

Awakening Seed Parent Handbook



2025 - 2026



6630 S. 40th Street
Phoenix, Arizona 95042

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THE SEED MISSION STATEMENT

Awakening Seed is an innovative, compassionate learning community that inspires global citizens by fostering curiosity, celebrating uniqueness, and promoting social justice.

THE SEED PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Throughout history, people from all walks of life have shared a vision of an age in which all beings will live together in peace. Those who hold this vision are committed to working for the benefit of all others until each one has attained an awareness of the unity of life. Awakening Seed shares this worldwide vision of peace and applies these fundamental truths into all aspects of our organization:

- Children are respected for their strengths, supported in their efforts to become well-balanced individuals, and should be encouraged to become intelligent, divergent thinkers.
- Life can be viewed as a series of cycles or patterns. By studying smaller cycles such as the breath in the human body or life cycles of insects and spiders, the universals of life are more easily understood.
- Each person is more than a physical being. Our intellect and spiritual nature need cultivation as well, in order to become a balanced person.
- We all need love and support in our efforts to learn and grow.
- Suffering can be eliminated through loving kindness and compassion. This attitude is cultivated most effectively at an early age.
- World peace is possible.

Awakening Seed was conceived in 1977 in order to provide an environment for children to further this vision. These principles represent the core of our operational philosophy. By staying true to this philosophy we are able to ensure prosperity and

stimulate positive growth for all children that attend Awakening Seed School.

At the Seed we strive to provide a safe environment with a nurturing, community atmosphere. We model respect and expect that children will be respectful to their peers and the adults in their lives. Educationally, we believe that children should be well-rounded, develop a disposition to love learning when they are young, and enjoy coming to school. We use an emergent curriculum model, which means the interests, passions, and daily lives of both children and teachers frequently drive classroom content. Academic subjects are often integrated into larger projects, which allows students to apply basic skills in meaningful ways. We adhere to the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards for our elementary students and follow the Arizona Early Learning Standards for our preschoolers. The Seed uses a modified STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) curriculum throughout the school. If you have more specific questions about the Seed philosophy or curriculum, please consult with the executive director, founding director, or the Seed website. Additionally, curriculum information specific to your child's classroom will be provided by the teacher.

GOALS OF THE AWAKENING SEED CURRICULUM

- To ensure that all children attending Awakening Seed feel emotionally and physically safe at school.
- To stimulate children's curiosity and inspire life-long learning through a wide range of engaging educational experiences.
- To support children in their growth as social beings by nurturing respect for each other, the people in their lives, their community, and the planet on which we live.
- To enable children to become self-disciplined through practice in making positive choices with thoughts, words and actions.
- To support parents in their important roles as their children's first teachers through clear and frequent

communications, helpful suggestions, and modeling kindness toward children.

- To foster creativity and innovative thinking by immersing students in an imaginative, expansive educational setting.
- To nurture compassionate, caring planetary stewards through school experiences that raise local and global awareness, with an emphasis on understanding the concept of inter-connectedness.

For more information about the Seed curriculum, go to this [link](#).

WHAT MAKES THE SEED UNIQUE?

- Children are respected for their strengths, supported in their efforts to become well-balanced individuals, and encouraged to become intelligent, divergent thinkers. An emphasis is placed on what a child does well, building on that to further develop areas of challenge.
- Students are treated with respect and are given support and guidance as they develop their social skills. Social/emotional development is considered as essential as learning to read and write.
- The Awakening Seed curriculum is designed to evolve from and with the children and staff. Children are highly motivated, self-directed learners because they are allowed to have a voice in determining their learning experiences.
- The rich multicultural learning environment allows students to appreciate both the similarities and differences we share as human beings. Many school activities include all ages and foster a spirit of cooperation, creating a sense of family and community.
- Class sizes are kept small, thus providing the maximum amount of attention for each child. Adaptations are made to meet individual needs and parents are highly involved, giving extra support to both students and staff.
- The outdoor environment plays a significant role in a child's Seed education. Gardening, tending personal outdoor spaces, spending time in the schoolyard

habitat, and learning about ecological issues are built into the Seed curriculum.

- Creativity and artistic expression are a high priority at the Seed. Both process and product are honored, giving children yet another means of self-expression.
- Seed students love to come to school because they are interested in what is offered and it's a happy place in which to grow.

THE SEED STAFF

Executive Director

Danielle Dueppen, the executive director, is responsible for all matters relating to the curriculum, enrollment, staff, and business practices of the Seed. She handles licensing procedures, facilitates communications with parents, supervises student placement, and oversees account payables and receivables. She monitors business decisions and daily operations of the school. Along with the board of directors and founding director, she upholds the Seed vision.

Founding Director

Mary Glover, the founding director, is responsible for supporting the executive director in the school's daily operations. Additionally, she works with staff development, coordinates alumni and grandparent groups, writes a weekly blog, and promotes school programs through the website and marketing. Along with the executive director, she supports the teaching staff as needed and upholds the Seed vision.

Office Manager

Debbie Moody, the office manager, runs the school office. She can answer most questions regarding daily procedures, enrollment, registration, tuition and scheduling, or will refer you to the proper person for information. She monitors student records, manages registration and enrollment, handles student medical situations, administers medication, and maintains office operations. Additionally, she works with the executive director to ensure that permits and inspections for licensing are current.

Business Manager

Sarah Balluff, the business manager, is responsible for all matters related to accounts payable and receivable, general and after school billing, maintaining accounts receivable customer files and records, review of contracts, assisting with special events that involve collection of funds, and coordinating maintenance services. She works closely with the executive director and office manager regarding business and maintenance matters.

After School Coordinator

Hannah Laugharn, the after school coordinator, is responsible for all activities and issues related to the after school program, including activity planning, staff coordination, supervision of children, communication with parents and working alongside the business manager with billing issues.

Resource/Logistics Manager

Stephanie Peyton, the resource/logistics manager is responsible for conducting developmental screenings for all new students, making referrals for students who might need additional services, implementing classroom modifications to support learners with differences, and generally offering assistance to students, parents, and teachers to help make their school lives successful.

Social-Emotional Learning Teacher

Mindy Bender-Webster, the social-emotional learning teacher, supports students and teachers by conducting in-depth observations of students, which are used to develop interventions and strategies for student success. She helps students directly with emotional regulation, and participates in meetings with parents as needed. Mindy provides professional development training to staff, and continues to find ways to enhance what the Seed can offer through this new position.

Lead Teaching Staff

Alex Zapien - Toddler 1s

Mali Lopez - Toddler 2s

Ashley Ruiz - Early 3s

Erin Kelly - Preschool 3s

Deb Hopkins - Preschool 4s

Karysa Horst - PreK

Kerri Tornow - Kindergarten

Gabryella Behnke/Emily Cleveland - 1st-2nd Grades

Bianca Lopez/Blanca Valle Rosas - 3rd-4th Grades

Bryce Gerrich - P. E.

Jay Cleveland - Music

Diane Hughes - Spanish

If you need to consult with a staff member, an appointment will be arranged during school hours. Please respect and preserve the privacy of staff members by not calling them at home, unless otherwise arranged to do so. Some staff members prefer to handle many of their communications via email or texting, so please check with your child's teacher to see which method is preferred.

HEALTH

Immunizations

You must provide an updated immunization record for your child that is authorized by your health provider. The immunization record or a request of exemption (for religious, medical, or personal reasons) must be provided prior to your child's enrollment. No exceptions will be made. Awakening Seed complies with all [state and county regulations](#) for preschool and elementary-age children and is required to submit an annual report to the Department of Health Services. Immunization forms must be updated by the parent as the child receives further vaccines.

Emergency/Health Form

The emergency/health form provided by Awakening Seed serves several purposes. Completed upon enrollment, it contains your child's health immunization record. It serves as a release form for the school to take your child for emergency treatment in the event that it is needed and you cannot be reached. It provides information concerning individuals who are authorized to pick up your child from school. It also contains the numbers of individuals to be called when you cannot be reached. Please FULLY complete the emergency/health form and return it on or before the first day of school.

Medical and Dietary Instructions Form

A medical and dietary instructions form is included with registration materials for you to fill out at the time of enrollment. Please fill out the form even if your child doesn't have allergies, so we'll know for sure that your child isn't allergic to anything. If your child requires an EpiPen®, you must provide two of them upon

enrollment: one for the office and one for the classroom. See "Nut Allergies" in the "Snack and Lunch" section for further information.

