



ROOTED IN MONTESSORI

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PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

This Handbook is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to create, nor does it create, a contract or part of a contract in any way, including but not limited to, between Oak Meadow School and any parent, guardian or student affiliated with or attending the School. Oak Meadow School reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to add, revise and/or delete School policies before, during and after the School year.

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

SCHOOL OFFICES

Main School Number 978-486-9874
Fax Number 978-486-3269

EXTENSIONS

Head of School – Bill Perrine Ext. 223
Administrative Assistant to Head of School – Jeanne Atkins..... Ext. 223
Admissions..... Ext. 226
Business Office – Margaret Gebhard Ext. 222
Billing – Peg DiSarcina Ext. 222
Children’s House & Lower El – Julia Pappas Ext. 257
Upper El & Middle School – Kirsten Wright Ext. 260
School Nurse – Katie Slupski Ext. 247
Student Services – Julia Pappas Ext. 257
Student Services – Meredith Katter Ext. 258
Summer Programs – Peg DiSarcina..... Ext. 222
Athletics – Deb Larson Ext. 251
Front Office – Laura Simon Ext. 221

After School Enrichment and Lessons – Patti Hotchkiss afterschool@oakmeadow.org
Childcare, Before Care & After Care – Sharon McNamara smcnamara@oakmeadow.org

WELCOME FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Students and Parents:

Oak Meadow School's diverse and far-reaching community comes together around common goals: a desire to foster academic excellence through the Montessori philosophy; an awareness and celebration of our cultural diversity; and a vested interest in nurturing children's spirits.

The guidelines that follow in this Handbook are meant to outline Oak Meadow's policies, procedures, and expectations for behavior. This Handbook is designed to serve as both an introduction to policies and procedures, and as a quick reference for families throughout the year. Please take the time to read and discuss it with your family. It will help you anticipate, plan for, and navigate issues that may arise during a day in the life of a student at Oak Meadow.

I look forward to the coming school year and hope you will find this Handbook to be a useful resource.

Warm regards,

Bill Perrine

I. INTRODUCTION

Mission

Oak Meadow School is rooted in the child-centered Montessori philosophy, which fosters academic excellence, personal growth, and cultural awareness while nurturing children's spirits. A diverse community of life-long learners, we cultivate confident, independent, and compassionate human beings by providing the tools and experiences needed to embark on rich, meaningful journeys as responsible citizens of the world.

Philosophy

Based on overwhelming evidence, we believe the Montessori approach provides a strong foundation for teaching and learning. With a focus on meeting each student's individual needs, we strive to incorporate the best and most current educational research and thinking into our teaching. We teach our students to experiment, test, analyze, observe, and practice in their own educations; we, too, approach our School as a laboratory for ongoing learning. We believe a complete, systematic approach to education – ever-evolving, yet rooted in timeless wisdom – produces sophisticated thinkers and wise individuals.

History of School

With 13 Children's House students and a space in the basement of a Boxborough church, Michelle Dubois founded Oak Meadow in 1977.

By 1980, the program grew to include a Lower Elementary program. As the School began to flourish, the church was too small for the students and faculty of Oak Meadow, so in 1988 the teachers packed up their classrooms and moved to a larger space on Tyler Street in Littleton, at which point the Upper Elementary program was added. Still, the School continued to grow, and in 1991 the School was moved to its present location on Old Pickard Lane in Littleton, where it rented a portion of the building that had been an egg production facility for Cobb's Chickens. By 1995, Oak Meadow had taken over the entire Old Pickard Lane building and added the Middle School program, and in 1999 the School purchased the property.

Though the egg production facility was a wonderful space, it was time for a facelift at Oak Meadow, so in 2000, a multi-phased renovation was in order, which eventually led to the addition of two Children's House classrooms, a Middle School wing, and later the completed construction of The Rizzi Center for Athletics and Performing Arts in 2009. The School also added a fine arts studio, as well as several community gathering spaces and administrative offices. In 2016, a Campus Master Plan was adopted and outdoor spaces were upgraded and expanded, with emphasis on outdoor classroom spaces with Lower and Upper Elementary and a sports court and small field enhancing play opportunities for students.

In 2008, Oak Meadow completed its accreditation with the Association of Independent Schools of New England and the American Montessori Society. In 2017-18, Oak Meadow will renew its accreditations.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Oak Meadow School admits qualified students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, mental or physical disability, genetic information, gender identity or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, mental or physical disability, genetic information, gender identity or sexual orientation, or any other status protected by applicable law in the administration of its educational, admissions, financial aid, athletic and other policies and programs.

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Curriculum

At the heart of Oak Meadow academics is the Montessori curriculum. Current brain research and educational trends support and confirm that the values and benefits of Montessori education are a good fit for many students. The School's curriculum is organized as a series of lessons, carefully crafted to meet the developmental needs of various age levels, from Beginners and Children's House through Middle School. The curriculum is supported by an extensive collection of materials, which were developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, to isolate and teach one concept or skill at a time, in the sequence through which they can be mastered best by students. Lessons given simply and concretely in early years at Oak Meadow are introduced several times over succeeding years, with increasing degrees of abstraction and difficulty. Building upon these lessons, Oak Meadow's Middle School curriculum has been crafted to meet the developmental needs of the School's seventh and eighth grade students, taking into account both state and national content standards, current adolescent brain research, and Montessori pedagogy.

The idea and implementation of mixed age groupings holds true to the principles and practices of a Montessori education. Older students help teach younger students as they strive to perfect their own skills, while younger students have the opportunity to learn and be inspired by the behavior and interests modeled by older students. Oak Meadow offers the following mixed age groupings:

Beginners – ages 18 months – 3 years
Children's House – ages 3-6, preschool through kindergarten
Lower Elementary – ages 6-9, grades 1-3
Upper Elementary – ages 9-12, grades 4-6
Middle School – ages 12-14, grades 7 & 8.

Children's House

Classes are generally balanced by gender and age. Students entering the first year of Children's House must be 3 years old by September 1. Students in the Children's House program tend to benefit from the Montessori practice of a three-year cycle of study. Prior attendance at a Montessori school is not a prerequisite for admission.

The program aims to prepare students for readiness for the Lower Elementary program, which is comprised of first through third grades. Students explore myriad ways to engage deeply and meaningfully with concrete manipulative Montessori materials that help to enable students to develop language, order, movement, and refinement of senses.

The classroom environment is arranged to support the development of independence, concentration, coordination, and order. Montessori materials used in the Children's House program aim to promote curiosity, awaken the senses, and inspire self-motivation. Through repetition with the materials, students experience opportunities for greater challenge and deeper understanding.

Elementary

The spiral curriculum of the Montessori classroom exposes students to many interrelated topics repeatedly over time. With each repetition, students may build on the knowledge they already have, striving to delve deeper into the details, see the connections more clearly, and ultimately develop a deeper understanding of our complex world.

