



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
AT THE TONY HSIEH  
EDUCATION CENTER

**2025-2026**  
**K-5**

# **Parent & Student Handbook**

Dear Strong Start Families,

Kasserian ingera! This is the traditional greeting used by the Masai tribe in Africa that means, "How are the children?" This greeting captures the essence of what Strong Start is all about. We are about the children! This greeting acknowledges the high value that we will always place on our children's well-being. The traditional response to the greeting is, "all the children are well", which confirms that the priorities of protecting the children are in place! The response serves as a constant reminder to never forget the reason why we are all here. It means that no matter what is going on around us, nothing is more important than properly caring for our children. This greeting perfectly reflects the philosophy at Strong Start Academy, where we emphasize positive and supportive relationships between students and adults that enable students to persist and succeed in academic environments. We are so excited to welcome you to our new school and even more excited and honored that you have selected Strong Start Academy Elementary as your child's school!

As we work together to ensure "all the children are well", we have developed this Parent & Student Handbook to assist in this endeavor. This handbook establishes consistent and clear expectations that align with our school's philosophy, vision, and mission. While we don't expect you to read the handbook from cover to cover, it is extremely important that you familiarize yourself with its contents. This will help you know where to find pertinent information about the school, such as, the school calendar, schedules, policies, procedures, etc. Please know that this is a living document, meaning, it will be consistently edited and updated with relevant information as necessary. We would also encourage you to contribute suggestions and provide feedback throughout the year, as we continuously strive to improve and want to form a true partnership with our families. We value your input and your collaboration. The handbook will be accessible on our website and notifications will alert families anytime changes are made to the handbook.

We look forward to an amazing school year! On behalf of the entire Strong Start family - Kasserian ingera!

Thank you for reviewing our Parent & Student Handbook!

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# **Board of Directors**

Lorna James-Cervantes, President

Maria Tamayo-Soto, Treasurer

Dachresha Harris, Officer

L. Alee Moore, Officer

Tari Smethurst, Officer

Alicia Arroyo, Officer

Roxann McCoy, Officer

Vanessa Mari, Officer

## **Board Meetings**

Board meetings are open to the public.

Meeting dates and times are posted as per Open Meeting Law (OML) requirements on the school website

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors are held the second Thursday of each month beginning at 5:00 pm

**[www.clvstrongstartes.org](http://www.clvstrongstartes.org)**

## **Administrative Staff**

Miriam Benitez, Executive Director and Principal

[mbenitez@clvstrongstartes.org](mailto:mbenitez@clvstrongstartes.org)

# What is a Charter School?

As defined by the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools ([www.publiccharters.org](http://www.publiccharters.org)), Charter schools are independent public schools allowed the freedom to be more innovative, while being held accountable for improved student achievement. Charter schools are non-profit, self-managed entities that enroll public school students. They are approved and monitored by the Nevada State Public School Charter Authority; yet, they run independently of one another. Charter schools are funded by state and local monies and are open to any student residing in Nevada who would otherwise qualify to attend a regular public school in the state of Nevada. Charter school students are public school students, subject to all applicable policies. Charter schools foster a partnership between parents, teachers, and students and create an environment in which parents can be more involved, teachers are given the freedom to be innovative and students are provided the structure they need to learn, with all three held accountable for improved student achievement. Strong Start Academy Elementary School is sponsored by the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority, not the Clark County School District.

## Our Mission and Vision

### **Our Mission**

The mission of Strong Start Academy Elementary School is to provide equitable, high-quality academics as we prepare our bilingual, civic-minded thinkers to maximize their potential in their community and the world. SSAES is committed to building a culture of high academic achievement for all students. All children will engage in dual language education that supports and embraces the development of English and Spanish while honoring their home languages and cultures. SSAES will offer rich linguistic and cultural education that values and develops families' cultural heritages and home languages as assets. Providing an enriched multilingual education combined with high expectations will help students attain their greatest potentials and close the achievement gap while preparing them for success in the 21st century.

### **Our Vision**

The vision of Strong Start Academy Elementary School is a culturally diverse learning community that prepares children to excel academically in two languages and have a positive impact on an increasingly evolving and global society.

### **Our Purpose**

Embrace diversity and accelerate learning by providing a high quality and equitable education to give rise to a bilingual, motivated, and socially responsible community of leaders.

## Core Values

The guiding core values for the vision are: (1) **Integrity** - Accountability for our actions and learning, (2) **Social Responsibility** – Respect and value for ourselves, each other, and the community, (3) **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** – Addressing inequitable and/or unjust systems and structures to create educational equity (4) **Civic Engagement** – Enrich the lives of youth to contribute to the well-being of the society. The goal of SSAES is to holistically meet the needs of all students by maximizing each child’s learning potential and creating long lasting, positive impact on learners.

<b>Core Values of SSAES Model</b>	
<p><b>Integrity</b> Accountability for our actions and learning</p>	<p>SSAES will cultivate a strong ethical culture inside and outside of the classroom by encouraging positive and trusting relationships among teachers and students. Teachers will model integrity and a growth mindset by demonstrating and encouraging accountability for our actions and learning. SSAES will maintain a supportive classroom culture, where students feel empowered to take risks in their learning and students will be taught how to build and maintain meaningful relationships. Taking responsibility will be encouraged in order to develop and enhance growth mindsets through personal accountability and reflection.</p>
<p><b>Social Responsibility</b> <b>Respect</b> and value for ourselves, each other, and the community</p>	<p>Social responsibility at SSAES will mean having a personal investment in the well-being of each other, the community and ourselves. SSAES will engage students with curriculum and school culture that values and creates empowerment, compassion, and respect. These values are fundamental for children to develop basic social skills and confidence, which maximizes student achievement and will play a pivotal role in the development of a concerned and responsible society. Teachers will foster the development of self-directed life-long learners in a safe and enriching learning environment while promoting value and respect amongst each other.</p>
<p><b>Diversity, Equity, &amp; Inclusion</b> Addressing inequitable and/or unjust systems and structures to create educational equity</p>	<p>SSAES is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion by taking steps to become an anti-racist and anti-bias school in order to have equitable learning opportunities for all students. SSAES will create a community that supports all dimensions of human differences and will work towards addressing and dismantling inequitable and/or unjust systems and structures. By incorporating multicultural education and taking a culturally responsive approach to teaching, teachers will help students to achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. SSAES wants students to develop a positive self-image and to embrace differences in others. This approach will bring greater multicultural awareness in order to help students with varied needs and backgrounds to succeed. Implementation of effective</p>

<p><b>Civic Engagement</b> Enrich the lives of youth to contribute to the well-being of the society</p>	<p>SSAES wants students to have the critical thinking skills to become productive and active citizens in their community. Teachers will utilize project-based service learning to create opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning, which will help students to begin to formulate their own opinions and views on topics. By embedding service learning into instruction, students will see the impact they have on the community and feel empowered to take action on issues they care about. This approach will work to build leadership and citizenship skills throughout their childhood and as they transition into adulthood. SSAES believes that helping children see their potential and achieve positive change, leading to a profound and lasting impact on their academic performance, social-emotional well-being, and contributing positively to the development of society.</p>
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**Core Beliefs**

Common community values are the driver of culture, allowing students, staff, and families to commit to shared ways of operating, hold common language for culture, and live out the commitments through implementation of our Core Beliefs. SSAES is a values-driven community of learners committed to the following Core Beliefs.

**SSAES Core Beliefs:**

- SSAES will strive for high academic standards and expectations for all students in an environment that stimulates learning.
- SSAES will promote students’ self-esteem with positive reinforcement and build good character so each student can be successful.
- SSAES believes in programs that allow students to progress academically through appropriately leveled instruction.
- SSAES believes our parents/guardians and families should be equipped with information and resources in order to support their child’s learning.
- SSAES respects diversity and individual differences in our students and staff. ○ SSAES believes students should be provided with opportunities to learn a second language.
- SSAES uses technology to help our students, parents, and staff prepare for the future.

## SSAES Character Traits

SSAES will be a place that is warm and welcoming with a focus on what is best for children, their families and the community. Through the explicit teaching of character traits, we will build a firm foundation for children to develop strong civic values. Parents/guardians and students will feel the difference and see these character traits in action every day.

○ Kindness ○ Empathy ○ Respect ○ Cooperation ○ Integrity ○ Gratitude ○ Justice ○ Curiosity ○ Courage ○ Perseverance ○ Accountability

kindnes**S**  
empa**T**hy  
**R**espect  
Co**O**peration  
i**N**tegrity  
**G**ratitude  
  
ju**S**tice  
curiosi**T**y  
cour**A**ge  
pe**R**severance  
Accoun**T**ability

# General School Procedures

## School Hours

Teacher workday: 7:30 am to 3:30 pm  
Student Bell Times: 8:00 am to 3:15 pm

Before/After school childcare:  
7:00 am - 8:00 am before school  
3:15 pm – 6:00 pm after school

## School Calendar

[2025-2026 SSAES Calendar](#)

## Daily Schedule

7:00 am	Before school childcare
8:00 am	First bell Campus opens Morning Message begins Breakfast after the bell
8:15 am	Late bell
8:30 am	Breakfast ends
3:15 pm	Dismissal
3:15 pm	After school childcare

## Childcare

Before and after-school childcare is available starting at 7:00 AM through Safekey. Please contact the Safekey office at (702) 229-5437 for more information or visit the website at [www.lasvegasnevada.gov/residents/education/safekey](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/residents/education/safekey).

## Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

### Arrival

The school campus will open at 8:00 AM and only students will be permitted on school grounds at that time. Students must arrive promptly at 8:00 AM to ensure they do not miss out on morning activities. Gates will be locked by 8:15 AM to ensure the safety of our students and optimize learning time. Breakfast will be provided in the classrooms until 8:30 AM.

Please note, prior to 8:00 AM, there will be no school personnel on duty to provide supervision. Please do not drop your child off to school before campus is open.

### **Dismissal**

Students will be dismissed at 3:15 PM. The main gate will open by 3:13 PM to allow parents on campus. The gate located on Bridger Avenue will open just before the dismissal bell rings. Kindergarten students will be dismissed directly from their classrooms only to persons authorized to pick-up the student(s). Students in grades 1-4 will be dismissed from their designated dismissal exit. To ensure the safety of all of our students, please be sure to communicate your child's after-school plan with the teacher. Teachers must be informed whether children walk home, wait for an adult, go to after-school care, or any other means of getting home.

### **Early Release**

We understand the need to occasionally pick-up children early from school for appointments, unforeseen circumstances or emergencies. Early dismissals should be an exception not the norm. Early dismissals are disruptive for all of the students in the classroom and for the teacher.

