

# POORNA LEARNING CENTRE

## SCHOOL POLICY



## Briefly...

Poorna is an inclusive and democratic space. Each member: student, staff or parent is an active and important contributor to the idea that is Poorna. In that spirit, this policy document should be viewed as a set of guidelines to help with the day to day functioning of the school rather than rules set in stone. Discussions and debates in the Poorna community will ensure that this remains a “live” document that will be periodically updated.



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## Inclusion

At Poorna, we believe that a community of teachers, staff, parents and children from diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds adds to the growing and learning experience of all, and, is a microcosm of society.

### Students

- Our student population includes 20% children from low-income families and 10% children with special education needs
- Nutritious morning snack and lunch are provided for children who are not able to carry their own food to school on a regular basis
- Our in-house Special Educator works with children with special needs and provides counselling and support to parents, students and teachers on a regular basis
- Sexual Identity and sexual preferences are an important and complex component of a child's growing years. Poorna provides a supportive and judgement-free environment for children to discuss their anxieties and learn to be sensitive and respectful of differences

### Language

- All school level communication is sent out in English as well as Kannada
- Discussions and meetings that include our support staff and/or the entire parent community are translated into Kannada and Hindi, as needed

### Staff

- Poorna provides the flexibility of part-time teaching to help the teacher community balance their personal and professional priorities. This also provides professionals from different walks of life an opportunity to contribute to the Poorna learning environment
- All members of the Poorna staff are given the opportunity and support to develop skills required for their professional growth

## Environment

Poorna's philosophy and practice is that of sustainable and ecologically conscious education and living. The principles of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle are integrated into our day to day functioning.

- Waste is segregated at school and wet waste is composted. Students are discouraged from carrying plastic or aluminium foil wrappers to school and are requested to carry them back home in case they do
- Students actively help in keeping their classrooms and the school premises clean
- All members of the Poorna community help implement and maintain projects such as rainwater harvesting, gardening, grey-water reuse, waste segregation and composting



## Events and Activities

- All members of the Poorna community get together to celebrate the following each year:
  - Republic Day
  - Independence Day
  - Environment Day
  - Karnataka Rajyotsava
  - Sports Day (celebrated in November, on Children's Day)
  - Annual Day (celebrated every alternate year as a culmination to our year-long theatre, dance and music practice)
  - Mela (celebrated every alternate year to showcase the various art and craft products created by our children through the year)
- Several festivals, across all religions, are celebrated through the year. Students and Staff get together to make dishes (e.g. Ramzaan sweets), play games (e.g. breaking the clay pot for Krishna Jayanthi) and dress up (e.g. Halloween costumes) in true festive spirit
- The Poorna curriculum includes an Annual Trip, in the month of October, for all classes. Annual school trips help students bond with each other and learn from travel and interactions with different communities. The trips are educational and fun and an essential learning experience for the students
- Teachers also take students on class-wise field trips, based on the current topic being handled, to help enhance experiential learning.
- Every Wednesday, one group of students cook and serve food for the entire school. Students actively participate in the planning, shopping, cooking and serving of the meal. A simple, healthy vegetarian meal is prepared
- A class-wise Circle Time is held every week. The students and Class Teacher discuss important happenings inside and outside the school, issues of concern, as well plans for the various activities and events in the school.
- A school-wide Parliament is held every alternate month. Students raise any concerns that they may have and participate in the discussion and resolution of these issues.
- Guest lectures are routinely organised at Poorna, to provide exposure to current thinking and developments in different fields. Our parent community and staff members contribute significantly to hosting these lectures and inviting experts from their individual social networks

## Students and Parents

### Working Hours and Leave

- Working hours for the school: 8:45 am – 3:30 pm, Mon – Fri
- School will close at 2:30 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of every month to make time for bi-monthly curriculum and other school related discussions
- Any leave taken by a student should be recorded in the diary, duly signed by the parent/guardian. The concerned Class Teacher and Principal should be informed

