

# PARENT HANDBOOK

**2019-2020**

2904 West Kiowa  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

(719) 203-6364

[mountainsongschool.com](http://mountainsongschool.com)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>School Personnel</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Student Drop-off and Pick-up</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Lunch and Nutrition</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Communications</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Grievance Policy and Procedures</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Educational Program</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Parents’ Right to Know</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Parent Involvement and Volunteering</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Anti-bullying Policy</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Health and Wellness Policies</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Media Policy</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Dress Code</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Personal Property (incl. Lost &amp; Found)</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Internet Acceptable Use Policy for Students</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Guest Wi-Fi Terms of Use</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Firearm and Weapons Policy</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>School Safety</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>FERPA Notification of Rights</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Procedures for Expulsion</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Ten Needs for a Healthy Childhood and Educational Experience at MSCS</b>	<b>47</b>

*I am struck by the fact that the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think that the same is true of human beings. We do not wish to see children precocious, making great strides in their early years like sprouts, producing a soft and perishable timber, but better if they expand slowly at first, as if contending with difficulties, and so are solidified and perfected. Such trees continue to expand with nearly equal rapidity to extreme old age.*

Henry David Thoreau

# WELCOME

Welcome to Mountain Song Community School! The staff would like to welcome all new and returning families to MSCS for the 2019-2020 school year. We look forward to working with you as partners in creating an inviting and effective learning community. The school operates under the following founding ideas:

## **Vision**

Mountain Song Community School is an educational community committed to the healthy growth and development of the whole child. Healthy includes the physical, emotional, and social realms. *Through a curriculum inspired by Waldorf-methods, our teachers nurture the imagination in the early years, building a foundation for abstract thinking, gradually and appropriately challenging the intellect throughout the grades.* This philosophy places equal emphasis on a solid academic program, artistic expression, social development, and attention to the inner life and natural rhythms of the child.

*Our School is committed to creating a healthy community which reflects and supports our common values.* We believe that children develop social responsibility and feel a greater sense of significance in a small, supportive environment that promotes close long-term relationships with classmates and teachers. In an atmosphere of respectful clear communication, cooperation, and parent participation, we believe children flourish and grow to be healthy, capable, contributing human beings.

*We believe that teaching children to care for and respect the earth encourages global responsibility and promotes environmentally-conscious living.* The celebration of seasonal festivals is an integral part of this as children joyously experience the earth's natural cycles. By reducing or eliminating exposure to electronic media and encouraging a cooperative rather than a competitive milieu, a child's inherent creative and intellectual abilities will naturally unfold. At the heart of this approach is the recognition that teaching must be presented to children in a way which fills both teacher and student with wonder, reverence, and enthusiasm.

## **Mission**

Dedication to the Conscious Evolution of the Whole Child – Mountain Song Community School is a community of families and educators dedicated to the conscious evolution of the whole child utilizing developmentally appropriate holistic education that nurtures body, mind, and heart. Our aim is to bring forth healthy, confident, free-thinking, self-directed children who are passionately engaged with their education and empowered to contribute positively to the world.

# SCHOOL PERSONNEL

## Administration

### Executive Leadership Team:

Principal: Teresa M. Woods, Ph.D.

Director of School Performance: Sarah Kreger

Director of Operations: Dan Kurschner

### Administrative Support Team:

Pedagogical Coordinator: Donald Samson

Dean of Students: Cori Karasiuk

Admin Assistant and Health Office: Kate Pettey

Admin Assistant: Katherine DeLeon

Building Manager and Custodian: Kyle McCabe

## Faculty

Sunflower Kindergarten Lead Teacher: Stacie Warren

Sunflower Kindergarten Assistant: Amy Saren

Sunflower Kindergarten Assistant:

Marigold Kindergarten Lead Teacher: Gina Nicoletta-Budler

Marigold Kindergarten Assistant: Elanie Mayberry

Marigold Kindergarten Assistant: Veronica Baker

Daffodil Kindergarten Lead Teacher: Jennifer Grimmett

Daffodil Kindergarten Assistant: Laura Rocca

Daffodil Kindergarten Assistant: Myrrhen Malone

Lodgepole Pine 1st Grade Teacher: Sara Feldman

Lodgepole Pine 1st Grade Teacher's Aide : Tiffany Maniates

Hawthorn 1st Grade Teacher: Amy Siebert

Hawthorn 1st Grade Teacher's Aide : Griffin Olsen

Blue Spruce 2nd Grade Teacher: Ellie Arzate

Red Oak 2nd Grade Teacher: Joan Donati

Evergreen 3rd Grade Teacher: Kathrine Smith

Mountain Maple 4th Grade Teacher: Eva Manz-Jackson

Juniper 5th Grade Teachers: Shannon Lang and Debbie Ellington

Ponderosa 6th Grade Teacher: Nancy Carson

Aspen 6th Grade Teacher: Alisia McCabe

Redwood 7th Grade Teacher: Nathaniel Dolce

Willow 7th Grade Teacher: Regina Splees

Bristlecone 8th Grade Teacher: Jesse Rochette

Homeschool Enrichment Teachers: Claudia Martin, Shannon Leifer, and Debbie Ellington

## **Special Subject Instructors**

Elementary Spanish: Maria Webb

Middle School Spanish: Oralia Venzor

Elementary Music: Deanna Bray

Middle School Choir: Mike Harris

Agriculture Arts: Adam Wright

Agriculture Arts Assistants: Shannon Huard, Griffin Olsen, Anita Schlichting

Handwork: Brandy Robinson

Movement and Games: Denise Neal

Middle School Mathematics: Eli Peake

## **Student Support Services**

Special Education Teachers: Lauren Martinez, Michael Katzenberg, and Angela Strickler

Reading Interventionist: Leslie Conrad

Reading and Math Intervention: Nicole Svenson

Gifted and Talented Teacher: Claudia Martin

English Language Learner Coordinator: Maria Webb

Speech/Language Therapist: Jack Apala

Nurse: Kimberly Nowland

School Social Worker: Erin Kivo

## **Board of Directors**

President: TBA

Vice President: TBA

Secretary: Bill Burkett

Treasurer: TBA

Board Member: Scott Diebert

Board Member: Aubrey Fennewald

Board Member: Christina Halligan

Board Member: Hilary Hoekenga

## ATTENDANCE

Colorado's Compulsory Attendance Law, *C.R.S. 22-33-104(1)*, establishes the expectation that all children between the ages of *age 6 (on or before August 1 of each year) through 17* be registered and attending school. Excused absences are those due to illness, both temporary and extended, those that occur when the student is in the custody of the court of law or its agencies, and those approved by the Executive Leadership Team at MSCS.

### Philosophy

In order for our students to succeed in school, it is of the utmost importance that they regularly attend. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work and possible academic failure. Developing a habit of regular and punctual attendance will help a student throughout his/her educational experience. Poor attendance is a major cause of poor performance and other problems as well as resulting in additional work for both the student and the teacher.

Mountain Song Community School's daily goal is 100% attendance with no tardies. Each day of school is part of a sequential learning process; therefore, missing a part of one day without good cause should be avoided. At MSCS, students are taught in carefully designed, complete units known as Main Lesson blocks which last 3-4 weeks each. Missing a portion of a block will affect full comprehension of that block as well as future lessons. When school is missed, rhythm is disrupted, lessons cannot be replicated, and missed work becomes a burden to complete while staying caught up on current assignments. Regular attendance is extremely important for many additional reasons, including:

- As a charter school, MSCS is accountable for overall student performance. A low attendance rate generally has a negative effect on student performance and can therefore affect the school as a whole.
- Attendance at school is mandatory by law. Note that the school is required to keep accurate attendance records. Our authorizer, the Charter School Institute, considers our attendance records each time we apply for a charter renewal.
- Regular attendance shows a commitment by the family to the student's education, and respect for the school and the student's teacher.
- Regular attendance helps to ensure each student can reach his/her full educational potential.

### Punctuality

When adults have a good relationship with punctuality and attendance, our children learn reliability and respect for others. Consistent punctuality strengthens the will of both adults and children. Mountain Song Community School maintains a consistent daily rhythm for the children. The beginning of the school day establishes the mood for the day, with activities such as movement, speech, and music, which bring the class together and prepare the children for work. The students greet their teacher with a handshake and recite a morning verse in unison. It is important that your child is present for these activities, and it is equally important that latecomers do not interrupt the class. Consistent, punctual attendance is essential.

School doors open at 8:00 a.m. School hours are:

1st - 5th Grade	6th - 8th Grade	Half-day Kindergarten	Full-day Kindergarten	Homeschool
8:15 am - 2:55 pm	8:15 am - 3:10 pm	8:15 am - 12:00 pm	8:15 am - 2:55 pm	8:30 am - 3:00 pm

**Parent Cooperation**

Mountain Song Community School requires cooperation from parents in the matter of school attendance and punctuality. Parents should:

- Ensure your child arrives and is picked up on time each day.
- Schedule routine medical and dental appointments after school hours when possible.
- Schedule family vacations during the school’s vacation days.
- MSCS cannot safely provide supervision to students past 15 minutes of dismissal. For student safety, families habitually not picking up students within 15 minutes of dismissal will meet with the Executive Leadership Team to problem-solve and decide on viable supervision options.

Please avoid picking up students before dismissal time. It is important to honor every class and all instructional time at MSCS. Physician, dental, counseling, and other appointments should be scheduled after school hours whenever possible. If unavoidable, please notify the office and have the child attend classes both before and after the scheduled appointments.

**Tardiness**

School begins at 8:15 each day (homeschool classes start at 8:30 am). Students who are not seated in their classrooms by 8:15 a.m. will be marked tardy by their teachers. **Students who arrive tardy must be accompanied into the building by a parent or guardian and signed in at the office in order to be admitted to school.** Students will then receive a pass from the office that will allow them into class.

A tardy may be excused for good reason and not habitual (such as car trouble, traffic congestion, or inclement weather). Excused tardies are those that are verified in writing by a member of the ELT. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy students to uninterrupted learning, excessive tardiness will be addressed by the ELT with the Parent/Guardian.

**Leaving School Early**

A parent or guardian **MUST** sign out students before leaving the school campus. If the student is going to leave with someone other than a parent or guardian, the parent must grant permission. Students will be called out of class once the parent has signed the student out for the day.