We will make every effort to offer an indoor option for children with asthma on high pollution days.

Potty Training Requirements

Students in the toddler and Early 3s classes may be at school in diapers. All students in the preschool 3s class and above must be reliably potty trained. The toddler and Early 3s classes are the only ones equipped for diaper changing, and violation of this could jeopardize our licensing. We appreciate your respecting this policy. **Parents of toddler and Early 3s children transitioning from diapers to underwear must review the [Potty-Training Agreement](#) and collaborate with their classroom teacher prior to the child coming to school in underwear.** Early 3s students will remain in the toddler after school at the toddler after school rates until age three and potty trained.

Our established policy for an older child who is not potty trained (due to a developmental or medical condition), is that they may attend school in diapers as long as a designated person **is in the building at all times** to take responsibility for the diapering process. See your child's classroom teacher for further information.

Drop-off Procedures

Parents are permitted to bring children into the building for morning sign-in and drop off. We ask that parents continue to check your child's health prior to coming to school. By signing your child in each morning, parents are confirming that your child is fever-free and symptom-free.

Hand Washing Policy

Children and staff must wash hands immediately upon arrival for the day. Parents who come in the building are asked to assist your child in this process. Hands must be washed BEFORE going to the classroom, with the exception of the toddlers who may wash their hands in the toddler classroom. Children and staff must also wash hands after spending time on the playground, before snacks or meals, and after using the toilet. [Hand washing procedures](#) are posted in each of the bathrooms.

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

All Awakening Seed staff members are considered mandatory reporters and are therefore required by law to report any cases of suspected physical, emotional, or sexual child abuse. All reports will be made to the Department of Child Services.

When a Child Becomes Ill at School

Ill children are brought to the office and are isolated from peers on a resting cot in the office area. A staff member supervises the child at all times. Children bring their own bedding or comfort items as they wait to be picked up and the parent takes all items home to be washed. The cot is sanitized and disinfected prior to use by another child.

Illness

Children who are ill should not attend school. We will keep our illness exclusion policy updated with the most current recommendations from the CDC and AZDHS. Children with any of the following illness symptoms should be monitored at home:

Fever or chills
Cough
Sore throat
Nausea or vomiting
Congestion or runny nose (not associated with history of allergies)
Diarrhea
Muscle or body aches
Headache

Any child with a body temperature of 100.4 will be sent home. If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be notified. You must make arrangements to take your child home as soon as possible. In some cases, parents may be asked to provide a note from the medical provider stating that the child is no longer contagious. Children must be fever, vomit and diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to school. When your child will be absent from school, for illness or other reasons, please notify the school before the beginning of the school day. You may leave a message on the answering machine: (602) 454-2606

You will be notified of actual or potential exposure of your child to any contagious or communicable disease. Notices of illnesses are posted on the bulletin

board located across from the office manager's desk in the office. If more than 10% of the children in a classroom group are reported having communicable diseases, we convey this information to the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Medications

Prescription Medications

Children who require medications during school hours must have written parent permission on a school medication form, which can be obtained from the office manager. Prescription medication must be provided to the office in the current, original container with student's name, medication name, dosage and prescriber's name. A written order from a physician must accompany any changes in medication dosage. Medications must be given directly to office personnel and cannot be sent to and from school with students. All medications brought to school, with the exception of emergency medications, shall be kept in a secured cabinet in the front office. At the end of the school year, parents are responsible for picking up any leftover medication. Medications not returned to the family will be discarded in an appropriate manner.

Over-the-Counter Medications

Children who require OTC medications during school hours must have written parent permission on a school medication form and (for toddlers/preschoolers) a written order from the student's pediatrician with instructions for use. Herbal medicines for all students must be accompanied by a written order from student's pediatrician. Administration of OTC medication must be consistent with the guidelines and recommendations on the label unless otherwise directed by pediatrician. OTC medication must be in original package labeled with student's name.

Head Lice

Head lice infestations are a problem throughout the country. You should become familiar with the symptoms of head lice (nits, small bite marks), and check your child regularly. Please notify the school if your child has head lice. **In the event that a case of head lice is found here at school, Awakening Seed will conduct head lice checks as needed.** Children found to have head lice (or a large number of nits) will be sent home for treatment. They may return to school AS SOON AS THEY HAVE BEEN TREATED. By working together, we can minimize the risk of spreading head lice to others. For further information on lice, refer to the updated [report](#) from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Staff Emergency Training & Emergency Procedures

Although only one staff person on the premises is required to have pediatric first aid and CPR training, the majority of Seed staff members complete a bi-annual pediatric first aid course required for daycare personnel, as well as pediatric CPR training. Staff members will handle minor medical problems and all other issues will be referred to professionals by calling 911. Staff members are involved in on-going training for storm and emergency evacuation procedures.

Adequate Rest

Adequate rest and proper diet are essential for a healthy, happy and well-adjusted child. If your child consistently displays symptoms of inadequate sleep, the teacher will request a conference with you and will suggest appropriate changes in your child's schedule.

Indoor/Outdoor Policy

Occasionally environmental factors may limit the amount of time that is healthy for the children and staff to be outside. The school policy for lunch recess and after school is that when the temperature is 100 degrees or above, children will have the option to play inside or outside except during the after school transition time. When the temperature hits 110 degrees or above, we will keep the children indoors only, except for during snack in after school and popsicles during summer recess and water play. Except on rare occasions, children will play outside in the mornings before school begins. During high pollution advisories we will have one staff member in the multi for children on the list for respiratory concerns. The children who must stay indoors may ask a couple of their friends to join them.

SAFETY

Transportation

Awakening Seed does not generally provide transportation for children to and from school. It is a school policy that individual staff members shall not provide transportation for students on behalf of the school. In the event that a staff member makes an arrangement with a family to provide transportation, a signed release form is required. Forms are available in the office.

Liability Insurance

The school carries general liability insurance, which covers all activities on the school premises. Coverage is also included while at final field trip destinations, not while in transit.

Field Trips

All children must have a signed field trip permission slip to attend a field trip, including walking field trips. For all field trips, a parent or guardian must drive their own child(ren) and remain with the group until they return back to school. If a car pool situation is required for a student to attend the field trip, parents must make these individual arrangements and fill out appropriate paperwork with the office.

Lockdown/Fire Drills

Health department regulations require that we conduct unannounced monthly fire drills. Additionally, we will conduct periodic lockdown drills as a security practice in the event that we would have an emergency situation. Notification prior to the first lockdown will be provided to parents. See the office manager or directors if you have any questions.

Playground Safety Rules

Awakening Seed prohibits any behavior that might jeopardize the safety of a child. We request that you reinforce safety rules at home. A complete list of the safety rules is given in the "Playground Safety Rules" section of this handbook. See "Discipline and Guidance" for further information.

Application of Pesticides

A schedule of monthly pesticide applications is posted on the bulletin board in the office. All applications are done on the weekends when students are not in attendance.

Threats and Violent Behavior

Safety is of utmost importance at the Seed. Awakening Seed has a no-weapons (imaginary, toy, or otherwise), no-violence policy. Verbal threats and physical violence are not tolerated and parents of any child involved in these behaviors shall be notified immediately. Children involved in such activities will be given an age-appropriate consequence, and if this behavior continues without noted improvement, we may ask you to withdraw your child from Awakening Seed. Any adult involved in violent or threatening

behaviors may also be asked to leave the school. See "Discipline and Guidance" for further information.

Sign-in/Sign-out (NEW)

The Seed now uses an electronic student sign-in/sign-out procedure. Parents will sign children in using a personal device or a designated school iPad. At the end of the school day parents will follow a similar procedure, using a personal device or designated school iPad. All children still present at 3:16 pm will be transferred into the after school program. When picking up a child from the after school program, parents will sign out upon entering the building.

If your child is a full-day student and you will be picking them up early (prior to 3:00), we ask that you call ahead to let office staff know when you will be arriving. A staff member will bring the child to the front office with their belongings.

