

Parent's Declaration of Support

Two facts define a parent's part in a student's career at The New School. First, The New School is a challenging and unusual experience for every child. Second, parents are very important to their children's lives. Because of these facts, a parent's role in a student's life at The New School might be the single most important indicator of the child's success in the School.

A student's experience while at The New School will touch on many basic and important aspects of their lives. In addition to many happy and exciting times, these experiences will include both unexpected and painful challenges. A child's ability to face and weather these important storms in their lives is greatly increased by a parent's support and confidence. On the other hand, a parent who is at odds with the School or the child's efforts can be a great or even decisive disadvantage.

Because of this, it is important that all parents make the effort and commitment to understand the dynamics of The New School and to support the School and the student as their child works through the challenges of the School. To help in this essential process, parents are asked to make the following commitments in support of their child's education within The New School:

1. Occasionally issues arise which require direct contact between members of the School and particular parents; therefore, I agree to attend any meeting to which I am asked by the Judicial Committee, any Mediation Committee, or the Alcibiades group.
2. In order to learn about the workings and theory of the School, I agree to attend at least three (3) TalkAbouts within the first 12 months of my child's career at The New School.
3. A child's success in The New School requires a serious commitment to their own education. Such a commitment is hindered by uncertainty or a notion that a child's commitment is only temporary. In order to be authentically engaged, the student must feel secure in their membership in the School, and must not be distracted by temptations to runaway from the problems and challenges which develop and hone their skills and understanding. In order that my child may authentically engage in their work at the School, I agree not to distract my child by disrupting or threatening their enrollment.
4. Self-direction is an important component of The New School. It is a skill that children must learn for themselves. It cannot be done for them, or forced on them. I will resist the temptation to intervene and will trust my child to learn in their own way. I recognize that they will stumble and crawl before they are able to walk with confidence. I will let my child find their legs, in their own time.
5. Each child is unique. They learn at different times and in different ways. Their interests and talents, when they flourish, take them in different and unexpected directions. Comparing children unfavorably to others, as though they were expected to follow the standards set by others or imitate the work of others, is discouraging and exerts great pressure on children to conform and ignore their own lights and strengths. I agree not to undermine my child's confidence and commitment by comparing them unfavorably to others or pressing them to conform to schedules or curricula set by others.
6. Education at The New School is a creative process. It cannot be forced by threat or purchased with rewards. Requiring or pressing my child to engage in academic studies or other activities would be detrimental. I will not use threats or promises to attempt to control or direct my child's efforts.
7. The New School is different from most people's experience of primary education. Students at The New School develop and excel in unusual and unique ways. Their time is spent doing things which other children do not do. Their achievements are often difficult to comprehend or explain to others. This can make for discomfort when talking to others about a student's education, especially in the face of expectations of standardized grades and conventional studies. However, the understanding and pride of a parent are often very important in the life of a student. I agree to try to understand the challenges and successes of my child, even though they may not be similar to my childhood experiences or to the expectations of my friends and acquaintances. I agree to not let my expectations or wishes over-ride or undermine my support for my child's efforts and choices at The New School.
8. I agree to respect my child as a person and as a competent student at The New School. I agree to support my child's autonomy by acknowledging their freedom and honoring their need to act on their own as they grow and learn in The New School. I agree to trust my child.

Date:

Date:

Parent's Signature

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