



# Staff Handbook

## Effective July 1, 2015

Mountain Song Community School  
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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE CONTENTS OF THIS STAFF HANDBOOK ARE SUMMARY GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES AND THEREFORE ARE NOT ALL INCLUSIVE. THIS STAFF HANDBOOK SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUSLY ISSUED EDITIONS. EXCEPT FOR THE AT-WILL NATURE OF THE EMPLOYMENT, THE COMPANY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SUSPEND, TERMINATE,

**INTERPRET, OR CHANGE ANY OR ALL OF THE GUIDELINES MENTIONED, ALONG WITH ANY OTHER PROCEDURES, PRACTICES, BENEFITS, OR OTHER PROGRAMS OF MOUNTAIN SONG COMMUNITY SCHOOL. THESE CHANGES MAY OCCUR AT ANY TIME, WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE.**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Mountain Song Community School (MSCS) is located in Colorado Springs, Colorado and is a public, tuition free charter school serving the needs of kindergarten through eighth grade students.

At MSCS, we are 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.

## **ABOUT THE STAFF HANDBOOK**

This Staff Handbook outlines policies, procedures and guidelines intended to provide information and set standards for expected conduct and performance to meet the mission statement at MSCS. This Staff Handbook and the policies, procedures and guidelines set forth herein are not intended to create or constitute a contract or to change the nature of the employment relationship between Mountain Song Community School and its employees. None of the policies in this Staff Handbook modify the “at-will” employment relationship.

MSCS reserves, to the extent not expressly prohibited by law, the right to unilaterally change, revise, or eliminate any of the policies and/or benefits described in this Staff Handbook. This Staff Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks, policies, procedures, and practices of the school.

Employees are responsible for reading and understanding this Staff Handbook. If anything is unclear, employees are responsible for discussing the matter with the Director. In the back of the Staff Handbook you will find an Acknowledgement and Receipt form to sign and return to the Business Manager. This documents your acceptance and agreement to follow the policies and procedures as an employee of MSCS.

The interpretation of all policies is in the sole discretion of MSCS, and the Director is tasked by the Board of Directors to apply MSCS’s interpretation of policies and procedures, as they apply to any and all situations. This Staff Handbook is effective July 1, 2015 and replaces all previous Staff Handbooks or personnel policies.

## **STATEMENT OF AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT**

This Staff Handbook is not intended to create or constitute a contract of employment; either expressed or implied and does not create legally enforceable rights. It is merely a condensed guide to various policies and procedures of Mountain Song Community School.

Your employment with Mountain Song Community School is “**at-will**”. This means that the employee has the right to terminate employment with the school at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Mountain Song Community School also has the right to terminate employment at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Nothing in this Staff Handbook changes the “at-will” employment relationship; nor does it extend or guarantee employment in any way or for any specific period of time, or restricts or limits the employee’s right, or that of Mountain Song Community School, to terminate employment. As an employee you will be provided with an employment agreement, but the agreement does not modify the at-will employment nature of your employment, nor does it create an employment for a specific term or contract.

The MSCS Board of Directors has the sole authority to approve the employment agreement for the school Director position. For all other positions within the school, the school Director has the sole authority to approve employment agreements on behalf of Mountain Song Community School except for decisions covered by the Anti-nepotism policy. MSCS reserves the right to enter into employment agreements as it deems appropriate to address the school’s needs. No one, however, has the authority on behalf of MSCS to modify the “at-will” employment relationship or enter into an employment agreement or contract or to make any legally enforceable promise or commitment – express or implied – with any employee or other person/company. No employee may rely upon any purported or draft contract, promise or commitment, including one created or provided by the School’s Director unless it is approved by the MSCS Board of Directors at a publicly noticed meeting upon a public vote. If there are discrepancies between the employment agreement and the Staff Handbook, the provisions of the employment agreement are controlling.

*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**

## **OUR WORK ENVIRONMENT**

### ***Equal Opportunity Employer***

Mountain Song Community School is committed to equal employment opportunities for all. We will not discriminate against staff members or applicants for employment on any legally recognized basis including, but not limited to: race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation veteran status, genetic information, or any other class protected by local, state or federal law.

It is further the policy of Mountain Song Community School to ensure equal opportunity for advancement and non-discriminatory treatment in training, promotion, transfer, layoff, and termination for all employees.

### ***Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986***

As an ongoing condition of employment, all employees are required to provide documentation verifying identity and legal authority to work in the United States. MSCS is committed to full compliance with state and federal immigration laws. MSCS will not knowingly hire or continue to employ anyone who does not have the legal right to work in the United States.

### ***Staff Relationship Philosophy***

Employees of Mountain Song Community School are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with high standards of personal character and professionalism, recognizing that their interactions with students, parents, co-workers, and the community reflect on the organization as a whole.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Mountain Song Community School prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace and any other place where a MSCS sponsored event takes place. Mountain Song Community School is committed to maintaining a workplace environment that is free of harassment of and by its employees.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination. Harassment on the basis of sex is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical or visual conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- submission to such behavior is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as the basis for employment decisions; or
- such conduct has the purpose or the effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment may include such actions as: repeated offensive or unwelcome sexual flirtations and advances; verbal comments, jokes, or innuendo of a sexual nature; words or gestures of a sexual nature used to describe a person or depict a situation; or the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Mountain Song Community School staff members are responsible for avoiding behaviors and conduct which create an offensive environment in the workplace.

### ***Prohibition Against Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation***

MSCS prohibits discrimination and harassment of any staff member or student by any staff member, supervisor, or student for any reason including race, color, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation veteran status, genetic information, or any other class protected by local,



state or federal law. The law also prohibits retaliation against an employee who files a complaint of discrimination or harassment for the grounds just cited.

The purpose of this policy is not to regulate the personal morality of staff members. It is to assure that in the workplace no staff member harasses another for any **unlawful** reason. While it is not easy to define precisely what harassment is, it includes some of the following: slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments, and unwelcome jokes and teasing. A hostile work environment is one where the harassment is so “severe” or “pervasive” as to affect an employee’s terms and conditions of employment and the harassment is undertaken for an unlawful basis: age, gender, race, color, religion or national origin.

Not all “harassment” constitutes “unlawful harassment” or an “unlawful hostile work environment”. Personality conflicts that have nothing to do with a person’s religion, age, gender, color, race, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, military status or other protected status is not unlawful harassment. Stated another way, a hostile environment that is **not** based upon a person’s age, gender, race, color, religion or national origin does not violate the law. Employees often confuse the concept of a hostile work environment. If there is any question, you are directed to contact the Director for guidance and assistance. MSCS will not tolerate harassment of any kind but there is a legal difference.

Any staff member who feels that he or she is a victim of such harassment should immediately report the matter to their immediate supervisor, the Director, or a Member of the Board of Directors.

MSCS will investigate discrimination/harassment complaints and our investigatory findings are confidential. Staff members who report or participate in the investigation of a violation of this policy are protected from retaliation as a result of his/her participation. Violations of this policy are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### **Employee Recourse**

Every employee has the right and is encouraged to tell any Mountain Song Community School employee in a professional manner to stop behavior towards him/her that the employee believes to be discriminatory, harassing and/or offensive. If an employee believes that he or she has experienced unlawful harassment or discrimination, or believes that he or she has witnessed unlawful harassment or discrimination, the employee must immediately notify the Director, or a member of the Board of Directors.

All reports of unlawful harassment or discrimination will be promptly investigated by the Director, or a designee who is not involved in the alleged harassment or discrimination, and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. If the results of the investigation confirm that harassment has occurred, appropriate corrective action will be taken, ranging from an official memorandum in an employee's personnel file, salary or responsibility adjustment to termination. The type of discipline imposed is within the sole discretion of MSCS and does not modify the at-will employment relationship.

### **Administration’s Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of every employee to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment. Management employees who witness or receive reports of discriminatory or harassing

behavior are required to take appropriate action, including immediately reporting such behavior to the Director, or the Board of Directors. Management employees who fail to promptly report such behavior may be subject to discipline.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

No employee will be subject to employment-based retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of making a complaint of unlawful harassment or discrimination or who has cooperated in the investigation of such complaint. Retaliation includes any employment decision or other conduct made with the intent to punish an employee for complaining about or assisting in the investigation of discrimination or harassment. Disciplinary action up to and including termination may be taken against any employee who knowingly makes a false, merit-less, or malicious claim of harassment. This policy creates no contractual rights on the part of any person.

### ***Anti-Nepotism Policy***

It is the policy of Mountain Song Community School that all Employment Decisions are based upon an individual's qualifications, and abilities, and performance. This Anti-Nepotism Policy is created to establish guidelines that are intended to avoid favoritism, the appearance of favoritism, and conflicts of interest in employment.

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, and temporary employees of the school.

For purposes of this Policy, the following defined terms shall have the definition and meaning set forth below:

“Close Relationship” shall include: (i) a dating relationship; (ii) a consensual romantic or sexual relationship; (iii) sexual or nonsexual relationship involving cohabitation; (iv) a formal or informal domestic partnership or other similar type of relationship; and (v) any close friendships or other relationships that might compromise judgement.