School Entrance

We now have controlled access to the building. When you arrive at the front door, a staff member will let you in. Please remember that the fenced area at the school entrance is for the protection of our students. We ask that when leaving, you let only children you are authorized to take from the school into the fenced area. All other children must remain in the building. Please be sure your child remains INSIDE the building until you are ready to leave. We ask that you close the gate gently to preserve the mechanism on the lock.

Visitors

When school is in session all visitors should report to the office and sign the visitors' sign-in sheet. If you know of an individual who will be visiting your child's class, it is helpful to let the office manager know ahead of time, as well as your child's teacher.

Elementary Student Drop-off (new)

Elementary students are still allowed to be dropped off at the curb, as long as their parent signs them in from the curb. Students will not be signing themselves in.

Persons Authorized to Pick Up Children from School (revised)

All persons authorized to pick up your child from school must be listed on the child's brightwheel student account. This includes relatives, and other parents who are picking up a child on a one-time basis.

Change of Clothing

All children (including older students) should be provided with a change of clothing (including shoes) appropriate to the season. Check daily to see if these clothes need to be cleaned or replaced. Younger classes have a system for informing you if your child has soiled or wet items. Please check with your child's teacher if you have questions about how this information is communicated. All clothing should be marked with the child's first and last name.

Auto Safety

Please exercise caution when entering or leaving the parking lot. Please drive slowly, park only in designated parking spaces, and **be sure to accompany all children across the parking lot, regardless of age.**

Designated Drop-off @ Yellow Curb

The area in front of the building along the yellow curb is a designated drop-off area for older students only. **At no time should a car be left unattended along the yellow curb.** Please help us keep our students safe by not parking in this area.

From time to time we've had cars broken into in the parking lot. In each instance there was a purse, backpack, diaper bag, money, or cellphone visible from the exterior of the car. Please be sure to bring these items into the building with you or place them somewhere in which they are hidden. Furthermore, NEVER EVER leave a child unattended in your car, especially running with the keys in the ignition. If you see an unattended child in a car, please report this to the front desk and we will follow up with the parent.

Screen Time

Screen time at the Seed will be used with mindful intention, enhancing current classroom discussions or studies. Exceptions for special occasions will be left up to the discretion of the teacher. Older students will be involved in age-appropriate use of technology.

Student "Away for the Day" Policy (NEW)

Personal electronic devices that have the capability to receive and send messages, make calls, take photos or videos, or play games during the school day disrupt learning and can result in social disconnection. If a student brings an electronic device to school, it must be turned off or set to "School Time" or "Do Not Disturb" to silence notifications before being put Away

for the Day. Devices should be stored in a student's backpack **upon being signed in and until after they're signed out.** Any students needing to connect to a parent/guardian are welcome to use the school's land line and Awakening Seed staff are happy to accommodate this need. Students wanting to keep time during the day are welcome to wear a standard analog or digital watch.

This policy was informed by current research and created with the intention of optimizing our students' learning and mental health. If you have questions about this policy or feel that the needs of your child require him/her to access a personal electronic device, please email administration and CC your child's teacher/s. Awakening Seed staff will work with a child's family and service provider/s (therapist, doctor, etc.) to create an individualized plan to support this need. For more information, please refer to this link.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent Volunteers

Awakening Seed encourages you to share your talents to help enrich the program. Joining the APA (see APA section), serving on volunteer committees, preparing materials at home for the classroom, or serving as a room representative are a few of the ways you can participate. Parents are also welcome to participate in classroom activities as determined in collaboration with your child's teacher.

As events arise, we can always use parent and grandparent volunteers to help with various tasks. Sign-ups will be handled through links that will be sent out through SignUp Genius. If you need further information, please consult with the executive director, founding director, APA coordinators, or your child's teacher if you are interested in volunteering (see p. 25 for parent participation guidelines).

Email/General Website

The Seed uses electronic communications through Brightwheel and general email to convey most information among staff and to parents, primarily through weekly updates from the director. Classroom teachers will send out messages through brightwheel regarding information specific to each class. Please check your messages daily and let us know if you aren't receiving our communications. The Seed curriculum guide, the parent handbook, and other pertinent

documents are available electronically on the school [website](#). Additionally, the founding director posts a weekly [blog](#) on the general website.

Mailbox

Each child has a classroom mailbox. PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM MAILBOX DAILY. This is another means of informing you of special news that may need your immediate attention. If you have a dual household family, please let the office manager and your child's teacher know, so we can provide duplicate copies of all information.

Parent Classroom Participation

Parents are allowed in the building for drop-off and pick-up, as well as other special events. Communications regarding special presentations or projects will be handled by classroom teachers.

Awakening Seed parents have access to the school at any time during hours of operation. You are welcome to participate in classroom activities with your own child by "attending class" for a few hours. Classroom teachers prefer that arrangements for such observations are made ahead of time; however, you are always welcome to drop in on any aspect of the school's program at any time. Some parents also prepare materials for teachers, decorate doors, or gather resources for studies. The Department of Health Services does not allow "parent volunteers" in the classroom unless they are fully fingerprinted and documented. Therefore, your focus in the classroom should be on your own child's experience, rather than helping out with the whole class.

APA

One of the best ways to participate in your child's education is through the Awakening Seed Parents Association (known as the APA) which is comprised of parent volunteers. They are involved in many service and social activities throughout the year, including, tie-dye day, tile painting, the spring picnic, and Teacher Appreciation Week. The APA also sponsors occasional events such as a splash pad meet-up at a local park and dine-out nights at different valley restaurants. Room representatives for each classroom are coordinated through the APA to assist with classroom and school-wide events. Information about the APA will be made available to you through your mailbox and the bulletin board in the hallway. Get involved! See the "FAQ about the APA" section of this handbook for further information.

Parent/Staff Communications

We are always eager to hear your ideas, suggestions, concerns, preferences, goals, and questions about the school. Generally, we suggest you begin with the classroom teacher if you have classroom issues, the after school coordinator if your concerns or questions relate to the after school program, or administrators for anything else. An appointment can be scheduled with the appropriate staff member to discuss such issues. See "Grievances" for specifics about our grievance policy. We strive to provide the best possible educational program, and your input helps to assure that this continues. We'll do our best to inform you ahead of time of staff changes or other decisions in practice or policy that affect the children. In the event of an emergency or last minute change, we'll inform you of such changes as soon as it's appropriate or practical to do so.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

Years of experience have shown us that children function best in the school environment when they eat a wholesome diet. In general, they are more alert and able to concentrate better when their diet includes a balance of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and a minimum of sugar, additives and processed foods. Furthermore, childhood obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer are increasing at alarming rates, and we believe school offers an excellent opportunity to address nutritional needs.

seedfood Website

In response to growing concerns around children's health, nutrition and a desire to support parents in providing quality food to children, our staff has created a [website](#) solely dedicated to food and children. It includes lunch ideas, an occasional blog, resources, the Seed lunch and snack policies, and the evolving Seed nutrition curriculum.

Daily Snack

Parents of all students are asked to bring their own snack from home each day. Health department regulations require two food groups for a snack (see chart above for suggestions).

Health department regulations prohibit staff from giving children younger than four years old the following items because they are a choking hazard: hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds)

SNACK AND LUNCH IDEAS				
<i>Veggies</i>	<i>Dairy</i>	<i>Protein</i>	<i>Fruit</i>	<i>Grain</i>
<i>broccoli</i> <i>corn</i> <i>carrots</i> <i>squash</i> <i>zucchini</i> <i>green beans</i> <i>tomatoes</i> <i>celery</i> <i>asparagus</i> <i>peas</i> <i>beets</i>	<i>milk</i> <i>cottage cheese</i> <i>soy products,</i> <i>calcium enriched</i> <i>cheese-cubed, string,</i> <i>cream, shredded</i> <i>yogurt</i>	<i>edemame (soy</i> <i>beans)</i> <i>soy products</i> <i>beans-pinto, black,</i> <i>kidney, garbanzo</i> <i>nut butters*</i> <i>cheese</i> <i>tuna</i> <i>meat-shredded,</i> <i>cubed, or sliced</i> <i>eggs-scrambled or</i> <i>hard boiled</i>	<i>avocado</i> <i>fruit cocktail</i> <i>blueberries</i> <i>strawberries</i> <i>bananas</i> <i>nectarines</i> <i>grapes (cut in half</i> <i>for toddlers)</i> <i>watermelon</i> <i>oranges</i> <i>mango</i> <i>pineapple</i> <i>peaches</i> <i>honeydew melon</i> <i>cantaloupe</i> <i>apples/applesauce</i>	<i>whole grain cereal</i> <i>pasta</i> <i>granola bars</i> <i>rolls</i> <i>bagels</i> <i>oatmeal</i> <i>pretzels</i> <i>barley</i> <i>English muffins</i> <i>pita bread</i> <i>rice</i> <i>enriched breads</i> <i>100% whole wheat</i> <i>bread</i> <i>crackers</i>

whole grapes
popcorn
hard pretzels
nuts

spoonfuls of peanut butter
raw peas
chunks of raw carrots
chunks of meat (larger than
can be swallowed whole)