Oak Meadow aims to foster independence and confidence in academic performance. The Elementary curriculum encourages students to actively manage their own learning within predefined boundaries established to aim to ensure strong progress across subject areas. With a low student/teacher ratio and with the help of classroom assistants, teachers are able to devote attention to each student to determine learning style and interests. Each classroom provides flexibility for students to progress at their own pace, advancing in areas of strength and taking additional time to master areas of challenge.

Middle School

The Middle School curriculum includes humanities, math, science, Spanish, drama, art, music, and physical education. Students participate in numerous outside-of-the-classroom experiences and other experiential learning opportunities such as running their own businesses, and serving the Oak Meadow community as classroom volunteers.

During their time in Middle School, students are encouraged to develop an understanding and confidence about their role within the School community and beyond. Students work in multi-age groups on developmentally appropriate and increasingly complex activities that aim to promote self-reflection and self-expression, teamwork, effective communication, and most importantly, critical thinking. The program offers students opportunities for in-depth study and for exploration of individual interests. The Middle School is founded on the belief that each individual student's strengths and passions should be celebrated. Again, prior attendance at a Montessori school is not a prerequisite for admission.

Because the Middle School curriculum emphasizes critical and analytical thinking, students are given the tools to help them to succeed in secondary school settings. Through cultural and practical life studies, students are encouraged to develop a lasting, compassionate global perspective. The learning environment in the Middle School community reflects the developmental need for social interaction, self-expression, and self-knowledge.

Tests and Assessments

Student assessment, through observation, dialogue, testing, project-based learning, and portfolios, is an essential part of Oak Meadow's Montessori classroom approach. On an ongoing basis, teachers assess their students' work and progress to plan their next lessons and to individualize instruction. Daily assessment allows students to continue through the curriculum at their own pace without having to wait for others or advance before they are ready.

Homework

It is important that students develop a responsible approach toward their homework, planning their time outside of school so that they complete their assignments to the best of their ability. Teachers ask that parents help in the planning by encouraging students to study in a quiet room and by discouraging television viewing, recreational computer use, and telephone calls during the school week.

In the event of a student's absence from class, classroom teachers will coordinate with families/students to help them manage homework and classroom assignments.

If a family celebrates a holiday for which a student will miss school for religious observance and worship, the family/student is asked to contact the teachers at least one week in advance to coordinate appropriate support for the student. As a general practice, teachers try to avoid scheduling major activities, assignments or assessments on religious holidays. Long-term assignments (assignments scheduled before

the day immediately preceding a holiday and due on a day other than the day immediately following a holiday) may be assigned.

School Libraries

The School has libraries available to serve the needs and interests of students, faculty, staff, and families. Students learn to use various library resources within the context of their classes, and teachers are available to assist with research, reference material, and general questions about the library.

Children's House and Elementary program students use library materials available in the Gathering Room. Parents participate in the library program for Children's House by reading to students. Students are encouraged to sign out books on a weekly basis.

Upper Elementary and Middle School have their own libraries from which students can borrow books.

Please follow the proper procedures for borrowing library materials. Families will be held responsible for the cost of lost or unreturned books and materials.

Progress Reports and Conferences

At Oak Meadow, progress reports are written evaluations detailing how your child is progressing through the curriculum. Progress reports are prepared by your child's classroom and cultural curriculum teachers as well as teachers of special subjects Art, Drama, Music, Physical Education, the Naturalist, and Spanish. Parents receive these written evaluations twice during the academic year.

Children's House

Parents receive written reports twice a year from their child's teacher. These reports generally are given to parents prior to conference days. Conference days provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss their child's development and academic and social progress. Parents and teachers may arrange for a meeting at any time to discuss their child's progress or to discuss specific concerns.

Elementary Program

A formal report and conference is offered in December to discuss first semester progress and what to expect during the second semester. A final report summarizing each child's academic year is offered at the end of May. An optional mini conference is held in the winter to discuss general student progress.

Middle School Program

Montessori middle school education emphasizes and puts into practice the idea that children take greater responsibility for their academic, social, and emotional growth, all the while being supported by their parents and teachers. Progress reports are intended to inform parents about their student's academic and social growth during the school year from the perspective of the Middle School team teachers. These evaluations in no way reflect a letter grade. The intention is to aid the student in developing a better understanding of him/herself as a learner and a contributing member of the Middle School. Twice a year, reports are filled out with checkmarks indicating progress in various skill areas. These are sent home with the students in anticipation of conferences in the fall and spring. In December and in June, parents receive a similar progress report that includes a narrative by the teachers. Final progress reports are sent home in June after school ends.

Placement and Progression

The Faculty and Program Directors, along with the Head of School and the Administration, make the decision regarding a student's placement and readiness to move from one level of the school to the next. A student must be deemed ready physically, emotionally, socially, psychologically, and academically in order to move to the next level. The decision to move a student to the next level is an important and individualized one. There is overlap in the curriculum of each program to allow for individual maturation and personal developmental styles, ensuring that students can be challenged in each program and need not move on until they are fully ready for the next level. Students do not move from class to class or from program to program during the academic year, but remain in the same class for the entire year, encouraging them to feel safe and secure. The nature of the Montessori materials and curriculum allows them to continue to be academically challenged within that classroom.

Secondary School Placement

Guidance counselors and admissions officers from our area's top private and public schools consistently report that the school's students excel both academically, and as members of their new communities. Generally, the school's students have a love of learning, poise and confidence, and the skills to navigate a challenging world, so they are well prepared for high school, college, and beyond.

The Head of School helps students and parents navigate the transition from Oak Meadow to public and private schools. To help students and families prepare for the process of applying to secondary schools, Oak Meadow offers various events and programs such as Secondary School Night with admission officers from area schools, mock-interviews for eighth grade students, and parent meetings with the Head of School.

Moving Up Ceremonies and Graduation

When students complete a program, they participate in a Moving Up Ceremony that is held on the last day of school. Students are expected to dress for this special occasion. Parents and relatives enjoy the opportunity to celebrate these milestones in their student's lives.

For Middle School students, the Oak Meadow Graduation provides a special opportunity for friends, relatives, and extended family to celebrate the unique gifts of the graduating students. Graduation is a special, formal occasion. The Graduation date is published in the school calendar.

III. ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to approach their academic work with the utmost care and integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and other kinds of academic misrepresentation are regarded as serious breaches of conduct. As is appropriate to lower grade levels, each case is treated individually and with the potential for learning in mind.

Cheating

No form of cheating, *e.g.*, copying a friend's homework or getting online translations, is acceptable at the School. Cheating undermines the integrity of the School's mission toward providing an academically rich environment, and deprives students of the opportunity to demonstrate genuine mastery of the curriculum.

Plagiarism

The School is dedicated to educating students in various ways about ethical and moral behavior. Plagiarism is perhaps one of the most important issues facing educators and their students today, for academic honesty is the currency of what we do together at school. Though Montessori philosophy emphasizes collaboration, the School also strives to teach students the importance of taking responsibility for their own work, and acknowledging when any work submitted is the result of collaboration.