## Absences

Students are required to be in school except in cases of emergency, illness, or religious observance. It is the family's responsibility to inform the attendance office by 10 a.m. (719) 203-6364 or it will be marked "Unexcused."

### Reporting Absences to School

Parents are to notify the office at (719) 203-6364 of a student's absence on or before 9:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. Absences that are not verified, or for which no reason is provided, will be marked as unexcused. Unexcused absences resulting from failure to notify the office will not be changed after two (2) days.

### Excused Absences

Excused absences are normally those resulting from the following:

- Illnesses that involve fever, vomiting, serious allergies, or situations when a physician recommends a student miss school;
- Injuries;
- Family emergencies;
- Absence due to a physical, emotional, or mental disability;
- Funerals;
- Religious observances when requested by parent or guardian;
- Suspension, expulsion, or denial of admission in accordance with C.R.S. 22-33-105 and 106; and
- Court responsibilities.

Family vacations or other recreational absences are strongly discouraged while school is in session and must be approved by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) at least three (3) days in advance to be counted as excused absences. No more than five (5) days total per school year will be excused for vacations or other recreational absences.

Unless otherwise exempted by the ELT, students must be present at least 90% of school days. No more than nine (9) total absences are permitted during a semester, and no more than eighteen (18) total absences are permitted during a school year, ***including excused absences.***

A physician's statement will be requested after the 3rd consecutive day of a student's medical absence or when a student's total days of medical related absence reach eight (8). After eight (8) total medical absences, a doctor's statement will be required to excuse any further medical absences for the remainder of the year.

## When to Keep a Student Home

According to the Colorado State Department of Education, a child exhibiting any of the following symptoms should be kept at home to recover and prevent the spread of any illness:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Head lice
- Fever of 100.0 degrees F. or higher
- Infectious rash
- Severe cough
- Pink Eye
- Infectious runny nose
- Communicable illness

## Unexcused Absences and Habitual Truancy

An *unexcused absence* is defined as one not defined as an excused absence (see above), including but not limited to the following:

- Minor colds, congestion, and minor allergies, or medical situations when a physician does not recommend the student miss school
- Unscheduled “long weekends” and vacations
- Moving days (change of residence)
- Transportation problems
- Sibling is staying home sick
- Appointments for non-essential activities such as haircuts

Colorado State statute defines *habitual truancy* as four (4) or more unexcused absences in a month or ten (10) or more unexcused absences in a school year. Truancy is reported to the state. Mountain Song Community School will involve its authorizer, the Charter School Institute, in truancy matters including truancy court.

## Management of Attendance Issues

If a pattern of tardiness, truancy, or general absenteeism develops, the Executive Leadership Team will schedule a parent conference that may also include the student’s teacher. Parents/guardians will be expected to identify steps for resolving the problem and sign an attendance contract. **Depending on the severity of the attendance issue, student retention in their current grade and/or additional actions may be considered.** The school reserves the right to initiate legal action for violation of the compulsory school attendance laws.

Note: Different procedures may apply to students with extenuating circumstances and/or those students receiving special education services.

# STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

The playgrounds are NOT supervised before school. Parents and guardians are responsible for the safety and supervision of their own children during these times.

## Morning drop-off

### Kindergarten and Grade 1

Parents are required to walk their children to their classroom door no later than 8:15 a.m., unless another meeting location is given by their teacher. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students may arrive no earlier than 8:00 a.m. Parents of Kindergarten and Grade 1 students may park along Bijou Street in the back of the school or in any available street parking space. There will be no parking around the perimeter of the school along 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Kiowa Street, as these streets are reserved for Grade 2-8 drop-off during the day. Students and parents may enter the building through the main entrance that faces Kiowa Street.

### Grades 2 through 8

Students in grades 2 through 5 may be either walked to the door of their classroom or walk independently through the main entrance and proceed to their classroom no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and no later than 8:15 a.m. Drop-off is along Kiowa or 29<sup>th</sup> Streets.

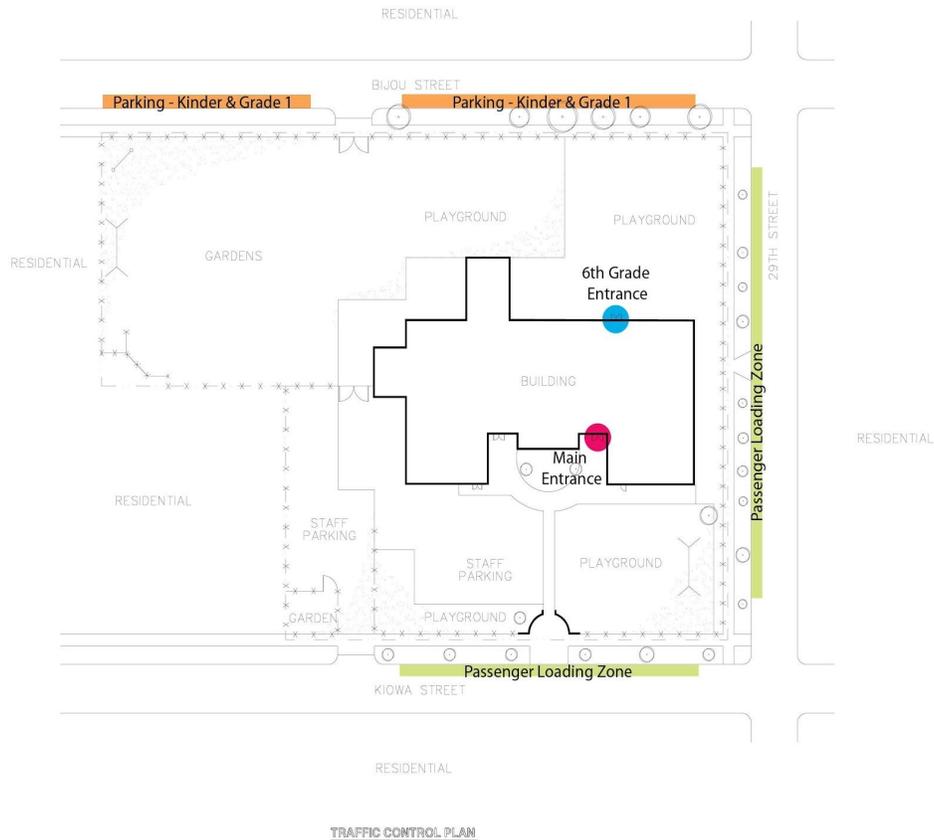
### Regarding All Students

If you are walking your student in, you may park in any available proper street parking space other than directly around the perimeter of the school.

If you prefer to drop off students, the designated drop-off zones will be on the south side of the building on Kiowa Street westbound or 29<sup>th</sup> Street southbound on the east side of the school property (see map). Please do not drop off on Bijou Street. This is reserved for Kindergarten and Grade 1 parking. If there are no available pull-off areas on Kiowa or 29<sup>th</sup> Streets, parents may park at any proper parking space in the surrounding neighborhood and walk students to the school, or they can circle back around.

If you are using the designated drop-off zones, pull your vehicle as far forward as possible to allow for more space behind you. This will allow the efficient flow of drop-offs. **Allow students to disembark from cars only along the curb at 29<sup>th</sup> and Kiowa!** Keep students in your car until you reach that spot. This will provide for the greatest safety possible for your children. Students must be ready to leave your car immediately when you reach the drop-off spot. You must then quickly and safely pull away from the curb and continue to leave the premises in an orderly way.

Please review the drop off diagram below. This plan has been established to provide the greatest safety for our students during drop-off times. The circular drop-off plan allows students to be dropped off safely and for there to be a convenient traffic flow for parents entering and leaving the premises during those times.



**We strongly encourage carpooling** to reduce the amount of traffic in the neighborhood.

The **school parking lot is for staff only**. Visitors may park on the street. For handicap parking, the designated space on the school parking lot may be used.

Please be considerate of our neighbors when parking in front of their houses and follow all traffic and parking laws, including but not limited to the following:

- Do not block driveways or alleys.
- Do not park closer than 5 feet to any driveway.
- Do not park within 30 feet of a stop sign to allow proper visibility for pedestrians crossing the street.
- For you and your child’s safety, cross streets only at intersections or designated crosswalks.

We do not have crossing guards at this time, as we do not qualify based on the amount of traffic in the vicinity.

**Late Arrival**

If you arrive after the 8:15 a.m. start of school, park your car and walk your child into the office for check-in. Students may not go directly to class if they arrive late. This procedure is to assure your child’s safety as we take over responsibility for your child during the school day. Recurring late arrival is considered a serious issue that can affect student achievement and the harmony of the classroom.

## **Afternoon Pick-Up**

Classes dismiss at 12:00 noon (half-day K), 2:55 p.m. (full-day K through Grade 5) and 3:10 p.m. (grades 6-8). If you cannot be here to pick up your student within 15 minutes of dismissal, please make other arrangements for your child with a family member or daycare provider. We understand everyone is going to run late at times, and we strive to be understanding of emergencies. At the same time, late pick-ups impact the schedules of school staff and our ability to use resources effectively.

Mountain Song Community School cannot provide supervision to siblings of students participating in any after-school activities. It is the family's responsibility to ensure students not involved in after-school activities are picked up within 15 minutes of school dismissal.

**Full-day Kindergarten and Grade 1** students must be picked up at the door of their classroom no later than 2:55 p.m., unless another location is specified by their teacher.

**Half-day pick-up for Kindergarten** – please park your car (street parking) and pick up your child at the classroom pick up area at 12:00 noon.

**Grade 2-8 students** can be released to meet their ride outside, or they may walk home if the parent/guardian has filed a student release form with the front office outlining the student's plan for after-school release (i.e. 'student is to walk home' or 'parent will be picking student up outside'). Otherwise, students must be picked up at the door of their classroom or playground no later than 2:55 p.m. (Grades 2-5) or 3:10 p.m. (Grades 6-8), unless another location is specified by their teacher.

## **Mid-day Pick-up**

If your child has an appointment and must be picked up early, please call ahead to notify the office. Park your car and come to the office to pick up and sign your child out. To keep disruptions to a minimum, we ask that you not interrupt classes to take your child out of school mid-day.