“Employment Decision” shall mean any decision relating to the hiring, promoting, reassigning, evaluating, disciplining, terminating, or setting of salary of an employee, assignment of working hours or shifts, or any other similar decision with respect to an employee or applicant for employment.

“Family Member” shall include any person who is a spouse, natural or adopted child, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, foster parent, foster child, stepparent, stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

“Supervise” shall mean the authority to direct, manage, oversee, evaluate or otherwise be in charge of an employee. “Supervisor” shall mean a person authorized to supervise another employee.

Policy - It is the School's policy that:

- a. Employees and applicants for employment shall not be denied employment or advancement opportunities solely because of a Close Relationship with, or his/her status as a Family Member of, another employee or a member of the Board of Directors of the School.
- b. No person shall be employed in, promoted or transferred to, or hold a position where he/she would supervise or be supervised by a Family Member or person in a Close Relationship.

- c. Board members or employees shall not participate in any final decision or recommendation relating to an Employment Decision regarding a Family Member or person in a Close Relationship.

This policy shall be administered by the School's Business Manager or such other party as identified by the School Director (the "Policy Administer"), in accordance with the following guidelines:

- a. If an employee becomes a Family Member of another employee or enters into a Close Relationship with another employee during the course of his/her employment, such employee shall notify the Policy Administer within ten days.
- b. Upon the Policy Administer's receipt of information reasonably indicating a violation or potential violation of the Policy, the Policy Administer may take such actions as the Policy Administer determines reasonable, including, without limitation, conducting an appropriate investigation, assigning the employee a new Supervisor or reassigning job duties.
- c. The School reserves the right at all times to make job reassignments and/or take disciplinary action up to and including termination as necessary to comply with this policy.

Exceptions to the Policy may be approved by the School Director on a case-by-case basis. Such decisions shall be based upon principles of merit, recruitment and retention difficulties, and the best interests of the School. Such exceptions should be documented in a writing that identifies the persons involved, the specific provisions of this Policy in conflict, and the terms of the exception granted. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any exception involving the School Director, a Family Member of the School Director, or a Close Relationship involving the School Director must be approved by the School's Board of Directors.

### ***Americans With Disabilities***

MSCS complies with all state and federal law regarding individuals with disabilities. Law prohibits discrimination against any "qualified" employee or applicant with regard to any terms or conditions of employment because of such individual's disability, perceived disability or record of disability, physical or mental, so long as the employee can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. An employee may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation, provided s/he is a qualified individual with a disability, as defined by the ADA, who has made the Director aware of his or her disability, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on Mountain Song Community School.

Employees with a disability who may be qualified individuals as defined by state and federal law should notify the Director in writing if they believe they need a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of their job. It is your responsibility to notify the Director of the need for an accommodation. Upon making this request the Director will require information, including medical documentation about your condition, the type of accommodation you and your doctor(s) believe may be necessary, the functional limitations caused by your disability and the amount of time required. MSCS, through the Director will need employee permission to obtain medical information from the employee's physician, psychologist, or other medical or rehabilitation professionals.

Upon receipt of this information, the Director will make an assessment of the request for accommodation, with input from appropriate MSCS personnel on a need-to-know basis, and make a decision. The employee will be notified of the decision in writing.

### ***Whistle-blower Policy***

If any employee reasonably believes that a policy, practice, or activity of Mountain Song Community School is in violation of a federal or Colorado law, a written complaint may be filed by that employee with the Director. It is the intent of Mountain Song Community School to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the School and the underlying purpose of this Policy is to support the organization's goal of legal compliance. The support of all employees is necessary to achieving compliance with various laws and regulations. An employee is protected from retaliation only if the employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of Mountain Song Community School and provides Mountain Song Community School with a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. The protection described below is only available to employees that comply with this requirement.

Mountain Song Community School will not retaliate against an employee who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of Mountain Song Community School, or of another individual or entity with whom Mountain Song Community School had a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law or a clear mandate of public policy.

Mountain Song Community School will not retaliate against an employee who discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or a public body any activity, policy, or practice of Mountain Song Community School that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate or public policy concerning health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

### **Filing a Complaint and Investigation Procedures**

1. An employee who reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of Mountain Song Community School is in violation of a federal or Colorado law, a written complaint shall be filed by that employee with the Director. The employee is required to provide all of the information requested in the Whistle-blower Complaint Form so as to ensure the Director has all necessary information to initiate and complete a full investigation.
2. Upon receipt of the complete Whistle-blower Complaint Form, the Director (or designee) shall initiate an investigation to determine whether such a violation has occurred.
3. The Director (or designee) shall report the investigative findings
4. The Board of Directors will take the matter into consideration and make a decision concerning the Employee's Complaint. To the extent permitted by law, including honoring appropriate confidentiality laws, regulations and policies, the Board will inform the Employee that an investigation has been completed, its decision and implementation of any recommendations, to the extent confidentiality laws permit.

### **Employee Discipline & At-Will Employment**

This Whistle-blower Policy does not prevent Mountain Song Community School from addressing employee performance problems, provided it is not done in retaliation for having filed a Whistle-blower complaint. This Whistle-blower Policy does not alter the at-will employment relationship.

### ***Protecting School Information***

Proprietary Materials are all property related to MSCS business in any way, including email, documents, reports, manuals, tools, equipment, handbooks, computer printouts, computer disks, thumb drives, materials developed by MSCS staff, and teachers and other property related to the business of MSCS, and materials created by MSCS while an employee of MSCS.

Proprietary Materials in an employee's possession, or used by an employee continues to be the exclusive property of the Mountain Song Community School. When an individual's employment relationship with MSCS terminates, the individual shall return all Proprietary Materials, both originals and copies to the Human Resources Department on or before the individual's last active day of work. All materials prepared by MSCS employees for use in the School are a "work for hire" and belong to MSCS

### ***Confidentiality***

Employees are required not to disclose, either during employment or following the termination of employment, to any person or entity, or to use for their own benefit, any confidential information concerning the conduct of the business affairs of the School, including, without limitation to, reports of abuse, students psychological or medical backgrounds, confidential conversations with parents, student academic records, staff discussions of students, trade secrets, know how, curricula, operation records, marketing plans, financial information, names, addresses, positions, and any other terms of employment or staff actions of any other employee.

All records, data, electronic files, software, communications and other property of the School entrusted or loaned to the employee or prepared by the employee during the term of employment are the School's property and will be returned by the employee to the School upon termination of employment.

### ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

MSCS honors the parent Notification of Rights Policy under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Therein lay the school's policies surrounding parent/student rights with regards to a student's education records. Please ensure your familiarity with this information by accessing the U.S. Department of Education: Family Policy Compliance Office website.

### ***Substance Abuse Policy***

The unlawful or improper presence or use of controlled substances, prescription drugs, marijuana or alcohol in the workplace presents a danger to everyone. For these reasons, we have established as a condition of employment, and continued employment with MSCS the following substance abuse policy. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action including termination.

- Staff members are prohibited from reporting to work or working when the staff member uses any drugs, except when the use is pursuant to a doctor's orders and the doctor advised the staff member that the substance does not adversely affect the staff member's ability to safely perform his or her duties.
- Staff members are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful or unauthorized manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs, marijuana and alcohol in the covered workplace including, on school paid time, on school premises, in school vehicles, or while engaging in school activities, including extracurricular activities both at school or off-site. Staff members are also prohibited from consuming alcohol or using marijuana during working hours, or when it could affect the staff member's performance, safety or health.
- Any Staff taking legal drugs which could affect job safety or performance is responsible for notifying his or her supervisor and providing to the Human Resources Department a physician's certification stating the substance does not adversely affect the staff member's ability to safely and efficiently perform the staff member's job duties and/or provide any work restrictions. This certification must be provided before the staff member reports to his/her work area. If the HR Department and the staff member's physician have determined that the substance does not adversely affect the staff member/s ability to safely and efficiently perform the staff member's job duties or determined that a reasonable accommodation can be made, the staff member may commence work. A staff member may not be permitted to perform his/her job duties unless such a determination or reasonable accommodations is made.
- Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the School is obligated to inform all MSCS employees that all employees must notify MSCS within five (5) calendar days if he/she is convicted of a criminal drug violation in the workplace.
- Any staff member who violates this policy is convicted of a criminal drug violation in the workplace or who voluntarily seeks assistance may be required, in connection with or in lieu of disciplinary action, to participate in and successfully complete a school-approved drug and alcohol assistance or rehabilitation program as a condition of continued employment at the employee's own expense.
- Any information concerning an individual's drug and/or alcohol use will remain confidential.
- Consistent with its fair employment policy. MSCS maintains a policy of non- discrimination towards recovering addicts and alcoholics and those having a medical history reflecting treatment for substance abuse conditions and will consider a request for reasonable accommodation, provided such request does not create an undue hardship on MSCS. The decision whether to provide such accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis consistent with the law.

We encourage staff members to seek assistance before their drug and/or alcohol use renders them unable to perform their essential job functions or jeopardizes the health and safety of themselves or others. MSCS reserves the right to take any and all appropriate and lawful actions necessary to enforce its substance abuse policy including, but not limited to, the inspection of school issued lockers, desks or other suspected areas of concealment, as well as a staff member's personal property when the school has reasonable suspicion to believe that the staff member has violated this substance abuse policy. Nothing in this policy creates a contract of employment.