Lunch

Your child needs to bring a healthy, well-balanced lunch that includes protein, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains (see "Snack and Lunch Ideas" chart for examples). and drink each day. All lunches and drinks (sippy cups for toddlers) for children in kindergarten and younger must be labeled with the child's name. Refrigeration space is available for perishable lunch items for all toddlers and preschoolers. Elementary students should provide their own means of keeping their lunches cooled (e.g. Blue Ice, frozen juice boxes, etc.). Make sure the lunch is fully prepared as preschool and elementary classes do not have kitchen appliances for heating up items. Warm soup/items can be sent in a thermos.

State regulations require preschool children to drink either milk or 100% juices for lunch. We ask that you assist the school in complying with this regulation by providing only these items for drinks. Sodas of any kind are not allowed with lunches for any students.

The Seed Green School Plan

As we promote healthy eating habits for our students, we are also promoting healthy practices for the planet. Parents are encouraged to send food items in reusable containers or wrappers instead of using throw away plastic bags, foil, and plastic wrap. Additionally, each classroom composts all lunch and snack food scraps to reduce trash and to enhance our gardens. Check out our [Green School Plan](#) on the website.

Toddler Food and Drink Program

Toddlers follow the same general procedures as the preschoolers for lunch and snacks. Toddlers need to have additional items included their lunch box for a snack. Additionally, toddler parents are asked to bring an enclosed cup of water, juice or milk daily. Breast milk may be sent in the water bottles for toddlers still nursing. A snack is served after school each day and water bottles are re-filled throughout the day with water or other parent-requested drink. DRINK CUPS, WATER BOTTLES, AND LUNCH BOXES MUST BE MARKED WITH THE CHILD'S FIRST AND LAST NAME AND THE DATE.

Seed Birthday Policy

SEED BIRTHDAY POLICY

Out of respect for the wide-ranging nutritional needs of our students, and an effort to be inclusive (so all children can participate equally in birthday celebrations), we ask that all birthday celebrations are conducted without food. The exception is fruit juice popsicles. Birthday posters, a book for the class, or a special activity are acceptable forms of celebration. If food items are sent in, they will not be served at school.

Snack and Lunch Ideas

The table on page 13 provides ideas for snacks and lunches based on the food pyramid guide. Choosing 1-2 items from each category makes a complete lunch.

Nut Allergies

Occasionally we have students with a severe nut allergy. When this occurs, it is necessary for a class to be determined a no nut classroom. Your child's teacher will let you know if that is the case. Children will eat only food from their own lunch boxes (except after school snack provided by the school), so shared snacks won't generally be an issue. Please see your child's teacher to make special arrangements about food if your child is highly allergic.

SCHOOL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Awakening Seed has numerous special events throughout the year. Please refer to the school calendar posted on the general website for more information, and be sure to read all weekly communications from the executive director.

Open House

is held on the Monday before school begins each August. It typically runs from 9:30 to 11:00 am. It is an opportunity for the children and parents to see the classroom and meet the teachers and classmates.

New Parent Orientation

is held virtually via Zoom on the Monday evening of Curriculum Week from 6-7 pm. New parent orientation will be recorded so parents who are unable to attend the virtual session can receive the information. All questions can be directed to the classroom teacher or to Danielle Dueppen, the executive director.

Curriculum Week

is held in late August to give parents a chance to learn about our curriculum. Curriculum night presentations will be held virtually by each classroom teacher. Details for each class will be communicated by the classroom teachers. All questions can be directed to the classroom teacher or to Danielle Dueppen, the executive director.

Hearing and Vision Screening

is a process by which we screen children to see if they have hearing or vision problems that might need further evaluation. All students will be screened for both vision and hearing. Parents (and teachers) will be notified of any concerns.

Tie Dye Day

is a chance to add that special unique touch to your newly purchased white Seed T-shirt. For families interested in attending this after school event, white shirts will be available for purchase (the cost of the dyes is included) ahead of time. Instructions for how to tie the shirts are provided and shirts are dropped off the morning of the event. After school, parents come to dye their shirts and then take them home to wash out the next morning. Proceeds go to classroom and program needs. Charges for shirts and tie-dye, and are all billed through brightwheel and charged through ACH. This event is held in late September.

Fall Festival (decision pending)

is a school event that replaced the Seed's Halloween Carnival, which was put on hold due to the pandemic in 2020. This event, if it is scheduled, will be held late October. It is still in the development stage, and further information will follow as decisions are made.

All-School Thanksgiving Gathering

is held outside on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving at lunchtime. Families and friends are welcome to join us for a picnic-style lunch gathering in honor of our school community and all that we are grateful for at the

Seed. The gathering will begin at 11 am. We have early dismissal on that day at 12:30 for toddlers and 1 pm for all other students.

Winter Solstice Celebration

is one of the favorite and most memorable Seed events. It is an outside event with luminarias, children's art, music, and candle lighting. On Thursday evening of the last week before winter break, families come to school to walk a path of luminarias in celebration of the winter solstice. It's a beautiful way to celebrate our Seed community during the holiday season.

School Picnic

is held in the spring at the Seed on a Saturday afternoon in April. Everyone brings their own lunch, and the event includes face painting, games, music, and a chance to check out various elements of the outdoor environment. Former Seed families are always welcome and everyone enjoys this relaxing and casual time on the Seed playground.

Tile Painting

is a chance to paint a tile to go on the front of the building. If you want to paint a tile, the cost is \$25 each. Charges for tile painting are all billed through brightwheel and charged through ACH. This event will be held in conjunction with Tie-dye Day.

Seed Art Silent Auction

is held in April and features art work created by Seed children and staff. Classrooms contribute a designated number of pieces of artwork for the event made collectively by each group. The art work is on display in the hallway, as well as on the website 32auctions.com, through which the auction is held. All bidding is done electronically during the days surrounding the picnic. Funds are dedicated to enhancing the school's outdoor programs.

Awards and Graduation

Awards and Graduation occur on the last day of the regular school year. Each class has a separate awards ceremony where children, teachers and volunteers are individually honored for their efforts and achievements of the year. It is one of the most touching and memorable Seed moments. Graduation for 3rd and 4th graders will be held first thing in the morning, with their awards following in the classroom.

Parenting Workshops (proposed)

are a series of workshops offered free of charge to all Seed parents interested in refining their parenting skills. Taught in-person by Seed staff, the workshops give parents a chance to learn about the Seed's approach to guidance, discipline, and child development, and at the same time learn how to make parenting a more pleasant experience. Plans are underway to offer topics that will enhance parenting skills and support children's social-emotional development.

Seed Grandparent Group

Awakening Seed has an active community of grandparents. In 2016 we established a grandparents group, which is open to all Seed grandparents. The group has had various levels of involvement, depending on members each year. There will be an initial meeting to plan out the direction of the group in mid-September. Please contact Mary Glover at mary@awakeningseedsschool.org to have a grandparent's name added to the email list.

FAQ ABOUT THE APA (see p. 12)

• What is the APA?

The APA is the Seed parent organization established to support teachers and staff members, serve as a network for parents, organize community building events, provide information about the school, and generally support the ongoing work of Awakening Seed. Each year the APA is coordinated by a leadership team consisting of several members.

• How do I get involved?

You may become involved by contacting the APA leadership team members and/or attending the start-up APA meeting in August. You may also sign up on the various posted committee sheets or leave a message with the school directors.

• What is a room rep?