**As a courtesy to the classroom environment, there is no student release within the last 30 minutes of the school day - from 2:45 pm to 3:15 pm - except in the case of an emergency.**

If you have an appointment scheduled during this time period, please email Christine Nguyen at [cnguyen@clvstrongstartes.org](mailto:cnguyen@clvstrongstartes.org) or Marisol Piedra ahead of time at [mpiedra@clvstrongstartes.org](mailto:mpiedra@clvstrongstartes.org).

### **Late/Early Student Check-in/out Procedure**

Students arriving at school after the bell and/or after the gates/doors have been locked must be checked in at the front office.

Students who are dismissed early must be signed out by a parent or guardian in the front office. Students will not be released to those whose names do not appear as a parent/guardian or on the emergency contact list kept on file in Infinite Campus. A photo ID must be shown in order to release a student from the school building. It is the parent's responsibility to come to the front office to add people to the emergency contact list. SSAES is very concerned about the safety and well-being of its students, therefore, there are no exceptions to this policy.

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Purpose**

The primary aim of attendance enforcement is to increase student achievement through improved attendance. Strong Start Academy Elementary School (SSAES) requires that students attend school regularly in accordance with the Nevada Revised Statutes. It is the position of SSAES that if a student is absent, no learning can take place. The educational experiences lost during an absence are irretrievable as the interaction in the classroom setting can seldom be duplicated through makeup work. SSAES recognizes that absences for students who are physically or mentally unable to attend school and have completed the course-work

requirements are exempt under NRS 392.050.

Attendance enforcement is a shared responsibility between SSAES and the student's parent or legal guardian. The parent, legal guardian, or other person in the state of Nevada having control or charge of any student is required to send the student to school during all times that the public school is in session (NRS 392.040). Each student is expected to attend school for the entire school day.

The success of the student's educational program at SSAES is largely based upon his/her daily presence, which ensures the continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The administration, faculty, and staff of SSAES expect the student to be in class, on time, and to be prepared to work. Promoting and fostering consistent student attendance requires a commitment from the administrators, teachers, parent(s)/guardian(s), and students. No single individual or group can successfully accomplish this task. Members of SSAES's professional staff will do all they can to encourage and support student attendance. This ranges from creating a pleasant and safe physical environment to providing meaningful learning experiences and opportunities in every class.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

Per NRS 392.122, the board of each school district must adopt a policy prescribing the circumstances under which a pupil is considered chronically absent by the Nevada Department of Education. Per Nevada state law, there is a 90% attendance requirement. Students must not miss more than 10% of the school year (18 days - excused or unexcused absences). If a student has a medical condition, which makes him/her miss more than the policy allows, the parent/guardian must arrange a meeting with administration to discuss alternative education options. The student is also required to have all missed work completed per the school make-up work policy. Students who do not meet these two conditions and fall short of the attendance requirement may be retained in the current grade. The Safe School Professional and Health and Wellness Specialist will be responsible for monitoring attendance and managing the SSAES Attendance Policy. Families will be notified of absences through attendance calls and written notices.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% (18 days) or more of school days in a year. Chronic absenteeism goes beyond occasional absences due to illness or family emergencies. It reflects a persistent pattern of missing school, which can severely impact a student's academic performance, health, and overall success. Recent research has illuminated the profound effects of chronic absenteeism, making it clear that addressing this issue is crucial for student success.

Regular student attendance is critical to the student completing coursework required for earning credit and/or being promoted to the next grade. Both in school and out-of-school learning activities and assignments contribute to a student's ability not only to attain a passing grade in a course, but also to master the standards for each course of study.

### **Retention**

SSAES expects that students must attain a standard of 90 percent attendance. Individual student absences should be limited to a maximum of eighteen (18) total absences per school year. Students who exceed eighteen (18) approved or unapproved absences during the school year may be retained in the current grade.

For the purpose of this subsection, all arranged absences in excess of ten (10) days during a school year shall be considered unapproved. All arranged absences for which the makeup work was not

completed and submitted as specified by the teacher shall be considered unapproved.

A required parent conference is to be scheduled by the principal or designee when the following occurs due to excessive absenteeism:

1. A student has been identified for possible retention;
2. A student is deemed to be a habitual truant; and/or
3. A referral for educational neglect is contemplated.

### **Due Process**

Before a student is denied promotion to the next higher grade for failure to comply within the attendance requirements prescribed, the principal shall provide written notice of the intended denial to the parent/guardian of the student. The notice must include a statement indicating that the student and parent/guardian may request a review of the absences of the student and a statement of the procedure for requesting such review. Upon the request for review by the parent/guardian, the principal or designee shall review the reason for each absence of the student upon which the intended denial of promotion is based. After the review, the principal or designee shall credit towards the required days of attendance each day of absence for which: There is evidence submitted by the parent/guardian that the student has physically or mentally been unable to attend school on the day of the absence; and the pupil has completed course work requirements.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the principal or designee that the standard under NRS 392.122 3(a) and (b) has not been met, the parent may appeal to the assistant superintendent or designee. The decision of the assistant superintendent or designee shall be final.

### **Notification of Absence**

Notifications of student absences will be made to the parent, legal guardian, or other person having control or charge of the child as recorded in the student information system upon each unverified absence.

In the event of an unapproved absence, the teacher or other school official shall deliver or cause to be delivered a written notice of truancy to the parent, legal guardian, or other person having control or charge of the child (NRS 392.130(4)).

### **Absence Documentation/Explanation**

SSAES includes specific directions and/or procedures relative to the manner in which students will be readmitted to school subsequent to an absence in the student/parent handbook. The procedures developed to implement this policy reflect state law, including elements of the Nevada Education Reform Act of 1997, which includes attendance as a criterion for determining the adequacy of a school's overall program performance. Schools will work with parents and students to identify and remediate the causes of poor attendance. SSAES requires parental/guardian confirmation of the reason for the absence in writing prior to or upon return from each absence. Verified medical appointments, medical excuses, medical documentation and/or other explanations must be presented in writing by the student from the parent/guardian or personally by the parent/guardian within three days directly following the absence.

### **Classification of Absences**

The determination of the proper classification of an absence requires the exercise of judgment on the part of the teacher, principal, or designee. To evaluate the proper classification of the absence, the school may reasonably inquire, investigate, and/or request further documentation from the parent/guardian.

Absences from school due to a student's participation in a school sanctioned activity or absences resulting from a student's suspension or required parent conference shall not be counted as absences for the purpose of attendance enforcement.

### **Approved Absences**

Explanations by the parent, legal guardian, or physician stating the reason the student was absent must be presented to the teacher or principal designee not later than three days after the student returns to school.

Absences shall be approved for the purposes of attendance enforcement pursuant to NRS Chapter 392 when:

1. The student is physically or mentally unable to attend school, or the absence is related to the student's disability and the course work has been completed.
2. The approval of the teacher, principal, or designee has been given for an unavoidable absence due to an emergency.
3. The student is absent due to a required court appearance or a religious holiday.
4. The absence has been arranged pursuant to the request of a parent or legal guardian prior to the absence and does not exceed the allowable ten (10) arranged days per school year.

### **Unapproved Absences**

Absences shall be unapproved for the purposes of attendance enforcement pursuant to NRS Chapter 392 when:

1. The arranged absence was not requested in writing in advance of the absence or exceeded the allowable ten (10) arranged days per school year;
2. The absence was not due to the physical or mental inability of the student to attend school, the student's disability, an emergency, a required court appearance, or religious holiday;
3. The absence from class or school was without written permission from the teacher, principal, or designee;
4. The parent/guardian or person in charge of the student failed to notify the school of the

reason the student was physically or mentally unable to attend, or the nature of the emergency, court appearance or religious holiday within three days after the student returned to school;

5. The student failed or refused to attend school when so directed by the parent or legal guardian or school official; or,
6. The parent or legal guardian or person having charge of the student failed or refused to require the student's attendance at school.

### **Truancy**

An unapproved absence for one or more class periods or the equivalent of one or more class periods during a school day shall be deemed a truancy (NRS 392.130(2)).

If a student has been declared truant three times for unapproved absences, the principal of the school, or designee, shall report the student to local law enforcement for investigation of habitual truancy and issuance of a citation, if warranted, in accordance with NRS 392.144 and NRS 392.149.

Nevada law does not distinguish between truancy resulting from an action of the student and that of the parent or legal guardian.

Any child who has once been declared a habitual truant and who in an immediately succeeding year is absent from school without a valid excuse may again be declared a habitual truant.

Once a student is identified as a habitual truant in accordance with NRS 392.144, the school shall conduct an investigation, set a hearing date, and provide a written notice of the hearing to the parent or legal guardian of the student. If the student remains a habitual truant following the investigation and hearing, the school may issue an order imposing administrative sanctions.

### **Makeup Work**

Teachers shall provide an opportunity for a student to make up missed work due to any absence, and students shall be held accountable for the work. When a student is absent, however, the educational experiences lost during that absence might be irretrievable because the instruction and interaction in the instructional setting cannot be duplicated through makeup work.

After any absence, the parent or legal guardian of an elementary student is responsible to contact the teacher to obtain appropriate makeup work within three school days directly following the absence. Once contact has been made with the teacher, the nature of the makeup work and the time allowed for completion will be determined and communicated by the teacher to the student/parent or legal guardian. Students shall be allowed a minimum of three (3) days to complete makeup work.

## **Recording Daily Attendance**

SSAES is responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance record for each student enrolled. A student at SSAES shall be recorded as absent for half of the day if more than one hour and fifty-five minutes of the instructional day is missed and recorded as absent for the entire day if more than three hours and forty-five minutes of the instructional day is missed.

## **Tardiness**

SSAES recognizes the problem of student tardiness to class as a serious disruption of the educational atmosphere of our schools. The distractions caused by students arriving late to class are unfair to the teacher and are an infringement on the educational rights of other students. Certain elements of instructional activity and learning are irrevocably missed when students arrive late to class. A SSAES, we have a fair, consistent, staff-involved, and well-communicated tardy procedure.

A student who is not physically present in the classroom at the start of the instructional day is to be marked tardy.

## **Attendance Incentives and Interventions**

Incentive programs designed to promote and enforce the good attendance of students shall be developed and implemented at each school. Attendance incentive plans are to be developed with input from parents, students, and teachers and must be reviewed by each school's assistant chief or designee.

Each incentive program will also include an intervention component. The intervention component will be developed with the involvement of school personnel. The interventions will be designed to address issues that affect students' regular attendance.