The MSCS campus is an alcohol and drug free zone. Alcohol and drugs are not allowed on campus, for any reason, even for evening events, except under exceptional circumstances, when medically necessary pursuant to a doctor's orders. Illegal or unauthorized possession, consumption (use), purchase, sale, or transfer of drugs or alcohol, or intoxication while on duty, is prohibited, and will result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment, regardless of job performance.

To ensure compliance with this policy and a safe environment at all times for the students and staff, MSCS reserves the right to request reasonable suspicion tests of its employees. Refusal to submit to a reasonable suspicion test will result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

### ***Smoking and Chewing Tobacco in the Workplace***

MSCS is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students, staff members and visitors; therefore, smoking and other tobacco products are not permitted in any facility or on school grounds (including the parking lot) and also during all school sponsored activities, even those off of school property. Further, these actions are illegal and may result in termination.

With respect to medically-prescribed marijuana, staff must inform the Director of this prescription and provide the physician's prescription, whereupon MSCS will undertake an evaluation of the medical condition and prescription to determine whether this accommodation can be made.

### ***Zero Tolerance - Treatment of MSCS Volunteers/Suppliers/Vendors***

MSCS employees are prohibited from discriminating against or harassing volunteers, suppliers and vendors, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, creed, sexual orientation, ancestry, military status, or any other class protected by local, state or federal law both in the course of work-related activities and at School-sponsored functions. Management employees who witness or receive reports of discriminatory or harassing behavior are required to take appropriate action, including immediately reporting such behavior to the Director.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

A School's reputation for integrity is its most valuable asset and is directly related to the conduct of its administration and other employees. Therefore, employees must never use their positions with the School, or any of its students for private gain, to advance personal interests or to obtain favors or benefits for themselves, members of their families or any other individuals, corporations or business entities.

The School adheres to the highest legal and ethical standards applicable in our business. The School's business is conducted in strict observance of both the letter and spirit of all applicable laws and the integrity of each employee is of utmost importance. Employees of the School shall conduct their personal affairs such that their duties and responsibilities to the School are not jeopardized and/or legal questions do not arise with respect to their association or work with the School.

### ***Examination of Personnel Files***

Staff members can inspect part or all of their personnel files with 24 hours advance notice in the presence of the Director or designee. Parts subject to inspection include the staff member's job application, wage or salary information, notices of commendations, warnings or other disciplinary actions, authorization for a deduction or withholding of pay, fringe benefit information, leave records and employment history with the school. The records may be inspected at reasonable times during regular business hours and in the office where the records are kept. You may take notes regarding the contents of the file. You may place a statement in the file if you find an error in the file. Requests of copies of personnel records must be submitted in writing. If approval is granted for copies, a reasonable fee will be charged.

### ***Change in Personnel Information***

MSCS requires that all employees maintain up-to-date information. Changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents or changes in next of kin and/or beneficiaries should be recorded on a Personnel Action Form (PAF) and be submitted to the Human Resources Department in a timely fashion. Payroll status changes will only be made after receipt of the PAF and required supporting documentation.

### ***Reimbursements***

Employees will be reimbursed for expenditures made on behalf of Mountain Song Community School provided that such expenditures have been approved in advance by the Director or are within the budgetary authority of the employee. The final decision on whether to reimburse an employee for any such expenditure is vested with the Director or his or her designee.

Mountain Song Community School is a tax-exempt entity; therefore, we will not reimburse any taxes paid by the employee. Reimbursement checks will be issued within 10 business days of submitting the form.

### ***Teacher Classroom Budget Agreements***

Each classroom teacher will be given a semester budget for classroom expenses. At the end of the semester teachers are responsible for submitting receipts for reimbursement. Teachers are responsible for accumulating all receipts and keeping them in a safe place until they are submitted. All receipts must be turned in to the Business Manager. The Business Manager will then reconcile and total them and reimbursement will be made to the teacher via check. These receipts must be in good, readable condition and organized into a neat pile. Sales tax cannot be reimbursed.

Mountain Song Community School will keep a stocked classroom supply closet, which should include all basic supplies necessary for Waldorf education. If there are items that are not supplied, but you feel should be, please contact the Pedagogical Director.

The teacher classroom budget may be used for the following:

- Special projects (i.e. handwork, building, costumes for class plays, etc.)
- Classroom décor
- Field trips



- Professional Development such as online courses (monies may not be used for travel expenses such as hotel, food, and/or gas)

The teacher classroom budget may not be used for personal use/items. All items purchased with the Mountain Song Community School teacher budget is the property of Mountain Song Community School. If a teacher should leave prior to the school year ending, said teacher will need to give back any unused budget money as well as all receipt for money spent thus far. If there is money unaccounted for, this money will be deducted from the teacher's last paycheck.

### ***Ordering Policy***

All purchases outside of Classroom Teacher and Department budgets need prior approval before purchasing.

When a staff member needs to make a purchase for the school and it is outside of their Classroom and Department budgets, a requisition form must be completed and submitted to the Director. Such purchases include the following:

- Supplies
- Equipment

Staff will be notified as soon as the form is either approved or denied. If the request is approved, staff may then proceed to purchase the item(s) or schedule a time with that faculty member as specified on the Requisition Request.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

### ***Professional Conduct in the Workplace***

All MSCS employees are expected to behave in a professional manner in accordance with the best interests of students and the school. Staff is expected to emulate the values and principles of Mountain Song both on and off campus.

Each employee has an obligation to be familiar with, observe and follow the school's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct. If an individual's behavior interferes with the orderly, safe and efficient operation of a department or of the school, disciplinary measures will be taken. Further, staff members are expected to maintain dignified behavior both at work and outside of school, while on school business which includes extracurricular activities.

Expectations of Staff:

- Be at school by 7:30 AM and at your work area by 7:45 AM, unless on special duty.
- Greet students as they enter the classroom or your work area.
- *Students should never be left unattended.*
- Take attendance by 8:30 AM.

- You are free to leave the building at 3:30 pm unless scheduled otherwise
- Read emails daily and respond within 24 hours
- Students are not to be released until the end of the school day
- Be on time for *recess* duty when you are scheduled, *and ensure that there is adult supervision on the playground prior to sending your students out to recess*
- Attend all required professional development activities *and all-school activities such as assemblies, festivals, etc.*
- Be familiar with the school calendar and when your presence is required at after-school or evening events.
- Utilize absence procedure for every absence
- Sub binder completed, maintained and put in visible location
- Treat others respectfully
- Praise in public, criticize in private
- Put your own pride aside when problem solving with others
- *Submit a yearly block plan to the Pedagogical Director prior to the first day of school*
- *Submit a weekly schedule to the Pedagogical Director prior to the first day of school*
- *Each class teacher will hold three Parent Evenings during the course of the year, one in the first month of school, one mid-year, and one in the last six weeks of school*
- *Class teachers will write a monthly newsletter to parents, with a copy emailed to the Pedagogical Director. Prior to sending newsletters, have your work reviewed by a colleague to catch possible grammatical or other errors.*
- *Class teachers are to comply with assessment schedule*
- *If a teacher is not able to attend an area or faculty meeting, they are responsible for notifying the Pedagogical Director (for area meetings) or Director (for faculty meetings) prior to the meeting*

### ***Professional Attire and Personal Hygiene***

Whether or not your job responsibilities place you in direct contact with the students or other community members, you represent the school with your appearance as well as your actions. Properly attired individuals help to create a favorable image for the school, to the public and fellow staff members. Teachers and staff will dress in a modest manner with clothing that is not distracting to the learning environment. Teachers are encouraged to present a professional image in the classroom that will help inspire awe, respect, and excitement in the students.

While proper attire and hygiene promotes professionalism within our school and a favorable image to our students, it also helps us to maintain a safe and healthy environment. Staff members are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times.

Remember, that some individuals are allergic to the chemicals in perfumes, colognes, body sprays and make-up, so please use these substances with restraint.

### ***Open Communication Policy***

Staff will maintain positive and open communication with one another at all times.

### ***Workplace Complaint Resolution Policy (Grievance Policy)***

The objective of the MSCS Workplace Complaint Resolution Policy is to resolve complaints as efficiently and informally as possible and for resolutions to be reached in a fair and timely manner.

The protocol for dealing with workplace complaints at MSCS follows:

**Step One:** Complainant seeks resolution of the complaint directly with the party/parties involved. Resolution may require multiple steps over a reasonable period of time. Complainant documents efforts to attain satisfactory resolution of complaint in step one.

If satisfactory resolution is not achieved by step one, continue to step two.

**Step Two:** Complainant informs the involved parties that they are not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint. Complainant seeks resolution of the complaint with the direct supervisor of the involved parties. (If the direct supervisor is the School Director, then proceed to step three.) Resolution may require multiple steps over a reasonable period of time. Complainant documents efforts to attain satisfactory resolution of complaint in step two.

If satisfactory resolution is not achieved by step two, continue to step three.

**Step Three:** Complainant seeks resolution of the complaint with the School Director or the Director's designee. Resolution may require multiple steps over a reasonable period of time. Complainant documents efforts to attain satisfactory resolution of complaint in step three.

If satisfactory resolution is not achieved by step three, continue to step four.