IV. SCHOOL RULES

General Conduct

Behavior is based on respect for others, kindness, awareness, safety, and pride in the school. Behavior is governed by two rules: students cannot hurt themselves, and students cannot hurt others. More than that, however, expectations of student conduct are aligned with the concepts of character development that underlie the school's guiding principles for students.

Attendance and Absences

Teachers take daily attendance. Parents are expected to call the front desk at 978-486-9874 to report when their child will not be in school.

Tardiness

Parents are expected to call the front desk at 978-486-9874 when a student will be tardy. Timeliness is strongly encouraged.

Security

A system requiring visitors to be buzzed-in is in place at the main entrance to the school. The system is installed on the inner door of the front lobby and is activated at the School's discretion. When the system is turned on, the door will be locked in place. Any parent or visitor wishing to enter the school will need to be let in by the Front Office Assistant. To the right of the door, there is a small speaker unit with a round button. The button will act as a doorbell, and will alert the Front Office Assistant. Visitors and unknown persons will be asked to identify themselves.

Fire Drills

In an emergency or a fire drill, the doors will automatically be released for safe, speedy exits. The system has been checked and tested by the Littleton Fire Department.

Dress Code and Appearance

Students are expected to maintain a high standard of cleanliness while at school. Clothing should be modest and appropriate for the weather conditions and the day's activities. Frayed or torn items are not allowed. All clothing must be clearly marked with the student's name (especially outerwear). During warm weather, Elementary and Middle School students must wear their shorts, skirts and dresses at fingertip length, which means that when students stand with their hands by their sides, apparel must reach to their fingertips. Children may not wear tank tops or tops with spaghetti straps. T-shirts and polo shirts are preferable and all apparel must be free of slogans or advertisements. If a student is not dressed appropriately, the parent will be contacted to provide appropriate clothing.

Shoes

All students must have sneakers for gym classes and appropriate footwear for outdoor activities, including boots during the winter months. Open-toed shoes, sandals, and crocs are not appropriate. While indoors, students wear "indoor" shoes which are not worn outside and therefore do not track dirt into the school.

Permissions

Students may not leave campus without the permission of their teacher or the Head of School.

Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation

It is the policy of Oak Meadow School to maintain a safe learning environment for all members of its community and one that is free from bullying. The Oak Meadow Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is an integral part of the School’s efforts to promote learning and to prevent behavior that can impede the learning process. The Plan spells out Oak Meadow’s comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation as required by the law. Please refer to the School’s website www.oakmeadow.org to view the Plan in its entirety. See Appendix A for the full Plan.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Through education and intervention, the School endeavors to maintain an environment that is free from sexual harassment. The School does not tolerate verbal or physical behavior that constitutes sexual harassment. Most unwelcome and/or harassing behavior results from ignorance and flirting or teasing that is not welcome or that becomes excessive. Being sensitive to other people’s feelings and communicating clearly are the best ways to prevent sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as behavior involving a single instance or repeated instances of inappropriate verbal and/or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Examples include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, touching, innuendo, and other conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of 1) creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; 2) interfering unreasonably with a person’s academic performance; or 3) creating a situation where an evaluation of a student depends on his or her submitting to and/or not objecting to the behavior. Sexual harassment between students, and students and employees, is prohibited: it violates both state and federal law and also the School’s core values.

The School takes seriously all complaints of sexual harassment or retaliation, and will investigate each complaint thoroughly and promptly. A student or parent who wishes to report any alleged violation of the School’s sexual harassment policy, including any instance of sexual abuse, should contact the Head of School or any other administrator. The School reserves the right to act unilaterally to end sexual harassment where such intervention is deemed warranted.

Electronic Communications, Computers and Acceptable Use

The Technology Acceptable Use Policy is intended to provide guidelines for behavior of Oak Meadow School students such that students can use technology appropriately in a safe and responsible manner that enhances the educational program. Whether physically on campus or off campus, whether linked to the school’s network from in school or from a remote location or not at all, or using their own personal computer or communication device on or off campus, students must comply with this Technology Acceptable Use Policy and any applicable policies and procedures, as set forth in the Parent/Student Handbook and as further described below. The School may monitor the activity and contents (including e-mail) on its network, servers, computers and other technological devices.

Technology in various forms is an important part of the school’s curriculum, and the school emphasizes that use of the school’s network, computers and other technology should be primarily for educational purposes, with the understanding that there may be opportunities for appropriate and limited recreational use. As students move through the program, they access technology in different ways. In the youngest programs, access to technology is limited to closely supervised work on school computers. By the time a student is in the Middle School program, he or she is using technology for research under the general guidance of a teacher. When a student uses technology at Oak Meadow School for access to the school network or the Internet, students should adhere to the following guidelines.

The student may:

- use technology for school work or class projects and assignments at the teacher's discretion;
- access the Internet with teacher permission to enrich the student's learning related to school work; and
- use technology only in the ways directed by the teacher.

The student may not:

- remove any school-owned computer equipment from the school;
- put the student's or another person's personal information in files, email, or on the Internet (such as phone number, date of birth, address, etc.);
- communicate with or make plans to meet in person anyone the student has contacted on-line unless directed to do so as part of the curriculum with teacher supervision;
- use inappropriate language or images in email, web pages, videos, or social networking sites
- be disrespectful by harassing, talking, or posting derogatory material (images, video, etc.) via email, social networking sites, live chat, web page, or any other method;
- access inappropriate information on the Internet such as (but not restricted to) sites that bypass filtering, promote hate or violence, gaming, or sites with sexually explicit or graphic, pornographic, or obscene material;
- plagiarize printed or electronic information;
- install or download software on to school computers from the Internet, home, or by any other means;
- carry cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices on their person; all such items must remain in backpacks and turned off;
- access, change, delete, read, or copy any file, program, or account that belongs to someone else without permission;
- use the network for illegal or commercial activities;
- intentionally vandalize, steal, or cause harm to any school-owned equipment; or
- deliberately disrupt or attempt to disrupt the software or hardware of the Oak Meadow School network.

Oak Meadow students should understand that:

- the use of inappropriate language, harassment, and disrespectful comments in email, texting or a chat room, or on a website or social networking site from both inside and outside the school may result in disciplinary action;
- there is no guarantee of privacy associated with their use of the school's technology resources. Students should not expect that email, voice mail or other information created or maintained on the school's network or school-issued devices (even those marked "personal" or "confidential") will be private, confidential or secure. The School has the right to access and monitor both student-owned and school-owned computers and communication devices connected to the school's network. By accessing the school's system, each student has consented to the School's right to view and/or monitor the School's network and all of its associated accounts; and

Every Oak Meadow parent should understand that:

- it is the responsibility of the parent to read this policy and discuss it with the student;
- teachers and administrators will strive to help students understand this policy at a level that is appropriate to their age and maturity; and
- if a student willfully damages the hardware or software of any school-owned technology, the parent will be responsible for paying for the repair or replacement of that technology.

