



Mountaintop School

parent handbook
2014-2015

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school year: 2014-2015

Mountaintop School Mission Statement

Mountaintop School is a mixed age kindergarten that is inspired by the Waldorf philosophy of education. There are two classrooms: one for 18 month – 3 year old children, and another for 3-6 year old children. The goal is to provide a warm, calm, secure, aesthetic environment in which the imagination and creativity of the child will flourish. We are here to provide a loving home setting that allows each child to grow to his or her full potential.

The 3 R's; reverence, repetition, and rhythm, is what is most needed for the young child. We will provide structured group activities consisting of finger plays, singing, reciting poems and doing full body movements at circle time. Fairytales and stories are told to the children on successive days, sometimes culminating as a puppet show offered to the children by the teacher. Art and crafts consist of water coloring, sculpturing with beeswax, coloring, finger knitting and baking bread. The child's unfolding imagination and creativity through free play, art, drama, music, oral recitation and dance/movement, is the goal for his or her healthy development.

My Privacy Policy

- I will do all that I can to protect your family's privacy and will abide by the state privacy laws. I will keep all records and information about your child and your family private and confidential, unless I have your written permission to reveal specific information.
- You may contact me to discuss issues about your child up until 9pm on weeknights.
- I do not discriminate based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, or public assistance status.

I Am a Mandated Reporter

I am a state-mandated reporter and am required to report any suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect. If I have reason to believe that your child has been abused or neglected, I will report the situation to my licenser or to the local child protection office.

Our Partnership Agreement

We will need to work together to ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop his or her full potential.

- We agree to communicate regularly about the child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth.
- You will keep me informed about any change in the child's schedule, routine, or home environment. I will do the same for any changes in the school that affect the child.
- You will notify me about any allergies or other health issues that the child is experiencing.
- You agree to follow the policies of Mountaintop School.

My Records for Your Child

I will keep the following records for your child; you are responsible for updating these records immediately when any of this information changes:

- Emergency contact information, including the name of a backup person in case I am unable to reach you, and the phone numbers of the child's doctor and dentist
- A list of everyone who is authorized to drop off and pick up the child
- A signed and completed enrollment form
- Any special care or health requirements for your child
- A signed consent form to obtain emergency medical or dental care
- Written permission to transport your child
- According to state law, you must provide me with updated immunization records every 12 months for preschoolers

Supplies for Your Child

Play clothes are the order of the day, the kind that will stand up to dirty knees, the sandbox, the slide, and mud pies. When purchasing your child's school wardrobe, please keep in mind that much of the clothing on the market is trendy and not suitable for children. Shorts are allowed in warm weather. Shoes with lights on them are not appropriate, simple shoes and sneakers are.

- Please bring in a pair of "indoor shoes", NOT slippers, these will stay at school.
- You must leave an extra set of clothing for your child that is appropriate for the season, including a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks.
- During the winter, you will bring clothes for outdoor play, including a jacket, hat, scarf, mittens or gloves, a snowsuit or pants, and boots.
- All clothing left must be labeled with your child's name.
- If your child requires a change of clothes and you have not left any clothing, I will use other clothing that I have on hand.

Food and Nutrition

- At mealtimes, I will offer the food to the children but will not require them to eat it. I will inform you if I notice any change in your child's eating habits.
- If your child has an allergy to any food or beverage, you must notify me in writing.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

Birthday celebrations are a very special event for each child. You will be invited to bring in a treat to share at snack time. There is a special birthday story told by the teacher, you will be asked for a short biography of a few events from each year of your child's life. These events will be woven into the birthday story. The birthday child will wear a special crown and cape and receive a gift from the class and the teachers. Please talk to me about scheduling as the day approaches.

We will also celebrate the changing of the seasons with the children as a community. These include: Michaelmas, Lantern walk, Winter Garden Spiral, Pancake Day, May Day, and Summer Sailing Regatta.

Behavior Guidance

At Mountaintop we take many measures to prevent behavior problems. Our goal is to support the development of self-discipline within each child and to help him or her develop social skills. Our own professional and inner work brings understanding of childhood developmental issues and gives us realistic expectations for the children. We strive to model ideal behavior through our interactions between ourselves, as teachers, with the children, and with you as parents. The rhythm of our day goes a long way toward helping the children develop inner form and the impulse to care for others, their playthings, and their environment. The classroom environment also effects behavior, therefore utmost consideration is given to the physical space of the classroom.

We will always share any concerns, or specific incidents we have about your child with you as we hope you will share with us any events that may be stressful in the life of your family that would affect your child's behavior in school.