**Step Four:** The employee informs the Chair of the Governing Board of his/her concern. The Chair of the governing board or their designee take the following steps:

- The Governing Board Chair designates two board members to meet with complainant and any other persons necessary to proper resolution of the concern in a timely manner.
- The designated board members provide a summary and recommendation in writing to the Governing Board Chair in a timely manner.
- The Governing Board Chair decides upon the final resolution of the complaint in a timely manner and provides written documentation of their decision.

### ***Workplace Violence***

Violence by a staff member or anyone else against a student, parent, staff member or other person on school premises or any other location where a school-sponsored activity is taking place will not be tolerated. The purpose of this guideline is to minimize the potential risk of personal injuries to staff members at work and to reduce the possibility of damage of school property in the event someone, for whatever reason, may be unhappy with a school decision or action by a staff member or member of management.

If you receive or overhear any threatening communications from a staff member or outside third party, report it at once. Do not engage in either physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual. If you encounter an individual who is threatening immediate harm to a staff member or visitor to our premises, contact an emergency agency (such as 911) immediately.

All reports of work-related threats will be kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated and documented. Staff members are encouraged to report and participate in an investigation of any suspected or actual cases of workplace violence in accordance with direction of the Director. Failure to report or fully cooperate in the school's investigation could result in discipline. Violations of this policy will not be permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### ***Acceptance of Gifts***

All employees of MSCS are considered “public employees” for purposes of Article XXIX of the Colorado Constitution (the “Ethics in Government Act”). As such, all employees of MSCS are generally prohibited from accepting or soliciting any gifts worth more than \$50 during a calendar year, unless the donor of the gift is a relative or close personal friend. This includes, but is not limited to gifts of money, goods, food, entertainment, or services -- directly or indirectly that are being provided by individuals, schools, or companies serving as vendors or potential vendors for the school. Gifts to MSCS are not covered by these restrictions. If you have any questions regarding the permissibility of a gift, please contact the Director or the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

### ***Social Media Policy***

In the social media world there is often no line between public and private, personal and professional. It is important that MSCS employees follow these general social networking/media guidelines when sharing your thoughts, views and perspectives—as a school representative—in the virtual world.

#### **Use good judgment**

- Use good judgment in all situations, particularly in the world of social networking/media
- Respect the privacy of students, parents and other staff.

- Maintain a tone that is positive, respectful and inclusive.

**Be transparent**

- Even as a MSCS employee, unless one is specifically authorized to represent MSCS as a spokesperson, one must state that the views expressed in postings are his or her own.
- Limit discussion of work-related matters to your area of job responsibility.
- Be open about your affiliation with MSCS and your role/position held.

**Confidentiality: Private information—yours, students’ and co-workers’**

Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential or not public. Online 'conversations' are never private.

- NEVER give out or transmit personal information of students or co-workers.
- ALWAYS respect the privacy of our students and families.
- Do not post pictures of others (students, families or other staff) without their permission. For students, please check to ensure that they have a signed Media Permission slip on file with the Front Office.
- If contacted by the media always refer them to the Director.
- If it seems confidential, it probably is. With questions about what is considered confidential, check in with the Director.
- Be careful about the type and amount of personal information provided. Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations.

**Please be cautious with respect to other websites**

- A significant part of interaction on Twitter, Facebook and MSCS’s website involves passing on relevant content or linking to other posts. However, MSCS is ultimately responsible for any content passed on to or through our networks. Do not repost a link without looking at the content first.
- When using Twitter, Facebook and other tools, always follow terms and conditions.

***Mountain Song Community School Internet Acceptable Use Policy***

Mountain Song Community School offers Internet access for staff use. This document contains the Acceptable Use policy for your use of the MSCS internet and email system (“MSCS System”).

**Educational Purpose Only**

The MSCS System has been established for a limited educational purpose. The term "educational purpose" includes classroom activities, career development, and limited high-quality self-discovery activities.

The MSCS system has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. MSCS has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material you access or post through the system. You are also expected to follow the rules set forth in the Staff Handbook, Board Policy and the law in your use of the MSCS System.

### **No Expectation of Privacy**

System users have no privacy expectations in the contents of their personal files of MSCS System. This system belongs to MSCS, which has the right to access any portion of the system and any files contained in the system as authorized by the Director.

Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to discovery that the user has or is violating the MSCS Acceptable Use Policy, Administrative Regulations or the law. If there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or school policy, School officials have the right to search any files at any time. The nature of the investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged violation. Pending the outcome of the investigation, privileges to technology may be limited or revoked, including but not limited to removal of MSCS email and/or loss of access to laptop/computer.

### **Unacceptable Uses**

The following uses of the MSCS system are considered unacceptable and in some cases, illegal. Users may not use the MSCS system to:

- access material that is profane or obscene (pornography of any kind), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature)
- to post personal information on the Internet about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes address, telephone, school address, work address, pictures or video bites, clips, etc. Also, any personal information posted must not have a negative reflection on MSCS, any of its students or other staff members;
- attempt to gain unauthorized access to any other computer system. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of "browsing," "snooping," or "electronic discovery;"
- deliberately disrupt or harm hardware or systems, interfere with computer or network performance, interfere with another's ability to use equipment and systems, or destroy data;
- use the MSCS system to engage in illegal acts, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of person, accessing or sharing unauthorized copyrighted music, movies, and other intellectual property, etc. ;
- utilize peer-to-peer file-sharing applications or execute programs to facilitate the downloading or exchange of copyrighted or unauthorized music, movies, and other materials;
- solicit information with the intent of using such information to cause personal harm or bodily injury to another or others;
- post information that could endanger an individual, cause personal damage or a danger of service disruption;
- knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization;
- intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users;

- use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, hateful, threatening, or disrespectful language;
- engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks;
  
- harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person;
  
- re-post a message that was sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent them the message;
- forward or post chain letters or engage in "spamming." Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people;
- install or reproduce unauthorized or unlicensed software on MSCS resources;
- plagiarize works that they find on the Internet or other resources;
- use technology resources and Internet for private business activities or unreasonable personal use;
- allow students to download files unless approved by their teacher and staff has so verified;
- use the MSCS system for political lobbying (communication with elected representatives, or to express your opinions on political issues or candidates);
- send emails, memos or any other documents to "All Staff" that involves:
  - personal matters of any kind
  - his/her job performance
  - problems or issues with any MSCS staff or Board member;
  - problems or issues with any students
  - problems or issues with any MSCS volunteer or vendor.

If an employee wishes to send an email or memo to "All Staff," the employee must first obtain the permission of the Director.

### **System Security**

- Users are responsible for the use of their individual account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account.
- Under no conditions should a user provide their password to another person.
- Users will immediately notify the Director if they have identified a possible security problem. Users will not go looking for security problems, because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.
- Users will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the MSCS virus protection procedures if they download software.

### **Inappropriate Language**

Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages.

Users of the MSCS system *will not*:

- use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language;
- post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or a danger of disruption;
- engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks;
- harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person;

- knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

### **Respect for Privacy**

- Users will not post private information about another person.

### **Respecting Resource Limits**

- Users will use the system only for educational and professional or career development activities and limited, high-quality, self-discovery activities.
- Users will not download large files unless absolutely necessary. If necessary, users will download the file at a time when the system is not being heavily used and immediately remove the file from the system computer to their personal computer.
- Users will subscribe only to high quality discussion group mail-lists that are relevant to their education or professional/career development.

### **Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

- Users will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when an individual inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright. If a work contains language that specifies acceptable use of that work, the user should follow the expressed requirements. If the user is unsure whether or not they can use a work, they should request permission from the copyright owner.

### **Inappropriate Access to Material**

MSCS employees may access the above material only in the context of legitimate research. If a user inadvertently accesses such information, they should immediately disclose the inadvertent access in a manner specified by their school. This will protect users against an allegation that they have intentionally violated the Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Limitation of Liability**

MSCS makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the MSCS System will be error-free or without defect. MSCS will not be responsible for any damage you may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. MSCS is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. MSCS will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the system.

### ***Staff Members' Children***

Children of Mountain Song Community School employees may take part in the CARE Program at the normal rate.

### ***Personal Property***

The School is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property. Valuable personal items, such as purses and all other valuables should not be left in areas where theft might occur. MSCS is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft of your vehicle or personal property left in your vehicle, therefore, we suggest that you lock your vehicle doors.



### ***Housekeeping***

Good work habits and a neat place to work are essential for job safety and efficiency. You are expected to keep your place of work organized and materials in good order at all times. Report anything that needs repair or replacement to Maintenance.

A staff member break area may be available for your use. Although general custodial care is provided, you are expected to clean up after yourself.

### ***Safety***

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork. All staff member are required to practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations, and reporting unsafe conditions immediately. Staff members have the responsibility to keep themselves updated on all information related to health and safety at MSCS.

All employees are expected to be familiar with all safety and emergency procedures in our Emergency Response Plan and participate in all drills, pursuant to state regulations.

Please observe the following precautions:

- Notify the Director of any emergency situation. If you are injured or become sick at work, no matter how slightly, you must inform your supervisor immediately.
- Use, adjust, and repair machines and equipment only if you are trained and qualified to do so.
- Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
- Understand your job fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safe procedure, do not guess... ask your supervisor.
- Know the locations and proper use of first aid and fire-fighting equipment.