A room rep is a parent who volunteers to help coordinate various classroom activities, such as the beginning of the year class gathering, teacher gifts, end of year projects and activities, and support of general classroom activities. Two or more parents take on this important responsibility, which is highly appreciated by the classroom teachers.

- **What are the time commitments, actual hours, and events?**

Time commitments vary according to the event or activity for which you are volunteering. Some parents volunteer hundreds of hours a year, and others volunteer minimally, due to previous commitments and responsibilities. Signups to volunteer for some events are handled through [SignUp Genius](#). For smaller events, Garden Club, and Room Rep signups, please contact the APA leadership team.

The best way to find out about the time involved is to ask someone who has participated in similar activities in past years. APA coordinators are a great source of this type of information. Some of the activities in which parents may become involved are:

- APA leadership team
- hallway door decorating
- tie dye and tile days
- spring picnic

- **If I volunteer for an event, will I still get to be with my kids during the event?**

Yes, depending on what you are doing and to what degree you are involved. Parents arrange their volunteer hours so that at least part of their time is free. Duties are scheduled in shifts so parents can have time with their children during the event.

- **I work full-time and have a career. Can my involvement work around these commitments?**

Yes. Check with the school director and APA coordinators about this. Sometimes we need help with various projects that need advice, expertise, or resources.

- **I want to be involved with my child's classroom. Does volunteering with the APA mean spending more time with the classroom?**

Not necessarily. Parent time with the classroom is separate from the APA, with the exception of being a room representative. See Parent Classroom Participation on p. 12 for more details.

- **What happens if I volunteer and get overwhelmed with the time commitment or am unable to follow through?**

Be honest with the people you're involved with and remember that family and personal well-being come first. Often when these situations arise, others are eager to step forward to help. While we all have good intentions at the beginning of projects, unexpected

situations do arise and we try to be flexible about this. If you are unsure about your ability to follow through, please start small and work your way into more involved projects as the school year unfolds.

- **Are there things I can do for the APA from home?**

Always! Particularly for families with infants or toddlers, work at home can be a plus for everyone. There are always phone calls to be made, posters and flyers to create, and other materials to be assembled. Check with APA coordinators if you want to be involved in this way.

- **What privileges or benefits do I get by volunteering for the APA?**

Volunteering with the APA doesn't give you any special privileges, but it does give you the satisfaction of knowing that you've done extra service for the school, which ultimately benefits your child. Furthermore, your volunteer hours will enable you to get to better know other parents and staff members, thus allowing others to become more familiar with your family's needs and interests. Awakening Seed, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, so any donations (except volunteer time) made to the school are tax deductible.

- **Can my older child help and volunteer with the APA?**

Yes, for certain activities that also include adults if your child is under 18. Any former student who is 18 or older may volunteer just as any adult would.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Your child will be placed and advanced based on social development, academic performance, emotional maturity, appropriate age parameters, and classroom availability. A child's birthday is just one consideration in placement decisions. Parent requests are considered, but final placement decisions will be left to the discretion of the Awakening Seed staff and school directors. If you wish to discuss your child's placement, please set up a meeting with the director.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Awakening Seed evaluates children on the basis of performance, effort, and emotional maturity. A traditional letter grading system and standardized testing are not used. To maintain continuous contact with you regarding your child's progress, the following procedures are used:

Parent/Teacher Conferences

You will be asked to schedule a conference with your child's teacher in mid-October and in early February. Conferences are held virtually and both parents are encouraged to attend. Conferences are scheduled for one half hour each. It is requested that you adhere to the scheduled time allowed. No classes will be held on conference days.

Progress Reports

Your child's teacher provides a written progress report three times a year, initially in October, mid-year in February, and a final report at the end of the school year.

Developmental Screenings

All new students will receive a developmental screening within 45 days of their entering the program (except the summer program), using the Denver II Screening Instrument. Parents will be informed if there are any areas of concern. If you have any questions about your child's development and/or the instrument itself, please contact administration. In addition, the Ages & Stages Questionnaire is another tool used by Seed teachers and parents to collaboratively gather additional information about a child's development.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Some information regarding your child or family will be made available to other families (e.g. contact information for the school directory) provided you sign the release form for the electronic newsletter and mark the box on the student information form. Other information is kept strictly confidential, with only select staff members having access to it. This includes both written and verbal information. All staff members are informed of this at the onset of their employment and frequently reminded.

Most information from a child's individual screening results and assessments will be represented, used, and interpreted by the classroom lead teacher, logistics/resource manager, social-emotional learning teacher, executive director, and/or founding director. These individuals will have access to the information in order to successfully meet the child's needs in the school environment, and/or make suggestions for services that might be necessary to enhance the child's development.

If it would be beneficial to the child for other staff members to have information about a child (e.g. how to help a specific child on the playground or in the after school program), the teacher, social-emotional teacher, and/or logistics/resource manager will work with the parent to determine appropriate and respectful ways to communicate such information and to whom it should be given. Some parents may choose to communicate directly with staff via a written document or a meeting.

The director will have access to all information in order to make appropriate decisions for both the child and the school.

The office manager will have access to most information, since she is the individual responsible for filing documents and making sure that all requirements and standards are being met (e.g. immunization records, child illnesses, etc.).

The after school coordinator will have access to any information concerning a child's development, special needs, or educational history that is helpful in facilitating the child's successful progress in the program.

The logistics/resource manager and social-emotional teacher will have access to any information related to a child's development, special needs, assessments, or educational history so she can facilitate the child's placement and progress in the program.

The business manager will have access to all financial information in order to make decisions regarding tuition, scholarships, and specific situations which may arise during a family's presence at the school.

Lead teachers will have access to their students' files, for the above mentioned reasons.

Parents may have access to their child's official school file, personal information, and school records at any time, provided a request is made to view it. The file

must be viewed in the presence of a program employee (e.g. office manager or administrator) and may not be removed from the school office. Parents may make copies of documents in the presence of a program employee. Information will be released to other schools or service providers ONLY after a parent has signed a release form submitted by the other school or provider. Parents may not look at other children's files.

If there is a request to view a file, the office manager will obtain the file, directly give it to the parent, and return it to the filing cabinet. Staff members who have access to children's information, such as a classroom teacher, will follow the same procedure as parents regarding the handling of files.

Student records will be released to other parties only through a court order.

TRANSITIONS

The Seed staff makes a strong effort to help facilitate school transitions for all children and parents. New incoming students and parents are encouraged to visit the school prior to enrollment. We encourage you to provide as much information as possible about your child's previous home/school setting. Currently enrolled students, especially very young students, often visit their next classroom to gain comfort, familiarity and continuity.

Our oldest students devote significant classroom time throughout the year to developing skills that will enable them to succeed after they leave the Seed. They experience various kinds of tests, learn how to take a standardized test, learn about recording assignments and how to manage time for projects and assignments. We strive to help children be as independent and self-confident as possible, so when they transition to a new class or leave the Seed they will continue to be happy and successful. Your continued collaboration with staff regarding transitions is always encouraged. (see appendix for a summary of the Seed transition practices)

PUNCTUALITY/ATTENDANCE

A significant way in which you will help your child and your child's teacher is arriving on time each day. **Late**

arrivals disrupt the whole tone of the day and interfere with the learning process of every child in the classroom. If your child needs extra transition time between home and school, please plan on arriving early so this process can go as smoothly as possible. Rushed children are often stressed children, and this ultimately affects every aspect of your child's school life.

Arizona children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required by the "compulsory education" laws to attend school regularly. Illness, medical appointments, bereavement, or family emergencies are defined as excused absences. **Parents are asked to notify the office before 9:00 am on each day that will be missed in order for it to be considered an excused absence.** A doctor's note will be required for illnesses extending beyond a week. All other reasons for absence are considered inexcusable. The executive director reserves the right to withdraw a student due to excessive absences.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

The Seed staff has worked diligently to develop a discipline and guidance policy that ensures the safest possible environment, gives children a consistent and common language for solving problems, and supports students in their development as social beings. Considerable efforts are made to minimize unsafe playground behaviors, eliminate inappropriate or unkind language, and diminish classroom disruptions. Bullying is not tolerated at Awakening Seed.

Consistent with our emergent curriculum model, we are always in the process of developing and adapting our discipline and guidance policy to meet the needs of the children in attendance at the Seed and the world in which we live. We are in the process of developing free workshops to Seed parents during the school year. The following section describes our current working plan for maintaining a safe and peaceful school environment.

