



FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Mission & Vision Statements:

Healing Roots Online School is committed to helping 'Heal the Roots' of Education through delivering K-12 Live Virtual Classes, Merged with In-Person Experiential Learning opportunities. We strive to inspire our students toward happiness, confidence and wonder; which will naturally develop a deep love of learning within each child. We conscientiously aspire to deliver a holistic education that will uplift our students to their highest potential, sowing the seeds for the next generation to be the compassionate leaders needed for the future.

HROS Goals and Core Values Based on the program's mission, purpose, and philosophy:

- To provide an innovative and seamless early childhood education and beyond utilizing a whole-person approach.
- To be a sustainable, effective, and highly valued professional organization that exhibits, expresses, and administratively supports the vision, goals, and values of our organization.
- To provide a safe, healthy, non-exclusive, and dependable environment where children can develop a sense of trust and well-being.
- To provide activities that will inspire further curiosity in a variety of subjects
- To provide a stimulating, inspirational environment where children can have hands-on experiences in order to learn by doing.
- To provide a variety of materials and activities to strengthen and satisfy old interests as well as develop new ones.
- To promote each child's physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development through participation in group activities.
- To encourage children's growth and development of curiosity, creativity, self-discipline, confidence, and self-esteem.
- To consistently encourage and promote parent/guardian, staff, and community input and participation.
- To ensure on-going high-quality care by continuously evaluating the

program's operations.

- To promote staff evaluation, on-going education, and training.
- To be involved in community activities and take advantage of community resources and visitors.

Core Values

- We believe that nature-based, arts-oriented education is among the most effective and promising forms of environmental, experiential education because of the innate ability in all people to connect with nature.
- We believe that nature-based, arts-oriented experiences promote life values by relating to the social, moral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of the human experience.
- We believe that hands-on learning in nature builds confidence, self-awareness, and individual and collective responsibility which leads to the sustainable stewardship of our world.
- We believe that there is real pedagogical value to learning while working on a product or process that will have lasting value beyond the task at hand.
- We believe that the practice and promotion of sustainability as well as practical applications of learning in nature enhance and reinforce theoretical learning in schools.
- We believe that nature-based, arts-oriented education promotes respect for nature, manual work, individuals, and community.
- We believe that the cultivation of food is fundamental to our society and that all people should be aware of agriculture and where their food comes from.
- We believe that the natural rhythms and cycles seen and experienced in nature leads to a deeper and accessible understanding of the world.
- We believe that every person has the right to learn and that exclusion in any form is counterproductive to a community learning environment and therefore unacceptable.

Discrimination Policy:

HROS does not discriminate against any parent, student, client, employee, job applicant or anyone interacting with our organization, on the bases of race, creed, color, national origin, religion or any protected class. HROS operates in a family-centered manner, and takes respect of all persons seriously.

*Not having internet access will temporarily keep a person from being able to access the on-line daily activities, but these situations, when temporary, are treated with respect as teachers and support staff will maintain connectivity as appropriate.

Services

Full Curriculum K-12th grades (ages 5 and up)

Healing Roots Online School is a new and innovative approach to online learning. We give families an online educational option that is designed specifically for inspiring students to a higher order of thinking. Our approach to education supports growth and imagination by honoring and working within each child's rhythm. We utilize natural approaches whilst specifying our curriculum to your child's unique learning type in order to inspire students to be leaders needed for the future.

Current Hours of operation:

Monday through Thursday. School Opens at 9:00 am and closes at 3:00 pm. School operates in the Eastern Time zone of the United States.

*Office Hours are 3:00 PM – 3:45 PM EST Monday - Thursday.

** Most admin and support staff are volunteers with varied availability

Eligibility for Enrollment:

To become enrolled, each family must have completed the following checklist:

- A completed application for each prospective student
- \$50 (non-refundable) application fee
- An assessment meeting with the student's prospective teacher

- Attended a 1:1 on-line On-Boarding Session with the Director of School Operations

Families will be reviewed and selected for enrollment based on availability of space and our assessment of the family's show of compatibility with our *collaborative education approach*. Students and participating family members must agree to the collaborative approach and sign the Three Pillar Contract agreement.

Upon acceptance, the parent is responsible for full year tuition payment. Once enrolled your child's spot will be held for them for the entire length of our school year. We have very limited spots available in our small classrooms therefore there are no refunds of tuition payment.