## **Tardy Policy**

Per attendance regulations, school time missed due to tardiness could contribute to a student's total absences. Any student arriving at school after the designated start time is considered tardy. Parents must sign their child in upon arrival. Excessive tardiness may result in a parent conference with administration.

## **Transportation**

SSAES families with transportation needs will be provided with bus passes through the City Area Transit (CAT) upon request. Students must be accompanied by an adult to ride on the CAT bus.

## **Field Trips/Extracurricular**

SSAES offers a range of activities, which enrich student learning both during and after the school day. For student safety and the safety of others, specific rules apply to these activities.

## **Field Trips**

Field Trips offer exciting ways to learn. SSAES students have the opportunity to go on field trips at various times throughout the school year. Throughout the course of a field trip, students must adhere to the following:

- Permission slips must be signed by the parent or guardian and submitted to the classroom teacher by the specified date. Phone calls and emails will not be accepted as permission.
- Students must wear school uniform, unless otherwise specified.
- Abide by all SSAES rules and policies while on the field trip.

**The classroom teacher will provide permission slips to students prior to each field trip giving specific information.**

### **Chaperones**

Parents are encouraged to participate as chaperones on field trips. We expect any parent chaperone to work collaboratively with the teacher(s) coordinating the trip to ensure that students are safe and that they are behaving in accordance with the SSAES codes of student conduct. Parent chaperones are expected to assist the teacher and to uphold any policies or procedures set forth by the teacher. Chaperones may not bring other children on field trips and are expected to remain with students for the entire field trip, including the return trip to school. Parent chaperones are expected to actively engage with and monitor students on the trip. Parents willing to be chaperones must fill out a Chaperone Form and have completed the background check required for all parent volunteers.

### **Special Events & Celebrations**

School parties may be held to celebrate special occasions or holidays. Schoolwide celebrations will be announced throughout the year. Celebrations will be limited to the last 15 minutes of the day. The following list of special occasions and/or holidays have been identified as possible celebrations:

Nevada Day/Halloween  
 Thanksgiving  
 Day prior to Winter Break  
 Valentine's Day  
 St. Patrick's Day  
 Day prior to Spring Break  
 Nevada Reading Week  
 School Community Observations

### **Birthdays**

If a parent chooses to share a treat with the class, the teacher must be notified in advance. Treats will be shared during the student's lunch period in the Multi-Purpose Room. The celebration will be held on the day of the student's birthday, during the regular lunch period. In order to minimize risks of food borne illness and to avoid known food allergies, food must be commercially prepared. It is recommended that a small nonfood item be given in place of a treat for healthier options.

### **Dress Code/Uniform Policy**

SSAES will be following a policy of standard student attire. By wearing school uniforms, students are part of a team. It is this team effort and sense of belonging that will help students experience a greater sense of identity and promote academic excellence. Each student will be provided with 2 logo patches that can be ironed onto the left side of polo

shirts, hoodies, sweaters, and/or jackets. Additional patches may be purchased through the front office for a nominal fee. The patches can be ironed onto the left side of gray, black, white or royal blue collared polo shirts. This minimizes the school uniform cost for families.

### **Shirts**

- Uniform **polo shirts** must be gray, black, white or royal blue collared and must have the SSAES logo on the left side.
- Long-sleeved shirts or sweatshirts may be worn **underneath** collared polo shirts and must be in school colors.
- **Administration has the final approval for all shirts.**

### **Outerwear (Sweatshirts, Sweaters, Jackets, etc):**

- No preference if worn outside the building
- If students want to wear their jackets, hoodies, or sweaters, inside the school building, outerwear must have the school logo on the left side.
- **Administration has the final approval for all outerwear**

### **Pants, Skirts, Shorts, Capris:**

- Khaki (tan), black, or gray in color.
- Skirts/shorts must be fingertip length.
- Pants must not be frayed or have holes.
- Leggings and tights are only allowed to be worn under skirts or dresses and must adhere to uniform pant color.
- Sweat suit pants, jeans, sagging or oversized pants are not allowed.
- **Administration has the final approval for all pants, skirts, shorts, and capris.**

### **Shoes and Sneakers:**

- All shoes must fit securely on the foot for student safety.
- No Slides, Flip Flops, Crocs, or Heelys allowed.
- Sandals may be worn provided that they don't interfere with the safety and welfare of the student.
- Shoes with heels should not be taller than 2 inches.
- **Administration has the final approval for all footwear.**

### **Consequences for Violating the Uniform Policy**

- 1st Offense - Verbal warning
- 2nd Offense - Parent contact & parent will have until 10:00 am to bring a school uniform in order for students to change
- 3rd Offense - Parent conference will be scheduled with administration

*Friday will be our scheduled 'Spirit Days'. Students are allowed to wear their SSAES t-shirt on Friday with blue jeans. Jeans should not be ripped or have holes. This attire is only allowed on Fridays. Students should remain in uniform on Thursdays if the Friday of a particular week is a holiday.*

# Charter Fees/Cost

There are no fees associated with attending Strong Start Academy ES.

# Medical Information

**A parent/guardian will complete an online "Health" form for each student as part of school enrollment.**

## Immunization Requirements

In accordance with Nevada Revised Statute 392.435, unless a student is excused because of religious belief or medical condition, a child may not be enrolled in SSAES ES, a public charter school, unless the student's parents or guardian submit to the registrar of the school a certificate stating that the child has been immunized against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, poliomyelitis (polio), rubella (German measles), rubeola, and other such diseases as the local Board of Health or State Board of Health may determine, and has received proper boosters for that immunization, or is complying with the schedules established pursuant to NRS 439.550, which are as follows:

- 5 DTaP/DPT (Minimum age: 6 weeks) if series was started before age 7
  - 1st and 2nd dose & 2nd and 3rd dose must be separated by 4 weeks
  - 5th dose not needed if 4th dose given on or after 4th birthday
  - Final dose at least 6 months after the previous dose (on or after the 4 th birthday)
  - See Tdap for catch up schedule if series started age 7 or older\*\*
  
- 2 Hepatitis A (Minimum age: 12 months)
  - 2nd dose must be given at least 6 months after the 1st dose
    - Required for students new to Nevada or school after July 1, 2002
  
- 3 Hepatitis B (Minimum age: Birth)
  - 1st and 2nd dose must be separated by 4 weeks
  - 2nd and 3rd dose must be separated by at least 8 weeks
  - 3rd dose at least 16 weeks after the 1 st dose (Minimum age for 3rd dose: 24 weeks)
    - Required for students new to Nevada or school after July 1, 2002
  
- 2 MMR (Minimum age: 12 Months)
  - 1st and 2nd dose must be separated by at least 4 weeks
  - 2nd not required until on or after the 4th birthday, but may be given sooner if separated by at least 4 weeks
  
- 4 Polio/IPV/OPV (Minimum age: 6 weeks)

- 1st and 2nd dose & 2nd and 3rd dose must be separated by 4 weeks
- 4th dose not needed if 3rd dose given on or after 4th birthday
- If both OPV and IPV were administered as part of a series, a total of 4 doses are needed regardless of child's age
- Final dose at least 6 months after the previous dose (on or after 4 th birthday)

#### 1 Tdap \*\*

- Required for 7 th grade enrollment and all students grade 8 th – 12 th
- Catch up schedule – Students age 7 or older, who are not immunized with the childhood DTaP/DTP vaccine series, should receive Tdap vaccine as the initial dose in the catch up series. If additional doses are needed, use the Td vaccine.
- A total of 4 doses DTaP/DTP/Td/Tdap combination is needed if the first doses are given less than 12 months of age. Dose 3 and 4 must be 6 months apart
- A total of 3 doses DTaP/DTP/Td/Tdap combination is needed if the first dose is given at 12 months and older. Dose 2 and 3 must be 6 months apart
- 2 Varicella/Chicken Pox (Minimum age: 12 months)
  - 1st and 2nd dose should be separated by at least 3 months for age ≤ 12 years, however dose is valid if separated by 4 weeks
  - 13 years and older 1st and 2nd dose must be separated by 4 weeks
  - Physician verification of past disease required for exemption
  - Required for students new to Nevada or school after July 1, 2011

The certificate must show that the required vaccines and boosters were given and must bear the signature of a licensed physician or the physician's designee or a registered nurse or the nurse's designee, attesting that the certificate accurately reflects the child's record of immunization. Parents can find out more about the vaccines required to attend school in Nevada at <https://www.immunizenevada.org/NVSchoolRequirements>. They can also check and print their child's immunization records at <https://izrecord.nv.gov>. First-time users may need to contact the Nevada WebIZ help desk at 1-877-NV-WebIZ (877)689-3249) or email [izit@health.nv.gov](mailto:izit@health.nv.gov). More information can also be obtained by calling the SNHD at 702-759-0850 or referring to <http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/>.

## Conditional Enrollment

A child may enter school conditionally if the parent or guardian submits a certificate from a physician or local health officer that states the child is receiving the required immunizations. If a certificate showing the child has been fully immunized is not submitted within 90 school days of the conditional enrollment, **THE CHILD WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL AND THE CHILD'S SEAT AT THE SCHOOL WILL BE RELEASED.**

\*\*The certificate showing proper immunization or the certificate for conditional enrollment must be received by the school no later than 3:00pm on the school day prior

to the first day the child is scheduled to attend his or her first class at SSAES. **FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN THE CHILD'S SEAT AT THE SCHOOL BEING RELEASED.**

### **Students from Out-of-State**

For a child that is transferring from out of State, the parents must submit a certificate signed by a physician or a local health officer showing:

- If the Nevada immunization requirements shown above can be met with one visit to a physician or clinic, a certificate showing full immunization must be submitted within 30 days of enrollment: or
- If the certificate shows that the Nevada immunization requirements shown 16 above cannot be met with one visit to a physician or clinic, a certificate showing the student is receiving full immunization must be submitted within 30 days of enrollment. The parent must then submit a second certificate showing full immunizations within 120 days of enrollment.

**\*\*FAILURE TO SUBMIT THESE REQUIRED CERTIFICATES IN THE TIME FRAMES INDICATED WILL RESULT IN THE CHILD BEING EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL AND THE CHILD'S SEAT AT THE SCHOOL BEING RELEASED.**

### **Illness/Emergency During the School Day**

In case of illness or accident, students will come to the school's health office. School staff will assess the student and contact parents immediately if they deem it necessary. Students who are ill (fever, vomiting, excessive productive coughing, runny nose and/or eyes) should be kept home; if illness commences at school, students must be picked up immediately from school. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact listed on the student enrollment form will be notified to come and pick up the student. Particular care should be given to any symptoms that are indicative of viruses. Students should be symptom free for 24 hours - without medicine intervention - before returning to school.

