

## A Little About the Exploratory Model

The Exploratory Model is based on C.A.R.E. — Community, Achievement, Responsibility, and Exploration

### The Philosophy:

The Exploratory School model was designed by in 1992 upon the research based principles of:

- project-based learning
- multiple intelligences
- multi-age classrooms
- Choice Theory

We individualize for students' learning needs through:

- multi-age classrooms (grouped accordingly: 1st and 2nd grades, 3rd and 4th grades, 5th and 6th grades)
- project based learning
- differentiating instructional levels
- subject acceleration
- extra support through special classes, volunteer help, or adjusted curriculum

We believe students learn best through experience and exploration. We weave traditional learning with hands-on experiences and real world activities as much as possible.

### School Culture and Achievement:

The school culture is based on Glasser's Choice Theory and Quality School model. We expect our students to:

- be personally responsible for everything from dressing appropriately, to homework and personal learning goals
- complete quality work (80% or better)
- make healthy choices according to our school culture.

Students enjoy attending school due to a safe and nurturing environment. School culture instruction includes:

- acceptance of all learning styles, multiple intelligences, and diverse backgrounds
- personal responsibility attitudes and skills (bully-proofing, Caring vs. Deadly Habits, and leadership skills)
- 3 P's (Polite, Prepared and Positive Mental Attitude)
- making healthy life choices.

We view parents as partners in education and expect parents to

- participation in Culture Night workshops (1 night per year)
- support caring habits at home and school
- promote student personal responsibility for learning and behavior
- communicate and collaborate with their child and staff members

The School motto is "Together We Make a Difference." We participate in community outreach programs.

Yearly, all students give back to our community by:

- participating in school community activities (classroom buddy days, special events, school clean up days, daily duties)
- participating in a local community activity, such as the mural painting near Centennial Park
- collaborating with a community group such as CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) to help promote their cause.

### Projects:

Quarterly, every student creates an individual project around a "passion area" which honors students' natural curiosity. Students:

- ask driving questions, complete research, create visuals, and formally present their findings to classmates and other audiences
- set up speakers, field trips, and activities to accompany their projects!

These presentations frequently inspire driving questions for classmates' future projects. It is a wonderful way to motivate students and give them a desire to discover new learning.

### Field Trips:

Students participate in exploratory learning through multiple field trips during the year. Field trips might be:

- to the library
- to the local eco park and the river walk
- to the Mining Museum or Children's Museum
- To other places related to quarterly classroom conceptual units
- from traveling programs such as hands-on presentations from The Gator Reserve and the Natural History Museum.



We are a learning community; we dine together, we play together, we work together, and we learn together! We CARE!

# Parents as Partners

## Parent Involvement is key:

Parent involvement is critically important for a child's success in school.

Balance is important, because while parents want to be involved, you must help your child understand that it is **their** education, **their** work, **their** responsibility, and **their** achievement. By creating a strong foundation in elementary school, you create a value that will last throughout their school years. You cannot learn for them, but you can help them develop in the following ways:

- have high expectations for quality in academic work and behavior
- provide a supply of reading materials at home
- read to and with your child
- encourage your child to use their academic skills in any way they can
- ask lots of questions about the specifics of the school day and subject areas
- encourage your child to solve their own problems by showing empathy with support for their abilities
- do not rescue your children, it gives them the message that they can't handle problems by themselves
- offer suggestion for possible solutions to problems
- help your child understand that they always have choices, and with each choice comes a reality....good or bad—and let them own the results
- support projects, but **do not do** projects for your child
- learn **with** your child, be interested in what they are doing, let them teach you.
- children learn through experience. At some point in their growing up, you will feel frustrated and disappointed with your child's actions or choices.
- do not worry, consider these moments opportunities to learn and grow

## 11 Tips for Communicating with your Child's Teacher:

1. Remember that communication is critical to student success.
2. Learn the school expectations for behavior, responsibility and quality work.
3. **READ** the information the school sends home. It will save time for you and for the school staff.
4. Ask how you can volunteer. We love having parents help in our school!
5. Be sure to ask questions about what is happening in school. It is best to make an appointment so issues can be discussed when your child's teacher isn't teaching or supervising children.
6. Let the school and your child's teacher know about any major changes in your child's life.
7. Remember that your teacher has a classroom full of students with parents to communicate with. Sometimes time is difficult. Please be patient with the communication process.
8. Be calm when problems arise. Remember we are here to help your child become compassionate, responsible, independent, and productive. We all want what is best for students, and that sometimes includes uncomfortable learning experiences.
9. If you make school a priority, so will your child. Kids love their hobbies and sports activities, but if you put those events ahead of school, it teaches your child that school is not important.
10. Be sure to attend all special school events. This communicates to your child that what they are learning and doing in school is important to you.
11. Keep the office updated with phone number or address changes.