Our Collaborative Education Approach:

The child's family or legal guardian(s) and the child's HROS teachers are partners in matters concerning the child's growth in education and agree to the "Three Pillar Contract." *See Appendix

In summary, the "Three Pillar Contract" states that families agree to open communication with our teachers daily regarding their child, teachers listen to the family's wishes and the child's aspirations regarding growth in education and helps to fashion a plan with goals that support the plan; and the student agrees to take responsibility for their behavior and participation in their designated groups-families and teachers support them in this agreement.

K-12th Grade Curriculum:

Our developmentally appropriate, experiential education curriculum is designed by our professional staff using: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math), the progression of concepts from the Common Core Standards for Language Arts, Math, and Science, concepts from Responsive Classroom for classroom and behavior management, and a live online Teacher Forum *including, but not limited* to the following guiding resources:

English Language Arts (any combination of the following):

- Lucy Calkins, Units of Study
- Journeys
- First Language Lessons
- Explode the code

- Building Writers
- Writing Strands
- Wordsmith

Outdoor Education:

- Leave No Trace
- Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature, Jon Young
- Leopold Project
- Project Wild
- Herbal Roots

Agriculture:

- Farm-Based Education Network
- Shelburne Farms in VT
- Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) with Farm to School and Farm to Preschool
- Heifer
- Nourish

Art:

- National Art in Education Association
- Association for Experiential Education

Mathematics:

- Singapore Math
- Engage New York
- Khan Academy

Science:

- NOVA
- CPalms

- REAL Science Odyssey
- Prentice Hall Science
- Explorer
- Discovery Education
- National Geographic
- Project Wild
- Teachingengineering.org
- Scholastic

Curriculum Program Description

Weekly Subjects and Experiences:

- Centering- Social Emotional Learning
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Music
- Foreign Language
- Science
- Social Studies and History
- Art
- Outdoor Education
- Agriculture
- Physical Education & Health
- *Extensions (Conflict Resolution, growth and development, Restorative Justice)

Descriptions

Centering

All students begin the day with a 'centering' session to help focus inward, share our thoughts and ideas with the group and prepare our minds and hearts for the day ahead together.

ELA and Mathematics

Thoughtful lessons are prepared and implemented by our teachers for math, science, and reading and writing groups. Art is integrated into all programs, projects and lessons. We utilize our own assessment system which includes multiple forms of evidencing comprehension including, but not limited to: observation and photo capturing techniques which compliment the standard state testing procedures.

HROS Behavior Management Policies & Procedures

At HROS, we recognize and respect that it is normal for children to disagree, sometimes argue, and become disgruntled, which may lead to lashing out in an undesirable or inappropriate way. We work diligently to model and teach life skills, which includes proper and mature communication and problem solving. As children develop and are guided through effective communication and problem solving, they will begin to comprehend and utilize the tools that are already present within themselves, to actively navigate through the emotions that cause them distress.

As they go through these stages of growth and self discovery, HROS will be there to help, every step of the way. Addressing behavior issues in the HROS online setting is the responsibility of ALL staff. Providing positive reinforcement to student's behaviors is an effective and powerful method for maintaining a peaceful and productive group learning environment. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from their guiding adults they develop a strong self-concept, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline which supports emotional intelligence.

Based on this practicing belief of how children learn and develop values, staff at HROS address the following common typical behavior issues in the online environment:

- Unkind verbal usage (including swear words)
- Dishonesty
- Defiance of known rules at school
- Preparations for positive behavior supports

Expectations

We expect students to follow our school rules and achieve goals by modeling and teaching positive behavior.

We design and maintain a calm, predictable, consistent learning environment that students can count on.

We present daily routines, expectations, and create group rules together.

We speak to the students in a respectful tone, we do not scream or holler over them. Rather, we maintain their attention in a more creative manner.

We are honest with students and present the expectation for reciprocal behavior through our lessons and general conversation.

We assume that they are being truthful unless they admit or we directly observe otherwise.

We take students aside when addressing issues, we do not single students out in front of their peers.

We use a unified set of “teacher language” for consistency purposes, generally falling into one of three categories: reminding language, redirecting language, or reinforcing language. *Power of our Words is used as a direct resource.

We direct students who are visibly upset to take the time to calm themselves before we work on the solution to an issue.