Behaviors that are not welcome:

- Biting
- Hitting
- Aggressive behavior
- Threatening/disrespectful language
- Bathroom talk

Behaviors that will be encouraged:

- Inside voice
- Walking feet indoors
- Cleanliness/responsibility and care for toys
- Sharing/taking turns
- Good table manners

Redirection will be used to guide children from behaviors that are not welcome towards behaviors that we wish to encourage. Time outs are our last resort when children cannot contain themselves and need space from other children's view to think about their behavior and to pull themselves together.

Approaches to discipline that are used at Mountaintop school are:

- Gesture- Without calling or speaking, we indicate with a gesture what we would like the child to do (i.e. sit down, quiet, etc.)
- Royal "we"- Speak in "we" rather than individualizing the children. This helps them to learn participation. Ex: "Now we are sitting down," or "We are putting on our shoes,"
- Privileged "may"- When asking a child to do a task or deed, we speak with truthfulness. We don't phrase a request as a question if we do not truly want to receive a yes or no response. Ex: "You may close the door."
- Pictorial Language - Children live in pictures. When we make a request through the use of creative language, children often respond with delight and enjoyment. Ex: to encourage a child to help put all the "food" back in their play kitchen we might say: "Let's collect all the muffins in the basket," or "Don't let the ice cream melt-lets put it in the freezer."
- Use of an even, objective tone of voice. When our voice wavers and escalates to urgency, we lose ourselves (our consciousness) and the child loses respect for us. Discipline is for the benefit of the child and is done with love and respect.
- Save "NO" for harm to self and others. Otherwise, we tell the children what they may do rather than what they may not. We describe what we want to see the child doing.
- If NO, then when YES? What are the underlying needs of the child? Is there a more appropriate way for them to have that need met? Ex: If the child is knocking another child's block castle over, we can create a place where things can be knocked over and broken down.
- Create healing relative to the deed. Ex: Have the child who hurt another help with the healing of the injured child by giving them an ice pack or just a kiss on the boo-boo.
- Objectify the deed. By seeing the inherent good in each child, we can then separate their behavior from who they are. This prevents the child from seeing him or herself as "bad." Ex: "I see those hands are knocking into things, let's make them warm, or help them do good work."
- Healing stories - Stories are told that provide examples and models of how to treat one another with kindness and gentleness. These moral lessons, told through stories, sink deeply into the child's consciousness and provide a way for them to check their behavior.
- I will use behavior guidance that is fair, reasonable and suited to the age of the child.
- I will not use any corporal punishment (spanking) in my program.

- If a child persists in problem behavior (hitting, biting, breaking toys, etc.), I will ask you to come and pick up the child from school for the remainder of the day.

Illness, Health, and Safety Policies

Sick Child Policy

Children who have the following symptoms or illnesses may not attend school;

- an illness that includes vomiting
- a virus
- a temperature over 100 degrees
- pink eye
- diarrhea
- a parasitic infection
- chicken pox (The child may return when all the blisters have dried and formed scabs, usually about 6 days after the onset of the rash.)
- any communicable or contagious disease

If your child has any of the above conditions, you are required to notify me as soon as possible. A child will not be allowed to return to my program until he or she has been symptom-free for a full 24 hours.

- I may also ask you to take a child home if the child isn't sick but is experiencing discomfort, such as during the last stage of an upper respiratory infection or after the first dose of an antibiotic.
- I will not send a child home who has a common cold, unless accompanied by a fever or other symptoms.
- If your child starts to show any of the above symptoms during the day, I will ask you to come and pick up the child.
- I will notify you of any illnesses that your child is exposed to in my home, including any of the symptoms listed above.
- Whenever a child enters a new childcare program there is an increased risk of colds or other minor illnesses until the child's immune system adjusts to the new environment.
- If in my opinion a child is too ill to remain in care, you are required to come and pick up the child when I ask you to do so.
- If your child becomes ill and I am unable to reach you, I will then try to contact your emergency backup person.
- If a case of head lice is found in my program, I will notify everyone in the school and everyone in my home will be checked. Children must be treated and be free of nits before they will be allowed to return to care.

Emergency Policy

- To reduce the risk of fire, I follow the fire safety rules and state laws regarding smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- In case the power goes out, I keep a first aid kit with a flashlight.
- I keep near my phone a list of emergency numbers (police, hospital, and ambulance) and the emergency contact numbers for all my students. I bring these contact numbers with me whenever I take the children on a field trip or other excursions away from home.
- You must provide me with the names and phone numbers of at least one other person to call if I cannot reach you in an emergency. You must keep me informed at all times of how you can be reached in an emergency, and then check your pager, voice mail, and cell phone often. If you leave work early, go to another location for the day, or vary your normal routine, you must let me know how I can contact you that day.
- If your child is involved in a serious or life-threatening emergency, I will call 911 and get immediate medical care, and then I will call you as soon as possible.
- My emergency plan includes:
 - A fire escape plan posted
 - An emergency meeting place away from the home
 - Fire drills as required by state law
 - An emergency plan for transporting the children
 - A general emergency plan to respond to accidents
 - A backup caregiver who can care for the children in case I have a personal emergency
 - My home has all the smoke detectors and fire extinguishers necessary to comply with state fire safety laws.
- I am required to report any child care accident that requires treatment by a physician to the proper agency.