THE SEED DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE POLICY

Safety

Safety is our priority. We are committed to maintaining a school environment that is physically and emotionally safe for our children. All children deserve to be treated with respect. They function and learn optimally when they feel secure. Safety is cultivated through our warm, accepting school climate, which fosters connection and contribution. Children are expected to contribute in meaningful ways to the community and to help maintain a safe environment. They are taught pro-social strategies and how to be helpful. Students are given tools to report unsafe situations and to prevent them by making better choices. Frequent discussions and posters serve as reminders of the importance of safety. By emphasizing physical and emotional safety first, we express our belief that connection and a sense of belonging are what motivate children to behave and are the foundation of emotional intelligence and academic success.

Pro-social Skills and Accountability

Central to our policy is also the belief that the goal of guidance and discipline is to help children lead fulfilling, moral lives. Our goal is to help children become self-aware, build positive relationships and self-esteem, and effectively and independently resolve conflicts. Thus, we actively teach and model social skills, just as we do academic skills. Problems are viewed as teaching opportunities and misbehavior is seen as an expression of a need for knowledge and understanding. Children learn skills in the context of problems or conflicts or during frequent group discussions and role-plays. Children are expected to be self-disciplined and are held accountable for skills that have been taught.

Approaches to Behavior

We do not refer to traditional rule-based discipline models, as they are designed to seek compliance through reward and punishment and tend to emphasize managing behavior by defining them as good/bad. Rewards and punishments involve adult judgment of behavior and encourage dependency on the judgment of others as the basis for moral decisions. In addition, rewards and punishments carry overt or covert messages which reduce optimal functioning by inhibiting problem solving, intrinsic

motivation, and the ability to develop values of caring and respect.

Our approach to discipline addresses school rules and all inappropriate behavior, while emphasizing children's emotional needs and developmental needs for self-regulation and social skills. We do this by modeling appropriate, caring behavior and through skillful guidance, nonjudgmental feedback, and the use of consequences. Consequences encourage children to reflect. When children connect their behavior to the results of their behavior, they become more conscious of their actions and learn from their mistakes. They are empowered and develop internal standards for moral living. This "thinking and reflecting" approach is also consistent with our discovery and inquiry model of curriculum and is facilitated through three types of consequences: Natural, logical, and problem solving.

Natural consequences arise from the child's choices and interactions. They do not depend on adult imposition and occur naturally. This type of consequence is a powerful motivator for future behavior change. (e.g. A child learns the skills of putting items in their backpack, because they experienced the consequence of losing an item when things weren't put away correctly.)

Logical consequences are prearranged by an adult and motivate children to use skills they already have. We know when children have the necessary skills because we've (parents and staff) spent the time teaching them. Logical consequences are used for more serious behaviors and safety issues. This type of consequence is implemented with positive intention to ensure it's related to the behavior, respectful to the child/ren involved, and reasonable in terms of severity and duration. (e.g. A child with language skills is hitting friends during centers. The adult sets the expectation by presenting a choice. "You have a choice. You can choose to build with your friends and play together during centers, or you can choose to hit your friends and play by yourself at the table, so everyone is safe, including you." After offering the choice, the adult reinforces the expectation by praising the child's effort to stop the behavior and following through with the consequence if the behavior continues.)

Problem-solving consequences motivate children to become part of the solution using shared power and support the development of conflict resolution skills. Children work with others (adults, peers, or both) during respectful conversation or whole class meetings to determine the consequence for specific behaviors.

Adults participating in or guiding these discussions frame the issue with positive intent so that children offer helpful solutions instead of punishments. This approach helps children recognize a behavior as a problem to be solved, rather than viewing themselves/another person as a problem. Children reflect on how a behavior impacts themselves, feel empowered to show disapproval for inappropriate behaviors, and learn to coach each other in helpful ways.

We believe that empathy is what gives a consequence its power to be effective. Consequences must always be absent of sarcasm, shame, and the emotions of the adult. An empathetic response to behavior is one that creates feelings of safety and connection, while modeling emotional regulation.

Safe Spaces, Emotional Regulation, and Time In

All classrooms have a Safe Space area where a child may go, or be encouraged to go, to gain composure and regroup after big feeling moments or behavior dysregulation. Though each Safe Space is arranged differently based on the age of the classroom, all are designed to evoke feelings of safety and comfort. All Safe Spaces provide a *Safe Space Toolbox* filled with age-appropriate materials which invite the practice of self-calming techniques and support emotional awareness. Self-calming skills and emotional awareness are a regular part of our curriculum, and techniques learned through lessons and play can also be used in the Safe Space. Older students gradually learn how to recover within themselves as a transitional step that will help them in future settings where a physical Safe Space is not present.

The use of “time out” is discouraged. However, in some situations, a child may benefit from a “time in” break. A “time in” is implemented by an adult when a child needs a moment away from an activity or lesson to practice a skill or refocus for learning. This may look like a child throwing blocks and being redirected to another activity where they can practice being safe before trying again. Or, after distracting others from a read aloud, a student may be asked to sit in a spot/ chair near an assistant teacher during a story. The assistant’s presence offers grounding so the child can refocus their attention to participate. Time-ins provide time for reflection through practice of skills and co-regulation.

We can all learn from our mistakes and make better decisions when we’re calm.

Team Approach to Intervention

At Awakening Seed School, we have skilled teaching teams in each classroom. In addition, we have highly qualified staff members in place to support all classrooms and students. These support roles include our Social-Emotional Learning Teacher, Resource and Logistics Manager, Founding Director, and Executive Director. The people in these roles are in and out of classrooms throughout the week and regularly participate in weekly classroom team meetings. These team meetings are intended as time for teachers to communicate about student needs, classroom norms, calendar and curriculum items, and teaching approaches.

When the needs or behaviors of a student negatively impact the child’s perception of self, their ability to connect with others, and their ability and motivation to engage in the classroom learning, the classroom teaching team may discuss strategies with someone in a school-wide support role. As part of this work, the Social Emotional Learning Teacher, Resource and Logistics Manager, or one of the directors may spend time in the classroom to better learn about the child. Sometimes, a few conversations and/or support strategies are all that is needed. If the needs or behaviors continue to be a concern, the team will request a meeting with parents/guardians to discuss the child’s needs/behaviors, so we can work together to create the best support plan possible.

Like plants that require different amounts of sunlight and water, children require different types of attention to succeed in school. Each child has important talents and qualities that contribute to the success and positive development of other children and the community. Our intention is to be inclusive with our student population, honoring diverse needs, while offering a healthy, positive learning environment. We give our best to children daily and expect parents/guardians to do the same. There will be situations in which we will expect extra support from parents/guardians in order to help a child succeed. We are willing to go a long way with a family if we know that our work at school is being supported at home.

Withdrawal

Although we work hard to help each and every child succeed at our school, some students may need an alternative setting. If, after intervention by the school and parents, a child’s problematic behaviors persist, it may be in the child’s best interest to be placed

elsewhere. Programs with additional services may be required to meet the child's needs more successfully. Such decisions will be made by the classroom teacher and the school directors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Awakening Seed, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Seed parents often wonder who is on the Board, how the Board is selected, what the Board does, and how to contact Board members. The following is a brief overview of the Board and its functions:

Who Is on the Board of Directors?

The Board consists of the school founder (Mary Glover), the executive director (Danielle Dueppen), and a number of local professionals, business people and others who have an interest in the vitality of the Seed. Many of the Board members are Seed parents, although it is not a requirement for board membership. Mary has lifetime board membership and most board members will serve a maximum of six years. Currently the executive director role includes active board membership. Board members have a wide range of training, expertise, and professional experience. Generally, the Board always has at least one attorney and accountant, in addition to individuals with experience in fields such as marketing, education, business, finance, and fundraising. The makeup of the Board changes in response to what the school needs at a given time in its evolution. Current Board members are:

Danny Beach, Chair (Seed parent)
Chandra Crudup, Vice Chair (Seed parent)
Cole Brooks, Treasurer (Seed parent)
Danielle Dueppen, Secretary (executive director/Seed alumni parent)
Mary Glover, (co-founder/founding director/Seed alumni parent, grandparent, and great-grandparent)
Anastasia Marin (Seed parent)
Jon Lund (Seed parent)

How the Board Is Selected

The Seed Board selects additional members based on what the school needs at a particular time. As the school grows and changes, the Board decides what skills and areas of expertise will be most helpful in furthering the school's mission, and then recruits individuals to fulfill those needs. In addition to the

balanced combination of people with specific areas of expertise, the Board sometimes includes individuals who are not currently Seed parents as well as those who are. Generally, there are anywhere from nine to thirteen board members at any given time.