## **Children's Release from School**

A child will not be released from the school unless the enrolling parent has given written permission in advance. In the case of an emergency, parents may give verbal authorization for persons listed as emergency contacts on the student's enrollment form. Photo identification will be required by anyone with whom the staff is not familiar. If someone comes to pick up a student without prior proper authorization, the administrative staff will contact the parent. If an unauthorized person tries to pick up a student without permission and/or contact with an authorizing adult, that person will be detained and the police will be called. If possible, the student will be removed from the immediate vicinity.

## **School Closure—Inclement Weather Policy**

While Mountain Song Community School is not a District 11 school, it does reside in School District 11. For the calendar school year time that we share the same school days as D-11, we will observe their closure schedule for inclement weather. For the few days during which we schedule classes when D-11 does not, this decision will be made by the School's Executive Leadership Team.

# LUNCH AND NUTRITION

## Philosophy

Our food philosophy is holistic in nature and considers the nutritional content of the food, how the food is produced, and its impact on our environment and economy. In addition, we acknowledge scientific research that demonstrates that students are able to focus, perform, and feel better physically, emotionally, and mentally when they eat nutritious whole foods.

Parents are asked to follow the MSCS Food Guidelines below when packing lunches. Healthy, well-balanced meals provide essential nutrition for your children's brains and bodies to perform optimally. Candy, soda pop, desserts, and other foods high in sugar or caffeine are not acceptable in school lunches or snacks at MSCS. Teachers will model good nutrition by following these guidelines in their daily lunches that are eaten with the children in the classroom or picnicking outside.

## Lunch

Mountain Song Community School does not serve lunch at this time. Therefore, all students (except half-day Kindergarten students) must bring to school a packed lunch that follows the MSCS Food Guidelines below.

## MSCS Food Guidelines

- Foods brought to school should be nutrient-dense, whole foods.
- Foods brought to school should not include candy or conventional sweets.\* Students should refrain from bringing candy or conventional sweets in lunches or for birthday celebrations. There are many healthy treats and traditional alternatives, which we will use to honor students on birthdays and for holiday celebrations. (\*Sweets are defined as any product in which conventional sugar is one of the first 4 ingredients.)
- Foods brought to school should be free of artificial additives, such as monosodium glutamate (MSG), corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, and trans fat.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these guidelines, please speak to your child's teacher and/or the Executive Leadership Team.

## Special Dietary Needs

If a child has special dietary issues, parents are asked to make these known to the office, class teacher, and cooking arts teacher.

## Agricultural Arts Program

Agricultural Arts is incorporated into the Grades 1-8 curriculum in which children help grow and harvest foods. Through such participation, children experience plant growth, weather, and soil conditions, and observe seasonal patterns. The Agricultural Arts teacher may help children prepare foods to make small meals that they share together, thus becoming more aware of the sources and processing of foods they eat on a daily basis. (These meals supplement their own packed lunches.) Every food item eaten or tasted by our students is of their own volition. Through our Agricultural Arts Program, children become connected to nature and to their food sources.

# ENROLLMENT

## **Kindergarten Enrollment Age**

Colorado state law mandates that children must be 5 years old before or by October 1<sup>st</sup> in order to be eligible to enter Kindergarten. Based on Waldorf standards and curriculum, MSCS strongly encourages an earlier cut-off date, recommending that children turn 5 by June 1<sup>st</sup> before they enter Kindergarten. Some children who turn 5 between June 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> might be ready for half-day Kindergarten.

## **Homeschool Enrichment Program**

Mountain Song Community School offers a homeschool enrichment program that is tuition-free and funded through the State of Colorado. Children are enrolled through our Registrar for grades 1 through 8 and will attend once a week for main lesson, music, art, gardening, and creative movement.

## **Open Enrollment**

MSCS is a Public Charter School authorized by the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI). Our charter allows us to enroll students from Kindergarten through Grade 8. Enrollment is open to any child who resides within the state of Colorado. Parents must turn in an enrollment request form to the office for their child to be considered for enrollment. If the number of students requesting enrollment exceeds the number of slots available, a lottery process will be put into effect. Students will be offered a slot in the order drawn in the lottery until the class is filled. A waitlist will be established for the remaining students according to the order drawn in the lottery. Siblings receive priority status in order to facilitate family involvement in the school. Please note: once a child has been enrolled as a student at MSCS, the school will be considered his/her neighborhood school and may reserve the right to continue at MSCS until they have completed Grade 8. Re-enrollment forms are requested for each student in January of each year.

## **Non-discrimination policy**

MSCS's educational program is non-religious, non-sectarian, and consistent with applicable law. MSCS will not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, disability, or need for special education services. Teachers and staff will exhibit professional behavior at all times in regards to our non-discrimination policy.

# COMMUNICATIONS

MSCS is dedicated to good communication between the school and parents. In order to keep parents informed of happenings at the school, we communicate through a variety of channels: parent letters from teachers, school-wide emails, hard copies of important information, parent/teacher conferences, our website, the community bulletin board, etc. When communicating with Mountain Song Faculty and Staff, please use appropriate channels of accountable communications provided by the school for our employees: Mountain Song Email Addresses, School Phone Lines, and in-person Appointments.

## **Progress Reports and Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held twice a year—one in the fall and one in the spring—to communicate student progress to parents. Parents and teachers are welcome to make additional appointments as needed. Mid-Year and End-of-Year Reports will be sent to parents in January and June and will include a summary of the child's progress during the year. Teachers will contact parents if concerns arise regarding a student's progress in school. It is essential to inform teachers of any changes in your child's life that might affect their performance in school.

## **MSCS Website** [www.mountainsongschool.com](http://www.mountainsongschool.com)

The MSCS website contains important information and updates about the school, board of directors' meeting agendas and minutes, information about Waldorf education, and much more. Volunteer opportunities will also be listed as well as news on festivals and school events. Please visit it often.

## **Songbird Newsletter**

The regular school Songbird Newsletter is distributed throughout the school year by e-mail, generally on a weekly basis on Friday mornings. Current and past issues are also available in PDF format on the MSCS website. Please contact your teacher if you would like the school to print the Songbird for you. All families' e-mail addresses are forwarded to our newsletter distributor shortly after the start of school. If you wish to receive the Songbird before that time, please subscribe here:

<https://mountainsongschool.com/about/songbird-newsletter/>

## **Community Bulletin Board**

MSCS has a community bulletin board in the foyer of the main entrance, where information about community events, opportunities, and information can be posted and shared. Staff, students, and parents wishing to post materials on the bulletin board must first receive permission from the Front Office to do so. As a public school, we must comply with certain guidelines for such postings.

# GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Mountain Song Community School strives to be proactive in promoting positive working relationships between all members of the School's community, including staff members, administration, the Board, students, family members, and visitors.

The following policies apply to grievances of any type that may include, but are not limited to: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) violations; harassment claims; conflict among staff members, students, family members, and/or visitors, etc.

The grievance procedures below detail how adult members of the school community (all faculty, family members, administrators, Board members) are expected to express grievances about other members of the community.

The administration and Board are committed to addressing and resolving conflict in a timely manner while following the fewest steps of the procedures below. However, if the conflict is not resolved at the lowest faculty or administrative level, guidelines below provide a process for resolving the conflict.

The steps below must be followed in order to ensure that grievances are properly addressed and resolved.

1. **Address issue among those directly involved.** The grievant brings the situation or concern to the attention of those directly involved. Dealing directly is ideal, however, it may not always be possible. After the step has been considered the grievant has the option to take the issue to the next step.
2. **Facilitate resolution with the assistance of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) or designee.** If satisfactory resolution is not realized after direct conversation between the conflicted parties, the situation must be brought to the attention of the ELT or designee within ten (10) days of the initial conversation between the conflicted parties. The ELT or designee and the conflicted parties will schedule a phone call or an in-person meeting within three (3) business days of receiving the complaint (where possible) in order to address the situation, facilitate communication, and develop goals for conflict resolution. The ELT or designee will monitor the process until resolution is realized or until an impasse is reached. If the concern is regarding the ELT, then the President of the Board or a designee will facilitate the complaint at this level.
3. **Prepare a written grievance for the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) or designee.** If the grievant is not satisfied with the response received via the first two steps, the grievant shall prepare a formal written grievance to the ELT or designee. The grievance must:
  - a. Describe the incident, decision, or practice that gave rise to the complaint.
  - b. If possible, cite the contract, policy, or procedure that has been violated and/or rationale for concern;
  - c. Describe what conflict resolution strategies were attempted via steps one and two; and
  - d. Explain what corrective action is being requested.

Within five (5) business days from the date on which the written statement was received, the ELT or designee will either issue a written response to the grievant or contact the grievant to schedule a time to address the situation as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the ELT or designee to manage the ultimate resolution of conflicts among faculty, staff, students, and family members except in situations that pertain to the ELT members themselves, or to the ELT's execution of a school-wide policy or procedure.

4. **Provide written grievance to the Board of Directors.** In cases when the concern has not been resolved in the three (3) steps above to the satisfaction of the grievant, the grievant may file a formal written grievance to the MSCS Board of Directors. The written grievance must:
  - a. Describe the incident, decision, or practice that gave rise to the complaint.
  - b. If possible, cite the contract, policy, or procedure that has been violated and/or rationale for concern;
  - c. Describe what conflict resolution strategies were attempted via steps one, two, and three; and
  - d. Explain what corrective action is being requested.

Current contact information for the Board can be found on the MSCS website under the "Governance" page, or the written grievance may be sent directly to [board@mountainsongschool.com](mailto:board@mountainsongschool.com).

Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the grievance, the President of the Board or designee will review the written grievance and provide a written response to the grievant either a) determining that the grievance warrants full review by the Board, or b) declining to review the written grievance. If the Board President or designee determines that the grievance warrants full review by the Board, the Board shall review the grievance at its next regularly-scheduled Board Meeting and issue a written decision to the grievant within ten (10) business days of the meeting. If declining review, the Board's written response to the grievant will explain the reasons for the determination.

While the Board will hear complaints during the public comment period of a Board meeting, formal grievances shall not be brought to the Board as a matter of public comments, as this does not give the Board sufficient time to consider the issue and address it through the grievance process. The Board will not hear grievances that do not follow the grievance process. Issues of employee or student privacy may be addressed in Executive Session, as is legally proper.