Sexting

The School prohibits students from using technology devices (whether owned by the student or the school, and whether through use of the school's network or outside of the school's network, and whether used on or off campus) to send any written message or image that contains explicit representations or references to sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or nudity (commonly known as "sexting"). Massachusetts law prohibits anyone (regardless of age) from disseminating obscene or pornographic images of minors, and the School reserves the right to contact law enforcement should any student violate this policy.

Student Personal Devices

The School provides access to mobile devices for student use during the school day. These mobile devices serve as valuable tools for students, providing structured, monitored, and equitable access to resources that students will need to complete assigned work. All mobile devices are expected to be used for academic purposes only.

Accommodations to allow students to bring their personal device will be made on a case-by-case basis, and will be informed by documented assessments of the individual student's learning needs. The School will not be held responsible for computer loss, theft, or damage that may occur. Mobile devices will be used to support learning needs, and must be stored securely when not in use.

Email

Oak Meadow School communicates frequently via email with the school community and key constituents. The School requests that each family provide the School with an email address for each parent. Email addresses will be used for school, classroom, and administrative announcements. All-school and/or classroom emails are not to be used for sales or marketing purposes. Parents are expected to update the School with current contact information.

Use of Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, Weapons, Threatening and Sexual Behaviors

All members of the Oak Meadow School community deserve to work and learn in a safe environment. Use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and e-cigarettes during school or school-related activities is prohibited. Distribution of these to others, whether for a fee or not, is also prohibited. Additionally, the School does not allow students to bring actual or toy guns or weapons to the school or to school-related activities.

Students who would like to talk about the meaning of sexual intimacy in a relationship, or students who are in a situation where sexual activity has taken place and who want to report or discuss the situation, should talk with a trusted adult so that appropriate support may be given. Sexual behavior in the school or at school-related events will not be tolerated.

Search and Seizure

Cubbies, hooks, and lockers (daily storage areas) are the property of Oak Meadow School. Students exercise control over their daily storage areas from other students, but not from the School and its administrators. As a result, the Head of School and his or her designees, as well as law enforcement officials, have the right to search daily storage areas to ensure school safety and students' welfare, including, without limitation, to determine if students are harboring stolen property, weapons, or illegal or dangerous substances, and school and law enforcement officials have the right to seize such items or other items that jeopardize the safety of the students or the building or constitute health hazards. The School also reserves the right to conduct random searches of daily storage area throughout the year.

V. DAILY LIFE AT SCHOOL

School Day Schedule

The School Day

	Children’s House	Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary	Middle School
Drop-off	8:20 a.m.	8:20 a.m.	8:20 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
Classes Begin	8:40 a.m.	8:40 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	8:10 a.m.
Pick-up	11:20 a.m. (AM half-day) 3:20 p.m.	3:20 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	3:40 p.m.

Arrival

Arrival of Children’s House Students

Children’s House students must be walked to the appropriate playground gate or classroom door. Parents must wait with their child until a teacher’s assistant comes to escort the student to the classroom. Classroom doors are closed at 8:40 a.m. The doors remain closed through Circle Time to ensure that the students will enjoy a quiet beginning to the school day. Parents arriving late must wait with their child inside the School foyer until Circle Time is complete and a teacher escorts the students into the classroom. It is important that students begin the day calmly and peacefully by participating in the start of class. Please arrive on time.

Arrival of Elementary Students

Parents of Elementary and Middle School students are encouraged to allow the students to enter the building alone. Parents are also encouraged to stay in their car when dropping off and/or picking up their child. If a parent must enter the building, the parent should park and escort the student to the School. Lower Elementary students may enter the School building through the Lower Elementary entrance (located directly to the right of the glass foyer) beginning at 8:20 a.m.

Upper Elementary students may enter the building through the Upper Elementary entrance located at the end of the southern walkway beginning at 8:20 a.m. Classroom doors will be closed at 8:30 a.m. to enable students to enjoy a quiet morning meeting. A student who arrives late must enter the building through the front lobby door. This simple step is important parts of the process of helping students develop independence and self-reliance.

Arrival of Middle School Students

Middle School students will enter the Middle School through the front door. In an effort to alleviate as much traffic congestion as possible, Middle School arrival time is from 8:00 – 8:10 a.m. Classes commence at 8:10 a.m. sharp.

Dismissal

Dismissal of Children’s House Students

Students are dismissed from each outside classroom door at 3:20 p.m. for full-day students and 11:20 a.m. for half-day morning students.

Dismissal of Elementary and Middle School Students

Lower Elementary students are dismissed at 3:20 p.m. from the Lower Elementary entrance. Upper Elementary School students are dismissed at 3:30 p.m. from the Upper Elementary entrance. Please note: Middle School students will be dismissed at 3:40 using the Lower Elementary entrance. Parents of all Elementary and Middle School students are welcome to stay in their cars to pick up their child. If a parent must enter the building, the parent should park in the parking lot.

Early Dismissals

If a student must be dismissed early, a parent should submit a written, dated note to the Front Desk Assistant. The Front Desk Assistant will arrange to have the student waiting in the front lobby at the designated time. In order to maintain building security, all entrances will be locked during the school day. All early dismissals must be signed out at the front desk.

Early Dismissal Wednesdays

In order to develop and revise School programs and curricula, and to participate in professional development workshops, the School implements an early dismissal each Wednesday. Students are dismissed one hour earlier on early dismissal days. See below for a list of early dismissal times by program level.

	CH half-day AM	CH full-day	LE	UE	MS
Pick-up	11:20 a.m.	2:20 p.m.	2:20 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	2:40 p.m.

School Delays/Cancellations

In an effort to maintain close communications with parents and guardians, Oak Meadow School uses SchoolMessenger, a broadcast system that enables school personnel to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that may cause an early dismissal, school cancellation, or late start. The School will continue to report school closings due to snow or weather on radio and TV stations, but will use SchoolMessenger as an overlay to the public announcements.

When used, SchoolMessenger will simultaneously call all listed phone numbers in the parent contact list, and will deliver a recorded message from the Head of School or another school administrator. The service will deliver the message to both live answer and answering machines. Calls that receive no answers or busy signals will be automatically re-tried twice in 15-minute intervals after the initial call.

NOTE: This service requires no registration by the parent on the SchoolMessenger website. All information and contact numbers are strictly secure and confidential, and are only used for the purposes described herein. When answering the phone, you must say “hello” to prompt the recorded message to begin.

In the event of inclement weather or the occurrence of any other event that could reasonably be expected to cause local schools to close for the day, parents may still obtain information concerning whether the school will be closed, or open on a delayed basis, by tuning into one of the three major Boston television stations: Channel 4 (WBZ); Channel 5 (WCVB); or Channel 7 (WHDH). Oak Meadow School is listed independently of Littleton Public Schools. The school is listed as “Oak Meadow School” under the school listings. School closing information will also be posted on the homepage of the School website www.oakmeadow.org and at www.facebook.com/oakmeadowma.

Before and After School Care

Before and After Care is offered during each school day. Before Care begins at 7:30 a.m. each morning.