If a medical emergency occurs:

- Parents/guardians will be notified and are responsible for obtaining medical care.
- **It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the school has the correct and current working phone numbers for parents /guardians and emergency contacts.**
- Activation of EMS (911) will be called.
- Students will be transported per EMS protocol.
- The expense of the ambulance transport and subsequent medical care is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

### **Medications**

- Parents of students who have specific or special health concerns, chronic illness, or need of medication during school hours will add that information to the "Health" form at the time of enrollment. This information will be given to the school nurse or First Aid Safety Assistant (FASA), who will create a "health alert" folder to be kept at the school office. This folder will contain information on procedures to follow in

case of illness or emergency, as well as any necessary parental permission. Should changes occur that may affect the student's care, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school and to update the student's health information at the school office.

- The FASA will provide teachers with health files on students with health concerns, chronic illnesses, and/or identification of students who take daily medication during school hours.
- For medication to be administered to a student, the school must have an Authorization for Medication form on file. This form is available in the office. A pediatrician or a family doctor must complete these forms. All medication must be office authorized through the health office. Medication must be in its original container and labeled with the following information: the child's name, dosage, name of the drug, physician's name, and the name/phone number of the pharmacy that filled the prescription. Office personnel designated to dispense medication are required to count the number of pills the student brings to school and document in the student medication log. Expired medications will not be accepted. If a medication expires during the school year, it must be picked up or it will be disposed of, with no exceptions. Unclaimed medications will be disposed of at the end of the school year.

## Student Behavior Expectations

### Student Code of Conduct

Strong Start Academy is committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment for all students enrolled at our school. Our Student Code of Conduct is in place to ensure the safety of students and staff and create an environment conducive to learning. SSAES has three basic rules - The 3 B's:

**1. Be Safe - Make good choices**

Students should not throw objects at others, push, hit, hurt, kick, or act in any other manner that may cause harm to another individual.

**2. Be Kind - Use respectful language and actions**

Treat others as you wish to be treated.

Be courteous.

Use appropriate positive language and actions.

Listen to each other.

**3. Be Responsible – Solve Problems Wisely**

Follow directions.






Complete your schoolwork.

If you make a mess, help clean it up.

If you make a mistake, be honest.

Take care of your equipment/school property.

Be on time.

  <b>Strong Start Academy Elementary School</b>   						
Norms		Classroom Expectations	Hallway Expectations	Restroom Expectations	Lunch Expectations	Playground/Recess
<b>Be Safe</b>	Be Safe by making good decisions/choices	-Walk -Keep your hands and feet to yourself -Stay in assigned area	-Walk -Keep your hands and feet to yourself	-Walk -Wash your hands before you leave -Stay in your own stall	-Walk to your seat -Keep your hands and feet to yourself	-Walk (no running) -Use equipment appropriately/for its intended purpose -Stay in designated areas -Keep your hands and feet to yourself
<b>Be Kind</b>	Be Kind by being respectful/using respectful language	-Be respectful to yourself others and property -Be happy for others -Use good manners -Work collaboratively -Accept differences	-Greet people positively -Help those in need -Respect environment	-Clean up after yourself -Report any messes or problems to an adult	-Use school appropriate language -Include peers in your conversations	-Invite peers to participate -Encourage Classmates
<b>Be Responsible</b>	Be Responsible by working hard to solve problems	-Use voice level 0-3 -Appropriate use of school materials -Use school appropriate language -Engage in learning -Be prepared and organized -Ask for help when needed -Respect others' property -Accept feedback	-Use voice level 0-1 -Report Inappropriate Behavior -Help keep environment clean	-Use voice level 0-1 -Return back to class in a timely manner -Use restroom appropriately (No Playing) -Report Inappropriate Behavior	-Use voice level 0-2 -Throw away your trash -Finish eating during your lunch time -Report Inappropriate Behavior	-Use voice level 0-4 -Use school appropriate language -Promptly transition from outside to inside -Play fair by game rules -Report Inappropriate Behavior -Accept Feedback

## Code of Honor

There is a clear expectation that all students will perform academic tasks with honor and integrity, with the support of parents, staff, faculty, administration, and the community. The learning process requires students to think, process, organize and create their own ideas. Throughout this process, students gain knowledge, self-respect, and ownership in the work that they do. These qualities provide a solid foundation for life skills, impacting people positively throughout their lives. Cheating and plagiarism violate the fundamental learning process and compromise personal integrity and one's honor. Students demonstrate academic honesty and integrity by not cheating, plagiarizing or using information unethically in any way.

## What is cheating?

Cheating or academic dishonesty can take many forms, but always involves the improper taking of information from and/or giving of information to another student, individual, or other source. Examples of cheating can include, but are not limited to:

3. Taking or copying answers on an examination or any other assignment from another student or other source
4. Giving answers on an examination or any other assignment to another student
5. Copying assignments that are turned in as original work
6. Collaborating on exams, assignments, papers, and/or projects without specific teacher permission
7. Allowing others to do the research or writing for an assigned paper • Using unauthorized electronic devices
8. Falsifying data or lab results, including changing grades electronically

## What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a common form of cheating or academic dishonesty in the school setting. It is representing another person's works or ideas as your own without giving credit to the proper source and submitting it for any purpose. Examples of

plagiarism can include, but are not limited to:

- Submitting someone else's work, such as published sources in part or whole, as your own without giving credit to the source
- Turning in purchased papers or papers from the Internet written by someone else
- Representing another person's artistic or scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, drawings, or paintings as your own
- Helping others plagiarize by giving them your work

All stakeholders have a responsibility in maintaining academic honesty. Educators must provide the tools and teach the concepts that afford students the knowledge to understand the characteristics of cheating and plagiarism. Parents must support their students in making good decisions relative to completing coursework assignments and taking exams. Students must produce work that is theirs alone, recognizing the importance of thinking for themselves and learning independently, when that is the nature of the assignment. Adhering to the Code of Honor for the purposes of academic honesty promotes an essential skill that goes beyond the school environment. Honesty and integrity are useful and valuable traits impacting one's life.

## **BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING**

SSAES responds promptly and takes a strong stance against bullying and cyberbullying. We are committed to providing a safe, secure, and respectful learning environment for all students and employees. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and/or intimidation will not be tolerated. Every individual at SSAES will be treated with dignity and respect. If bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and/or intimidation occurs, it should be reported to the school immediately.

### **I. Definitions**

#### **A. Definition of Bullying**

1. Under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 388.122, "bullying" means written, verbal, or electronic expressions or physical acts or gestures, or any combination thereof, that are directed at a person or group of persons, or a single severe and willful act or expression that is directed at a person or group of persons, and:
  - a) Have the effect of:
    - (1) Physically harming a person or damaging the property of a person; or
    - (2) Placing a person in reasonable fear of physical harm to the person or damage to the property of the person; or
  - b) Interfere with the rights of a person by:
    - (1) Creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment for the person; or
    - (2) Substantially interfering with the academic performance of a student or the ability of the person to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges provided

by a school; or

c) Are acts or conduct described in Section (II.A.1.a.) or Section (II.A.1.b.) and are based upon the:

(1) Actual or perceived age, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental disability of a person, sex, or any other distinguishing characteristic or background of a person;  
or

(2) Association of a person with another person having one or more of those actual or perceived characteristics.

2. The term includes, without limitation:

- a) Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking, or use of put-downs or demeaning humor regarding the actual or perceived age, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental disability of a person, sex, language, legal status, or any other distinguishing characteristics or background of a person.
- b) Behavior that is intended to harm another person by damaging or manipulating his or her relationships with others by conduct that includes, without limitation, spreading false rumors.
- c) Repeated or pervasive nonverbal threats or intimidation, such as the use of aggressive, menacing, or disrespectful gestures.
- d) Threats of harm to a person, to his or her possessions, or to other individuals, whether such threats are transmitted verbally, electronically, or in writing.
- e) Blackmail, extortion, or demands for protection money or involuntary loans or donations.
- f) Blocking access to any property or facility of a school.
- g) Stalking.
- h) Physically harmful contact with or injury to another person or his or her property.

#### B. Definition of Cyberbullying

- 1. Under NRS 388.123, “cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of electronic communication. The term includes the use of electronic communication to transmit or distribute a sexual image of a minor. As used in this section, “sexual image” has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 200.737, which is any visual depiction, including, without limitation, any photograph or video of a minor simulating or engaging in sexual conduct, or of a minor as the subject of a sexual portrayal.
- 2. Under NRS 388.124, “electronic communication” means the communication of any written, verbal, or pictorial information through the use of an electronic device, including, without limitation, a telephone, a cellular phone, a computer, or any similar means of communication.
- 3. A student who is a minor who knowingly and willfully transmits or distributes an image that is racially motivated or illustrates bullying, electronically or using another means, with the intent to encourage,

further, or promote racially motivated behavior or bullying:

- a) For a first violation is considered a child in need of supervision, as that term is used in Title V of the NRS.
- b) For a second or subsequent violation, commits a delinquent act, for which a court may order the detention of the minor in the same manner as if the minor had committed an act that would have been a misdemeanor if committed by an adult.

## **GENDER DIVERSE STUDENT POLICY**

Strong Start Academy Elementary School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for all students, including those with diverse gender identities or expressions, in every classroom, hallway, cafeteria, restroom, gymnasium, playground, athletic field, parking lot, and other areas on the premises of the school. This policy will contain the requirements and methods for addressing the rights and needs of persons with diverse gender identities or expressions. [NRS 388.132 and NRS 388.133(2)(b)].

### **I. Definitions**

A. These definitions are not provided for the purpose of labeling students, but to assist in understanding this policy.

1. Classroom Activities: Activities that provide education or instruction for all students, other than field trips. Nothing in this definition requires adoption of a specific curriculum [NAC 388.880(6)].
2. Gender Expression: How a person expresses their gender through outward presentation and behavior. This may include, but is not limited to, a person's name, clothing, hair style, body language and mannerisms.
3. Gender Identity: A person's understanding/outlook/feelings/sense of being male, female, both or neither, regardless of the person's biological sex. All people have a gender identity.
4. Gender Support Team: A group consisting of the student; the student's parent(s); the school personnel and/or administrator or designee of the administrator, including a counselor; and any representative(s) of community-based groups (including faith groups), as requested by the parent(s). The Gender Support Team will be led or coordinated by the school administrator or the administrator's designee.
5. Parent: For the purpose of this policy, a parent is defined as:
  - a) A biological or adoptive parent;
  - b) A legal guardian;
  - c) A person acting in the place of a parent with whom the child lives;
  - d) A person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or
  - e) An emancipated student.