### Transport and Fees

- School will help arrange for an appropriate bus transportation vendor
- Parents should coordinate with their child's bus attendants or drivers for finalising route and daily pick-up and drop-off
- Parents should inform the concerned Class Teacher and Principal in case of any change in the usual transportation arrangement for their child, in writing
- Parents should ensure that all fees are paid on time

### Food

- Children need to bring adequate snacks and lunch to school. They will not be permitted to buy food from outside
- Poorna encourages children to bring nutritious, home-made food. If they do carry packaged food, it should be repackaged in tiffin boxes. Students are discouraged from carrying and disposing throw-away packaging in school

### Certificates and Documents

- Parents and students should give the Office at least a week's notice in case specific certificates or forms need to be completed and authorised.

### Academic Help

- Students and parents can approach the concerned Class Teacher if a child should require additional academic support.

### Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTM)

- Formal PTMs are scheduled twice a year, once in the first term and once in the last term of every academic year. Teachers share detailed information on a student's progress through reports
- In the second term, students are guided through a process of self-evaluation for each subject. These self-evaluation reports are sent home for parents' review
- If a parent wants to meet with a teacher outside of the scheduled PTM, they can contact the Office and schedule an appointment. The student's Class Teacher should be kept in the loop

### Examinations

- Students start taking formal examinations in the 8<sup>th</sup> standard
- In the 10<sup>th</sup> standard, students choose between the IGCSE and NIOS Boards of Education and decide on their subjects of choice for the Board Examinations



## Mutual Respect

- Poorna provides a safe environment for all to voice their opinions and share their ideas. This is done in an environment of mutual respect. Please speak respectfully of the school and all the people connected with it, both within school and outside

## Student Admission and Withdrawal

### Admission

- Admission process for the next academic year starts in November. Interested parents can contact the Office and schedule a visit to Poorna
- The admission process can involve one or more of the following:
  - Meeting with the Principal
  - One or two days of class participation for the child
  - Oral and written evaluation tests for middle school and high school children
  - Submission of previous school records and special needs reports, if any
- Based on availability, all admissions are finalised by the following February
- All fees that are due should be paid to the Office
- New students should be ready to attend the first day of school when school reopens in the end of May or beginning of June

### Withdrawal

- If a parent chooses to change schools for their child, they are advised to do so at the end of the academic year
- The Office should be informed of the parents' decision to withdraw their child by November
- All school dues should be cleared prior to the release of a Transfer Certificate
- A Transfer Certificate will be issued in June, at the beginning of the next school academic year. Exceptions can be made for circumstances beyond the parents' control (mid-year job relocation, etc.)

## First Aid and Emergency

- The school has a recovery room with two beds and a fully stocked First Aid Box. Minor injuries and temporary ailments are treated in the school.
- In case of a medical emergency, the child is taken to Saralaya Hospital on Bagalur Main Rd and the parent/guardian is informed as soon as possible.
- In case a student requires specific medication or emergency response (e.g. allergic reaction), parents should inform the Class Teacher and the Office about the required procedure and ensure that appropriate medication is provided and updated at the beginning of each school year.
- Poorna organises a Fire Drill and a Fire Safety workshop periodically.



## Conflict Resolution

Conflicts and misunderstanding can arise between members of the community in various situations. Being respectful and engaging in productive dialogue is at the core of conflict resolution in Poorna.

- Resolution of any issue through assumed authority or power is discouraged at Poorna. Any interaction, between students, members of staff, office administration and parents should be respectful
- A space is provided (commonly referred to as “Bubble Space” in Poorna) where a child or staff member can express their concerns in private, to a group of teachers who are nominated or elected periodically. All such conversations are kept confidential and only information required for issue resolution is shared on a need basis
- Sealed boxes are placed in different locations in school if a member of the community wishes to share their feedback or concerns anonymously. Members can share incidents that upset them as well as those that brought them happiness
- It is advisable to talk and resolve issues as soon as they occur instead of letting things fester and blow out of proportion. Resolution typically involves extensive dialoguing between the two concerned parties with a neutral person acting as a moderator
- For all issues or conflicts related to a student, the student’s Class Teacher should be informed and kept in the loop