During the school year, After Care is provided from 3:40 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Before & After Care Information (2016-17 school year)		
Before Care	7:30-8:20 a.m.	\$5 per day/child
After Care – Early Dismissal Wednesdays	2:20 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.	\$4 per day/child
After Care	3:40-6:00 p.m.	\$16 per day/child*

Please note that there is a charge of \$1 per minute for every minute after 6:00 p.m. (see below).

After Care

Students who are not picked up by their parents by 3:40 p.m. will be checked into the After Care Program. The fee for After Care is \$16.00 per day per student for care provided between 3:40 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. (regardless of the amount of time the student stays after 3:40 p.m.).

Additional Fee for Late After School Pick-up

Parents of students enrolled in the morning Children’s House program who fail to pick up their child by 11:30 a.m., and parents of students involved in the After Care program who fail to pick up their child by 6:00 p.m., will be charged an additional fee in the amount of \$1.00 per minute for each minute after 11:30 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. This fee is paid to the After Care charge person on the day the student is picked up late.

Enrichment, Childcare, and Summer Programs

The School offers a variety of programs to supplement the school day and/or the school year. These programs are scheduled based on pre-registration. If pre-registration is insufficient to run a program, it will be cancelled and any fees charged credited to the parent account. Pre-registration also determines the number of staff planned for each event. If you fail to pre-register for a program, your child may be turned away if there is insufficient staff to safely run a program.

After School Enrichment Program

There are various classes and lessons available through the After School Enrichment Program, which runs from 3:40 – 5:30 p.m. most school days. For more information, see the After School Enrichment Program brochure and registration packet located on the School’s website www.oakmeadow.org. Some programs fill very quickly and the enrollment is strictly limited. Other programs may require a minimum enrollment. If enrollment in a class is either over or under enrolled, your child may not be able to sign up for that class. Thus early enrollment is encouraged.

Childcare for Conferences

The School offers childcare for conference days, for the period of a conference (generally 30 minutes or less), at a modest fee. Pre-registration is required. If you wish to use childcare for the entire conference day, you must pre-register. Pre-registration also determines the number of staff planned for each event. If you fail to pre-register for a program, your child may be turned away if there is insufficient staff to safely run a program.

Childcare for Curriculum Nights

The School offers childcare for curriculum nights for a modest fee. Siblings who are toilet-trained are welcome to attend Childcare for Curriculum nights, as the parents are in the building in the event of emergency. Pre-registration is required. Pre-registration determines the number of staff planned for each event. If you fail to pre-register for a program, your child may be turned away if there is insufficient staff to safely run a program.

Summer Program

In the summer of 2015, the School sponsored summer programs for Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary during the first two weeks following the end of the school year, and for Children's House for the entire summer. These programs are designed based on the age and interest of the students. As is the case with all programs sponsored by Oak Meadow, pre-registration is required and the School reserves the right to cancel Summer Program weeks based on low enrollment.

School Meetings and Assemblies

Monday Morning Meeting, scheduled most weeks, is an important school-wide event beginning at 8:45 a.m. Students report first to their classrooms; parents are encouraged to attend Monday Morning Meeting and sit in the parent area along the side of the Rizzi Center. Many Monday Morning Meetings are devoted to the opportunity to watch other members of our community perform. On occasion, we are also fortunate to be able to welcome visiting speakers and performers. Each student is expected to arrive at assembly promptly and to exemplify mature, supportive, and appropriate audience behavior throughout the lecture or performance.

Field Trips and Overnight Trips

Field trips are scheduled throughout the year to enhance the learning experience beyond the classroom. Outings are planned to complement the curriculum, as well as provide opportunities for students to be outside and experience the beauty of nature in the surrounding area.

Students in the Children's House program participate in field trips to areas within walking distance of the school, such as the Cobb Conservation Land. In addition, the school schedules "in-house" field trips for Children's House students from such groups as local story tellers, the Museum of Science, or other Drumlin Farm to enhance the Children's House curriculum.

Students in the Lower Elementary program participate in field trips to local areas of interest, generally in conjunction with the curriculum. Transportation for field trips is provided by rented school buses or by school-owned school bus or van. Past field trips have been to the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, and the Worcester Art Museum.

In addition to local field trips during the school day, students in the Upper Elementary and Middle School programs participate in overnight field trips to camps, programs, or important cultural and historic destinations such as New York City or Washington, DC. These overnight field trips are an important part of the curriculum and all students are expected to participate. Parents are responsible for the cost of these overnight trips. Dates of field trips are listed on the online school calendar. The online calendar will include up-to-date information regarding field trips. Parents will also receive email notifications from individual classroom teachers. Transportation for field trips is provided by rented school buses or by School-owned bus or van.

Golden Beans

Several times a year, Oak Meadow sponsors Golden Bean social meetings for parents. These meetings are theme-based, such as “Update from the Head of School,” “Meeting the Board of Trustees,” or a presentation about a specific academic area such as STEM or Spanish.

What to Bring to School

Parents are provided with program-level supply lists at the start of each school year.

Classroom Supplies

Parents are responsible for the cost of personal supplies (including paperback books and workbooks) needed by students for class work and projects. When the School provides such items, the items will be billed to the parents. Middle School students are charged an annual book fee to cover the cost of their books. Children’s House students are provided an Oak Meadow canvas drawstring bag for storing a complete change of clean clothing.

Food at School

Students are expected to bring healthy, nutritious foods, and non-carbonated drinks to school for lunch. Each student may bring a special snack or treat on the student’s birthday, or other special occasions, provided that prior consent of the teacher is obtained. Students who remain after school to attend the After School Program should bring their own after school snacks. Please note that the School is not an allergen-free environment (please refer to the Health Services Section of this Handbook).

VI. GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Accreditation

Oak Meadow School is accredited by the American Montessori Society and the Association of Independent Schools in New England, and is a member of the Educational Records Bureau and the National Association of Independent Schools.

Governance

Oak Meadow School is a non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Trustees that establishes the School's policies and oversees the general operation of the school. The Head of School is appointed by the Board of Trustees for the purpose of attending to the day-to-day operation of Oak Meadow School. Tuition payments, fees, gifts, and donations support the School. Gifts and cash donations to Oak Meadow School are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by applicable law, and may be eligible for matching grants offered by some employers. For a current list of the Oak Meadow School Board of Trustees, please visit www.oakmeadow.org.

Family/School Communication

Each family receives a printed, single-page calendar in August that highlights vacation days and other important dates. Parents should refer to the online Parent Calendar located on the school's website for the latest information on important dates, activities, and events. The online calendar is updated frequently, so it is important to check the calendar on a regular basis. Updates and new information about scheduled events are communicated via email and/or individual classroom notification.

In addition to the calendar, each family receives a weekly electronic newsletter, which often includes a message from the Head of School, articles about recent events, topical items of interest, announcements, and a list of upcoming events. Teachers also send out e-newsletters that detail information specific to their classroom activities on a periodic basis, the frequency of which varies by program level.