Students are given a reasonable amount of warnings (at least 1) before they lose privileges. That warning likely includes informing or reminding them what the consequence will be for continued identified behaviors.

Students engage in reflection activities on a daily basis that ensure basic privileges for the next day. Students may also lose privileges for continued poor choice behaviors at any time.

We work 1:1 with students for plans for restoring privileges; sometimes we conduct a teacher/student strategy meeting to help them identify their personal motivators.

Consequences

Typical consequences may include: going into “observation-mode” until calm (being muted), loss of freedom to choose partners, calling their parents for reinforcement (potentially losing at-home privileges),

temporary suspension from HROS for the rest of the day, and expulsion.

Follow-up with typical behavior topics

After a reasonable warning system is used (custom to the student), and they have continued the identified undesirable behavior, and they have sat out for an amount of time long enough for them to be calm and clear-headed, *follow up* will begin. Staff will approach the student peacefully, and begin with a conversation designed to help them further develop their problem solving skills. They coach students on identifying their feelings and identify honestly what took place regarding their behaviors. They look together at how their behaviors affect those around them, and have them identify ideas to help them come up with other options, should they be faced with a similar feeling in the future. The teacher may offer suggestions, and/or call or text the parent directly as well. Our hope is that it will help families bring to light the challenges that their child is experiencing in following our school rules, which will allow them to provide additional support for the child's plans to make respectful choices in the future. This is designed to help them feel very loved, safe, and capable of dealing with any feeling that may fester within them.

How many issues are too many?

The answer to this question is student dependent, therefore there is not an exact amount that will cause dismissal. It is all about effectiveness. We are looking for the system that we have in place to help students grow in their independence with managing their feelings and initiating forward progress. If there are continued, consistent issues occurring and no forward movement is being made with this system, we will ask parents to come to join an online conference with the student and their teachers. Together we will design another more in depth plan for that student.

An Alternative Strategy

Students with known (diagnosed or undiagnosed) behavior issues who may display a certain discomfort with group settings, may be given a choice to either join with their group and partake of the current activity, observe from a distance, or work on a small quiet project by themselves in a close by area. As long as the child manages themselves peacefully, is relatively engaged, and is of little distraction or deterrent to others' learning, they may continue with their choice to stay out of the group until

they are ready to participate. Forward progress toward group interaction will be monitored and encouraged. And, parents shall be aware and in full acceptance of the fact that their child's progress may be greatly diminished if they are not actually participating in the activities and lessons provided in the group setting.

Non-typical Challenging Behaviors

Violent behavior, defiance, and threats, as well as disregard for safety is unacceptable and cause for dismissal if not brought under control. Examples of extremely challenging behaviors include (but are not limited to): outward displays of aggressive behaviors such as biting, hitting, kicking, throwing objects, destroying property, running away, as well as constant demanding of attention to themselves to the point of distracting the whole group, and refusal to comply with known classroom rules.

Parents will be provided with a list of current resources that they may pursue such as counseling or therapy. It is possible to have a professional provide 1:1 guidance and accompany the child throughout their school day (at the family's expense), if that is a viable option. However, we are not staffed for 1:1 full guidance support, and therefore do not provide that service at HROS.

Every opportunity will be given to the student to succeed, but it essentially comes down to their ability to comprehend the directives and their choice to comply. If students are incapable of independently managing their behavior with our guidance and support from home, then they may not be ready for the group learning environment at our school. Should it be decided that a student is either incapable of comprehending or is consistently non-compliant with directions that will keep them and other students safe, they will be dismissed. It is possible to discuss future enrollment for such a time when the student matures and may be more ready for the environment, but it will be up to the discretion of the Teaching and Administrative Staff.

Payment Policies:

All tuition payments are made through Paypal, Zelle or HubSpot (online digital invoicing, payment, and tracking system) via bank draft or credit card payment. If payment is made through Paypal or Hubspot the payee is responsible for service charges.

Full tuition is expected prior to the first day of school. There are no refunds for missed days, snow days, holidays, vacations, withdrawal or expulsion.

Honorable Withdrawal from the Program

Withdrawal requires a 30 day notice. You are responsible for any incurred costs beyond the tuition agreement amount. There are no tuition refunds.