II. Gender Support Plan to Address the Rights and Needs of Students with Diverse Gender Identities or Expressions. In order to address the rights and needs of students with diverse gender identities or expressions, a Gender Support Plan will be created for each student by the Gender Support Team.

- A. The Gender Support Plan will be consistent with the requirements of this policy. Each Gender Support Plan for students with diverse gender identities or expressions must include the following components [NAC 388.880(3)]:
  - 1. Methods to ensure protection of the privacy of the student;
  - 2. Methods to support the appropriate engagement of the parent(s) of the student;
  - 3. Compliance with the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA), if interscholastic activities are considered;
  - 4. Compliance with the Nevada Equal Enjoyment of Places of Public Accommodations law; and
  - 5. Consideration of the rights and needs of the student for which the plan is developed, as well as the capacity of the school (for example, but not limited to, the layout or age of the school), and the rights and needs of the student body at large, including individual requests for privacy.
- B. SSAES shall take measures to ensure access to academic courses and services that are appropriate for and supportive of students with diverse gender identities or expressions, including without each person governed by the plan, including, without limitation,
  - 1. Classroom activities that are relevant and meaningful to and appropriate for the student and do not discriminate or segregate according to gender identity or expression;
  - 2. Physical education, assemblies, dances, ceremonies, and other school activities shall be appropriate for students with diverse gender identities or expressions and not discriminate or segregate according to gender identity or expression;
  - 3. Intramural and interscholastic activities, in accordance with the regulations and policies of the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association; and
  - 4. Schools shall ensure that students with diverse gender identities or expressions shall have access to all clubs.

### III. Addressing the Rights and Needs of Students with Diverse Gender Identities or Expressions

SSAES shall address the rights and needs of students with diverse gender identities or expressions on an individualized basis as outlined in their Gender Support Plan. Specifically, the school shall consider the student characteristics and unique circumstances of the student. The following provisions address the rights and needs of students with diverse gender identities or expressions.

- A. The school shall protect the privacy of each student governed by this policy.
  - 1. School employees shall not disclose information that may reveal a

student's gender identity or expression status:

- a) to other students;
- b) to the parents of other students;
- c) to staff members unless there is a specific need to know;
- d) unless legally required to do so (e.g. court order, subpoena);  
or
- e) unless the parent has authorized, in writing, such disclosure.

B. Names/Pronouns: Students have the right to be addressed by the name and pronoun that correspond to their gender identity or expression. The requested name shall be included in the school's Student Information System in order to inform faculty and staff of the name and pronoun to use when addressing the student.

1. Records:

a) Unofficial Records (including the school's Student Information System): As part of the student's Gender Support Plan, the school has a process that will allow a student to use their preferred name and gender on unofficial records. The unofficial records may include, but are not limited to: identification badges, classroom and homeroom rosters, certificates, programs, announcements, office summons, communications, team and academic rosters, newspapers, newsletters, yearbooks, and other site-generated unofficial records:

(1) School Administration Receives a Written Request: The process is initiated upon written request from a parent.

(2) School Administration Schedules a Meeting: A meeting is scheduled with a Gender Support Team to address the parent's written request to support the student's gender identity or expression.

(3) Outcome of Request is Determined: As a result of the Gender Support Team meeting; if agreed upon, appropriate changes may be made in the school's Student Information System.

b) Official Records (including Permanent Records): The school is required to maintain in perpetuity mandatory permanent student records (such as transcripts), which include the legal name of the student and the student's gender as indicated on official government issued documents such as birth certificates, passports, and identification cards/permits. The

school will change a student's name and gender on official records when the name of the student is changed by court order.

- C. The school shall ensure that dress or uniform policies are not delineated or segregated according to gender identity or expression. Students with diverse gender identities or expressions may wear clothing consistent with their gender identity or expression.
- D. The school shall ensure that yearbook photographs allow for all students, including those students with diverse gender identities or expressions, to choose clothing that aligns with their gender identity or expression and, if applicable, allow for yearbook photographs of high school seniors that are not gender-specific.
- E. The school shall ensure that the preferred name of a student be read during ceremonies and other events, including, without limitation, promotion ceremonies.
- F. The School shall use appropriate definitions and terminology in describing the requirements, needs, and experiences of students with diverse gender identities or expressions.
- G. Access to Facilities and Educational Experiences: SSAES complies with all state and federal laws regarding discrimination and access to public facilities. NRS 651.070 states: "All persons are entitled to equal enjoyment of places of public accommodation. All persons are entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity or expression."
  - 1. Restroom Access:
    - a. Option 1: Restroom access for students with diverse gender identities or expressions may be determined on a case-by-case basis through the Gender Support Plan process, subject to any individual requests for privacy.
    - b. Option 2: Students with diverse gender identities or expressions have the right to access restrooms consistent with their gender identity or expression as determined on a case-by-case basis through the Gender Support Plan process, subject to any individual requests for privacy.
    - c. Option 3: Students with diverse gender identities or expressions may use restrooms consistent with their sex assigned at birth, subject to any individual requests for privacy, as determined on a case-by-case basis through the Gender Support Plan process.

#### IV. Professional Development and Training

The school will provide professional development and training concerning

the rights and needs of students with diverse gender identities or expressions, for the Board of Directors, teachers, and all other personnel employed by the school as prescribed by this policy.

- A. The school shall develop methods for discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with staff in order to address the rights and needs of persons with diverse gender identities or expressions and ensure that they are safe, included, and respected.
  
- B. The school shall assume full responsibility and authority in developing a professional development and training plan that will include the following requirements and procedures:
  - 1. Awareness of the rights and needs of students with diverse gender identities or expressions;
  - 2. Training in the appropriate methods of cultural competency to facilitate positive learning environments, social emotional learning skills, and appropriate human relations among all students;
  - 3. Training concerning the needs of persons with diverse gender identities or expressions as it pertains to the prevention of discrimination, harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying;
  - 4. Training regarding the requirements of state laws and regulations, which require the school to develop a Gender Support Plan with a team led by the school-site administrator or administrator's designee;
  - 5. Training in methods to support the appropriate engagement of the parents of students with diverse gender identities or expressions; and
  - 6. Training addressing the definitions and terminology in describing the requirements, needs, and experiences of persons with diverse gender identities or expressions.

## V. Complaint Procedures

Persons (employees, students, parents, members of the public) who believe they have been discriminated against or believe they witnessed discrimination against a student because of their gender identity or expression may file a complaint with the Executive Director.

## VI. Discipline

The school shall establish methods to ensure that disciplinary action against an employee, volunteer, or student for the use of a name or pronoun, selected during the Gender Support Team meeting, shall only be considered

if the action or actions meet the definition of bullying as prescribed in Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 388.122 through NRS 388.124 inclusive, or violate Bullying and Cyberbullying policies, or any other policy of the school.

**Restorative Justice Policy**

At SSAES, we employ restorative justice through a whole school approach. A whole school approach uses restorative justice to build culture and climate based on restorative values of respect, trust, inclusion, tolerance, and understanding. Building a restorative culture results in fewer incidents of harm overall. We have embedded Restorative Practices into our Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. Our school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a large-scale example of MTSS that focuses on teaching as prevention. Our Restorative Justice Policy was developed to integrate with the school’s PBIS framework and create a model that is a more collaborative, inclusive, and positive approach to developing effective interventions for personal behavioral growth. The model is a three-tier problem-solving process that provides a continuum of tiered interventions with increasing levels of intensity and duration to prevent inappropriate behavior by means of reinforcing appropriate behavior. Tier 1 focuses on prevention of problem behavior by emphasizing universal supports. The critical features of Tier 1 include school-wide expectations that are taught and encouraged, and systems that discourage inappropriate behavior. Tier 2 is designed to prevent the development and escalation of problem behaviors for students who are identified as being at risk for developing chronic behavior problems. It involves specialized group interventions to supplement the Tier 1 supports. Tier 2 interventions focus on targeted and explicit instruction of skills, structured prompts for appropriate behavior, opportunities to practice new skills in the natural setting, and frequent feedback. Tier 3 is designed to reduce the intensity, frequency, and/or complexity of problem behaviors by providing individualized behavior supports. Tier 3 interventions are utilized for students that demonstrate the highest need, based on lack of responsiveness to Tier 1 and 2 supports.

Tier I	Restorative Practices
Prevent inappropriate behaviors by introducing school wide support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish and reinforce school-wide expectations, initiatives, and systems</li> <li>● Cultivate healthy, positive, and professional relationships with students</li> <li>● Emphasize a sense of school community</li> <li>● Engage students personally before addressing any behavioral issue, whenever possible</li> </ul>

Tier II	Restorative Practices
Identify students who are developing chronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue Tier 1 Restorative Practices</li> <li>● Temporary/alternative student environment - teacher to teacher, teacher to staff member, teacher to penalty box, etc.</li> </ul>

<p>inappropriate behaviors</p> <p>Focused on behavior data and documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet with the Counselor or Safe Schools Professional</li> <li>● Self-Reflection</li> <li>● Students required to self-disclose inappropriate behavior to a parent via student initiated contact from the school site.</li> <li>● Informal parent/family contact via phone call, e-mail message, text message</li> <li>● Peer circles</li> <li>● Apology letters</li> </ul>
Tier III	Restorative Practices
Resolve chronic inappropriate behaviors with individualized interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue Tier 1 &amp; 2 Restorative Practices</li> <li>● Meet with the Counselor or Safe Schools Professional</li> <li>● Introduction to the Executive Director</li> <li>● Formal parent/family contact</li> <li>● Social contracts</li> <li>● Create a Restorative Action Plan (RAP) - Collaborate with students, parents, and all to create a plan that is realistic to accomplish.</li> </ul>

In an effort to optimize equitable application of disciplinary consequences for students, it is important to differentiate and define different types of disciplinary incidents.

### **MINOR BEHAVIOR INCIDENTS**

Minor Behavior Incidents are staff-managed behavior incidents that are addressed by school personnel such as a classroom teacher, when applicable. Minor Behavior Incidents violate school or classroom rules or procedures.

#### Restorative Steps For Minor Behavior

- Respectfully address student
- Describe inappropriate behavior
- Describe expected behavior
- Teach/Model Roleplay expected behavior
- Link to expectation on Matrix
- Redirect back to appropriate behavior modeling

### **MAJOR BEHAVIOR INCIDENTS**

Major Behavior Incidents are office-managed behavior incidents that are addressed by office staff and/or administration. They are severe in nature or are habitually repeated. Major Behavior Incidents that violate SSAES Rules or Policies, impact student or staff safety, or cause property damage may be subject to law

enforcement involvement. Major Behavior Incidents include discretionary expellable offenses.