Children's House students take their work home in an envelope each Friday. Important notices are often included. Parents are asked to return the emptied envelope on Monday. Elementary and Middle School students take their work home periodically throughout the year.

Current Family Contact Information

Parents are expected to keep the School informed of telephone changes for emergency situations. If a parent is going to be away from home for an extended length of time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number where you can be reached, as well as information regarding who will be responsible for the student and how they may be reached in case of illness or other emergency.

Religious and Cultural Observances

Various holidays are recognized and discussed with stories, plays, and special foods that convey the cultural significance of the holiday. The School recognizes, but does not celebrate, holidays from a religious perspective. If a particular holiday or its traditions are important to a parent's heritage, and the parent would like to share information with the students, the parent is invited to contact the teacher to make arrangements for a presentation about the holiday and its traditions.

Background Checks

With student safety as a priority, the School conducts state and national criminal history on all current and prospective faculty and staff of the School who may have “direct and unmonitored access to children,” including any individual who regularly provides school-related transportation to students.

The School requires any volunteers who will work closely with students to undergo a state criminal background check or “CORI” (Criminal Offender Record Information). It is also School policy to require that volunteers with direct and unmonitored access to students undergo a fingerprint-based check, which is run through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and provides access to national criminal history databases. Examples of the types of volunteer activities requiring a background check include, but are not limited to, chaperoning field trips. A background check is typically not necessary for parent volunteers involved with larger school functions at which many adults are typically present.

These background checks require the completion of a brief application form and verification of a government-issued photographic identification, and are only conducted with the consent of an individual employee or volunteer. A volunteer’s service, and an individual’s employment, is contingent upon successful completion of the checks, which may take several days or weeks to process.

Completed CORI and fingerprint-based check forms must be returned to the Business Office at least two weeks in advance of volunteering.

Classroom Observations

Parents are encouraged to visit periodically with their children in the classroom, and may do so after making arrangements with the classroom teacher.

Classroom Participation by Parents

Parents who have developed special talents and interests are encouraged to share their talents and interests with the students. The personal achievements and insights of our parents are welcome additions to our classrooms. Parents should make arrangements concerning their participation with each classroom teacher.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Children’s House, Elementary, and Middle School student-led conferences are scheduled to give teachers and parents the opportunity to discuss the student’s progress, and to touch base about the student’s development. Written evaluations are mailed to parents prior to the conference dates. The conferences are considered mandatory in nature. These conferences are intended to enable parents and teachers to discuss any concerns they may have about the student’s progress. At conference time, you will receive an email from the School with information how and when to sign up. Please note: the School will be closed on conference dates for those specified programs only. Be sure to check the Oak Meadow Parent Calendar for specific dates when school will be closed for specific program level conferences. Childcare is available with pre-registration. The School will be open for all other programs.

Dual Households

In order for the School to most effectively communicate with parents and support each student, it is important for teachers and administrators to be aware of students who spend time in dual households. Please be sure to communicate to the School about primary caregivers in the event of an emergency, and whether special co-parenting arrangements exist. If there are court-ordered guidelines regarding visitations, picking up a student from school, parent involvement in field trips or other issues, please include the school in your communication loop. These situations can be stressful for parents and confusing for students, and your help in minimizing the School's phone calls to you for clarification is very important. Unless otherwise specified, each parent for whom the school has current contact information will receive a copy of the student's report card as well as other informational mailings and electronic communications during the year.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students

The School strives to provide a safe and supportive environment that will help students succeed academically and socially. To that end, the School promotes respect for all people, and will not tolerate harassment or bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity that impacts a student's experience at the school (whether the bullying or harassment takes place on or off campus), including cyber-bullying through the use of electronic technology (on or off the School's campus, and on or off the school's network). Particularly with respect to transgender and gender non-conforming students, the School will work closely with students and their families to strive to honor their wishes with respect to use of School facilities, participation in athletics, accuracy of student records, use of preferred name and pronouns, and privacy, in accordance with applicable law, and to the extent that the school's campus facilities reasonably permit.

Visitors to School

For the safety of our students, our Visitor Pass policy includes parents, family members, alumni, and visitors from outside of the school community. Upon arrival, all visitors are requested to check in with the Front Office Assistant to obtain a Visitor's Pass. Special events for an entire class and all school meetings are exceptions to this policy.

Pets at School

Family pets need to be left at home at all times for health and safety reasons. They should not be in attendance during the school day, or at special occasions. If a student wishes to bring a family pet for Show and Tell, a brief visit can generally be accommodated. Parents need to discuss the visit ahead of time with the teacher and, if approved, remain with the animal at all times.

Transportation

Parents are solely responsible for transporting their children to and from the school. Parents may not allow their children to roam freely in the parking lot area. If a student is to be regularly transported by someone other than the student's parent, the parent must provide the name(s) of such person(s) on the student's Emergency Information Form. Additionally, if a parent wants a student to be picked up from the school by anyone other than the parent or a person whose name is on file with the School, the parent must provide the School with a signed note specifying the day the student is to be picked up and identifying the person who is authorized to take the student. That person may be required to show a photo I.D.

Traffic Flow

Traffic flow in our driveway is one way. Drivers must stay to the right of the driveway after entering the parking lot from Old Pickard Lane. Parents of Elementary and Middle School students are encouraged to drop off and pick up their child by staying in their car and driving close to the building in the “drive-through lane.” Parents of Children’s House students are to park their car and walk their child to the appropriate playground gate or class. Please drive very carefully and slowly. Please, do not use cell phones – all eyes and ears should be focused on the parking lot – and most importantly, watch for children. Oak Meadow personnel may be present in the parking lot to help direct the flow of traffic, but drivers are fully responsible for their driving decisions.

Student Records and Transcripts

While a student is enrolled at the school, original copies of all school records will be accessible only to parents and school personnel. Parents may receive copies of their child's file upon written request. At a parent’s written request, Oak Meadow School will send copies of the file to other schools to which parents may apply on behalf of the student.

When a child leaves Oak Meadow, the school keeps the student record for seven years. After seven years, the School destroys the student record, with the exception of the final transcript, which is kept for sixty years.

Lost and Found

Please be sure to mark all of your student’s clothes with the student’s name in indelible ink or with sewn-on labels. All unmarked clothing will be put into the lost and found box. Anything left unclaimed past a two-week period will be donated to charity or used at the staff’s discretion.

Gift Giving

Gifts from individual families to teachers are in no way required or expected.

Gift giving among students at school can lead both to awkwardness and hurt feelings. We discourage students from exchanging gifts at school, and if students choose to do so, it should be done so as privately as is possible.

VII. PARENTS' ASSOCIATION AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Oak Meadow Parents' Association (OMPA)

At the heart of our community is Oak Meadow's Parents' Association (OMPA). Through their dedication and hard work, members of OMPA help enrich the Oak Meadow community, serving as a support to students, families, and faculty at all program levels, and as a model to our students for personal commitment and active citizenship. Oak Meadow families participate at the school as library volunteers, and room parents, among many other ways. OMPA members are essential to the planning, organization, and running of many of our annual events, such as OaktoberFest/Fall Festival, the Cookie Swap, Cultural Heritage Fest, and Spirit Week.

