Egypt party or Cinco de Mayo celebration. We ask that use of candy and sweet products be limited to support the Spero Academy Wellness Plan. The Wellness Plan is located on the Spero Academy website in the policies section

Picture Release/Pictures

Parent/Guardians are asked to complete a “Media Release Form” at enrollment and at the beginning of each new school year. This release authorizes the use of the child’s picture in marketing activities that are agency-related, such as the promotion of Spero Academy programs for educational purposes.

No access to files or parent contacts is given without written parent/guardian’s consent. As noted on the form, parents/guardians may refuse permission. It is Spero Academy’s policy to notify parents of any use of their child’s picture and to request special written permission for use in publications not generated by the school. Since the school building is used for community activities Parent/Guardians/Guardians should be aware that when signing the agreement to allow Spero Academy to use the student’s photo, that agreement includes posting photos in the classroom and school common areas.

School pictures are taken each year. Information is sent home prior to Picture Day. This activity is provided as a service to families. No one should feel obligated to purchase school pictures.

Playground Expectations

Students are expected to follow rules regarding playground and indoor gym activities. All games should be played with a concern for the safety of others using the playground or gym. The equipment is to be used properly. If there are questions about use, consult with a teacher or supervisor. Students shall be supervised by an appropriate number of adults at all times.

Pledge of Allegiance

Students are given the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America one or more times each week. Each individual classroom teacher or the teacher's designee conducts the recitation. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance may elect to do so. Students and school personnel will respect another person's right to make that choice.

Room Assignments

The Director is ultimately responsible for placing students in classrooms. Consideration is given to leadership ability, self-discipline, achievement, motivation, behavior, and interpersonal relationships with other children. Assignments are based upon information gathered from the classroom teachers, special services, and parents.

School Property

Spero Academy staff and families will promote a culture in which property is valued and well maintained. All Spero Academy students are expected to respect the school facility and school property. Students will work together to care for the school facility.

School Schedule

School hours K-6 are 8:50 a.m.-3:20 p.m.

Arrival at School

School begins at 8:50 a.m.

Vans unload and load students at the west entrance to the building facing California Street.

Children who are transported privately should be dropped off in the parking lot area using the student drop off/pick up lane. Starting at 8:40 a.m. Spero Academy staff is on hand to assist students into the building. Students should not be dropped off without adult supervision present who can escort them into the building.

School staff will be available to greet these students as well. School doors open at 8:40 a.m. Please wait outside with students before the start of school.

DO NOT park on the west side of the street and walk students across the street. We teach students to cross only at crosswalks and corners. **DO NOT** walk students through the van line at the curb.

If students are transported independently and arrive late to school, they must be assisted by an adult into the building and escorted to the school office. Late arrivals require parents to sign in at the school office. Staff will assist the student to their classroom.

Departure from School

School ends at 3:20 p.m.

Vans will pick up students at the west entrance on the California Street NE side of the building. School staff will assist with departure and busing.

Students who are transported privately should be picked up in the school parking lot area using the student drop off/pick up lane. Students are released at 3:20 p.m. Please wait outside for students to be dismissed.

If students are picked up from school by parents or a designee rather than transported by van, they must arrive by the end of the school day at 3:20 p.m. Students whose transportation has not arrived by the time vans leave will wait for their driver in the school office.

If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up the child from school, notification to the office with the following information is required:

1. Name of person authorized to pick up the student.
2. Reason and time of pickup.
3. Whether the student will return to school that day.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Refer to section on Discipline Policies and Procedures.

Severe Weather and Emergency School Closings

School closings are announced through the phone line message, Spero Academy website www.spero.academy and local news stations. Spero Academy students are transported from many different districts, which may affect safe transportation. Early closures due to weather or other circumstances will be announced on the phone line and the school website.

Families are encouraged to supply an email address and cell phone number so they may be contacted via these methods as well. Families can also register to receive a text message or automated voice message via the Website Notification System. Please contact the main office for additional registration details.

Service Animals

Spero Academy has a policy on the use of service animals at the school. We ask individuals who are assisted by a service animal to discuss arrangements with the Director prior to enrolling at or visiting the school.

Special Services

Students with special learning, speech, and/or behavioral needs may receive assistance from the Special Services Department (Special Education) at school. Parent/Guardians are involved when planning and/or assessing a student's needs.

Special education services can be provided to children enrolled at Spero Academy who meet the required criteria. All questions regarding the program may be directed to the Special Services Coordinator at 612-465-8602.

S.T.A.R Student Information

Refer to Discipline Policies in Procedures heading

Student Records

Parent/Guardians have the right under federal and state laws to inspect and review their child's student educational and health records maintained by Spero Academy. They have the right to request an amendment to their child's student records to ensure they are accurate, not misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. The child's school records may be viewed at any time. A request needs to be submitted either as a written notice or via email to the school is requested so that the records may be pulled. The records may be reviewed in the presence of the classroom teacher, the Director, and/or privately.