Applicable Law/Arbitration: This Agreement will be governed by the laws of the State of Vermont. Any controversy or claim arising under or relating to this Agreement or its breach, including any dispute relating to the student's enrollment at Healing Roots Edu. or to the student's completion of the school year at Healing Roots Edu., shall be settled solely by final and binding arbitration before a single neutral arbitrator. The parties hereby knowingly and intentionally waive any right they may otherwise have to trial by jury or court of such claims or disputes. The arbitrator shall determine all challenges to the legality or enforceability of this Agreement. Any arbitration shall take place in Montpelier, Vermont.

Tardiness Policy

Ideally, HROS students should arrive at their class on time every day in order to get oriented with the space. Your student should login 5 minutes prior to their scheduled class. Logging in late might cause difficulties with logging into the classroom.

Excessive tardiness not related to actual emergencies can eventually lead to dismissal from our program. Each case is reviewed individually. Ample warnings will be provided as applicable.

Attendance Policy

We are an experiential learning school. Projects and lessons are presented as full group hands-on experiences. Often, students work in partners and small groups and are responsible for portions of projects.

In the event a child is sick or unwell, they should rest. We ask that families be responsive and stay in direct communication with teachers/support staff. Students are expected to keep up with and complete assignments when they are absent. They will have the option to complete missed work at home.

*We have requested that HROS families plan all family vacations, appointments, and special visitors during the seasonal breaks. Excessive absences not related to actual sickness or travel can eventually lead to dismissal from our program. Each case is reviewed individually. Ample warnings will be provided as applicable.

What to Bring or NOT to Bring

Please DO NOT allow your child to bring toys to class sessions (unless there is a special *Share from Home* project; families will be notified of such

projects). *If there is something special that your child would like to share, please inform your child's teacher so we can make a plan for it.

Assessments

Assessments at HROS are authentic and on-going, and used as a means to both drive instruction and record progress. We use a variety of “evidences” to determine if, and to what extent the student comprehends subject matter, both of equally valued academics and social/emotional management. Each student will have a portfolio that builds throughout the year, containing completed work, notes, and surveys.

Students will be assessed for their starting points in math and ELA (English Language Arts) and will gather daily with other students of like starting points. Teachers differentiate within groups, with respect to the building blocks of learning for each subject. Teachers will be acutely aware of the students’ progress through the curriculum points. If students are moving at a faster rate than their current group, they may press forward. *For example: they may be placed in a higher math group.

Screenings

To help gauge starting points for each student and identify leveled ELA and math groups, within the very first few weeks of school, HROS teachers will prepare and integrate planned activities to help identify current levels of cognition and social/emotional skills. Staff may utilize a variety of assessment tools such as Brigance and Teaching Strategies Gold systems with the younger students, K-12 Common Core assessments, and/or by incorporating Multiple Intelligence activities with the older students.

Recordings and Observations

Teachers manage each student’s portfolio and use the following methods:

- Teacher reflections: written observations, anecdotal notes, and digital capturing (video, audio, photo).
- Student reflections: recorded verbal interviews with teachers, surveys, written self-assessment.
- Parent reflections: recorded (written or audio) conversation with teachers and surveys.

Meetings and Reviews

There are three scheduled Assessment Points throughout the school year at HROS for each student in each grade.

1. An Orientation Meeting is scheduled after the 1st few weeks of the school year for each student to collaborate with parents to create goals while in attendance for the current school year at HROS.
2. In January, the first Whole-Child Report goes home for review.
3. In February, teachers review the progress of the goals. If there are significant issues regarding progress, behavior, or the goals are out of date, then they will arrange for a face to face meeting with the parent(s). Students may or may not be present at this meeting.
4. In June, teachers prepare the final Whole-Child Report for each student highlighting the strides in goal achievement, along with color photos. Parents may request a meeting to discuss the report in further detail

Student folders

HROS keeps record of enrollment documentation for each student. Student Folders include:

- Pictures for their whole child report (for parents only).
- Signed copy of the [23/24 HROS Family Handbook](#)
- Signed Permission slip: [Google Meet Use Sign-off](#) Signifies use of the HROS online platform. Teachers record the class ONLY for enrolled students to watch if they were absent.
- Photo release- [MINOR \(CHILD\) PHOTO RELEASE FORM](#) if parents want their students' photos to be used for marketing purposes. (If parents desire, they can send us more pictures of their student's activities at home.)
- Receipt of Tuition Payment
- Signed [HROS Financial Agreement form-1](#)

Fundraisers & Parent Contributions

At HROS, we work together as a learning community to raise the funds needed to provide the services to your children. All enrolled families are asked to participate in our fundraisers and encouraged to volunteer whenever it may be convenient. Consider joining the Family Outreach Committee! *See and fill out the options for the current school year.