All parents are automatically members of OMPA. There are many levels of involvement available for those who wish to volunteer their time. OMPA's current committees include: Community Service, Library, Outreach, Events, OaktoberFest/Fall Festival, Book Fair, Game Night, End-of-Year Picnic, and Staff Appreciation. OMPA meetings are held monthly on Friday mornings. All are welcome to attend. For more information, email the OMPA Board Chair at pachair@oakmeadow.org.

Birthdays & Parties

Parents are welcome to provide a special snack on their child's birthday; however, doing so is not mandatory. Each teacher determines specific rules governing the celebration of student birthdays within the classroom. Parents are encouraged to discuss particular concerns or desires relating to birthday celebrations directly with the teacher. Invitations to parties at the student's home are not to come in to the school. Please mail these invitations home.

School Gatherings off Campus (Not Sponsored by School)

In the younger grades, party invitations should not be delivered or discussed at school unless all classmates are included. The misuse of party invitations in a school setting can be very hurtful to students. The invitations themselves can offer all parents an important teaching opportunity with students on considering the feelings of others.

It is important to remember, through their quest for acceptance from peers and their desire for greater independence, that students still need clear boundaries and guidance, and the following section provides some ideas to consider. They are designed to be practical and, more importantly, are based on the values that we, as a School, stand for as part of our mission. In this sense, we hope that all our parents will support these in spirit, if not in letter.

Yearbook

Oak Meadow School produces an annual yearbook with individual and class pictures. The cost of \$25 is charged to each student's account in the fall. This allows the school to publish an adequate number of books for spring distribution. If a family does not want a yearbook, a call or email to the Business Office before December 1 will result in the charge's removal from the account.

VIII. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS

Eligibility

All students must have on file an annual physical completed and signed by a medical doctor. No one will be allowed to participate until this form is on file.

Physical Education

Physical education is an integral part of the School's curriculum and is designed to provide optimum growth and development for each student. Therefore, every student is required to participate. A student who is ill or injured will be excused only if she/he has a note from home, the School Nurse, or a doctor.

Students are responsible for having necessary clothing and sneakers for each class. All clothing should be labeled with the student's name.

Montessori Athletic Conference (Big MAC)

Oak Meadow is pleased to be a member of the Montessori Athletic Conference. Each fall, 5th through 8th grade students have an opportunity to participate in the soccer program. In the winter, 6th through 8th grade students are invited to participate in a basketball program. In the spring, 4th through 8th grade students are invited to participate in a cross country program. There is cost for participation in these programs. All athletic programs practice several days a week after school, and participate in home and away games and meets. Oak Meadow athletics are a great way for students to interact between different program levels, and to gain confidence outside of the classroom through physical activity.

Sportsmanship

Athletics enhance the overall educational experience and build well-rounded students and leaders. Integrity, fairness and respect—these are the principles of good sportsmanship. With them, the spirit of competition thrives, fueled by honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of the results.

Sportsmanship goals include:

- developing a sense of dignity under all circumstances;
- respecting the rules of the game, the officials who administer the rules, and their decisions;
- respecting opponents as fellow students and acknowledging them for striving to do their best while you seek to do your best at the same time;
- looking at athletic participation as a potentially beneficial learning experience, whether you win or lose;
- educating other students and fans to understand the rules of the game, and the value of sportsmanship; and
- accepting the personal responsibility that comes with your actions on the court/field.

The School also encourages parents to act in a sportsman-like manner. As such, the School hopes parents will:

- realize that athletics are part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond the final score of a game;
- encourage students to perform their best, just as we would urge them on with their class-work, knowing that others will always turn in better or lesser performances;

- participate in positive cheers and encourage our athletes, and discourage any cheer that would redirect that focus;
- learn, understand and respect the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions;
- respect the task our coaches face as teachers, and support them as they strive to educate our youth;
- respect our opponents as students, and acknowledge them for striving to do their best;
- remember that we would all like to be victorious in every situation we face in life, but just like in athletic competition, sometimes we fall short.

Medical and Other Excused Absences

Any student who is to be excused from physical education or athletics must bring in a medical excuse signed by a doctor and present it to the School Nurse. For the first day of an excused absence from physical education, a parent note is acceptable. For excused absences from physical education for more than one day, a doctor's note is necessary.

Communication

Please refer to the School Calendar on the school's website which is updated regularly. In most cases, an email or phone call will go out to parents should an athletic event be postponed or canceled under any circumstance. You may also call the school for up-to-date information regarding athletic events.

IX. DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

General

These guidelines are based on the School's philosophy and principles regarding good character, and reflect the School's commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment for students. The School strives to promote effective and caring communication among faculty, students, and parents that supports students in their personal growth and provides room for a young person to make mistakes and learn from them. The guidelines in this section apply to all conduct by students, whether on or off campus, as long as they are enrolled at the School.

As a School, we want to work with families in changing behaviors in students that interfere with the learning climate of a classroom or pose problems of safety for students. Occasionally, students need to be reminded about expectations and consequences of behavior. Both expectations and consequences are age and developmentally appropriate.

Students are expected to show respect for each member of the school community. The faculty and administrators seek to help students learn how to manage their behavior more effectively and deal with difficult situations constructively. If a student is involved in a problem, the student is encouraged to express his or her opinion about the cause of the problem, and to explain his or her reasons for choosing to respond as he or she did. The student is then encouraged to examine the consequences of his or her actions, and to discuss alternative actions he or she could have chosen. If a student is unable or unwilling to deal with the problem in an acceptable manner, the teacher may suggest that the student take an opportunity to "pull one's self back together," or take such other actions as the teacher may deem to be warranted. If the teacher asks the program level Director or the Head of School to assist in resolving a problem, he or she may first attempt to help the student find an acceptable resolution. If the program level Director or Head of School determines, in his or her sole discretion, that parental involvement would be appropriate, he or she will contact the parents to discuss the situation. The goal is to help each student understand what type of behavior is expected at school, and learn to assume responsibility for his or her actions.

Examples of Grounds for Discipline and/or Dismissal

Oak Meadow School reserves the right to discipline, suspend, or dismiss a student, at its sole discretion, for any of the following reasons (though this is not a complete list, it is a list of examples) including:

- physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or students;
- student fails to abide by a School policy or practice, as may (or may not) be described in this Handbook;
- student's failure to follow an agreed-upon behavioral plan of action;
- continued behavioral difficulties following implementation of behavioral action plan and target deadlines;
- failure to comply with Montessori philosophy;
- failure to comply with Oak Meadow School policy regarding discipline and safety;
- a student's persistent deviation from acceptable behavior; or
- a student posing a safety hazard to self or others.