5. **Submit a written grievance to the Colorado Charter School Institute ("the Institute") Executive Director.** If the grievant is not satisfied with the MSCS Board's determination not to review the written grievance or the written resolution reached by the MSCS Board after reviewing the grievance, the grievant may submit its concerns in written format to the Institute within five (5) business days from receiving the written decision of the MSCS Board. After review, the Institute's Executive Director will publish his/her conclusions in writing within 15 calendar days from receipt of the written concern. The decision of the MSCS Board will not be overturned unless there are compelling grounds that MSCS violated an applicable law, regulation, policy, or contract provision. The Institute can be contacted at (303) 866-3299 or [csi\\_info@csi.state.co.us](mailto:csi_info@csi.state.co.us).

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Waldorf approach to education offers an academically rigorous curriculum presented in a developmentally appropriate, arts-integrated context. By synergizing a Waldorf curriculum with the Colorado Academic Standards, students will be poised to excel academically and transition gracefully into any public high school setting. Student achievement is measured and evaluated using a variety of methods, balancing quantitative and qualitative assessments. Portfolio (main lesson book) reviews, parent-teacher conferences, and written evaluations by teachers are all part of our student evaluation procedures. In addition, MSCS will utilize state-required standardized assessments and analyze the resulting data for school improvement.

### **Waldorf Education: Why Do I Need To Know About It?**

Mountain Song Community School is dedicated to bringing a Waldorf-based curriculum to its students. Many of the policies and programs at the school are most successful with parent understanding of the underpinnings of the Waldorf approach. We encourage parents to read, study, ask questions, and gain a deeper understanding of the Waldorf pedagogy. We ask that you join the faculty and administration in striving to learn and understand your child's experience in a deeper way. Below are recommended reading about Waldorf education:

***You Are Your Child's First Teacher***, by Rahima Baldwin. A classic parenting guide, especially for families of preschool aged children.

***Waldorf Education, a Family Guide***, by Pamela J. Fenner and Mary Beth Rapisardo. The standard beginner's guide to Waldorf education, answering commonly-asked questions. Highly recommended for new parents.

***Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out***, by Jack Petrash. Insights from a very experienced class teacher and father. Great outline of the key ideas behind Waldorf education.

***Waldorf Schools: Volume I and II*** edited by Ruth Pusch. A collection of articles on all things Waldorf.

***School as a Journey: The Eight-Year Odyssey of a Waldorf Teacher and His Class***, by Torin Finser. A lovely overview of the grades experience, with lots of helpful insights on child development. It has a wonderful appendix that helps anyone interested go further into their reading.

### **Student Assessment**

Mountain Song Community School is committed to developing well-rounded children and nurturing their development to fullest capacity in multiple intelligences: cognitive, emotional, and physical. This whole-child development prepares students with comprehensive skills to become lifelong learners and contributors. Teachers weave together a rich, authentic, and relevant curriculum that aligns to the Colorado Academic Standards. Confirmation of each student's academic success will be documented through comprehensive assessments using effective and mission-focused tools (portfolio or main lesson book reviews, teacher journals, and state-required assessments). The students' daily academic work includes creating beautiful documentation of their learning in portfolios or main lesson books.

## **School-based Written Reports**

Mountain Song Community School issues written progress reports twice a year, once in January and once in June. These reports provide you with assessments of learning expectations from the child's primary teacher as well as special subject teachers. In addition, extensive narrative end-of-year reports and a curriculum review is provided at the end of the school year for K-8th grade. These reports provide documentation of your child's growth during the year, areas of strength, and areas that need support. Questions about the mid- and year-end reports should be directed to the teacher who wrote them. Transcripts and student records are kept on file at the school as long as the student is enrolled. When a student graduates or moves away, the parent must fill out and sign a Request for Records form at the new school. When our school receives that form, we send the child's complete academic file directly to the new school. Please note that MSCS does not issue letter grade report cards.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences occur at least twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. This is a time for parent and teacher to come together and have a conversation about the progress of your child. Teachers will typically share examples of your child's main-lesson work highlighting their strengths and acknowledging what your child may struggle with. It is also a time for the parent to share the child's perspective of school and any social concerns or academic concerns.

## **State-based Assessment**

The state of Colorado requires students in publicly-funded schools to be assessed with standardized instruments. Thank you for your support of state-required testing in our school.

### School-Readiness Assessment

All students in publicly-funded kindergartens must be assessed for school-readiness using a state-approved school readiness assessment. "School readiness describes the status and ongoing progress a child makes within the domains of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language and comprehension development, and cognition and general knowledge. By monitoring each child's progress across multiple domains, teachers, parents, schools, and caregivers can provide needed support to ensure each child's success in school. - See more at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness/>" (description from CDE's website).

The purpose of the School-Readiness Assessment is to provide the school and teachers necessary information in order to provide a responsive learning environment for each child. Information gathered from school-readiness assessments is to be used for supportive and instructional purposes and cannot be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.

### Other Assessments

These include READ Act Assessment for K-3, MAP assessments three-times a year, and CMAS assessments. In addition, assessments (i.e., ACCESS) will be given for English Language Learners. Please see the school annual calendar for times these assessments are administered.

## **Meeting the Needs of All Students**

Mountain Song Community School will provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as well as a least restrictive environment (LRE) for all of our students. Our methods of instruction are inherently interdisciplinary and thematic in nature, an approach that serves all students, including those with special needs. For the majority of students with special needs, we will use methods that provide FAPE within the general classroom environment. If deemed necessary by Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) recommendations or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals, MSCS will provide services outside of the general classroom environment.

## **Educational Interventions and Special Education**

At times during their education, many children struggle cognitively, physically or emotionally. This is completely normal, and we view it as a healthy part of learning and growing. Some children may need extra assistance to keep within the range of what we expect to see in the class. Often, these extra supports are of short duration (6-8 weeks), though sometimes they will last longer.

Our academic and behavioral supports and interventions framework is based on the state's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that is a team-driven, data-based problem-solving approach for improving the outcomes of every student. The approach uses a layered continuum of evidence-based practices applied at the classroom and school level. Students are identified as needing extra support through the use of screeners (short, task-based assessments and observations) and/or referrals from teachers, staff, or parents. Appropriate supports (often referred to as "interventions") are then implemented with close monitoring. If the initial supports, whether in-class or out-of-class, do not provide the expected results, a variety of other evidence-based supports are implemented until the student's needs are addressed. Parents will be informed whenever your child needs supports or interventions.

Meeting a student's needs might involve the development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in our Special Education Program, which is done through meeting with parents, teachers, administrators, and specialists to agree on the individualized plan for the student. Parents will always be involved in this process.

## **Gifted Education**

Mountain Song Community School believes that all children are gifted, and Waldorf approaches allow children to progress at an advanced pace in their areas of advanced skill, while continuing to encourage and engage children in areas that are more challenging for them. For the purposes of public education, gifted students are defined as those whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains is so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Children under five-years-old who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice-exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these **areas of giftedness**:

- General or specific intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership abilities
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities

Students will be screened and identified as gifted in the fall, and special supports will be provided to them to support their areas of giftedness. Parents will be notified when students are identified as gifted. The School complies with all state and federal special education requirements and works to accomplish this in a manner that respects the integrity of a Waldorf curriculum. Questions about special education should be directed to the Executive Leadership Team or the Special Education teacher.

## **Festivals and Events**

Mountain Song Community School celebrates festivals throughout the year to mark the changing seasons and to build awareness and respect for people of all cultures. Seasonal festivals are observed in the classroom and, at times, extended to include the parent community. The curriculum itself, through the study of different mythologies and ancient cultures, provides many opportunities to share cultural traditions—decorating classrooms, baking special treats, learning seasonal songs, etc. Nature stories and special tales help bring deeper significance of the season to the children in a pictorial way.

The living rhythms of the year help provide a common foundation for the children, and we believe that the ceremonies associated with them help reveal the deeper significance in many everyday occurrences. Following are some festivals in the life of our school that we plan to celebrate:

- Dia de los Muertos at the end of October
- Lantern Walk: In the fall around Thanksgiving
- St. Nicholas & Winter Faire: Early December
- May Faire: Beginning of May

We would like to acknowledge and share other religious customs and celebrations enjoyed by our families. If you want to celebrate special holidays with your child's classroom, please give suggestions to your child's teacher. Parent participation helps to make these festivals meaningful and special.

Also, parents are welcome to keep their children home in observance of their own religious holidays.

## **Assemblies**

School assemblies, typically held at the beginning of school are an opportunity for gathering as a school to share class work with each other and celebrate seasonal festivals. Parents are welcome to attend any of the assemblies as space allows. Please check with your child's teacher and the website calendar for times and details. Adults are reminded that picture taking is discouraged and cell phones should be turned off, which allows the audience to experience the work of the children directly and without distraction.

## **Academic Promotion and Retention**

Mountain Song Community School staff and administration will decide promotion and retention of students. Promotion is to be viewed and determined on two levels: Academic performance, and emotional and social readiness.

Students who show decided and documented deficiencies in both academic and social areas should be considered for retention. Retention decisions will be based upon:

- Teacher-documented anecdotal information.
- Parent anecdotal information.
- Developmental and achievement test scores.

If the teacher is considering retention of a student, the parents and Executive Leadership Team should be informed as soon as possible. In any case, this recommendation or consideration should come no later than Second Semester Parent Teacher Conferences. The MSCS reserves the right to determine final placement of any student.

Students who maintain academic work consistent with their talents and age level will be promoted so long as their social and emotional behavior patterns are in norm with others of that class or grade level.

## **PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW**

As a parent of a student at Mountain Song Community School, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teacher who instructs your child. This is a requirement for all districts that receive Title I funds. Federal law allows you to request certain information about your student's classroom teacher. The law also requires the school to give you this information in a timely manner upon request. Listed below is the information about which you have the right to ask for regarding each of your student's classroom teachers.

- Whether the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has licensed or endorsed your student's teacher for the grades and subjects taught.
- Whether CDE has decided that your student's teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- Whether any teachers' aides or similar para-educators provide services to your child and, if they do, their qualifications.

Please contact the Executive Leadership Team at (719) 203-6364 if you would like to receive any of this information.

# **PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING**

As a community charter school, MSCS depends on parent support. If you are able to, we ask that parents contribute a minimum of 4 volunteer hours each month to the school—a total of 40 hours a year. Parents can help with festivals, fundraising, committee work, class plays, work parties, and more. If you have a suggestion for better utilizing your talents, please share it with the Executive Leadership Team, teacher, or committee chair.