Substitute Teachers/Substitute Staff

Spero Academy is fortunate to have qualified people to teach or assist help whenever the regular teachers are ill or away from school. Spero Academy works with a licensed agency to provide well-qualified substitute teachers and paraprofessionals as an alternate source for covering staff absences. Any questions with regard to substitute staff should be given to the Director.

Textbooks/School Books

The textbooks used by students are supplied by the school and are the property of the school. Each student should take exceptional care of the books issued to him or her.

Thefts and Locker Security

Spero Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Lost or stolen items should be reported to the teacher. Every effort will be made to recover and return the article. Students are encouraged not to bring valuables to school. All items brought to school should be clearly marked for easy identification. Students are assigned lockers. No student locks are permitted. (see also Lost and Found heading in Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook)

Tobacco and Drug-Free Environment and Education

It is a violation for any student, teacher, administrator, and all other school personnel of the school district or person to use tobacco or tobacco-related devices in a public school or on the school grounds. Use of controlled substances, toxic substances, and alcohol before, during, or after school hours, at school or in any other school location, is prohibited as general policy. Paraphernalia associated with controlled substances is prohibited.

Transportation

Spero Academy provides busing for students who live within the designated boundaries of the school location in Minneapolis. Spero Academy contracts with Contemporary Transportation to provide transportation for its students according to Minnesota law. The contact is Contemporary Transportation: 612-332-2888.

Parent/Guardians must call Contemporary Transportation directly if their child is not riding the

bus on a particular day. When riding the school bus, students are expected to remain in their seats and follow bus safety rules. A signed ridership agreement discussing the rules and expectations is required for all bus riders. Riding the school bus is a privilege and all students need to abide by the rules of safe riding. Students are trained in Bus Safety during the first 60 days of school, as well as at least one additional time per school year.

Any changes in transportation require families to complete and submit a Transportation Form to the school office. The Transportation Form can be found on the school website www.spero.academy. Transportation requests can take up to two weeks to process.

Any transportation accommodations must be a part of a child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) in order to be fulfilled. Transportation accommodations will be discussed, decided, and scheduled for implementation during a team meeting.

Visitors

Spero Academy welcomes and encourages parents, guardians, and guests to schedule planned visits with their child's teacher during school hours. All visitors shall enter the school by using the East entrance on the parking lot via the intercom. To ensure a safe and secure environment for each student, a log of all visitors is maintained in the school office. School visitors must sign-in; after signing in, the visitor is issued a visitor or volunteer's badge. Badges should be worn at all times on the school grounds. Parent/Guardians or guardians who need to deliver an item to their child will check in with the school office for identification purposes.

Parent/Guardians and guests should schedule with the classroom teacher or the Director if planning a classroom visit. The teacher can then prepare students for visitors.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities to volunteer at Spero Academy. All volunteers are required to agree to a background check at their own cost, to attend a volunteer orientation, and are expected to act under a professional code of conduct.

Weapons

No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use, or distribute a weapon or any facsimile when in a school location. Spero Academy will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer, or member of the public who violates this policy.

Wellness Program Policy

The Spero Academy Wellness Policy is located on the Spero Academy website in the Policy list on the Board page.

Withdrawal from School

If a parent plans to withdraw their child from Spero Academy, they should notify the school office in writing, provide Spero Academy with the new educational information, and the date of

the child’s last day at Spero Academy. Records for students enrolling into a new school are sent by Spero Academy office upon formal request by the receiving school. Spero Academy’s number is 612-465-8600.

II. SCHOOL HEALTH INFORMATION

Health Services Overview

The mission of the Spero Academy Health Services is to “promote and support optimal health for an optimal learning experience.”

The School Health Services is coordinated by: Kristen Gerber, RN, PHN, School Nurse Contact information:

Phone: 612-465-8600

Email: kgerber@spero.academy

Unlicensed Health Service Assistants (HSA) who provide the following services to support Spero Academy students:

1. Assess individual student health and developmental status;
2. Promote and maintain the health and well-being of all students;
3. Develop health plans for students with health conditions;
4. Coordinate prevention and control of communicable disease;
5. Develop a system of first aid and emergency care;
6. Participate in health education; and
7. Recommend new and updated health policies.

School Nurse	Health Service Assistant
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides treatment plans; 2. Medication delegation, administration, and supervision; 3. Assess health status and plans for students; 4. Provides health education; 5. Provides health consultation to students and staff; and 6. Provides referrals to community resources. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides first aid to students and staff; 2. Administers medication (under direction Registered Nurse) 3. Proces immunization records; 4. Maintains health records.

Immunizations

Kids Need Shots for School!

It's the Law in Minnesota. To go to school in Minnesota, students must show they've had these immunizations or provide a Medical Exemption or Notarized Conscientious Exemption.

Preschool children, through age 4, must show evidence of the following:

1. 4 doses of DTP or DTP (diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis);
2. 3 doses of Polio (OPV or IPV);
3. 1 dose of MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) given after the first birthday;
4. 1 or more doses of Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b); and
5. 1 dose of Chicken Pox vaccine.