Employees are required to wear personal protective equipment in accordance with the job you are performing. (i.e. when conducting science experiments or other potentially hazardous activities). Violations of safety precautions are themselves unsafe. Such violations may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

### ***Emergency Evacuation***

During an emergency situation, (fire, alarm, bomb threat, etc.) the administration follows very specific procedures. These steps may or may not involve notification of students. However, every situation is taken seriously.

The Director (or designee in his/her absence) is the sole authority to determine whether to evacuate the School building. Evacuation should be conducted in a timely and controlled manner. For safety, students and staff should remain approximately 400 feet from the building and should avoid touching or leaning on chained link fences

A search team shall conduct a search. This may consist of the police, building administrator and other school personnel. If nothing is found, the Director, on advice of the members of the search team will decide when the building is safe to re-enter.

If the search requires assistance from the law enforcement agencies, the building may have to remain evacuated for an extended period of time. Should this occur, an indoor staging area at an alternative site has been selected.

### ***Injuries on the Job***

Work-related injuries or illnesses must be immediately reported to the employee's immediate supervisor (or designee) regardless of how minor the injury or illness might be. If appropriate, the employee will be referred for appropriate medical treatment. Failure to promptly and appropriately report workplace injuries or illnesses and unsafe workplace practices or conditions will not be tolerated.

### ***Care of Equipment***

You are expected to use proper care when using the school's property and equipment. No property may be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of management. If you lose, break, or damage any property, report it to your immediate supervisor immediately.

### ***Visitors***

All visitors must report to the office immediately upon entering the building. Visitors are required to sign a visitor's log indicating time of arrival, reason for visit, and time of departure. Any visit must be arranged to minimize disruption of work. Generally, friends and relatives should be asked not to visit Employees during working hours. Unattended children are not allowed in the facility or on the premises at any time. For safety and insurance reasons, friends, relatives, and parents of students are not permitted in areas restricted to Employees only, unless authorized.

### ***Committees***

Mountain Song welcomes the participation of our community members, and we often create committees to facilitate the organized involvement in projects and events. From time to time in the structuring of committees, you may be asked to represent the Mountain Song faculty or staff. These committees may include, but not be limited to, School Accountability, Creative, Development, Festivals & Events, Communications, Facilities, Outreach, and more.

## **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

### ***Categories of Employment***

Both federal and state laws govern the classification of employees, wages, overtime and manner/method of payment. The Fair Labor Standards Act identifies classifications as follows.

## **Status**

**Regular Full-Time:** Regular full-time employees are those employees who are regularly scheduled to work 32 hours per week or more. Regular full-time employees are eligible for our fringe benefits package. This handbook describes benefits available at the time of its publication. These benefits are expected to continue, however, they may be amended or altered at any time. The Staff Handbook is not contractual in nature and does not guarantee any continuation of benefits.

**Part-Time:** Part-time employees are those who work week less than 32 hours a week. Part-time employees are not eligible for our fringe benefits package.

## **Classification**

**Exempt:** Exempt employees are those who perform administrative, professional, supervisory or managerial responsibilities. All certified staff, including teachers, fall into this category and do not qualify for overtime pay.

**Non-Exempt:** Non-Exempt employees qualify for overtime pay for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week. Non-exempt or hourly employees are required to track their work hours and submit time sheets.

## ***Instructional Salary Schedules***

All salaries are based on the availability of funds, relevant experience and/or unique contributions to the school.

## ***Mandatory Deductions from Paychecks***

MSCS shall make all mandatory deductions from employee paychecks. These may include federal, state and local income taxes or PERA. These deductions will be itemized on the employee's check stub. Modifications to W-4 exemptions require the completion of a new W-4 form. Verbal or written instructions are not sufficient to modify withholding allowances. Employees are advised to review pay stub details to ensure that it reflects the proper number of withholdings. MSCS will also honor all other legal deductions, including garnishments.

## ***Recording Your Time***

All non-exempt staff members are required to maintain an accurate record of all time worked. Failure to accurately and consistently record work time may result in corrective or disciplinary action. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties. Employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work day, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. They should also record the beginning and ending time of departure from work for personal reasons.

All required payroll documentation, including request for leave forms, personnel action forms, change of information requests and time keeping records must be received by the Director by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

No one may record hours worked on another's timecard or timesheet. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to

and including termination of both employees. In the event of an error in recording your time, please report the matter to the Director immediately.

### ***Compensation Dates***

Employees will be paid monthly on the 28th, as identified in the annual payroll calendar. When our payday is a holiday or weekend, you will be paid on the nearest business day closest to the 28th of the month.

Please review your paycheck for errors. If you find a mistake, report it to the Business Manager immediately. You will be informed as to the steps necessary to correct the error.

### ***Pay Advances***

Pay advances will not be granted to employees.

### ***Group Insurance***

Employees classified as full-time regular will become eligible for enrollment in a group medical insurance plan on the first of the month following thirty days of employment. It is important to note that there is a 30-day deadline period from the date of hire or eligibility for the employee to complete and return the required enrollment forms to the each applicable insurance carrier. It is the responsibility of the employee to satisfactorily meet the enrollment requirements.

If the employee chooses to enroll, Mountain Song Community School will pay a portion of an employee's single rate premium. The employee is responsible for any dependent coverage. In addition, Mountain Song Community School may offer additional group benefits. Please refer to the benefits packet you receive from the Director for further information.

MSCS reserves the right to modify its benefits at any time. We will keep you informed of any changes.

### ***COBRA***

You and your covered dependents will have the opportunity to continue medical (and/or dental) benefits for a period of up to 36 months under the provisions of the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) when group medical (and/or dental)\* coverage for you and your covered dependents would otherwise end because:

(a) your employment terminates, for a reason other than gross misconduct; (b) your employment status changes due to a reduction in hours; (c) your child ceases to be a "dependent child" under the terms of the medical and/or dental plan; (d) you become divorced or legally separated; (e) you become entitled to Medicare; or (f) you die.

In the event of divorce, legal separation, or a child's loss of dependent status, you or a family member must notify the plan administrator within 60 days of the occurrence of the event. The plan administrator will notify the individuals eligible for continuation coverage of their right to elect COBRA continuation coverage and costs of such coverage.

### ***PERA Retirement***

Mountain Song Community School is a PERA employer and will deduct the required employee portion of the PERA Contribution from your paycheck as directed by statute. MSCS will also contribute the required employer portion of the PERA Contribution to PERA on your behalf as outlined in statute.

### ***Worker's Compensation Insurance***

On-the-job injuries are covered by our Workers' Compensation insurance policy. This insurance is provided at no cost to you. If you are injured on the job, no matter how slightly, report the incident immediately to your supervisor. If necessary you may be required to submit a written report.

Consistent with applicable state law, failure to report an injury within a reasonable period of time could jeopardize your claim. We ask for your assistance in alerting management to any condition that could lead to or contribute to a staff member accident. MSCS will abide with all requirements set forth by the Workers' Compensation Act and any other applicable law. We will not take any adverse action against any staff member in retaliation for filing a workers' compensation claim.

The amount of the benefits payable to you and the duration of payment depend upon the nature of your injury or illness. You will be required to go to one of MSCS's designated providers for all non-life threatening injuries requiring medical attention. Emergencies can be treated at a local hospital. Post-accident drug testing may be required.

### ***Right to Modify or Change Benefits***

MSCS reserves the right to change the benefits offered to employees at any time, subject to applicable laws. Employees will be notified of any change in benefits.

## **TIME OFF**

### ***Attendance and Punctuality***

From time to time, it may be necessary for you to be absent from work. MSCS is aware that emergencies, illnesses, or pressing personal business that cannot be scheduled outside your work hours may arise. Leave time has been provided for this purpose.

### ***PAID TIME OFF (PTO) POLICY***

At the beginning of each school year, full time staff members shall be granted 72 hours (nine days) of leave. Part time employees at .5 FTE or greater shall receive a pro-rated number of hours based on their FTE status from their offer letter.

PTO may be used for the illness of the staff member; or for the illness or bereavement of the parents, children, siblings, grandchildren and grandparent of either the staff member or their spouse/domestic partner, or for business of a personal and unavoidable nature. Advance notice for use of any leave is requested when possible and should be documented as noted in the staff handbook. Unused PTO time will

not be carried over to subsequent school years. PTO time is not accrued and is not payable at the end of employment.

### ***LEGAL LEAVE***

Paid leave will be granted to employees for jury duty and legally required appearances in court per Colorado law up to 20 days. When legal leave is granted, employees shall return any stipends they might receive to MSCS.

### ***UNPAID LEAVE***

Unpaid leave may be granted by the Director or Designee and will be reviewed on a case by case basis upon written request from an employee. Unpaid leave will typically be granted only when all paid leave and FMLA days are exhausted. The nature of the request and any extenuating circumstances will be considered in the decision to grant leave. Leave will only be granted up to 45 calendar days or less and must be reviewed for each additional increment requested by the employee. Appropriate documentation will be required for each increment of unpaid leave. An employee who is absent on a day or days that have not been approved for unpaid leave will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Unpaid leave is not protected leave and shall not imply any guarantee of a position of employment being held.