Any time you volunteer, please sign in and out on the Visitor Log at the front office. A written record of volunteer hours is helpful when the school applies for grants, as it indicates strong parent commitment.

## **Parent Council**

The Parent Council represents the early childhood, elementary school, middle school, and homeschool parent community, and works with all areas of the school -- including the Faculty, Board, and administrative staff -- to coordinate parent participation.

Its purpose is to inspire, inform, and organize parents so that they can successfully engage in and help to sustain the life of the school in alignment to the school's mission and vision. Parent Council membership includes one or two representatives from each early childhood class and grades 1-8. One Council Representative from each class will be present at each Parent Council meeting and are liaisons to other areas of the school. Speak with your child's teacher if you'd like to be a Council Representative. It is the responsibility of the teacher of each class to choose their class representative for the Parent Council. Speak to your Class' Representative(s) about how to get involved with Parent Council activities.

Made up of volunteer parents, grandparents, and primary caregivers of children currently attending the school, the Parent Council will ensure the voice of the parent community and students is heard and will plan/organize opportunities to appreciate staff, faculty members, administrators, and the Board of Directors.

## **Committees**

The Board of Directors may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Board members in office, establish standing committees. The Board may also establish other ad hoc committees as it deems necessary to assist in the governance and operations of MSCS. Such committees shall have and exercise only the power and authority specifically prescribed and granted by the Board of Directors in the resolutions establishing them. Committees make recommendations to the Board of Directors, but the Board makes final decisions.

To the extent practical, each committee shall consist of one or more Board members, parents, grandparents, and primary caregivers of enrolled students, school staff, and community members. The Board of Directors shall approve membership on committees.

# DISCIPLINE

## Values and beliefs regarding discipline

Discipline is an integral part of a Waldorf curriculum. Children are guided in building self-discipline and understanding the impact of their behavior. Mountain Song's school-wide goal is to maintain an atmosphere of respect, harmony, and community to support a focused, imaginative learning environment. Maintaining a strong and reliable daily rhythm and a predictable classroom environment resolves many discipline issues through prevention. Mountain Song's behavior model is grounded in finding strategies to help children successfully meet expectations of respect and safety by providing clear boundaries and building on a child's strengths.

As part of the Waldorf pedagogy, the age and developmental stage of each child is taken into account in guiding methods that are intended to help children internalize rules, get along with others, and become increasingly self-directed in their behavior. Giving children limited choices, a sense of safety in the classroom, and promoting cooperation are some of the preventative strategies all staff members strive to use daily to help with behavior. The school values a progressive approach to discipline that includes restorative justice practices.

## Mountain Song Student Behavior Expectations

Be Safe  
Be Kind  
Be Respectful  
Be Responsible

- Student behavior must support a productive learning environment.
- Students must comply with all teachers' directives in a timely manner.
- Students must treat other students and adults, and their belongings, with respect.
- Students must treat school property with respect.
- Students must use respectful language.
- Students must engage in safe, responsible, respectful, and appropriate activities in school, on the playground, and during any school-sponsored activities.
- Students must help take care of each other and the school.

Not allowed or tolerated at MSCS:

- Disruptive behavior.
- Non-compliance or defiance of teacher's directives.
- Disrespect to others and/or their belongings.
- Destruction or defacing of school or others' property.
- Offensive language, derisive language, and name-calling.
- Activities that relate to violence, drugs, harassment, non-school related media, or bullying.
- Play that involves hitting or holding others.

## Playground Rules

Be safe

Be kind

Be respectful

Be responsible

- Play with a concern for the safety of self and others.
- Everyone needs to be in control of their own bodies at all times. The following are not allowed: tackling, restraining, hitting, throwing hard objects at others, or other rough play.
- Follow all instructions given by staff members.
- Show respect. Stop means stop. No means no.
- Use playground equipment properly:
  - Swings may not be twisted.
  - Chalk is used only on the sidewalks.
  - Avoid hitting balls at windows.
  - Do not intentionally put equipment out of reach (roof, fire escape stairs, street, etc.).
- Remain within playground areas only. The staff parking lot is off limits.
- Climb only on playground equipment. Stay off bannisters, light poles, etc.
- Tires must remain away from the school building, doors, and fire escapes.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Return all recess equipment to the recess cart attendants.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully. Negotiate and compromise. Seek a staff member when you cannot resolve it on your own.
- After school - ALL students (K-8) must be supervised by staff members. After 3:25 p.m., students may not be on the playground, except those in after school programs.

## Distractions

A student's attention should be on activities within the classroom and school grounds, and not on external distractions. In this light, electronic games, music players, personal electronic devices or computers, and the like are not permitted in school.

**Cell Phones** are allowed on school grounds, but they must be turned off and in a student's backpack during school hours. Students may not use personal cell phones to call home for illness, homework, lunches etc. They must go to the office to make these calls.

## **Expectations regarding discipline**

Behavior management includes the reflection on the part of the teacher on how they can foster a child's strengths and help them overcome difficulties. Teachers are expected to ask themselves, "What is this child trying to communicate, and how can I change their environment to help them?" Teachers will speak respectfully to and about students at all times, and will strive to learn any accommodations they can make to help students' stay in the classroom as much as possible.

Teachers will meet with the student support teams to implement in-class strategies to aid with discipline issues as provided by the Three Streams model and other evidence-based approaches. Classroom teachers implement behavioral supports and interventions for students with 504's and IEP's in consultation with the Special Education teachers. Regular classroom visits and teacher evaluations will support them in maintaining successful in-class discipline.

Teachers will encourage children to care and respect for all life, solve their own problems whenever possible, participate in class activities, value safety for themselves and others, and share the classroom and playground space. Incentives for positive behavior will not be based out of a system of extrinsic rewards, but rather a foundation of building character and the inner will of the child.

## **Restorative processes**

Mountain Song values a restorative justice discipline model that focuses on repairing harm through an inclusive process. When restorative justice is implemented, the focus of discipline is changed from punishment to learning, and from the individual to the community.

### *Accountability without Blame Meetings:*

When children have conflict, due to social needs or behavioral, this will be handled through an in-class conflict resolution meeting facilitated by the teacher, or a formal Accountability without Blame meeting led by the Dean of Students or Executive Leadership Team. These meetings include perspective sharing, taking personal responsibility, repairing any harm, mending relationships, and reintegrating all parties back into their class community. These meetings may include members of the 8th grade Student Action Committee (SAC). Students who are part of the SAC are trained in facilitating conflict resolution and offering leadership guidance to younger students.

## **Discipline procedures**

There may be occasions where children need more formal direction. The Administrative Team may give a suspension to a student in cases where Mountain Song's discipline strategies are not effective.

The process for repeated offenses, unless the safety of other students is at risk, follows:

1. Parent/guardian is called by the Administrative Team for any serious offense and a warning letter is sent home
2. A meeting is scheduled with the Administration Team, parent/guardian, and teacher
3. In school suspension is given for ½ of a school day
4. In school suspension is given for 1 full school day
5. Out of school suspensions may require a re-entry meeting with the Administration Team.

### **Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion at MSCS:**

1. Continued willful disobedience or defiance
2. Persistent bullying or harassment
3. Destruction or defacing of school property
4. Behavior on or off school property that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other pupils or of school personnel, including behavior that creates a threat of physical harm.
5. Declaration as a habitually disruptive student
6. Making a false accusation of criminal activity against an employee
7. Sexual assault or misconduct
8. Offensive language that is sexual, racial, or threatens the safety of another student.
9. Repeated interference with the school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.
10. A commission of any acts that, if committed by an adult, would be considered third degree assault by a juvenile.

### **Procedures for Suspension:**

1. The Administrative Team may suspend a student from one day to up to 10 days and may require the suspension to be in school or out of school.
2. Oral and written notification will be given to the parent/guardian, and must include a description of the behavioral incident.
3. Informal Hearing: The student will be given an opportunity to have an informal hearing before the Administrative Team to share their perspective of the incident. In some instances, witnesses may be presented in order to allow the Administrative Team to make a more informed decision. The notice and informal hearing should precede the student's removal from school, but there does not need to be a delay between the time a notice is given and the time of the hearing.
4. A suspended student must leave school immediately, and will not be allowed to attend any school activities on or off campus from the time the suspension is issued to when the student is reinstated in the school. Administrative Team may suspend a student for a period not to exceed five (5) days for minor violations and up to a period of up to ten (10) days for serious violations.
5. To be readmitted to the school, the student and a parent/guardian must meet with the Administrative Team, teacher, and a member of the Child Care support team, for a reinstatement meeting and a Change Contract to be formed.
6. If the child was suspended because of a conflict with other students, an Accountability without Blame meeting may be facilitated prior to the child re-entering class.

### **Mandatory Expulsion from MSCS:**

Expulsion shall be mandatory for the following violations:

- a. Carrying, bringing, using or possessing a deadly weapon. Any knife brought to school will be considered a weapon if the blade is three or more inches in length.
- b. The sale or use of a drug or controlled substance.

*Please see the section at the end of the Handbook outlining Procedures for Expulsion.*

## **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

Mountain Song Charter School exists so that all children will have the opportunity to experience the benefits of Waldorf curriculum in an environment that fosters their potential, self-esteem, and wellbeing. When learning or physical challenges are hindering a student's behavioral progress significantly, the Special Education teachers may collaborate with teachers, parents/guardians, resource specialists, and community advocacy services to create and implement an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or accommodations assigned in Section 504.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protect children with disabilities from inappropriate school discipline.

A child with an IEP or Section 504 accommodations can be suspended up to 10 days before a mandatory manifestation meeting is required. If a student meets 10 days of suspensions, or is considered for expulsion, the school must notify the child's parent/guardian and give a written notice of all procedural safeguards available to their child. If the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of a child's disability, the child may not be suspended or expelled. However, if appropriate, the school may propose changes in the child's IEP or 504, or an alternative program placement. A parent/guardian may request a hearing to challenge the decision made in a manifestation meeting.

If the manifestation determines the behavior is not a result of the child's disability, the child may be subject to the same disciplinary measures, including suspension or expulsion, as children without disabilities who engage in similar behavior.