Board Functions

The main functions of the Board of Directors are: determining the school's budget, advising and supporting the administration regarding finances and general school policies, and establishing a long-range plan for the school which includes marketing and fundraising. The Board is not involved in developing school curriculum or monitoring day-to-day operations. For more detailed information regarding Awakening Seed finances and budgeting, see "Awakening Seed Finance and Budgeting Information."

AWAKENING SEED FINANCE/ BUDGETING INFORMATION

We would like to give you a basic understanding of how Awakening Seed finances its operations and the process by which the school sets the annual budget.

Income

Awakening Seed School receives no federal funding. Nearly all of the Seed's income is from tuition, after school care, and special programs and projects. In recent years the Seed has received various grants for specified spending (e.g. payroll increases and building upgrades). [Institute for Better Education](#) is the state tax credit program we work with that allows individuals to donate funds for scholarships. Contributors receive a \$1 for \$1 credit against their state tax bill. These funds are then directed to Awakening Seed for scholarships, which helps pay tuition for those who qualify. Additionally, Seed families are eligible to apply for an [Empowerment Scholarship](#), which allows qualified parents to use public funds for private education.

Expenses

The Seed's main area of expense is staff salaries and benefits. It is a Board priority to continue increasing staff salaries, which are much deserved. Other expense items in the budget are capital improvements (e.g. new playground fencing, shade structures, and air conditioning unit replacements), equipment (including technology and the copier), insurance, accounting fees,

teachers' continuing education, maintenance, utilities, and quality classroom materials.

Budgeting Process

As we prepare the budget for the upcoming school year, we look at the current year's income and expenses, and estimate the number of students we'll have. The student count drives our income estimates for the year. Next we look at the number of staff members we will need in order to appropriately educate and guide the students in the coming year. We have made excellent strides in recent years to increase salaries and hourly wages while maintaining affordable tuition rates. Retirement accounts were established for the first time in 2002.

Once we estimate our income for the year, we subtract our major expenses. Any remaining funds are then allocated to other expense items mentioned above. When larger items that surpass our budget arise, such as replacing the shade structures, it is necessary to conduct additional fundraisers. Donations and small grants have been most helpful in previous years, although they cannot be depended upon for the annual budget. It is a goal of the Board to pursue such funding sources, not only to support the annual budget but also to help secure the school's long-term future.

GRIEVANCES

Decisions made by the executive director, founding director, after school director, logistics/resource coordinator, business manager, social-emotional learning teacher, and/or the office manager, are based on established school policies. Should you have a dispute that falls outside of these policies and cannot be resolved at the staff level, you may submit to the board chair a written statement and documentation from other sources, which support your position. The Board may call a special meeting with you to further clarify the issue. The decision of the Board is final, and you will be notified of that decision by mail or email.

SCHOOL HOURS

Part-time Students

Part-time students enrolled in the part-day program may attend from 7:30 am until 12 for toddlers, 12:30 pm for preschoolers, and 1:00 pm for PreK students.

Part-time toddlers must be picked up by noon. The part-time toddler pick-up late fee starts at 12 pm and the rate is \$5 per child per quarter hour.

Part-time preschoolers must be picked up by 12:30 pm (1:00 pm for PreK). The part-time preschool pick-up late fee starts at 12:30 pm/1:00 pm and the rate is \$5 per child per quarter hour.

Full-time Students

Children enrolled in the full-day program may arrive between 7:30 am and 9 am. School is in session between 9 am and 3 pm. The after school program runs from 3 to 5:30 pm (including toddlers).

2025-2026 TUITION and FEES

Tuition Rates and Fees

All tuition rates and school fees are posted on the school's general website at this .

Payments

All payments must be set up through ACH processing and run on the 15th or 25th of the month in which the invoice is billed. Awakening Seed does not accept check payments. Exceptions will be made for "annual paid in full" payments made July 15th OR "semester paid in full" payments made July 15th and December 15th. For an alternative payment schedule, please contact Sarah Balluff to make arrangements. Electronic payments made through brightwheel and credit card payments are subject to transaction fees.

Deposits and Payment Schedule

All deposits are non-refundable. A one-time, non-refundable enrollment fee of \$100 is required of all new students. Often this fee is paid as the waiting list fee.

Parents are required to sign a tuition agreement for the school year. Tuition is based on an annual fee, divided into ten monthly installments. A deposit of \$100 for current students, and \$500 for new new students is due at the time of registration. The deposit is applied to the first monthly installment in July. Monthly installments are billed on the 1st and due on the 15th of each month, beginning in July. No placement will be held for a student without payment of this deposit.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Awakening Seed provides an after school childcare program for an additional fee per hour per student. A snack is provided during the first hour of the after school program.

Billing Procedure

After school will be billed per hour per student as follows:

3 to 4 pm - first hour charge

4:01 to 5 pm - second hour charge

5:01 to 5:30 pm - third half hour charge

The hourly rate for all students is \$8/hour.

No child may remain at the school after 5:30 pm. A \$10 per 15 minute charge will be added to your after school invoice.

Awakening Seed requires all children not attending the after school program to be picked up by 3:15 pm. Parents picking up their children after 3:15, for any reason, will be charged for the first full hour of care. At 3 pm, children will transition from the classroom to the after-school program. During the transition time, the first hour fee will be waived for children who are picked up by 3:15 pm. From 3 pm on, the multipurpose room and playground will be available for enrolled after school students only.

Upon arrival for pickup, parents may come in the building and wait for you child in the hallway. Teachers will make sure all students and their belongings are read for departure.

Late Fees and Unpaid Balances

A \$35 late fee will apply to NSF payments or balances remaining at the end of the month.

SUMMER PROGRAM

There is a separate enrollment procedure for our summer program. Summer students may attend weekly or monthly. Children registered for all six weeks will be given priority for summer enrollment, as well as currently enrolled students. The tuition and fees for summer school and the summer school class schedule are determined in February and will be made available as soon as they are established.

Late Fees and Unpaid Balances

A \$35 late fee will apply to NSF payments or balances remaining after the end of the month.

HOW TO STAY INFORMED

General Website

The Seed's general [website](#) contains important school information, including staff bios, the school calendar, tuition rates, news about special events, and program descriptions. The founding director's weekly blog is also posted on the general website. Please consult this website often to obtain general information about the school.

seedfood and seedjustice

Along with our general website, we have two sites with specific information about our program. [seedfood](#) is a site dedicated to food practices and resources related to food and nutrition for parents. [seedjustice](#), a newer site, highlights the social justice work happening at the Seed, as well as resources for parents intending to raise socially conscious children.

Classroom News

Classroom teachers will provide frequent posts and photos through brightwheel to keep you informed about classroom activities and pass on important information. Please let school administrators know if you're not receiving classroom information and news.

The Seed Curriculum Guide

The Awakening Seed Curriculum Guide is posted on the Seed website at this [link](#). From time to time there will be additions to the curriculum guide, so check in regularly. If there are areas of the curriculum you would like more information about, please let the school director know.