Bad Weather Closings

Weather cancellations can be heard on these radio stations:

- WDST 100.1 FM Woodstock
- Cancellations.com

I will notify you as soon as possible if the school will be closed because of inclement weather, during the day.

Policies for Transporting Children

Transporting Children by Car

- I will transport the children by car only with your written permission. My reasons for transporting the children may include, but are not limited to:
 - field trips
 - transporting children in the event of an emergency
- You must leave a car seat with me to use when I transport your child.

Field Trips:

- I do offer field trips and will need written permission to transport your child. When I transport the children, I will secure them in an appropriate child seat or carrier as required by state law.
- I may ask you to help me transport the children on a field trip in your car. When this need arises, I will request your help at least one week in advance.
- If someone else's car will be used to transport the children, I will make sure that the driver has a current driver's license and is insured as required by state law.
- On every field trip I will carry a first aid kit and the emergency contact numbers for the parents of all the children. I also have a field trip emergency plan.

Persons Authorized to Pick Up and Drop off Your Child

- You will authorize the people to pick up your child from school.
- You will update this list annually.
- You will notify me immediately of any changes in the name, address, or phone numbers of the people who are authorized to remove a child from my care.
- I reserve the right to remove anyone from the authorized pickup list for any reason.
- You will notify me in advance verbally or in writing if an authorized person will be arriving at my program to drop off or pick up a child.

Pickup and Drop-off Policy

- You are responsible for your child's safety and well being in the parking lot until you have come through the garden gate and greeted by a teacher.
- When you transport your child to and from my program, you must comply with state law regarding appropriate car seats and infant carriers.
- The morning program begins at 9:00am and ends at 12:30pm, for the 3-6 year olds and 9:00am-noon for the 18 month-3 year olds. We appreciate your promptness as will your child. Beginning the day at the same time with other children will help establish rhythm, which is the foundation of our program and will prove helpful for a smoother transition from home.
- The child who is consistently late is at a considerable disadvantage to the other children as he or she tries to enter into play that already has taken form. Shorter good-byes make for easier transitions. Socializing with other parent should take place outside of the school grounds. If you need to speak to me please arrange a time for a phone conversation or meeting, so as not to take my attention away from the children during school hours.
- The afternoon dismissal is at 3:00pm for the 3-6 year olds and 2:30pm for the 18 month-3 year olds. Please be prompt, your child has had a full day and will be in need of your attention when you arrive.

Afternoon Program

Rest Time

Afternoon rest is an hour-long, quiet soothing, and restorative time of the day. As the children rest under soft blankets with their heads on pillows, there is soft music and a story. This rhythmic part of the afternoon program is very important for the young child. Sleep gives us a chance to step away from our immediate sense impressions. Rest time is a true letting go for the child, allowing him or her to better absorb what he or she has experienced in the morning. This time of peace gives the child pause from our often very hectic lives. We ask your support and understanding should your child need time to adjust to the long rest period. Dolls, stuffed animals and other toys should remain at home; children can use a school cuddly toy to rest with.

Dismissal

Once rest time is over, children will draw or play quietly, then dress to go outside to play and get ready to go home. Pick up time is at 3pm for the 3-6 year olds and 2:30pm for the younger children. If there is a discussion that you need to have with a teacher, please schedule a time via the telephone or email rather than engaging in long conversations in the play yard. As teachers, our primary responsibility is for the safety and well being of the children. Our attention must be completely given to them.

It is important to realize that once you have arrived at school, you are responsible for your child. Although we wish to encourage a sense of community among families, we ask that you leave the schoolyard promptly after meeting your child. They will need your time and attention. Thank you very much for your support in these matters. Please feel free to talk to us about any questions or concerns.

Mountaintop School Handbook Signature Page

Please sign and return with your forms

I agree to abide by all policies in the handbook that has been provided for me. I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to watch my child in the parking area and only when we are inside the garden gate and I have shaken a teacher's hand, then the teachers of Mountaintop School will be responsible for the safety and well-being of my child. I am also responsible for my child upon pick-up after I take my child through the gate into the parking area.

Parent or legal guardian's signature: _____

Date _____

Parent or legal guardian's signature: _____

Date _____