In cases of weapons or illegal drugs brought to school by a child with an IEP, school officials may, acting by themselves over parent objection, temporarily place the child in an appropriate "interim alternative educational setting" if the child's behavior would likely result in the injury of other students after the school requests a hearing. If the school believes that the child returning would be dangerous, the school may request an expedited hearing to seek permission to keep the child in an interim alternative educational setting if the time is above 45 days.

If weapons or drugs are brought to school by a child with a 504, the student will be treated no differently than any other student without a disability who was accused of the same infraction if the student is currently engaging in the use of these drugs or alcohol.

Students with disabilities are still eligible for educational resources provided at home in cases of suspension or expulsion. Any student with a disability, who has not been identified by the school, is still eligible for rights in suspensions and expulsions as a student with a disability. These rights remain if the parent/guardian has written the school stating that the child needs special services, if the child's behavior demonstrates the need for services, if the parent has requested an evaluation, or if the child's teacher or other school personal have expressed concern to the special education team.

## Denial of Admission to MSCS

A student may be denied admission for the following reasons:

1. Any behavior recorded by another school during the preceding twelve months that would have been a consideration for expulsion from MSCS.
2. Any student that has a record of being expelled from another school during the preceding twelve months.
3. Any behavior in another school district during the preceding twelve months that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other pupils or of school personnel.

*Denial of admission for students with a disability:*

According to the U.S. Department of Education, any student “under a regulatory provision implementing Title II of the ADA, public entities are required to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.”

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Mountain Song Community School prohibits acts of harassment or bullying. The MSCS has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

### Definitions

“Harassment or bullying” is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand-held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. These “characteristics” will be referred hereafter as these characteristics. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function.

“Harassment” is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- is directed at one or more pupils;
- substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of pupils;
- adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from MSCS’s educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the pupil, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect; and, is based on a pupil’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

“Bullying” is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- is directed at one or more pupils;
- substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of pupils;
- adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from MSCS’s educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress; and,
- is based on a pupil’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

## **Expectations and Consequences Related to Harassment and Bullying**

MSCS expects students to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors. In regard to self and others, as well as for the school and community property, students are expected to behave safely, kindly, respectfully, and responsibly.

MSCS believes that the best discipline is self-discipline, and that it is the responsibility of staff to help students learn to assume responsibility and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage students’ abilities to develop self-discipline.

Since bystander support of harassment or bullying can support these behaviors, MSCS prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying. The staff should encourage students to support students who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, or report them to the designated authority.

The following factors shall be given full consideration by the Executive Leadership Team in the development of the procedures for determining appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of harassment or bullying.

### **Factors to Consider**

#### Factors for Determining Consequences

- Age, development, and maturity levels of the parties involved
- Degree of harm
- Surrounding circumstances
- Nature and severity of the behavior(s)
- Incidences of past or continuing pattern(s) of behavior
- Relationship between the parties involved
- Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred

## **Appropriate Consequences**

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion of a student.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment or bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance.

Remedial measures shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act. Effective discipline should employ a school-wide approach. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

### Examples of Consequences

- Temporary removal from classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Detention
- Referral
- Suspension
- Legal action
- Expulsion or termination

## **Reporting Bullying or Harassment**

MSCS requires the Executive Leadership Team and/or designee to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Executive Leadership Team or designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy to the Executive Leadership Team or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The MSCS Board of Directors requires the Executive Leadership Team and/or designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the Executive Leadership Team and/or designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation is to be completed within (3) three school days after a report or complaint is made.

MSCS prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Executive Leadership Team after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

MSCS understands the harm that harassment or bullying can cause to a victim, and extends its full range of resources to mitigate those effects. Such efforts may include the reciprocal benefits of a bully's restitution and restoration, counseling, therapy, parent conferences, and other measures deemed in the student's best interest.

MSCS prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements.

MSCS requires the Executive Leadership Team to annually disseminate the policy to all school staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of harassment and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions. The Executive Leadership Team shall develop an annual process for discussing the school policy on harassment and bullying with students and staff.

MSCS shall incorporate information regarding the policy against harassment or bullying into each school employee-training program and handbook.

## **How Parents Can Contribute to Positive School Culture**

- Model mutual respect to all adults and children in the school community.
- Work collaboratively with others in the community.
- Support the school and its mission.
- Get involved.
- Don't get involved in disciplining other people's children—turn difficult situations over to a teacher or Executive Leadership Team.
- Care about all children, not just your own.
- Bring concerns directly to the adult person concerned in a respectful way. Listen to other points of view as presented by staff. Be patient as the school endeavors to be thoughtful in determining how to respond to your concerns. If you are not satisfied by the response, you may then contact the Executive Leadership Team to assist in the communication, unless the situation is one where safety and security of the children are at risk.
- Do your part to contribute to positive relationships with staff and other parents.
- Speak kindly about other people in the community around your children. Model compassion.

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES

## When to Keep a Student Home

According to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), a child exhibiting any of the following symptoms should be kept at home to recover and prevent the spread of any illness:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Head lice
- Fever of 100.0 degrees F. or higher
- Infectious rash
- Severe cough
- Pink Eye
- Infectious runny nose
- Communicable illness

If a child is diagnosed with a serious communicable illness, MSCS requires a doctor's note, granting permission for the child to return to school, on file in the front office upon the child's return to school. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the child being asked to leave school until such a note is produced, if staff suspects that the child is still contagious.

## Medications

School personnel cannot administer prescription, nonprescription (over the counter), or herbal medications\* to students unless 1) appropriate administration cannot be reasonably accomplished outside of school hours and 2) the parent or legal guardian is not available to administer the medication at school. In order to administer any medication to a child, a copy of the original prescription or doctor's permission letter must be on file at the school. All medication must be brought to school in the original container, listing proper dosage information and the child's full name. The parent(s) and a physician must fill out a medication administration form before our staff can administer medication. All medication brought to school must be given to the Registrar, Office Aide, or Secretary. Medication of any kind should never be kept in a child's backpack, cubby, or lunch box. Medication must remain locked in the office until it is returned to the authorized adult.

*\*"Medication" is considered to be any substance applied directly to the student that addresses a condition that does not usually exist. Example: cough drops, chapstick for cracked lips, cold sore cream, etc. These medications need a Medication Administration form signed by a parent/guardian AND a physician because it is treating a condition (sore throat, compromised skin, cold sore, etc.) before they are administered to the student during school hours.*

## Head Lice

The Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) position on Head Lice in the school setting is based on the Center for Disease Control's stance. This information can be found at the following website: <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) maintains that it is not necessary to exclude students from school if they are suspected of having lice for the following reasons:

*Many nits are more than ¼ inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice, or may in fact be empty shells, also known as 'casings'. Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people. The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice. Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by nonmedical personnel.*

If a student is suspected of having lice, the CDE policy is that the student remain in school the rest of the day, begin treatment after school/that evening, and return to school the next day.

If you still have questions, please refer to additional links provided on the CDC website referenced above.

Unfortunately, there is a negative stigma associated with lice. People may assume that lice are only found in dirty and/or unsanitary conditions and homes. This is a myth. Lice can be found in any condition and in very clean environments.

If you are concerned that your child has lice, refer to the CDC link and check your child at home. It is important to consider the privacy of those students that may have lice. Please refrain from reporting or talking about a student with other parents or on social media if you suspect someone has lice. This is a personal issue and as mentioned above, unfortunately, has a negative social stigma in our society.

## Accidents/First Aid

All class teachers and at least one of the office staff are first-aid trained. Homeopathic remedies (with a parent's/physician's written permission) and/or basic first aid are administered for common injuries. Should a child sustain an injury that warrants treatment at school or needs further attention, the parent will be notified by phone and/or in writing, based on the severity and nature of the injury as determined by MSCS staff. If Emergency Medical Response is required, 911 will be called first and then the parent/guardian.

## Health Care Plans

Health Care Plans are required for the following conditions if emergency medications are held in the Health Office: Allergy/Anaphylaxis, Seizure, Diabetes, and Asthma. These Health Care Plans are available on the website to be filled out by parent/guardian and physician.

Even if you do not choose to keep emergency medications in the Health Office, it is a good idea to have a Health Care Plan on file for the safety of your child if an emergency occurs.

If you prefer your child to self-administer emergency medication (ex. Inhaler for asthma), please download and sign the Self-Carry form also found on the school website. The student, parent, and school nurse will need to sign this form, verifying knowledge, maturity, and awareness by the student self-administering the medication listed. Even if your child carries emergency medication, we recommend that the Health Office also have the medication in case of an emergency.

### **Immunizations:**

Please submit immunization information to the school at the beginning of the school year. If immunizations are given during the school year, please submit a written copy of the immunization to the front desk. Incomplete immunization records may result in your child being excluded from the school per Colorado state law unless the student is in “process” of fulfilling the State requirements. However, if you choose to exempt your child from receiving immunizations, please fill out the Immunization Exemption form found on the school website. You may also visit the Colorado CDPHE website for their version of the exemption form.

<https://colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/vaccine-exemptions>

MSCS participates in the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS), a confidential web-based system, maintained by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to help gather immunization information. If you would like to remove your child’s information from CIIS and/or choose to not have your child’s immunization information entered into this system, the opt out procedures can be found at

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/ciis-opt-out-procedures>.

### **Hearing and Vision Screenings**

Screenings are done yearly for all students in grades K,1,2,3,5, and 7 as well as all new students to MSCS. Parents are notified if students display difficulty with screening tests. Parents may request vision and hearing screening for any student by contacting the school nurse or health aide. Parents may also choose to opt their child out of vision and hearing screening by notifying the school nurse in writing at the beginning of the school year.

### **Field Trips/Extended Activities**

If your child has a health condition or health concern and would like to participate in a field trip or extended activity, the Field Trip/Extended Activity form needs to be completed and turned into the front office prior to the field trip or extended activity. This form can also be found on the website.

## MEDIA POLICY

We ask that MSCS students are not exposed to digital media or screen-time on school nights -- Sunday through Thursday evenings -- and that a family effort to reduce children's general exposure to media away from school is sustained. For our purposes, screen-time includes movies, television, electronic/video games, cell phones, tablets, and computers.