Community Updates from the Executive Director

Look for occasional community updates from the executive director toward the end of each week through brightwheel. We put forth considerable effort to communicate with parents, and hope you'll complete the cycle by reading what we send out. Thanks for staying in the loop and please let us know if we're missing anything.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Awakening Seed is regulated by the Department of Health Services. We provide full-day and partial-day care for children from one year of age through school age, including our after school program. Yearly inspection reports are available upon request. For further information contact:

Arizona Department of Health Services
Assurance and Licensure Services
Office of Child Care Licensure
150 N. 18th Avenue #400
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 364-2539
(800) 615-8555 Toll Free
(602) 364-4768 Fax
<http://www.hs.state.az.us/>

Stephanie Peyton email: stephanie@awakeningseedschool.org
Mindy Bender-Webster email: mindy@awakeningseedschool.org
Hannah Laugharn email: afterschool@awakeningseedschool.org

2025-2026 CALENDAR • AWAKENING SEED SCHOOL

The school calendar is posted on our website.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

[Arizona Department of Education, Early Childhood Education Unit](#)

[Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Childcare Licensing](#)

[Arizona Child Care Resource and Referral](#)

[Arizona Child Care Association](#)

[Arizona's Children Association](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Seed phone number: (602) 454-2606
FAX number: (602) 454-2773
Seed website: www.awakeningseedschool.org

Danielle Dueppen email: danielle@awakeningseedschool.org
Mary Glover email: mary@awakeningseedschool.org
Debbie Moody email: debbie@awakeningseedschool.org
Sarah Balluff email: sarah@awakeningseedschool.org

PLAYGROUND SAFETY RULES

These safety rules will be enforced to protect the safety of each child using the Awakening Seed playground facilities. Please review these with your child to help us make our playground a happy, accident-free environment.

- Only one child at a time on the slides. Children must be in a seated position. Head first is not permitted.
- Only one child is permitted on a swing at a time. No twisting on the swings. Children must sit on the swings and remain upright while swinging.
- All children in PreK and up are required to use the taller monkey bars. Children in younger classes may use the lower monkey bars.
- Inappropriate climbing on or jumping off any of the playground equipment is NOT permitted at any time. Climbing or running up the slides is not permitted.
- Children are not permitted to climb on the playground wall and should always stay within the grassy, sand, dirt digging areas, or Gwen's Castle unless permission is given for students to work in their outdoor classroom areas.
- Digging is allowed in the sand and dirt areas. No digging in the grass. Sand, mud balls and muddy water are to remain on the ground. Throwing sand and mud is not permitted. Trucks and toys will be confined to the dirt area south of Gwen's Castle.
- Bikes must be ridden rather than pushed from behind. Children are not permitted to stand on bikes and feet should remain on the pedals. Bikes must be used on the sidewalk area of the playground (or the dirt area for older bikes).
- Games requiring balls will be played only on the basketball court or grassy areas. Balls that go outside of the fenced area must be retrieved by an adult.
- Jump ropes, strings, etc. may NOT be tied to anything (e.g. playground equipment, bikes, other children, trees, or oneself).
- Children should use the outside drinking fountain during recess and before and after regular school hours. Water bottles may be filled up in the dispenser

in the hallway. The drinking fountain shall NOT be used for washing sandy hands or for sand play.

- Dirty, sandy, or muddy children will not be allowed in the building until they are free of debris. Sand must be emptied from shoes, socks, and pockets before re-entering the school building. Shoe scrubbers are available to remove any compacted mud from shoes.
- Children who destroy school equipment will be asked to replace damaged items.
- CHILDREN ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE IN THE BUILDING OR ON THE PLAYGROUND WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION AT ANY TIME. When a child needs to leave the playground to go inside, he/she needs to have permission and/or be escorted into the building.
- Threats, bullying, and violent behavior will not be tolerated on the playground at any time.
- Older siblings are not permitted to play in the toddler playground area. The 3rd/4th-graders are allowed to help in the toddler area in the mornings with permission.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENT PARTICIPANTS

Your time and effort spent in the classrooms is always appreciated. The following is a list of guidelines to help your classroom experience be beneficial to you, the students, and the teacher. Please remember that your time in the classroom is to experience school with your own child. All parents serving as substitutes will be asked to complete a staff file prior to subbing.

- Respect other children and other families in the class and school. Please refrain from inquiring about other children's academic progress, behavior or asking personal questions about them.
- Speak respectfully about other children in the classroom, in the same way you'd like others to speak about your own child.
- Turn your cell phone ringer off while in the classroom and put your phone away. Parent participants are expected to follow the same cell phone guidelines as the staff.

- Dress appropriately to work with young children. Short shorts, mini-skirts, and tops that reveal cleavage are inappropriate. If you're unsure if something is inappropriate, it's best not to wear it. This is in line with the Awakening Seed staff dress code.
- Clarify your objective as a parent participant with the teacher; i.e., observe, help your child with a particular subject, get to know your child's schedule, help with classroom tasks, etc.
- Interact specifically with your own child. Other children may join in with what you are doing with your child (e.g. if you're reading a story to your child).
- Designate a specific time and day you'd like to participate with your child in class.
- Notify the teacher in advance if you have to cancel.
- Direct all questions or concerns back to the teacher.
- Follow teacher-given directions when helping your child.
- Check with the teacher to clarify how much help and/or direction should be given to your child for any given assignment.
- Always address children with respect, both physically and verbally.
- Stay focused on your child's school experience. Save personal conversations with other adults (including the teacher) for non-classroom time.
- Follow all school/class rules set for children.
- Use positive, encouraging language when in the classroom.

APPENDIX 1: TRANSITION PRACTICES

Transition into the School

When families are interested in having their child(ren) attend the Seed, they first attend an in-person tour. Specifics will be determined prior to the tour date. This is an opportunity to learn about the Seed, its

history, and visit the space. Once on the waiting list, parents/guardians come with their child for a **classroom specific visit**. During this time, the child spends time in their future classroom with their parent/guardian. They can participate to the degree they are comfortable and parents/guardians are welcome to stay and participate as well.

Before the school year starts, each family receives a **detailed welcome letter** from their teacher. This includes information about the class, items they need to bring, and information about beginning of the year events.

The day before school starts there is an **open house**. During this time students and families visit the school and their new classrooms. They spend time locating their cubby, mailbox, and other spaces. They are also welcome to bring their personal belongings in preparation for the first day.

Each year we host a **virtual New Parent Orientation**. This event is intended to acclimate new families to all of the Seed happenings. There is general information regarding policies, where to find information, school events, and how to get involved.

During the week of New Parent Orientation, families will attend a **virtual Curriculum Night** event specific to their child's classroom. This is when the teacher reviews classroom specific routines and curriculum, as well as answers any questions.

At the start of the school year, each classroom holds a **beginning of the year gathering** at a local park, someone's home, or on the school playground. This event provides time for families to socialize with each other and the teachers.

Transition from Class to Class

Throughout the school year, we offer a variety of **multi-age experiences** that allow students to become familiar with teachers and children outside of their classroom. Through all-school recess times, our multi-age after school program, book buddies, play pals, and all school meetings and events, students interact with adults and children throughout the Seed.

Awakening Seed provides a **summer camp** option for families. Most students attend all six weeks or select individual weeks, if available. Our summer program offers a time for students to work with other teachers, sometimes their teacher for the following school year, in a relaxed and fun summer experience.

During the last day of the school year, each class holds an **awards ceremony** and all families are invited. The students are recognized and presented with certificates. This provides closure and marks moving on to the next class.

Other applicable events explained under “transition into the school”, that help ease transitions from class to class include:

- **open house**
- **class picnics**
- **curriculum night**

Transition from the School

When students reach 3rd/4th grade, our oldest class, we hold a **graduation** ceremony on the last day of school. The entire school community is invited. The students are given graduation certificates, presented to the audience, and photographed with the school directors and their family members.

The Awakening Seed **summer camp** includes campers through 6th grade, so after students graduate in 4th grade, they can still return to attend camp. We also provide a summer intern program for students in 7th grade and up. Even after students graduate from the Seed they look forward to returning and continuing as part of the Seed community through the camp experience.

Other applicable events explained under “transitions from class to class,” that help ease the transition of leaving the school include:

- **summer school**

Students with Special Needs

The Seed community does include students with special needs and challenges. The logistics/resource manager works closely with families of these students to determine additional support they may need as they experience the various school transitions. These plans are individualized and vary by student.

APPENDIX 2: COMMUNICATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Communication is a high priority at Awakening Seed. One of the major aspects of the school involving communication is the curriculum. Information about

the curriculum is transmitted to parents in the following ways:

website

[Seed curriculum](#)
[prospective parents](#)

open house

Monday before first day of school (date varies)

founding director's blog

[Mary's blog](#)

new parent orientation

parent handbook, p. 14

curriculum night

parent handbook, p. 14

parent/teacher conferences

October and February, teacher meets with parents of each child to go over progress report, communicate curriculum specifics, and address learning needs of each student.