#### Restorative Steps for Major Behavior

- Administrator assesses, problem solves
- Objective: Teach, learn, return to academic instruction as quickly as possible
- Strategies:
  - Practice behavior expectations
  - Re-Teach in setting
  - Ask the following Restorative Questions
    - What happened?
    - What were you thinking of at the time?
    - What have you thought about since?
    - Who has been affected by what you have done?
    - In what way have they been affected?
    - What do you think you need to do to make things right?
  - Problem-solving team (SST)
    - Student Success Specialist
    - Mentor
    - Administrator
  - Conference with families (Student Restorative Plan of Action is completed)

For all offenses, common sense and good judgment will prevail. Strong Start Academy students are expected to show respect for themselves and others. Students are expected to behave in ways that are acceptable to classmates and conducive to learning. Behavior can be generally corrected when parents and teachers work together. Continued disregard for school rules is a key factor for all progressive consequences. Restorative action is also commensurate with the severity of the offense.

#### **Administration will make the final decision on disciplinary actions.**

If the administration determines that a Restorative Action Plan would not be practicable, the following discipline measures may be imposed: **RPC, Suspension, or Expulsion.**

If the student continues to exhibit disruptive, dangerous, defiant, or otherwise undesired behavior and/or the student violates their Restorative Action Plan (RAP), parents must come to campus and attend a Required Parent Conference (RPC). The RPC may include members of the Restorative Justice Team, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the student. It may be necessary to determine interventions or a revision of the student's Restorative Action Plan.

**Pursuant to NRS 392.467 a student may be expelled, suspended, or removed if they have been charged with a crime if:**

- a. The school conducted its own documented investigation.
- b. The school gives notice of the charges brought against the student.

**Summary of Progressive Restorative Discipline Structure**

Students are disciplined in a restorative, progressive manner. It is not an individual disciplinary event(s) that is/are consequential; students will be given an opportunity to correct their wrongdoings and to learn from their mistakes through restorative practices (AB 168). Continued disregard for school rules is a key factor for disciplinary consequences. Disciplinary action is also commensurate with the severity of the offense.

**Battery of a School Employee**

Any student who commits a battery against a school employee while on school grounds, a school bus, or at a school sponsored activity, may be suspended, expelled or permanently expelled, subject to certain age limitations. In the event of disciplinary action, the student and their parents/legal guardian(s) must meet with the school and the school must provide a progressive discipline plan based on restorative justice to the parent or legal guardian of the student. Any student who commits battery with the intent to cause bodily injury against a school employee must be suspended, expelled, or permanently expelled, subject to certain age limitations.

**Discipline Limits for Special Education Students**

- Age 11+ Discipline is limited to suspensions of not more than 10 days per occurrence or permanent expulsion. The statute does not provide authority for nonpermanent expulsion. (Cumulative suspensions greater than 10 days require hearing.)
- Age 11+ limit for all four categories of misconduct (no exception for possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon)
- Students with an IEP under age 11 must not be permanently expelled except under extraordinary circumstances.
- If a student with an IEP of any age is removed from school premises, suspended, expelled or permanently expelled for any behavior for more than 10 cumulative days, the school must make available to the student a free appropriate public education in compliance with IDEA. Schools must also comply with this and other provisions of IDEA with respect to notice, determining whether a removal constitutes a change of placement, conducting a manifestation determination and other requirements in connection with any disciplinary removal of a pupil with a disability.

**Changes to discipline laws for students who receive special education services in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

**Suspension or Expulsion**

- A student with an IEP who is at least 11 years old may be removed from a school, suspended, or expelled only after the Board of Directors has reviewed the circumstances and determined that the action is in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (NRS 392.466.10; NRS 392.467.6), except in the case of possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon by a student, which is described below.

- Suspension of a student with an IEP is limited to 1-5 days for each occurrence of misconduct (NRS 392.466.10; NRS 392.467.6).
- As with general education students, a student with an IEP who is younger than 11 years old must not be permanently expelled except under extraordinary circumstances, in which case a school may request an exception to this prohibition from the Board of Directors (NRS 392.466.9, NRS 392.467.1)

## **Suspension and Appeals Policy**

### **School Disciplinary Committee (SDC)**

Strong Start recognizes the right of parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to appeal a suspension or expulsion decision in a student-discipline case. Prior to being suspended, a student must be told what they are being accused of and given the opportunity to share his/her side of the story. The student must be put on a Required Parent Conference (RPC) to bring in the parent/legal guardian and share the findings with the parent. The parent has the right to share any additional information. Following this process, the school's leadership (in minor situations) and/or the School's Disciplinary Committee (in major situations) has the right to make any initial discipline determination on the basis of each specific case and can determine if suspension is the appropriate course of action. The School's Disciplinary Committee is made-up of various school staff members (Executive Director, Safe School Professional, teacher(s), and support staff ) who will be selected before the start of each school year (but may be adjusted from time to time depending on workloads, recusals for conflicts of interest, and other factors). If suspension is recommended, it must be progressive and fit the infraction. Under NRS 392.467.1, a student who is less than 11 years of age must not be permanently expelled from school, unless an exception is approved in extraordinary circumstances. The School's Disciplinary Committee will act in good faith and fairness to protect all persons at the school, school property, and general school safety.

### **Board Safety Committee (BSC)**

The School Disciplinary Committee has the authority to make a determination on its own, but at times, may ask the Board Safety Committee for support and input. The BSC is made up of board members.

During investigations of serious acts and/or when the School Disciplinary Committee thinks an out-of-school suspension or expulsion is possible, the School Disciplinary Committee may contact the Board Safety Committee and ask that committee to handle some or all of this process. In such situations, after an investigation is conducted and evidence is collected by the school's leadership or the School Disciplinary Committee, the matter will be brought to the Board Safety Committee.

If the decision by the school's leadership or the School Disciplinary Committee is a recommendation for expulsion, the student has the right to a due process hearing in front of the Board Safety Committee. At the hearing, the Board Safety Committee members will be provided with the discipline history and background information from the Behavior tab in Infinite Campus, prior to the hearing. The hearing will be a closed hearing and members of the public may not attend. The hearing will be noticed only as "Student Hearing- Closed Meeting." At the hearing, the school's leadership or School Disciplinary Committee

representative will outline the incident, provide proof of a thorough and unbiased investigation and findings, as well as the recommendation and the reasoning for the harsh recommendation. The student and/or the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will then have the same opportunity to share his/her perspective, additional information, other factors or considerations, etc. The student or the student's parent or legal guardian will provide the BSC members with his/her own recommendation for resolution. The BSC members may ask questions of either the school's leadership or SDC members or the student or the parent/legal guardian. The school's leadership or the SDC representative will be allowed to make a closing statement, then the student or parent/legal guardian may make a closing statement. Following the information, the Board Safety Committee can make a decision by consensus immediately at the conclusion of the hearing or may take up to three days to render a decision and notify the parent/legal guardian by telephone of the final decision.

If the Board Safety Committee will be hearing a disciplinary matter, then that shall be included in a notice to the student and parents/legal guardians. In the written notice, the school will (i) state the charges against the student; and (ii) provide a brief summary of the evidence. (Due process does not require that the description of the evidence be exhaustive, nor that it identifies witnesses or other participants by name.) Also, when a parent/legal guardian is notified that a student will be suspended or is recommended for expulsion, the parent/legal guardian will be told that they can appeal and will be given a copy of this policy. If the parent/legal guardian requests it, or the committee decides it's appropriate, the committee will hold a hearing. The hearing will generally follow the same rules and procedures described in the appellate process below (with appropriate modifications—e.g., evidence will be presented by the school's leadership and/or School Disciplinary Committee, but the school will typically carry the burden of proof and no standard of review is applicable). The Board Safety Committee then meets together to make a determination in the case—e.g., a suspension (and what kind), no suspension, a recommendation for expulsion, and/or other stipulations tied to the Board Safety Committee's judgment (e.g. adoption of a restorative justice plan, detention or other sanctions, etc.). Any recommendation by the Board Safety Committee for an out-of-school suspension or expulsion will be alerted to the Board and parent/legal guardian as soon as is reasonably practicable.

### **Appeal Notice & Timeline**

The following provisions speak about the parent/legal guardian's rights and/or options. If a student is suspended or expelled from Strong Start Academy, the school will provide, on the same day that the student is suspended or expelled, a notice of the policy for appealing the suspension or expulsion pursuant to NRS 392.4671. The parent/legal guardian has five (5) school days to appeal a suspension or expulsion decision. A parent/legal guardian must notify school leadership in writing (e.g., by letter, fax, or email) of his/her request for an appeal. The school will liberally interpret a request to be an appeal, even if the word "appeal" (or similar terminology) is not used, but the request may not be done orally (e.g., by telephone). If 5 days have passed without a request for an appeal, the school may treat the discipline decision as final.

### **Interim Education**

If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) chooses to appeal a suspension, the student will be allowed to attend school until the appeal is heard, unless the student poses a danger and/or

applicable law permits his/her exclusion (in which case the following paragraph applies). If the student attends school, Strong Start Academy reserves the right to place the student in a somewhat restrictive environment (e.g., in a classroom removed from his/her peers), in part to protect everyone's safety and avoid disrupting other students' educations. If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) chooses to appeal a recommendation for expulsion, the student will work from home while receiving instruction until the appeal is heard. The student and teacher(s) will communicate at least once a day and follow other customary distance-learning protocols (similar to what quarantining students would experience).

### **No Contacts**

Whether or not a family appeals, in all cases, the student may not directly or indirectly interact with any witnesses, victims, or co-conspirators involved in the case. Any violation of this prohibition will be independent grounds for consequences (e.g., as a bullying charge), as well as deemed an aggravating factor during the disciplinary appeal. This rule will be strictly enforced. A social media post may be considered a violation.

### **Board of Directors; Appellate Process**

If the family appeals, the Board will do its utmost to schedule and conduct a hearing as soon as reasonably practicable (or on a timeframe otherwise agreed to by the family). In the hearing:

- School leadership, the School Disciplinary Committee, and/or a member of the Board Safety Committee will present the facts and evidence of the case. Strong Start Academy may present any statements from the victim(s) of the incident and should identify any other aggravating or mitigating circumstances. The school may ask its legal counsel to present arguments and address questions of law.
- The Executive Director and/or members of the School Disciplinary Committee.
- The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) may state their case for appeal. Fundamental procedural due process (i.e., an "opportunity to be heard") will be afforded.