The MSCS media policy is based on the strong body of evidence showing that screen time for children disrupts normal and healthy brain development, as well as negatively impacting social, emotional, and motor skill development. Of importance also are research findings demonstrating that parents' screen time in the presence of their children negatively impacts children's development. The media policy aligns with the MSCS premise that the violence, consumerism, and passive entertainment promoted by today's mass-media culture do not support the well-being of children. We strongly recommend limiting media viewing for children. For more information, talk with your child's teacher, attend parent nights, and read the latest research on the effects of television and other technologies on brain function and imagination.

The following sources provide additional information about our media policy:

- *Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don't Think*, by Jane Healy
- *The Plug-In Drug and Unplugging the Plug-In Drug*, by Marie Winn
- *What To Do After You Turn Off the TV*, by Francis MooreLapp
- *How Television Poisons Young Children's Minds*, by Miles Everett
- *ScreenTime: Diane Sawyer Reporting*:  
<https://abcnews.go.com/WNT/video/study-impact-screen-time-children-62812163>
- This is Your Child's Brain on Video Games, by Victoria L. Dunckley, M.D. in *Psychology Today*  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-wealth/201609/is-your-childs-brain-video-games>
- ScreenTime is Making Kids Moody, Crazy, and Lazy, by Victoria L. Dunckley, M.D. in *Psychology Today*  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-wealth/201508/screen-time-is-making-kids-moody-crazy-and-lazy>
- How Bad is Screen Time, Really? by Alex Apatoff in *People Magazine*  
<https://people.com/parents/screen-time-rules-guidelines-suggestions-best-apps-programs/>
- "Gaming Disorder" added to the World Health Organization's list of diseases  
<https://www.npr.org/2019/05/28/727585904/is-gaming-disorder-an-illness-the-who-says-yes-adding-it-to-its-list-of-diseases>
- Media and Children, by Dimitri Christakis  
[https://youtu.be/BoT7qH\\_uVNo](https://youtu.be/BoT7qH_uVNo)

## DRESS CODE

MSCS recognizes that all students are valued individually for who they are and not what they wear. Clothing, however, can be distracting to students and teachers and can undermine the school environment. Therefore, the following dress code has been adopted to help create a positive environment for all, where the focus is on learning:

- All clothes must be neat and clean, and cannot be torn or tattered.
- Hair should be clean, neat, and out of the face.
- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs (see image). Tops must have shoulder straps.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes should be safe for the school environment and allow students to move freely and safely. Shoes with flashing lights or wheels are not allowed.
- See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meet the minimum requirements of the dress code.
- Headgear including hats, hoodies, and caps are not allowed indoors unless permitted for religious, medical, or other reason by school administration.
- Specialized classes or events may require specialized attire, such as sport protection, safety gear, or theater costumes.

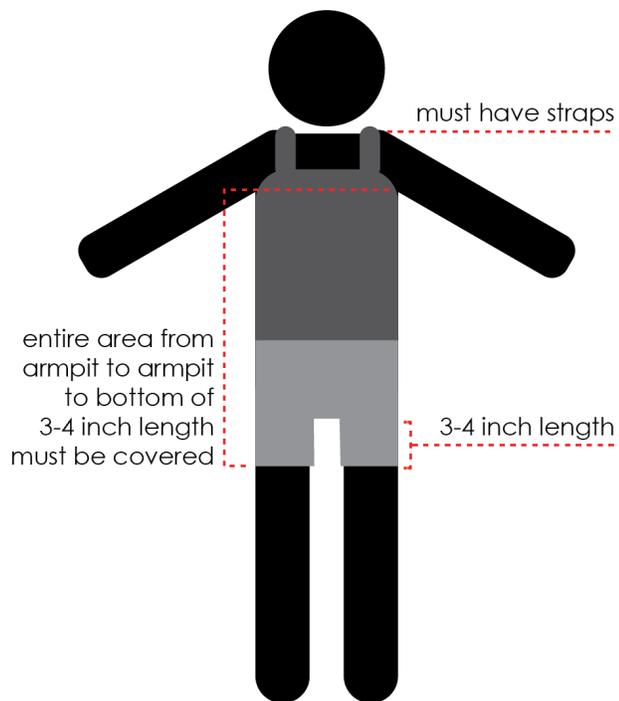


Image used with kind permission from the Roanoke County School District in Virginia.

- Suitable clothing is required for seasonal safety. In winter, warm jackets, gloves, and hats are required. In the warmth of the sun, hats are encouraged to protect students from harmful rays. Our students can be outside for up to 3 hours on some days, so protective clothing is very important.

*Continued on next page*

### ***Dress Code, continued***

- Clothes and personal items such as purses, bags, backpacks, lunch boxes, and shoes should be free of media characters, including sports teams/memorabilia.
- Clothes and personal items may not feature logos, symbols, or pictures such as those referring to gangs, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
- Clothing and personal items may not display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene language or images.
- Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or other protected classification.
- Clothing and accessories that endanger student or staff safety may not be worn.

The administration reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate dress.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Toys, games, cell phones, electronic devices, etc. are to remain at home. If such items are brought to school, they must be left with the teacher until the end of the school day. Inappropriate items will be held in the office and may be picked up at the end of the day, except in cases of habitual abuse of this policy. Such cases may warrant extended confiscation time, as determined by staff. Dangerous items may be confiscated and disposed of and will require more serious consequences.

### **Pets**

No dogs or pets are permitted on the school campus during school days or events for safety, health, and liability reasons. Special arrangements may be made to bring pets to school with approval from the Executive Leadership Team and Class Teacher.

### **Lost and Found**

All lost and found items will be stored in bins in the lost and found closet, at any time you can ask the front office for permission to look through these items for your child's missing item(s). The last Friday of every month the bins will be sorted and leftover items will be donated.

# INTERNET ACCEPTABLE-USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

## Overview

Use of computers is limited at MSCS. The main use will be for computer-based state assessments. However, because there is a possibility of internet use on campus, the following policy will be followed.

## Privileges

Any student accessing the Internet will be trained on the proper uses of the internet. Use of the Internet is a privilege and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges.

We encourage your help in guiding your child to use online services responsibly. We further recommend continual discussion and monitoring of your child's interaction, learning, and exploration activities throughout the year for both encouragement of good practices and prevention of possible problems.

## Specific Guidelines

1. Students shall not use the Internet unsupervised and only with parental approval.
2. No student is to be identified over the Internet by full name, photograph, etc. without specific written permission from the parent or legal guardian. If the parent or legal guardian has signed a form provided by the classroom teacher or technology instructor, personal information may be posted in certain circumstances.
3. Use of the Internet to defame or demean any person is prohibited.
4. Network etiquette: Be polite; Use appropriate language; Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language; Do not reveal personal address or phone number or the personal addresses or phone numbers of others. Remember that illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
5. Users may not download or use any documents or data that could knowingly cause damage to the school's computer system (ie: viruses).
6. Students will not engage in any activity that requires an exchange of money, credit card numbers or where they enter into an area of service for which the school will be charged an additional fee. Purchases or sales of any kind are prohibited.
7. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks, and other antisocial behavior are prohibited.
8. The illegal installation of copyrighted software for use on MSCS computers is prohibited.
9. Use of the network to access or process pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the network is prohibited.
10. Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the network.
11. MSCS shall be the final authority on the use of the network.
12. Appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken against any student who willingly and knowingly violates the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

## **GUEST WI-FI INTERNET TERMS OF USE**

By accessing or using the Mountain Song Community School wired or Wi-Fi Internet access service (service) you represent and agree that you are currently a guest of Mountain Song Community School. You also acknowledge and agree that you have read all of the information, disclaimers, and provisions stated or referred to in this document below (terms), understand them, and agree to be legally bound by them. If you are not a current guest of MSCS and/or you do not agree to the terms, you may not access the service.

Consent to monitoring. MSCS reserves the right to, and you acknowledge and consent that MSCS may (but is not required to), monitor, or authorize a third party to monitor, your communications and activities via the service (including the content) in connection with your use of the service, and may disclose any such information for purposes of ensuring your compliance within terms, applicable law, cooperation with legal authorities, and otherwise protecting MSCS's rights, property and interests.

Disclaimer of warranty. You acknowledge and agree that the service is provided solely as a convenience to you, "as is," with any and all faults or defects. You further acknowledge and agree that MSCS disclaims all warranties and representations of any kind, whether express, implied or statutory, including without limitation any warranties: (I) of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, non-infringement, workmanlike effort, quality, accuracy, timeliness, completeness, title, quiet enjoyment, no encumbrances, no liens, or system integration; or (II) that access to or use of the service or any part thereof will be uninterrupted, error or defect free, free of viruses or other harmful elements or features, or secure, or that problems will be corrected, even if MSCS is on notice of such problems. No advice or information given by MSCS or its employees shall create any warranty. If applicable law does not allow the exclusion of some or all of the above implied warranties, you agree that the above exclusions will apply to you to the extent allowed by applicable law.

The Internet contains a variety of materials and information that may be offensive to you. You agree that you assume full responsibility and risk for your use of this service and the Internet, and that you are solely responsible for evaluating the suitability, appropriateness or legality of any informational content or other materials you may encounter online.

Limitation of MSCS 's liability. (A) You acknowledge and agree that the service is provided as a guest privilege solely for your convenience and does not impose liability of any kind or in any amount on MSCS including without limitation, liability for any direct, indirect, special, consequential, incidental, punitive or exemplary damages (including, without limitation, loss profits, loss of business, business interruption, loss of data, or other similar damages) arising out of or related to this agreement or the service; even if MSCS is advised of the possibility of any such damages. (B) You specifically waive any and all claims against MSCS related in any manner to your use of the service. (C) You further agree that if for any reason any of the foregoing limitations of liability or waiver are determined to have failed in their essential purpose or are otherwise deemed to be unenforceable, then the maximum aggregate, cumulative liability of MSCS, arising out of or related to the terms of this agreement and this service, shall not exceed your direct damages, if any, up to fifty dollars (\$50). (D) You agree that the limitations and waivers in this section shall be deemed to apply to all causes of action and all legal theories, without regard to whether the claims of damages arise from: (I) breach of contract, breach of warranty, negligence or other torts, or (II) any other cause of action, however stated.

Termination of service; updates to this agreement. You agree that MSCS may, at any time and for any reason, change, terminate, limit or suspend this service (in whole or in part) or your access to this service. Upon any termination, your rights to use this service will immediately cease. MSCS also reserves the right to update or revise this agreement at any time without prior notice, and you agree that MSCS may do so. Your continued use of this service following an update to this agreement signifies your acceptance of its revised terms.