Communication:

To connect families with pertinent information such as: tuition statements,

announcements, field trips, community visitors, fundraising events, inclement weather, emergencies, etc. HROS will communicate with families by the following means:

- Email
- Digital School Calendar
- Text

Please indicate your preferred methods of communication to the Office / Support Staff.

Behavioral Incident Reporting

The Behavioral Incident Report Form (Appendix) is designed to assist staff, students, and families to report incidents of concern regarding questionable behavior, and is available in the appendix. The form should be emailed to the Academic Director at: director@healingrootsedu.org

Acknowledgement of receipt will usually be provided within 1 to 2 business days. In consultation with the person making the report, HROS will make an initial assessment of the situation, and if appropriate, recommend an action plan. A communication strategy involving relevant personnel across the Board of Directors may be required. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will include the relevant accused.

Three Pillars Agreement

The HROS Staff agree to:

- First and foremost, get to know your child (academically and personally), their likes, dislikes, and learning type (in references to the multiple intelligences).
- Be well prepared and ready to receive students for learning each day.
- Maintain the safety of the learning environment.
- Initially and continually assess your child's growing skills in academics and social/emotional needs.
- Continually take students to their next natural step in the learning process.
- Hold and maintain high expectations of respect and independence.
- Strive to inspire the students with interesting, hands-on, experiential learning lessons at their developmentally appropriate levels.
- Continually look for the positive in your child and seek to enhance those qualities.

- Maintain an open ended (agreed upon) communication line with both parents and students.
- Seek support from the Parents as needed to uphold this contract, and are expectant of reciprocity.

HROS Parents/ Guardians agree to:

- First and foremost, work in partnership with Teachers and Support Staff in all matters concerning the student's growth and development academically, socially, physically.
- Abide by the school schedule, having their child logged into the class session on time, prior to and not interrupting "Centering" Time. And, logged off on time per the schedule.
- Remain in direct communication with HROS staff regarding absent days, communicable illnesses, changes in the home environment that may affect behavior, health concerns or restrictions, concerns, etc.
- Maintain open ended communication at all times by being responsive to phone calls, emails, and text messages from HROS staff and return messages promptly.
- Be prepared to end the class session should they become unwell, injured, or uncooperative at any time.
- Support HROS Staff in holding high expectations for respect and independence.
- Continually look for the positive in their child and seek to enhance those qualities.
- Speak with kindness to students, administrators, and teachers
- Seek support from the staff as needed to uphold this contract.
- Support/ monitor/ allow their student to use Google Suite including google classroom
- If the parent is dissatisfied with offerings the parent agrees to help and be a part of the solution.

HROS Students agree to:

- First and foremost, remain receptive to learning and progressing forward.
- Remain respectful as evidenced by being responsive to directions and adhering to known policies.
- Agree to be good sportsmen in all subjects and spaces online and in-person.
- Be prepared to stay current with their classes should they be absent from school.
- Engage in the prepared daily reflective practices in an effort to

- apply what they have learned to future choices.
- Remain receptive to the high expectations for respect and independence held for them by their parents and teachers.
 - Remain respectful to their peers and use only positive language at all times. *Everyone has a right to learn at HROS.
 - Respect the property of HROS by handling materials properly, cleaning up after themselves.
 - Seek support from their Teachers and Parents as needed to uphold this contract.
 - Use the Internet in a mature, responsible and safe manner.

Acknowledgement and Agreement to the Three Pillars Agreement

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date _____

Parent/ Guardian Name: _____

Parent/ Guardian Signature: _____ Date _____

*Appendix

Questionable Behavior Incident Report

Reporters Name: _____ Date Received _____

Person of Interest >> _____

circle one: employee student

Date of incident: _____

Description of incident:

List any witnesses: _____

Witness statements:

Requested action:

Verbal warning Probation Dismissal

Written warning Suspension Other

Explain:

This information is truthful to the best of my recollection.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Acknowledgement and Agreement to the Parent Handbook

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed name: _____