Unless otherwise required by law, the Board is not required to follow Nevada's or any Court's civil procedure rules, rules of evidence, or similar laws or regulations—e.g., hearsay may be ruled admissible. Similarly, the Board may freely adopt any burden(s) of proof and standard(s) of review which he/she/it deems appropriate, although in most cases, it should consider the following:

- The party appealing the existing decision will bear the burden of proof in favor of an alternative determination regarding guilt and/or consequence.
- Any factual determinations made by a prior decision maker will be reviewed for "clear error." Any legal determinations will be reviewed de novo (i.e., with no deference to the earlier decision).

In accordance with applicable law, all meetings/hearings conducted under this Policy will be closed sessions and not subject to Nevada's Open Meeting Law. (See NRS 388A.495(2); 392.467(4).) The school administration will nonetheless keep a general record of the

proceedings, noting all major findings/conclusions in writing. The Board will make a final and binding decision on the appeal and instruct the school's administrative staff to provide the student/parents with written notice of its determination.

### **Designee**

Applicable law permits the Board to appoint a designee to handle disciplinary appeals. Although the school does not currently anticipate appointing a designee for that purpose, the Board: (i) reserves the right to have a designee hear and decide an appeal in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., the volunteer Board cannot assemble in a prompt fashion); and (ii) hereby empowers the Executive Director to appoint such designee under such circumstances. The designee will not be a member of the relevant School Disciplinary Committee or the Board Safety Committee. The choice of designee may be adjusted from time to time depending on workloads, recusals for conflicts of interest, and other factors. The designee may, but need not be, a member of the Board.

### **NRS 392.4671**

NRS 392.4671 creates a requirement for the governing bodies of charter schools to adopt a process for appealing a suspension or expulsion. The statute outlines the requirements of that policy, noting that the timelines included in the policy must align with timelines that are established by the Nevada Department of Education ("NDOE") pursuant to NRS 392.4609.

- Initial notification of right to appeal: Information on the right to appeal a suspension or expulsion and the current process for doing so must be provided to the parent or guardian of the pupil on the same day that the suspension or expulsion is issued.
- Filing of the appeal: The parent or legal guardian of the pupil, may file an appeal within five (5) days of the suspension or expulsion.
- Hearing on the appeal: The governing body of a charter school or designee of the body shall schedule a hearing on an appeal of a suspension or expulsion of a pupil within five (5) days of the appeal being filed. Note that NRS 392.4671 prohibits any increase in the length of the suspension or expulsion following an appeal (i.e., the final penalty may not be harsher than the original one).

### **Legal Information**

- Strong Start reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time in its discretion and will endeavor to keep the school community aware of any changes.
- In developing this policy, Strong Start has endeavored to comply with its legal obligations, including those in: (i) its Charter Contract with the State Public Charter School Authority; (ii) all applicable state and federal laws and regulations (including, e.g., NRS Chapters 388A and 392); and (iii) any Constitutionally-required due process. In the event this policy conflicts with any such authority, the authority controls. That means, among other things, if there is a change in an authority (e.g., a statutory amendment) and a conflict develops, then that change shall take effect immediately and automatically, regardless of whether or not Strong Start Academy has formally updated this policy and/or provided notice to the school community of

the change.

- The fundamental aim of this Policy is to outline the school's general practices in disciplinary matters, and to ensure each student/parent has an appellate right. This policy is not intended to and shall not provide a basis on which any person or entity may assert negligence, liability, breach-of-contract, due process, or other claim. Any process or procedure described herein is only intended to describe a general set of practices, not a set of binding commitments, the technical violation of which would prevent the school from disciplining an individual. As long as the overall process provides fundamental due process and includes a reasonable right to appeal, the school reserves the right to deviate from any process or procedure described in this Policy, without notice and without creating any cause of action against the school.

## Academic Success

### Homework Policy

Homework is assigned to reinforce daily learning targets, as well as to teach students time management, personal responsibility, study skills, and to be independent learners. The homework policy will reinforce parents' active involvement in their child(ren)'s academic progress. Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday, except on holidays or state testing days. Daily homework is due at the beginning of the next school day for all students. Parents wishing to gather homework missed due to an excused absence or on the day of an early sign out may do so at 3:15 p.m. in the front office. To prevent any delay in retrieving classwork/homework, parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher prior to their arrival at 3:15 p.m.

If a child is taking an excessive amount of time to complete homework assignments, please note this on the homework slip or contact the teacher directly. This information is used to assess both individual and class mastery of concepts, as well as determine proper homework load. Your child may experience difficulties if he/she has excessive absences or is learning new or difficult concepts.

### Teacher Responsibilities Regarding Homework

The teacher will:

- Assign meaningful, grade level appropriate, and not excessive homework that reinforces daily learning objectives.
- Monitor comprehension and provide appropriate feedback. Make every attempt to keep homework consistent within the grade level.
- Communicate in a timely manner with parents and students when homework issues arise.
- Respond in a timely manner when homework concerns are brought to their attention by a parent.
- Provide appropriate feedback.

## Student Responsibilities Regarding Homework

The student will:

- Complete his/her work on time.
- Apply and practice skills learned in class.
- Strive for the highest quality work possible by completing homework to the best of his/her ability.
- Communicate to parents or teachers when concepts are difficult.

## Parent Responsibilities Regarding Homework

The parent will:

- Provide the proper conditions suitable to study.
- Check his/her child's homework for complete and neatly written responses.
- Supervise completion.
- Read all communications regarding homework.
- Ensure that proper materials and supplies are available.
- Contact the teacher in a timely manner when homework concerns arise.
- Support school homework policies.
- Monitor his/her child's grades and attendance.

## **Make-up Work Policy**

The student shall have up to five (5) school days to request make-up work for excused absences. Students will have the opportunity to submit assignments in a period equal to the number of days absent.

## **Late Work Policy**

Late assignments must be handed in within one week of the due date. Assignments submitted later than one week past the due date are accepted at the teacher's discretion. Late assignments will not be accepted during the last week of the semester.

# Communication

## **Parent to School Communication**

Conferences with individual teachers can be arranged by contacting the teacher via email or leaving a phone message. A response should be expected within 24 hours. Conferences can be scheduled after school, or during a teacher's planning-time when applicable. Conferences with teachers during arrival, dismissal, or classroom instruction may impede the teacher's ability to effectively supervise his/her students and are not allowed.

## **Communicating Parent Concerns/Conflicts**

When a concern or conflict arises, please adhere to the levels of resolution:

- Direct communication or conference with the teacher or staff member; then

- Communication or conference with the Executive Director - if there still has not been a resolution.

### **Progress Reports**

Student progress reports will be available approximately every four weeks through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Parent-teacher conferences are recommended when unsatisfactory progress is identified. The teacher will send an unsatisfactory notice to alert parents at any time during the grading period when the student is doing unsatisfactory work. Notification of student progress will be posted through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal approximately every four weeks during the grading period. Also, parents have access to student grades at any time through the Infinite Campus Portal.

## **Student Retention**

SSAES will promote a student when they demonstrate proficiency or mastery of grade level standards. The retention of a student in his/her grade level is the final intervention step to ensure students have the necessary prerequisite skills to be successful in the next grade level. Students must demonstrate accomplishment of the standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies adopted by the Nevada Department of Education. SSAES values all academic disciplines by providing a well-rounded program of instruction. If the student does not meet the Promotion Criteria for his or her grade level, parents will be notified of available interventions. Interventions may include, but are not limited to tutoring, summer school, and grade-level retention.

Students who completed a grade level at a previous school must enroll in the next sequential grade level available. Parents may not “self-retain” or “self-promote” by selecting a lower or higher grade level during the enrollment process. Should this occur, the school administration would meet with the parent and discuss a plan of action, including, but not limited to, withdrawal of the student or a change in grade. Written proof of retention or accelerated promotion by the former school must be submitted in writing in order for the grade change to be valid at SSAES.

## **Student Support Services**

### **Special Education**

Strong Start Academy maintains compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. We provide a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal statutes and regulations and follow the model policies and procedures outlined by the [State Public Charter School Authority's Special Education](#)

## [Guidance Manual](#).

As a charter school, SSAES meets IDEA's Child Find obligations by identifying, locating, and evaluating all children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services within the enrolled population of the school. In order to qualify as a student with a disability under IDEA, a child must be of school age, in need of specially designed instruction, and must meet the eligibility criteria for one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities, as set forth in Statutes: autism; developmental

delay; emotional disability; hearing impairment; other health impairment; specific learning disability; mild, moderate, or severe intellectual disability; multiple disabilities; multiple disabilities with severe sensory impairment; orthopedic impairment; preschool severe delay; speech/language impairment; traumatic brain injury; and visual impairment. Strong Start engages in identification procedures to ensure that eligible students receive FAPE, including special education and related services, individualized to meet student needs. To identify students who may be eligible for special education, various screening activities are conducted on an ongoing basis. These screening activities include a review of data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report cards, and achievement test scores), hearing and vision screenings, and speech/language screenings. Students who struggle academically or behaviorally may also be referred to the school's Response to Instruction team for pre-referral interventions. When screening or pre-referral intervention results suggest that a student may have a disability, the school's special education team seeks parental consent to conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. Parents who suspect their child may have a disability may request a multidisciplinary evaluation by submitting a request to the school's Executive Director. When a student is identified as eligible for special education, the school's Special Education Multidisciplinary Team will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in order to identify the student's needs for special education and related services. At least annually, the student's IEP will be reviewed and revised. At least on a triennial basis, the student will be re-evaluated to determine if he/she still meets the eligibility criteria as a student with a disability in need of specially designed instruction. Strong Start Academy will provide special education services to all eligible students in the Least Restrictive Environment and in alignment with their individual needs. We will provide academic and behavioral support services, itinerant vision and hearing services, speech therapy services, occupational therapy services, physical therapy services, and counseling services as required for the student to benefit from the special education program.

### **Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - Section 504**

To qualify as a student with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a child must be of school age and must have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If determined to be eligible for protection under Section 504, a student will receive a 504 Plan to outline accommodations and services necessary to provide the student with an equal

opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school's programming to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. Identification procedures for Section 504 are the same as those of special education. Upon suspicion that a student may meet the Section 504 definition of a student with a disability, the school will follow multidisciplinary consent and evaluation procedures similar to those for special education identification. However, evaluations under Section 504 are not limited to formal evaluation instruments, because the definition of a student with a disability is broader under Section 504 than under IDEA. Parents who suspect their child may have a disability may request a multidisciplinary evaluation by submitting a request to the Executive Director or the 504 coordinator.