### ***BEREAVEMENT LEAVE***

Full Time and Part Time Employees are eligible for up to 3 work days of paid leave to attend funerals and to handle other end of life affairs for the death of an immediate family member. For the purpose of bereavement leave, immediate family members are defined as spouse, other legal partner, parent, children, sister, brother, grandparent, grandchild, mother or father-in-law, grandparent-in-law aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew. Any time you wish to take off past the three paid bereavement leave days would require the use of PTO.

### ***Planned Absence Procedure***

Teachers planning an absence from the school must complete and submit a PTO Request/Documentation form to the Director for approval. Once approved, the Secretary will arrange for a qualified substitute. Teachers are encouraged to cultivate substitutes in case of absence. Such substitutes will spend time and observe at the school, prior to teaching, to learn about the rhythm of the day and how things are done in the Waldorf educational climate.

All other staff planning an absence must complete and submit a PTO Request Documentation Form to the Director for approval.

Unauthorized absence from work without notifying your supervisor or the school administrator may be considered a voluntary resignation.

### ***Unplanned Absence Procedure***

In case of sudden or unexpected absence from the school (such as illness or death in the family), the Director and the Secretary must be notified immediately. Upon return to the school, staff must complete and submit a PTO Request/Documentation form to the Director with details of the absence.

### ***Substitutes***

A list of qualified substitute teachers will be maintained in the front office. The school Secretary is responsible for scheduling all teacher substitutes.

### ***Substitute Plans and Preparation***

Teachers must maintain and regularly update a substitute file, in case of unexpected absence, that includes a seating chart, classroom rules, the daily schedule including playground supervision times, and some suggested activities. This folder will be kept in the office with the Secretary for the substitute to check out upon arrival.

### ***Job Share***

Job sharing involves teachers who voluntarily agree to share one full-time teaching assignment at Mountain Song Community School. Teachers electing such a partial assignment will be designated as a part-time employee for the time of the job share agreement.

Job sharing agreements are granted for one school year. Teachers wishing to continue their job share from one year to the next must renew it annually. The Executive Director and Pedagogical Coordinator have control over all Job-share arrangements and must approve all arrangements and may at his/her discretion refuse an arrangement or rescind a job share arrangement after it has been put into effect.

Requests for job share arrangements must be in writing and must include a plan which addresses the following:

- Detailed explanation of the proposed division of teaching time
- Explanation of the division of teaching responsibility, including:
  - Parent Conferences
  - Student grading
  - Lesson Plans
- Explanation of division of non-teaching duties
- Faculty meeting attendance
- District/school-based in-services

- Daily related duties (ie., recess duty, etc.)
- Committee responsibilities
- Planning/coordination time
- Special schedule days

The request must be signed by each partner Teacher, the Executive Director, and the Pedagogical Coordinator. Requests for the Fall Semester should be submitted by April 15th and requests for the Spring Semester should be submitted by November 15th.

Teachers interested in job sharing must find their own partner Teachers. Both partner Teachers must be qualified for the position to be shared and both must be acceptable to the Executive Director and Pedagogical Coordinator. Teachers who job share must be Highly Qualified for the position in which they are teaching. All Mountain Song Community School Policies and Procedures as found in the Staff Handbook apply to both Teachers.

### ***Military Leave***

Staff members who are required to serve in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States or are engaged in state military service are given the necessary time off, without pay. Military orders should be presented to the Director or designee so arrangements for leave may be made as early as possible before a departure. Staff members are required to give advance notice of their service obligations to the school unless military necessity makes this impossible. You must notify the Director of your intent to return to employment based on requirements of the law.

### ***Witness Leave***

Staff members who are subpoenaed to serve as a witness in a criminal or civil proceeding will be given the necessary time off. This excused time off will be unpaid unless you choose to use leave days. Our school will not discriminate against any staff member who is requested to serve as a witness. Requests for witness leave should be made to Director in writing as soon as possible.

### ***Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)***

The FMLA grants **UNPAID** leave to eligible employees. The School's Director is charged with determining whether an employee is eligible for FMLA.

To be eligible for protection under the FMLA, an employee must be employed at MSCS for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months preceding the start of the leave. The maximum time allowed for FML is a total of 12 weeks (480 hours) in a 12-month period. The 12-month period is measured from the first day of your first leave. Although most leaves would be taken in a single block of time, intermittent leave or reduced leave schedules also may be approved, where required. FMLA will allow for unpaid leave for:

- Serious health condition of the employee
- Father's attendance at birth of child



- Parents' care of child following birth
- Placement of child with employee for adoption or foster care
- Serious health condition of employee's child
- Serious health condition of employee's spouse or parent.

The FMLA was amended by the Military Family Leave, Section 585(a) that adds two new leave entitlements for service members and their families:

1) Military Caregiver Leave (also known as Covered Service member Leave): Under the first of these new military family leave entitlements, eligible employees who are family members of covered service members will be able to take up to 26 workweeks of leave in a "single 12-month period" to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of duty on active duty. Based on a recommendation of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors (the Dole-Shalala Commission), this 26 workweek entitlement is a special provision that extends FMLA job-protected leave beyond the normal 12 weeks of FMLA leave. This provision also extends FMLA protection to additional family members (i.e., next of kin) beyond those who may take FMLA leave for other qualifying reasons.

2) Qualifying Exigency Leave: The second new military leave entitlement helps families of members of the National Guard and Reserves manage their affairs while the member is on active duty in support of a contingency operation. This provision makes the normal 12 workweeks of FMLA job-protected leave available to eligible employees with a covered military member serving in the National Guard or Reserves to use for "any qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that a covered military member is on active duty or called to active duty status in support of a contingency operation. The rule defines qualifying exigency by referring to a number of broad categories for which employees can use FMLA leave: (1) Short-notice deployment; (2) Military events and related activities; (3) Childcare and school activities; (4) Financial and legal arrangements; (5) Counseling; (6) Rest and recuperation; (7) Post-deployment activities; and (8) Additional activities not encompassed in the other categories, but agreed to by the employer and employee.

A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves. Covered service member also includes veterans who were members of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves at any time during the period of five years preceding the start of treatment, recuperation, or therapy. The injury or illness must make the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list. In the case of a veteran, the qualifying illness or injury must be incurred or aggravated in the line of duty and manifest itself before or after the service member became a veteran

The rule also includes two Department Of Labor certification forms that may be used by employees and employers to facilitate the certification requirements for the use of military family leave. These forms are available from the Human Resources Department.

All MSCS employees are required to first use any earned vacation and sick leave at the beginning of their Family Medical Leave, unless collecting Workers' Compensation benefits. If collecting disability payments, your sick leave may be used first to offset the disability payments. If you are on a family leave of absence, you are required to use any earned vacation at the start of the leave.

Once all sick leave is exhausted, all FML is exhausted and/or the person does not qualify for FML, the employee is required to return to work. Failure to return to work may be deemed voluntary job abandonment. The Director may determine, on a limited case-by-case basis, if the circumstances or medical condition warrants additional leave. This is an administrative decision that is NOT APPEALABLE. Whether the leave is to be paid or unpaid is determined by the Director. The Director is the final decision-making authority whether to grant or deny additional leave after all other leave has been exhausted.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### *Announcements*

Staff members will receive a copy of the Daily Announcements in their mailboxes by 8:00 am. This will contain important information for the day including events, staff absences, and substitutes. Staff is responsible for reading the Daily Announcements in a timely fashion. An additional copy of the Daily Announcements will be hung on the corkboard in the Staff Lounge. Staff is responsible for checking school email daily for updates, announcements, and communication with parents.

### *Mailboxes*

Staff is responsible for checking mailboxes at least daily for phone messages, paperwork, hardcopy communications, mail deliveries, etc.

### **Media and Public Relations**

The MSCS Board of Directors has the exclusive and sole right to designate School spokespersons. Any and all requests by the media regarding MSCS and School activities should be directed to the Director for assignment of an appropriate communications representative. No staff member can speak on behalf of the School without prior approval by the MSCS board and/or as specifically delegated to the Director. Staff cannot invite members of the media to MSCS or any School event or allow media into the School without approval from the Director, provided the Director has received prior delegation or express permission from the MSCS Board to approve media for this purpose.

### *Performance Evaluations*

Mountain Song Community School conducts its staff evaluation program with the purpose of supporting professional and personal development. We wish to recognize strengths and encourage the striving of each staff member to expand their skills beyond their current limitations. This program is intended to blend self-evaluation and helpful outside feedback.

All staff, both full-time and part-time, are formally evaluated on an annual basis. First-year teachers are evaluated twice. We use the same form to create consistency between goal setting, self-evaluation, and formal evaluation.

Employee evaluations incorporate the following components:

- Goal Setting
- Self-Evaluation

- Classroom Observation and Conference for Teachers
- Professional Development Program
- Intervention/Remedial Action, if Deemed Necessary

### ***Leaving MSCS***

Should you decide to leave your employment with us, we ask that you provide the Director with written notice at least two weeks prior to the desired resignation date. Your thoughtfulness will be appreciated and will be noted favorably should you ever wish to reapply for employment with the school.