Kindergarten children, who are 6 years old or younger, must show evidence of the following:

1. 5 doses of DTP or DTP (diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis), unless the fourth dose was given after the fourth birthday;
2. 4 doses of Polio (OPV or IPV), unless the third dose was given after the fourth birthday;
3. 1 dose of MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) given on or after the first birthday;
4. 2 doses of Chicken Pox vaccine; and
5. 3 doses of Hepatitis B.

School Health Records

Spero Academy intends to use the requested information to provide for your child's health and safety needs while at school. You may refuse to supply the requested personal information.

There will be no consequence for not providing the information. However, it may result in an incomplete health and safety plan for your child. The information you provide will be shared only with staff in the school whose jobs require access to this information to ensure your child's safety and school success. (MS Section 13.04, Subdivision 2)

School Health Records consist of the following forms:

1. Current Immunization Record;*
2. Student Health Form;
3. Student Emergency Contact Form;
4. Medication Administration Form (if applicable); and
5. Individual Health Care Plan (if applicable).

*Students may not attend school without current immunizations. To go to school in Minnesota, students must show they've had these immunizations or provide a Medical Exemption or Notarized Conscientious Exemption.

Annual Health Forms

The following forms are requested annually and provide up-to-date health information and parents/ emergency contacts phone numbers.

1. Student Health Form;
2. Student Emergency Contact Form;
3. Medication Administration Form (if applicable); and

4. Individual Health Care Plan (if applicable).

Medication Management in School Guidelines

Whenever possible, the parent or guardian should make arrangements so that it is not necessary for school personnel to administer a medication to a student. However, there are cases when a student's health could be compromised by not getting medication during school hours. When sending any prescription or nonprescription medication to school each year, parents must send:

1. Written parent permission (see Administration Form above) authorizing school personnel to administer medication;
2. A written order from the physician (see Administration Form above) indicating the necessity of any (prescription or over-the counter) medication, including dose and how often it can be given. The physician may fax the order to the school; and
3. The original labeled container of the medication. For prescription medication, the pharmacist will supply a duplicate labeled container so one can be kept at home and one can be kept at school. Each container should have the phone number of the pharmacy, student's name, physician's name, medication's name, dosage, time to be given, and route (oral, inhaled, etc.).

For the safety of all students, we require that families bring their child's medication to the school office directly and meet with the School Nurse or Health Service Assistant to check in and count medication.

Forms

Administration of Medication Form is required for students needing to take medication at school.

Storage

Medication to be administered at school is to be kept in the School Office. Exceptions are students who may carry an asthma inhaler or an epi-pen, if they have a written doctor's order and written parental permission to do so, and have demonstrated to the school nurse competency in administration. Other special requests may be discussed with the School Nurse.

Half Tablets

Health Services staff is not responsible for breaking tablets in half. This will not be done at school. When there is a physician order to give one-half of a tablet, please talk with your pharmacist.

Field Trips

If your child takes daily or as-needed medication, you will be receiving a form to complete indicating whether or not there is a need for this medication on field trips. Health Services staff do not routinely accompany students on field trips and a teacher may be responsible for administration of medication.

Standard Medications

Health Services staff will administer only medication that is listed and described in the Standard Physician's Desk Reference (PDR) or the over-the-counter (OTC) PDR.

Nebulizer Treatments

When nebulizer treatments are required, special arrangements must be made in advance with the School Nurse.

Other Treatments or Health Support Needs

We ask parents to contact the school nurse for coordinating all other health related treatments or support needs.

Student Illness**Illness at School**

The school environment can be an excellent medium for the rapid spread of illness. Any student assessed in the Health Service Office must be dismissed from school and picked up by a parent/guardian or other authorized individual if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

1. Vomiting;
2. Diarrhea;
3. Temperature 100 or above;
4. Suspected or confirmed communicable disease; and/or
5. Other symptoms upon discussion with parent/guardian.

Absences and Return to School

Your child may return to school after an absence due to illness when:

1. He/she has been on an antibiotic for twenty-four hours;
2. No vomiting/diarrhea for twenty-four hours; and /or
3. Fever free for twenty-four hours without the aid of a fever reducing medication

A note from your physician is required if your child has been absent for five or more consecutive school days. The School Nurse is available to facilitate transition back into the classroom and coordinate planning for medications, treatments and equipment if needed.



After reading and reviewing the Parent/Guardian/Student Handbook, **please sign and return** the following statement to the Spero Academy office:

The following individuals by their signatures indicate that they have read, understand, and agree with the content included in the Spero Academy Parent/Guardian/Student Handbook. Parent/Guardians/Guardians agree to discuss the content with and support their child in meeting the expectations included in the Handbook. Students agree to meet the expectations of students at Spero Academy to the best of their ability every day at school.

Student

Date

Parent/Guardian/Guardian

Date

Parent/Guardian/Guardian

Date