# **FIREARM AND WEAPONS POLICY**

## **Purpose**

It is the intent of Mountain Song Community School (MSCS) to provide a safe and secure environment for students, employees, and visitors by establishing preventative measures, holding perpetrators accountable, and providing assistance and support to victims. This policy specifically addresses the school's position on firearms and weapons to provide a safe working and learning environment for students, employees, and visitors at all school-owned or -controlled properties.

## **Firearms and Weapons Policy**

MSCS maintains a strict policy prohibiting firearms and weapons in the school community, including legal and authorized weapons. Use of any firearm, explosive, weapon, dangerous chemical, or biological agent on school property or at any school function is prohibited. Other prohibited items include, but are not limited to, swords, razors, hatchets, pellet or BB guns, knives, paintball guns (collectively weapons). Furthermore, all firearms as defined in the Gun-Free Schools Act, Section 921(a) of title 18, United States Code, shall also be considered firearms for purposes of this policy.

Students, faculty, and staff are not allowed to carry and/or possess firearms or weapons at any time while in the school buildings or property, whether or not licensed to do so. School "property" includes, but is not limited to:

- Buildings
- Sidewalks or walkways
- Lawn areas
- Playgrounds
- Open or undeveloped lands

Students, volunteers, faculty, and staff are also prohibited from carrying and/or possessing weapons at any time while working or attending school or school-related events, whether or not on school property, including, but not limited to:

- Driving school vehicles at any time; and
- Driving privately owned vehicles used in the course of conducting school business or activities.
- MSCS also prohibits school visitors from carrying and/or possessing weapons on school property or attending school events (field trips, sporting events, entertainment). Non-employees include, but are not limited to, vendors, visitors, customers, and potential customers of the school.

## **Procedure**

All individuals are encouraged to be alert to the possibility of violence on the part of employees, former employees, students, visitors, and strangers. Employees and students shall place safety as their highest concern and report all acts of violence, threats of violence and possible dangers. It is the responsibility of every administrator, student, and staff member to take any threat or violent act seriously and report acts of violence and threats to the appropriate authorities as set forth in this

policy. Reports of any suspected violation of this policy should be made immediately to any one or more of the following:

- Office (719-203-6364)
- Executive Leadership Team
- Administrators
- Teacher
- Staff member
- School Official
- Local Law Enforcement (911)

Any such individual who is reported or discovered to be in possession of a firearm or weapon will be asked to remove it or turn it over immediately. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary actions and/or arrest as described in the “Consequences” section, below.

### **Authorized Exceptions**

The following are authorized exceptions to this policy:

- Visitors who are required to carry a weapon in the scope of their employment would be exceptions to this policy. For example, law enforcement officers are exempt from this policy.
- Employees, students, staff, and volunteers may use appropriate tools, such as saws, knives, and other such implements necessary for the performance of their job duties or schoolwork.
- Contractors or workers hired by the school to perform a job that requires the use of saws, knives, or equipment that may be seen as a weapon or used as such to cause harm to another individual.

The Executive Leadership Team must approve all other exceptions.

### **Support**

Mountain Song Community School shall make every effort to provide a campus and workplace that is free of violence, and to protect and support victims and those threatened or exposed to acts or threats by offering security measures and appropriate resources for providing support and assistance.

### **Consequences**

Any student, who is determined to have brought a firearm to school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, shall be expelled for not less than one year. The Executive Director of the Colorado Charter School Institute may modify the length/term of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis if such modification is in writing. Any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school will be referred to the appropriate criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system. A record will be kept of all firearm expulsions, including a description of circumstances that, at a minimum, includes: the number of students expelled, the type of firearms concerned, how many expulsions were modified, how many were IDEA students, and how many were referred to “alternative placements.”

Violation of this policy by non-students shall be grounds for disciplinary actions to include but not be limited to termination and prosecution under the law. The school will not tolerate retaliation against any student, employee, or visitor who reports a suspected violation of this policy.

## **School Safety**

Our Emergency Response Plan, available in the front office, contains detailed information on our approved emergency plans.

### **Fire safety**

Fire drills are conducted monthly, in compliance with Colorado state statutes. Fire extinguishers are located in all buildings and exits and are maintained annually.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Should the school have to be permanently evacuated due to an emergency situation, everyone will proceed to the Pleasant Valley Baptist Church at 30<sup>th</sup> and Bijou. Parents will be contacted via phone and email to inform them of the situation as soon as possible. It is therefore essential to keep all contact information up to date in the office.

### **Lock-Down or Lockout Situation**

Should the school need to initiate lock-down or lock-out procedures, all persons on the property will be escorted to a safe location inside the building, and all entries and exits will be locked. NO ONE is allowed to enter or leave the designated lock-down area until it has been deemed safe and announced as such by the Executive Leadership Team or emergency personnel in charge of the situation.

## **FERPA NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Mountain Song Community School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school administrator a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school administrator will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Mountain Song Community School to amend their child's or their education record should write the school administrator, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school or school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request or the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.]

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Mountain Song Community School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

# PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION

In instances where the Administrative Team is considering dismissal of a student, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Written Notice - The Administrative Team will give written notice to the parent/guardian of a student prior to the expulsion.
2. Contents of Notice - The notice must contain the following basic information:
  - a. A statement of the basic allegations leading to the contemplated expulsion.
  - b. A statement that a hearing on the expulsion will be held if requested by the student or their parent/ legal guardian within five (5) days after the date of notice.
  - c. A statement of the time, date and place of the hearing.
  - d. A statement that the student may be present at the hearing and hear all information against him or her; that the student will have an opportunity to review such information as is relevant; and that he/she may be accompanied and represented by their parent/guardian and an attorney.
  - e. A statement that failure to participate in such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.
3. Conduct of hearing:
  - a. The hearing will be conducted by the Administrative Team and two MSCS Student Care Team members. The members shall not discuss the details of the hearing with anyone outside of the Student Care Team.
  - b. The hearing will be conducted in a closed session except to those deemed necessary by the Student Care Team; but shall include the student, the parent/guardian and the student's attorney. Such additional individuals as may have pertinent information will be admitted to the closed hearing but only to the extent necessary to provide such information and to answer questions related to such information as permitted by 3.c., below. Following such testimony, the additional individuals shall remove themselves from the hearing.
  - c. Testimony and information will be presented under oath if requested by either party. However, technical rules of evidence will not be applicable, and the Discipline Committee may consider and give appropriate weight to such information or evidence deemed appropriate. The student or his representative may question individuals presenting information.
  - d. A sufficient record of the proceedings will be kept so by a third party unaffiliated with either of the parties and unrelated to the hearing's participants as to enable a transcript to be prepared in the event either party so requests. Preparation of the transcript will be at the expense of the party requesting the same.
  - e. The Administration Team will render a written decision no later than five school days after the hearing. The decision will be delivered only to the student or their parent/guardian and the MSCS Board of Directors in the manner described above. The Administrative Team may establish reasonable conditions for readmission, as well as the duration of the dismissal, which may not extend beyond one calendar year.
4. Appeal to the MSCS Board of Directors:
  - a. An opportunity to request an appeal may be brought to the Board whose decision will be considered final.
  - b. No second appeal will be allowed unless important new facts that may possibly alter the decision have come forward.
  - c. New evidence must be presented in writing to the MSCS Board of Directors. No appeal may come more than 10 days after a decision is rendered.

- d. In case of an appeal, it will consist of a review of the facts that were presented and that were determined at the dismissal hearing conducted by the Administrative Team, introduction of new facts, arguments relating to the decision, and questions of clarification from the MSCS Board of Directors.
- e. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Directors may vote to affirm, reverse or modify the decision. The Board of Directors' decision will be communicated orally and entered in the minutes of the meeting.
- f. Upon written request, the Board of Directors' decision will be reduced to writing for purposes of further judicial review pursuant to state law.

5. Re-admittance

- a. No student shall be readmitted to school after dismissal until after a meeting between the Administrative Team and the parent/ guardian has taken place, except that if the Administrative Team cannot contact the parent/guardian or if the parent/guardian repeatedly fails to appear for scheduled meetings, the Administrative Team may readmit the student.
- b. If the student is expelled, he/she may only be permitted to reapply for the following school year and enter through the lottery system.

6. Notice to the Charter School Institute (CSI)

- a. MSCS will notify CSI of any dismissal within two school days.
- b. The MSCS Board of Directors has the final authority in determining an expulsion from Mountain Song Community School consistent with state and federal laws.

## **TEN NEEDS FOR A HEALTHY CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT MOUNTAIN SONG COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

These “rules of thumb” are recommendations that have circulated within Waldorf school communities, and we share them as worthy principles that we support.

### **1. Proper Nutrition**

A good, hot, nutritious breakfast every day before school. Breakfast, snack, and lunch should contain lots of protein, not sugar or food additives.

### **2. Adequate Sleep**

Be in bed on school nights early enough to get sufficient sleep. Most children and young adolescents still need 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night.

### **3. Minimal Media**

Aim for no media exposure on Sundays through Thursdays, and minimal media on the weekends. Media such as movies or shows emphasizing violence or content that is too adult-oriented should be avoided.

### **4. Quiet Time**

Provide some daily quiet time, without electronic music, screens, or computers on. Give your children the gift of silence.

### **5. Time in Nature**

Spend some time in nature every day. Experience the weather; pay attention to the seasons, moon, stars, and sky.

### **6. Contributions at Home**

Assign some responsibilities for taking care of the home, pets, and yard.

### **7. Appropriate Dress**

Ensure your children are warm and dry while at school, especially their feet. Students need to dress appropriately for the activities that they participate in during the school day, including outdoor activities.

### **8. Cultivate Reverence**

All spiritual traditions offer practices that help develop the reverence for life that supports home, school, and community relationships. If need be, create your own.

### **9. Support Your Child’s Education**

Help develop healthy study habits, participate in school activities, and communicate honestly about your concerns with your child’s teachers.

### **10. Support the Class and School Community**

Get to school on time. Plan vacations during breaks. Support school and class conduct codes. Children need shared values and alignment among their adult role models.



*The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue and strength of each one is living.*

-- Rudolf Steiner