An employee who resigns or is terminated must return all curricular material, student work, office keys, identification, security cards and codes, and office materials and supplies to the Director. No information or copies of information, including but in no way limited to files, memos, computer-stored items, rosters, or other similar information, may be taken without the express permission of the Director. Otherwise, the school may take further action to recoup any replacement costs and/or seek the return of school property through appropriate legal recourse.

You should notify the school if your address changes during the calendar year in which employment is severed so that your tax information will be sent to the proper address.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL**

### ***Non-Discriminatory Policy***

MSCS admits students of any race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. It does not discriminate against students on the basis of ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin ancestry, gender, sexual orientation or disability in its educational policies or admission policies, to the extent they will exist in athletic and other school-administered programs.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect***

Staff members are obligated to report instances of child abuse or neglect to Social Services and the Director. Instances of child abuse or neglect are to be reported when a staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child under eighteen (18) years of age is suffering serious physical or emotional injury, including a perception that the child may inflict harm upon himself/herself, resulting from abuse inflicted upon him/her, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition or one who is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth. Staff is required to report instances of suspected child abuse or neglect to Social Services and the Director verbally and in writing.

### ***Classroom Maintenance Expectations***

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that the classroom is clean and ready each afternoon for custodial maintenance. Chairs should be on tables, big items should be picked up off the floor, and the room should be free of clutter and generally organized. Custodians empty trash, sweep rooms, spot mop/mop, clean

desks/tables, clean boards, dust, and empty pencil sharpeners. If your room requires any improvement or maintenance beyond these duties, you must complete a Requisition Request form (available in the office) and submit it in the Custodian's mailbox. If you have a concern with the cleanliness of your room, please contact the Custodian. If concerns persist, contact the Director.

### ***Student Behavior Policy***

MSCS staff is dedicated to a positive discipline approach. We support the philosophy that as children grow, they will make inappropriate choices. Such choices require that they experience logical consequences for their actions. We endeavor to develop a sense of responsibility for one's actions and an intrinsic desire to make things right. MSCS reserves the right to choose consequences that best meet the needs of each child within the framework of school policies.

### ***Classroom Management***

Effective management of your classroom is an essential part of maintaining a calm, engaging learning environment. Teachers should establish classroom routines and procedures at the beginning of the year that support student learning. Students must know how you want them to begin the day, pass in papers, sharpen their pencils, line up, etc. You might have to practice routines until students know them automatically. When this happens, you have a routine.

Be clear with students on behavioral expectations in the classroom and in common spaces. Please inform students of behavior expectations for bathrooms, hallways, playground, cafeteria, etc., and ensure that they are followed.

### ***Discipline Policy***

Minor discipline cases are best handled by the teacher. If trivial items are referred to the Director, his/her effectiveness for problems of a more serious nature will be diminished, and children soon become aware of the ineffectiveness of the classroom teacher.

If a student DOES need to be removed from the classroom, the teacher should make arrangements for the student to do productive work in another classroom or for another teacher. Such situations should be discussed with the Director and a course of action determined for future instances. It is the intention of the Director to support every staff member. Make sure that he/she can support the decisions you make by following the philosophy, policies, and procedures of the school.

Such things as bringing controlled substances, weapons, and habitual behaviors that are detrimental to the children and school environment should involve the Director immediately.

### ***Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy***

Public schools are required by law to have a bullying policy in place. MSCS does not allow harassment, bullying, or intimidation of pupils on school property or during school-sponsored events. Such violations of policy will be recorded and kept in the student's file. Bullying will be dealt with according to our discipline philosophy. All staff who are made aware or who witness bullying will report it to the Director

who will make sure the behavior is documented, determine appropriate consequences, inform parents, and keep the documentation in the student's file.

### ***Student Dress Code Policy***

The Mountain Song dress code has been established, based on other Waldorf schools, to help create a positive environment for all, where the focus is on learning. Children should dress in clothing that is not distracting to students or teachers and could undermine the school environment.

- All clothes must be neat and clean and cannot be torn, tattered, or suggestive. Clothes must appropriately cover the body. No halter tops, spaghetti straps, miniskirts, short shorts, overly baggy pants, or tops that expose the midriff.
- Clothes must fit so that no underwear is visible.
- Clothes should not feature inappropriate or distracting logos, symbols, or pictures such as those referring to media characters, gangs, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. Personal items such as purses, bags, backpacks, lunch boxes, and shoes should be free of media characters. Solid-colored or simple prints are suggested for clothing.
- Hair should be clean, neat, and out of the face. Jewelry is to be kept to a minimum. Makeup, nail polish, and distracting tattoos are discouraged.
- Children should wear shoes that allow them to move freely and safely and protect the feet. We highly recommend shoes that cover and support the heel. Because Mountain Song is located in a natural environment, playing outside requires that students have safe shoes or boots that provide good traction.
- To protect our classroom floors and carpeting, students must have a pair of indoor shoes to change into when they come into the building. These shoes must have a rubber/waterproof sole in case we must go outside quickly due to an emergency.
- Suitable clothing is required. 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.
- Wearing hats indoors is discouraged except when used for warmth during cold winter days.
- Students who come to school wearing clothes not in conformance with the dress code will be given other clothing to wear that day, or parents will be called to supply a change of clothes.

### ***Students' 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.

## *Accidents/Emergencies*

### **General Procedures**

Any time a student or adult is injured, notify the office and the Director immediately. Do not move the student or adult if the injury seems severe. It is better to err on the side of caution, so take every precaution necessary to ensure no further harm occurs. Teachers should have their first aid fanny packs and cell phones with them when they are on recess duty, and when a severe injury occurs the duty teacher should call the office immediately for assistance.

The parent(s) should be notified when a child is hurt, if the injury might need additional attention. Duty teachers should treat all minor injuries with their first aid kits, and send the injured student or adult to the office if needed additional medical assistance is required. An injury report must be filled out in a timely manner, and kept in the student or employee file.

### **Student Accidents and Injuries**

The parent(s) should be notified when a child is hurt in a timely manner and a copy of the injury report provided. If the injury requires additional attention this should be written in the injury report.

### **Calling 911**

Calls to 911 should be made when immediate assistance is needed from the police, fire department, or medical services.

Be prepared to follow any instructions the call-taker may provide to you, as you may be told what to do until help arrives. This may include first aid steps to someone who is having a medical emergency. Do not hang up unless instructed by the 911 operator.

If you are unsure whether the situation is a true emergency, it is recommended that the call to 911 be made. Let the 911 operator determine whether you need emergency help.

### **Assemblies**

Assemblies are a regular scheduled part of the curriculum and, as such, are designed to be educational as well as entertaining experiences. They also provide one of the few opportunities in school for students to learn formal audience behavior. Regardless of the type of program, courtesy demands that the student body be respectful and appreciative. In live entertainment, unlike radio, television, or movies, the performers are very conscious of their audience. It is the individual teacher's responsibility to instruct students that all talking, whispering, whistling, stamping of feet, and booing are discourteous. Teachers are to escort their individual classes to the assembly site. All teachers should be seated with their classes and help supervise all students. Teachers should take roll at each assembly and upon returning to the classroom.

### **Field Trip Policy**

#### **Outdoor Education:**

Teachers are encouraged to designate a day during the week for outdoor education which would be off-campus wellness educational experiences in which the class can walk to in under 30 minutes; nearby destinations include Thorndale Park, Bancroft Park, and the West Side Library.

- Minimum supervision ratios are 10:1 for elementary and 20:1 for middle school.
- Minimum number of 2 adults required on each trip.

- One supervisor must be First Aid/CPR trained, and first aid kits must be carried whenever leaving school property

Destinations longer than a 30-minute walk or that are of a higher risk (such as Garden of the Gods) will require an event-specific Field Trip Permission slip, which the teacher will supply two weeks before the scheduled event.

Each student should have, on file, a signed permission Friday Outdoor Education form from the parent/guardian. Each teacher must carry a working, charged cell phone, with the number on file in the office. Teachers must also have care plans, emergency contact information, and first aid kits.

Please be familiar with the field trip process and plan ahead to facilitate timely communication, approval, and documentation. All necessary forms, including detailed instructions are included in the Field Trip Process packet.

Teachers must turn a Field Trip Approval Form in to the Director 2 weeks in advance. Once you receive approval, send a copy of the following forms home with each student, to be returned at least 48 hours before the field trip:

- Parent/Guardian Field Trip Consent and Emergency Information form
- Transportation Release form (if you plan to use volunteer drivers)
- Medical Care Plans/Medication form

If you have recruited volunteer drivers, you must provide a copy of the Volunteer Driver Checklist to each driver to be returned at least 48 hours before the field trip.

Before you leave for the field trip, you must complete the Field Trip Student Roster and provide a copy to the front office.

If signed permission is not received in time for the trip, the student will not be allowed to attend. Field trips should be curriculum related and have a stated purpose that benefits students' education at Mountain Song. It is wise to plan field trips in advance of each school year to correspond with the main lesson blocks for planning purposes.

Each teacher must carry a working, charged cell phone, with the number on file in the office. Teachers must also have care plans, emergency contact information, and first aid kits.

### ***Student Attendance***

#### **Taking Attendance**

Teachers are required to take daily attendance in their classrooms using the designated attendance procedure.

Attendance must be taken every day before Main Lesson.

