

## Pacific Elementary School Independent Study Program

K/1/2, 2019-2020

Hello Families-

I am so excited to be your child's teacher this year!

I'm sure many of you are wondering about my teaching style and the type of learning environment your child will experience when in the classroom. I promote a student-centered classroom and strive to create an atmosphere of positivity, mindfulness, competence, collaboration and respect for the community (both personal and global).

To build a strong classroom community, I have a teaching style that fosters a positive and safe learning environment. I support activities where we can learn to appreciate each other and take notice of the kind acts that we do for one another each day. I also bring training and a passion for mindfulness in education, a belief in using compassionate communication, and a need to prioritize what's "good for the whole group" to nurture responsible global citizens and caretakers of the Earth.

I favor a teaching pedagogy that values constructive conversation in the classroom, critical thinking and inquiry. I'll do my best to infuse students' interests into the work that we do and let them contribute to what we choose to learn. Not all activities can lead to project-based learning but I think we all appreciate it when we can create lessons together as a group that allow us to dive deeper into a subject. I love to end learning themes with events that involve performance, dress-up, show-casing our talents and play.

Most importantly I like to make learning fun and engaging and am always assessing student interest and motivation to guide the flow. Please feel free to contact me through email if you have any more questions about me or what the upcoming year will look like. I'd also love to chat about your children if you want to share with me their particular learning styles or needs. I feel lucky to be in such a supportive, collaborative community and am grateful for the upcoming year. When I say "we're going to have fun"- I really mean it!

**Here are some important things to remember as you plan for the upcoming year.**

The Independent Study Program's first day of homeschool work begins on Thursday, August 22. IS students **do not** come to school that day but please begin work at home. At this point we will have met and signed contracts and I will give your child work to do at home. Our first in-class day is **Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Please be on time to school and schedule vacations during school vacations. We spend a lot of time building a strong classroom community, learning routines, setting up parent-teacher schedules and we all count on one another to inspire and uplift our own learning. Being late and taking off-schedule school vacations is disruptive to everyone. Often times children need to re-acclimate to our culture and it can be tricky becoming familiar with our day again.

The school requires that all families [complete field trip driver forms online](#). Please follow the prompts online to complete these forms. As you know, field trips begin soon after the start of the year ☺

**Please pay ahead for school lunches, BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS.** You may use your own online banking to set up auto-pay for lunches, September 1 – April 1 (as well as for preschool tuition, after care, and rec bills). \$72 monthly covers 20 full-priced student lunches @ \$3.60 each (\$43.20 for 3-day IS students), and the cost for all other lunches (parents, guests, siblings) is \$5.65. However, if you are new to the school or your financial situation has changed, please apply for free or reduced price lunch ([forms are online on our website](#)). Both

families and the school benefit when families qualify. Contact the school office or see the website for more information.

Open classrooms are on **Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.** This is a time that all teachers will be in the classrooms to welcome students before the hustle and bustle of the first day of classes. This is also a chance to be sure all your registration paperwork is complete and turned in at the office. [Forms are on our school website](#) and the emailed Back-to-School Registration Paperwork memo. I will give a more detailed description of our routines, procedures, and curriculum plans and answer any questions you may have at the Back-to-School Night, Wednesday, September 11th. We also encourage everyone to explore our online family handbook at [www.pacificesd.org/family-handbook.html](http://www.pacificesd.org/family-handbook.html).

If you would like to donate supplies to the classroom, please refer to the following list:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Watercolor paper
- Crayons
- Whiteboard pens

Thank you so much for all that you do! I am looking forward to a great year ahead!

Warmly,

Kara Nickel