## **English Learner Students**

Strong Start Academy Elementary School is committed to ensuring all students graduate college-and career-ready, through the consistent application of high-quality instruction, balanced assessment, and a rigorous accountability system. SSAES is further committed to closing the achievement gap by implementing culturally responsive practices, as well as engaging families and the community. The following policy, guiding principles, and practices support these commitments.

SSAES recognizes that explicit emphasis on language and literacy instruction is an integral part of effective teaching and learning for English Learners (ELs), and that the academic success of ELs is a responsibility shared by students, educators, the family, and the community. Strong Start will be providing a dual immersion program in Spanish and English because it is vital for EL students to receive rigorous, explicit, high-quality language instruction while being held to high expectations and standards in order to access content areas.

It is the intent of Strong Start Academy to provide explicit, high-quality language and literacy instruction to pupils who are Limited English Proficient. Effective instruction is essential in engaging students in both linguistic and academic learning to accomplish the goal of providing quality programs for LEP students, resulting in increased academic achievement. SSAES has committed to develop English and home language proficiency as well as high levels of academic mastery across the curriculum.

### **1. Guiding Principles**

- a. All pupils are provided instruction that enables those pupils to attain proficiency in the English language as soon as possible and improve their overall academic and linguistic achievement and proficiency.
- b. SSAES will use research-based strategies and a set of core principles for an effective English Language Learner (ELL) program to ensure achievement and sustainability and build bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism.
- c. SSAES systematically uses English Language Learners' languages, cultures, and experiences as the foundation for culturally responsive learning and success across all curricula for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.
- d. SSAES has implemented a concept of data-driven accountability.
- e. Each individual child has a different pace and style of learning. There are many

different approaches to instructing English Language Learners in both content, literacy, and English language acquisition that can result in mastery of the subjects, depending on the needs and abilities of a particular student. Children who are Limited English Proficient benefit from instruction that is designed to address the academic and linguistic needs of those children.

- f. SSAES promotes access to educational opportunities and high-quality instruction for all students and their families. The school ensures meaningful community and parent engagement to provide communities and families with the tools to become advocates for the educational rights of students.
2. Guiding Practices
    - a. Ensure the proper identification and placement of Limited English Proficient students, and that all students will have access to effective programs and pathways to succeed academically.
    - b. Promote the simultaneous delivery of language and literacy development and academic content instruction that closes the achievement and access gaps, builds 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and capacities, and achieves high levels of parent satisfaction and support.
    - c. Ensure that English Language Learners develop full proficiencies in academic and interpersonal English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with expectations for all students.
    - d. Evaluate English Language Learners with appropriate and valid data-driven assessments that are aligned with federal, state, and local standards in order to improve academic, linguistic, and sociocultural outcomes for English Language Learners.
    - e. Provide professional development, giving all teachers and leaders the skills and knowledge they need to address language acquisition in ELL students.
    - f. Build a culture of collaboration in which all staff work together to meet the needs of ELL students.
    - g. Offer targeted support services and strong partnerships that ensure families of ELL students are welcomed as full members of the educational community and in the educational decision-making process for students. In addition, the school decisions reflect the voices of ethnically and linguistically diverse parents.
    - h. Ensure teachers use a balanced assessment system including diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative language, literacy, and content area assessments provided by the state and the school.

## After School Activities

### **After-School Activities**

SSAES offers after-school activities to enrich students' education. Such involvement provides ways for students to engage in activities they already enjoy and provides opportunities to experiment with other areas that may interest them. If students remain at SSAES for an after school activity, he/she will be expected to follow these rules:

- The student must always be with a teacher or other staff member.
- The student must arrange for his/her own transportation to be picked up promptly at the

end of the activity.

- The student must abide by SSAES's behavioral expectations while participating in the activity. Inappropriate behavior will result in dismissal from the activity/club.
- The student may not stay after school to wait for another student.
- Once enrolled in an activity/club, students must commit to regular attendance. Three or more unexcused absences from the activity/club may result in withdrawal from that club. All students must be registered in the after-school care program, if participating in after-school activities.

All students who are not in a club, after-school activity, after-school care, or have made a special arrangement with a teacher, must be picked up no later than 15 minutes after standard dismissal. **A full list and description of after school clubs and activities will be posted on the website or available at the front office.**

## Cell Phone Policy

Strong Start Academy ES is a cell phone free school during the instructional day. The instructional day is defined from school drop off until school pick up. While students may have a cell phone in their possession, all cell phones should be turned off and stored in the student's backpack. In the event of an emergency, parents and students should contact the office. A violation of this policy will result in the cell phone being confiscated and will only be returned to a parent/guardian at the end of the school day.

## Technology Use

Students are offered use of a device and access to Strong Start Academy's computer network for communication, research, and other tasks related to the school's academic program. All use of computers furnished or created data, software, and other technology resources as granted by SSAES are the property of SSAES and are intended for school business and educational use. Students are to use the computer network responsibly. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and using the SSAES computer network and the school's technological resources. The school educates students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response. The following Technology and Use agreements must be agreed to by the parent/guardian of all students. Students will have a device assigned to them to be used and kept at school.

### Fines

Fines will be assessed for damage to technology devices.

# Family Engagement

## Volunteering

As establishing and maintaining a thriving small school community involves families and staff working together, parent/guardian volunteering will be highly encouraged, but not required. At SSAES, families are embraced as important stakeholders who have a voice in their child's future. As such, parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in activities, events, and celebrations throughout the school year to take an active role in their child's education. Events are opportunities for families to contribute to the school community. Family volunteers and community organizations are vital to help facilitate activities and participate in events.

Volunteer opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Attending Parent meetings
- Assisting classroom teachers
- Signing up to help at school sponsored events:
  - Teacher Appreciation Week
  - Field Day
  - Field Trips

More information about volunteer opportunities will be given throughout the school year. Please contact the school office to request volunteer hours.

Parents/visitors must sign-in at the main office and obtain a visitor's pass. In order to ensure the safety of all of our students, **NO PARENTS/VISITORS WILL BE ALLOWED BEYOND THE MAIN OFFICE WITHOUT A VISITOR'S PASS.**

## **Volunteer Fingerprinting**

Senate Bill 287 requires volunteers with unsupervised OR regular contact with students to be fingerprinted and pass a criminal background check. Regular contact has been defined by the Nevada Department of Education as volunteering at least four times a month.

Any volunteer who will have unsupervised contact with students or who will have regular contact with students must:

1. Sign a waiver to have their background check complete;
2. Sign an acknowledgment as being a mandatory child abuse reporter; and,
3. Complete a background check including fingerprinting at the expense of the parent volunteer.

These steps will be required every three (3) years. In order to complete these steps, volunteers must inform the school that they wish to undergo fingerprinting. If a parent volunteer has not completed all of the steps above, and has not been cleared by a school administrator, the parent may not have unsupervised or regular contact with students.

## Family Concerns/Greivance Policy

The SSAES Board and school leadership are committed to building and maintaining strong partnerships with parent/guardians, one that is founded on collaboration, honesty, transparency, integrity and two-way communication. If a parent/guardian has a concern about a school policy or practice, academic grade, discipline decision, or any other school related decision or outcome, the parent/guardian is encouraged to contact the appropriate staff member at the school, following the appropriate chain of command. SSAES Board and leadership are committed to address concerns of families and seeking a resolution that benefits the academic development and progress of our students. Informal complaints should begin with the staff member directly involved and closest to the concern. If that is not possible or comfortable, the complaint can go directly to the Executive Director. All concerns will be mediated at this level with an appropriate decision made. If the informal complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, a letter may be submitted to the Executive Director initiating a formal complaint. The letter should include, in detail, the event, policy or decision of concern; timeline of events; staff involved (if applicable); and desired resolution. Within one week of the formal complaint being filed, the Executive Director will conduct a thorough investigation and issue a written response detailing his/her findings and recommendations or resolution. If the parent/guardian is still not satisfied, he/she may appeal to the Governing Board. Formal complaints submitted to the Governing Board of Directors will be reviewed by the Governing Board of Directors President and assigned to a designated Board member to schedule a meeting, during which the parent/guardian will have the opportunity to address his/her concerns. The designated Board member will issue a report of findings to the Board prior to the next regular Board Meeting. At that meeting, the Board will take action, as appropriate, based on the information and findings. The parent/guardian may attend the Board meeting and request to speak. If the parent/guardian wishes to speak, he/she will be limited to two (2) minutes. If additional time is requested, the Board may agree to allocate additional time to speak at the end of the meeting. The Board will make a decision as they feel appropriate. A parent/guardian may address the Board at any meeting without going through the informal and formal complaint process as outlined above, but the Board encourages constructive conversations with relevant parties prior to direct outreach to the Board. The Board has the power, authority and duty to take action as they see appropriate. If the parent/guardian believes that the Board did not adequately address their concern, the parent/guardian may present the concern to the State Public Charter School Authority.

# Relevant Law

## **FERPA**

According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), school records of students are confidential. All staff are prohibited from discussing the discipline and investigation of other students. FERPA is a federal privacy law that gives parents certain protections with regard to their children's education records, such as report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules. As a parent, you have the right to review your child's education records and to request changes under limited circumstances. To protect your child's privacy, the law generally requires schools to ask for written consent before disclosing your child's personally identifiable information to individuals other than you. FERPA allows school officials to provide what is called "directory information" without parental consent. However, public notice must be made before directory information may be made available. Parents or guardians also have a right to review educational records kept by the school. To inspect these records, parents/guardians should contact the principal to schedule a records review. In addition, parents may by written request, to the principal of the school, challenge the contents of student records that they believe are inaccurate. School personnel are to respond to all requests within a reasonable length of time not to exceed ten (10) school days from the date of receipt of the request. Questions regarding educational records at the school should be directed to the principal in writing. Parents or eligible students have a right to file a complaint regarding the schools compliance with these requirements by contacting the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education.

## Parent Acknowledgement of Handbook

All Strong Start Academy students must have a signed Parent Acknowledgement form on file.

As a parent, I understand the importance of the Strong Start Parent/Student Handbook and I have discussed it with my child. My child and I agree to adhere to the policies and regulations set forth in the Student/Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ (initial) I understand that failure to follow school regulations and policies, will jeopardize my child's eligibility to register for the following academic year, or perhaps will result in dismissal from Strong Start Academy by the Governing Body of the school.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Electronic signature during registration will fulfill this requirement.*