#### **Late Arrival**

Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. may be admitted to class ONLY with a Tardy Slip. Students arriving late without a Tardy Slip must be sent the office to sign in and get a Tardy Slip.

**Early Pick-Up**

Students being picked up before the end of the school day may only be released to office personnel or to a parent/other responsible party with an Early Release Slip. Do not let parents and relatives take students from the school, playground, or field trip location without one. Refer them to the office, where they will sign the student out and return with an Early Release Slip.

**Attendance Policy**

When a student shows excessive absences/tardies or exhibits a pattern of chronic absences/tardies, parents should be contacted and/or the office notified. It is the responsibility of the teacher to speak with the office and Director to inquire as to how best to serve the student.

Teachers should be familiar with the Attendance Policy and Procedures detailed in the Parent Handbook, as certain actions will need to be taken when absenteeism and tardies may affect the student's education.

***Student Health Policies***

Please be familiar with the Health and Wellness policies stated in the Parent Handbook, particularly related to when a student should be kept at home and not allowed to attend school.

**Medications**

No medication of any kind should ever be kept in a child's backpack, cubby, or lunch box. Likewise, a teacher should never keep a student's medication. All medication brought to school must be checked in and locked up in the front office.

School personnel cannot legally administer prescription, nonprescription, 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) must fill out a medication administration form before our staff can administer medication. Medication must remain locked in the office until it is returned to the authorized adult.

***Lost and Found***

Teachers should encourage students to check for lost items in the lost and found bin(s). Unclaimed items will be donated the last Friday of the month.

***Lunch and Nutritional Guidelines***

Teachers should model good nutrition by following these guidelines in their daily lunches that are eaten with the children.

Parents who pack lunches are asked to follow the Mountain Song Food Guidelines and give thought to the health and growing needs of children. Healthy, well-balanced meals provide essential nutrition for a



child's brain and body to perform optimally. Candy, soft drinks, desserts, and other foods high in sugar or caffeine are not acceptable in school lunches or snacks at Mountain Song.

### **Special Dietary Issues**

If a child has special dietary issues, parents are asked to make these known to the office and the class teacher. Food allergies must be reported and kept on file in the office prior to the start of school. Teachers will receive a list of student health needs and should be familiar with it.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are an essential part of a community school such as MSCS. We encourage parents to find ways to get involved in the school by assisting in the classroom, field trips, and by using their strengths to help the school. A list of volunteer opportunities will be posted on the website. Teachers provide many opportunities for parents to make a contribution by posting sign-ups outside of your classrooms. For example, seek volunteers for Friday outdoor monitors, laundry fairies, flower fairies, park/library walkers, etc. Familiarize yourself with the list of volunteer opportunities, which is maintained in the office. If you think of additional ways parents might help the school, please share your ideas with the Director. Maintaining positive relationships with parents will go far in creating a healthy school. Teachers and staff will develop ways of showing appreciation throughout the year for parent volunteers.

### **Class Parent Council Representatives**

Each class needs a parent representative who can work with the Director to provide support for the teacher. Such support may include help with parent communications, field trips, festivals, class plays, and other events. Teachers are encouraged to work with the Director to determine the best appropriate candidate.

### **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. End of the Year Reports will be sent to parents in June and will include a written 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 that teachers be made aware of any changes in their child's life that might affect their performance in school.

### **Materials and Supplies**

A Supply Closet is located just outside the office. In it, employees have access to a variety of general supplies they may need. If you do not find what you need in the Supply Closet, please check with office staff, as it may be stored elsewhere or need to be ordered. DO NOT remove items you may need from someone else's desk or workspace.

Students are NOT allowed in the Supply Closet or the Staff Workroom, so please plan to make copies, pick up print jobs, replenish supplies, etc. either before or after school, during planning periods, or during recess.

### **Posting of Materials Policy**

Staff, students, and parents wishing to post materials on the school's bulletin board must first receive stamped permission from the school Secretary to do so. As a public school, we must follow certain district guidelines for such postings.

### ***School Closure-Inclement Weather Policy***

Inclement Weather: If school is in session during inclement weather, Mountain Song will allow students to do the following:

Enter the building at 7:50 a.m. when the outside temperature at the school site is less than 15 degrees/F. Wind currents will also be considered under other conditions.

Remain indoors as a class during recess and lunch periods when the temperature is less than 15 degrees/F. Wind currents will also be considered under other conditions. All classes will stay in or go, so that recess duties are not compromised.

Remain indoors for health reasons, at the parent's request, during school hours.

The Director is responsible for making prudent decisions in conditions not presented in these guidelines.

School Delay/Closure: For school delay/closure due to inclement weather, Mountain Song follows District 11's guidelines. School delays/closures will be communicated in the following ways:

- Posted on the Mountain Song website
- Notification by phone, text, or email, according to the parent's communication preference
- Announced on the Mountain Song phone message
- Please note that Mountain Song is still in session during some of District 11's scheduled breaks. Therefore, it is especially important to check these channels for closure notifications.

### ***Student Records***

The office maintains each student's records in a locked file cabinet. The contents of the files are confidential and may NOT be removed from the office. Student files may be accessed only by the following staff:

- Student's grade teacher
- Director
- Instructional Mentor
- Office personnel
- SPED Team

Anyone outside these staff members wishing to access student files must go through the Director.

### ***Recess and After-School Duties***

It is the duty of Mountain Song staff to ensure the safety of all students. A qualified employee must be on duty at all times to supervise all student activities, including recess both inside and outside. A schedule of supervisory duties will be provided to all staff. The schedule will include after-school supervision from 2:30 to 2:45 p.m., as well as supervision during recess and lunch.

### **Inability to Fulfill Duty**

If the scheduled staff member is unable to fulfill his/her duty, it is his/her responsibility to find a replacement before abandoning the post and to communicate that change with the front office.

### ***Supervisory Duty Expectations***

Staff should be in place for supervisory duty on time in order to ensure the safety of all students. Staff on recess and after-school supervisory duty must have the following materials with them at all times:

- Fully-stocked first-aid fanny pack
- Safety vest (over clothes)
- Cell phone
- Keys

Students should ONLY be admitted to the building during recess for the following reasons:

- Bathroom emergency
- Illness
- Injury that cannot be treated with the first aid fanny pack
- Improper clothing

Students must be let into the building by a duty supervisor with a key. Students who ring the doorbell will not be admitted to the building.

Faculty NOT on recess duty are expected to meet their classes on time for pick-up.

### **Playground Rules**

All staff should be familiar with the playground rules in order to ensure the children's safety and enforce rules consistently at all times.

### ***Use of the Facility***

To use the Mountain Song facility for special class instruction, events, meetings, etc., you must sign up for a room on the Master Calendar located in the main office. Use of space is on a first-come first-served basis. You are responsible for room/facility set-up and clean-up and must provide the following information with your reservation:

- Name of the event (such as "4<sup>th</sup> Grade Play" or "7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Experiment")
- Beginning and end times, to include set-up and clean-up
- Adult responsible for the facility, including clean-up
- Contact phone number of the adult responsible

### ***Front Office Guidelines***

The Mountain Song front office is often the first impression families and visitors get of our school. Our goal is to be friendly and welcoming, while maintaining a professional atmosphere at all times.

### **Office Appearance**

Office staff is expected to maintain a clean, organized, professional work environment:

- No visible signs of food
- Drinks in spill-proof containers
- Desktops, counters, and workspaces clutter-free
- Display of personal items kept to a minimum
- Swept/vacuumed floor
- Any dishes used during the day washed and/or cleared before leaving

### **Office Disruptions**

Staff should respect the time and workloads of office personnel and keep disruptions to a minimum:

- Do not congregate in the office
- Keep conversations professional—both in tone and in nature
- Keep noise to a minimum
- Make appointments to meet with office staff whenever possible

### **Student Presence in the Office**

Students are allowed in the office only in the Health Room for an injury, medication, or illness. Students are not allowed in the Staff Workroom or the Supply Closet. Teachers are expected to make copies, pick up print jobs, replenish supplies, etc. either before or after school, during planning periods, or during recess. Do NOT send students to the office for ANY of the following reasons, as they will be sent back to the classroom:

- Retrieval of print jobs
- Making copies
- Resting in the Health Room
- Non-urgent phone calls
- Behavioral issues
- Supplies or materials

### **Incoming Packages**

Only the School Secretary and Office Aide will open all incoming packages and, based on the packing slip, account for all items. If there are missing items, the Secretary or Aide will document them on the packing slip. The packing slip will then be put in the Business Manager's inbox with the Secretary's or Aide's initials.

The Secretary or Aide will then deliver the item(s) to the appropriate person(s). All packages must be opened on the day they are received.

## **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Staff Handbook**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Mountain Song Community School Staff Handbook effective July 1, 2015 and that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with MSCS's policies and guidelines set forth in the Staff Handbook. If I have a question about these policies and guidelines, I understand that I can request an explanation from MSCS's Director or a designated representative.

I understand that MSCS has the sole discretion to interpret the Staff Handbook policies and guidelines. I recognize it may be necessary to change the policies, practices and benefits described in the Staff Handbook from time to time and accordingly, that MSCS has the right to delete, suspend, discontinue or revise any or all of its provisions of the Staff Handbook. I am