The School assists students and parents through many difficult circumstances. However, the Montessori environment may not be the best for students who exhibit disruptive behavioral problems. If it is determined that a discharge from our program is necessary, Oak Meadow School will assist the student in understanding the situation and attempt to make suggestions to the family for a more suitable program.

Behavioral Expectations While Away From School

Students should be aware that they represent the Oak Meadow School community at all times, both on and away from campus. The School encourages parents to partner with us to reinforce the School's mission and values when students are off-campus. While it is not the School's intention to monitor students in all of their off-campus activities, the School reserves the right to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, in response to inappropriate conduct (including cyber activity) occurring outside of campus, if such conduct negatively impacts the experience of any student at the school or the reputation of the School.

Parent Involvement

Disciplinary matters and student issues are handled directly by teachers, administrators, and appropriate staff. If a student is having an issue with another student, parents should not attempt to deal with the other student directly about that matter, as doing so may put a student in an intimidating situation. The problem is best resolved, when appropriate, through a school administrator. Please speak to the appropriate school administrator for guidance with respect to any questions about contacting another student or parent about a school-related matter.

X. STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

School Nurse and Illness

The School Nurse is available in her office five days per week, on a schedule posted on the health office door. She evaluates students who become ill during the school day and contacts their parents as appropriate. The nurse is responsible for ensuring that all student medical forms are current and on file.

In order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for students and staff, please do not send students to school with any of the following: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent cough, or profuse discolored discharge from the nose or eyes. Students who develop a fever of 100.0 degrees F or greater, vomiting, or diarrhea will be sent home. Students must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents are expected to notify the School if their child contracts a contagious illness such as strep throat, chicken pox, or head lice.

Medications at School

Students may not bring, and will not be permitted to maintain, medicine of any kind with their personal belongings. Parents are expected to attend to students' medication needs outside of school whenever possible; however, if a student must take a daily prescription medication, parents are expected to provide the School with Permission to Medicate Form signed by the student's doctor and parent. A responsible adult should deliver medications to the School Nurse in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container. Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. Medications will be dispensed by school nursing staff or by school personnel who have been designated and trained in accordance with the School's policy regarding delegation of prescription medication administration. Medications should be picked up at the end of the school year. Any medications left after one week of school closure in June will be destroyed.

The School Nurse, in collaboration with the parent/guardian and student's physician, will establish an individualized medication administration plan for any student requesting medication self-administration privileges. The student will be involved in the decision-making process and the student's preferences respected to the maximum extent possible. In a collaborative effort, the School Nurse together with the student, the student's parent/guardian, and physician will determine the student's understanding of the student's medication and competency in the administration of the student's medication. Based on this determination, the School Nurse will allow or disallow self-administration privileges in accordance with state and federal laws. The self-administration of medication shall include self-administration while on school property or during School-sponsored trips. A duplicate dose of life-saving medication provided by the parent/guardian will be stored at the School Health Office. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the School Nurse in order to update the student's medication administration plan with respect to any medication, dosing revisions, and health status changes.

Misuse of the right to self-administer medication will result in immediate revocation of said privilege. Oak Meadow School will not assume any responsibility for students not in compliance with this medication self-administration policy.

Health Records, Regulations, and Access

Oak Meadow School requires proof of an annual physical examination from a licensed physician and proof of up-to-date immunizations for every student to be kept on file in the Health Office. Religious exemption forms may be obtained from the School Nurse. All medical exemptions require written documentation from a licensed physician stating the medical reason for non-immunization.

Parents are asked to provide the School with information about the student's physical and emotional health. In part, this information is obtained to comply with state law; it is also needed to keep the School well-informed of the health of all students. The School is sensitive to the privacy of this information and is committed to protecting the confidentiality of students and their families by restricting the use of and access to this information for necessary medical management only, in accordance with applicable law.

Food Allergies

Oak Meadow School is not an allergen-free environment. Parents/Guardians are expected to notify the School Nurse of all known allergies, and in the case of a life-threatening allergy, parents are asked to meet with the School Nurse to formulate an individualized allergy care plan. If a student requires an Epi-Pen, a parental consent form and a physician's order should be filled out prior to the student's entry to school. The Epi-Pen must be provided by the parent/guardian, and will be kept in an easily accessible place. Many members of the Oak Meadow faculty are trained in CPR and the administration of Epi-Pens. Students with life-threatening food allergies must provide their own lunches and their own snacks while at school.

Asthma Management

Parents of students with asthma should contact the School Nurse prior to the start of school to discuss an asthma management plan.

Head Lice

It is the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Harvard School of Public Policy, and the National Association of School Nurses that the management of head lice should not disrupt the educational process. Lice are not a major health problem since they do not transmit diseases or cause permanent problems. Nonetheless, the School understands the unpleasantness of the condition and the desirability of limiting its spread across the school community. The School therefore has a "no nit" policy.

Students with any nits will be sent home. A parent will be contacted by phone and written information will be sent home with grade level students.

It will be at the discretion of the School Nurse whether to check other students or the whole classroom.

In all cases where nits have been found, the student must be treated before returning to school the following day. The School Nurse must evaluate the student before he/she returns to the classroom. All nits must be removed by the seventh (7th) day following treatment if the student is to remain in school.

On occasion, exceptions from this guideline will occur, and the professional judgment of the School Nurse will be followed.

Toilet Training

The School expects that students who enter Children's House will be toilet trained by the time they begin school. This means they must be able to determine when they need to go to the bathroom and be able to express that need to a teacher. They should also be able to handle their clothing and their own toileting needs.

Emergencies

The School Nurse will attempt to contact parents regarding illness or injury, minor or serious. In the event of a serious emergency, an ambulance will be called, the student will be taken to the nearest hospital emergency room, and a parent will be notified immediately. Emergency situations arising on campus will generally be referred to Emerson Hospital, which is close to school. The School neither diagnoses nor treats injuries that occur on non-school time, but does offer temporary first aid for problems that arise during school. If a student complains of a persistent ear ache, sore throat, rashes, or joint pain, such complaints warrant a call to the student's pediatrician.

Parents are expected to keep Emergency Forms up-to-date. Please remember, it is most important that the School have current home, work, and cell phone numbers for parents/guardians, day care providers, or others (relatives, friends, or neighbors) who routinely assume temporary care of the student if the student's parent(s) cannot be reached.

Parents will be notified of an illness or injury that may require follow-up medical care. A "Statement of Permission and Release Consent" form and "Permission for Emergency Medical and Surgical Treatment" must be on file for every student, allowing the School to obtain necessary medical assistance.

XI. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Tutoring

Learning differences can be encountered in the classrooms that cause student, teacher, and parent concern. The teacher is always the first line of remediation and diagnosis, and it is the teacher who offers suggestions to parents about home assistance or teacher help. The teacher knows the student's history from the student's file and has the kind of daily learning encounters that can best identify problems and suggest skill-building extra help. If problems persist, more diagnostic testing might be recommended, perhaps in consultation with the Director of Student Services. If extra content or skill work is advisable after these steps, the School, in conversation with parents and teacher, might recommend tutoring.

Tutoring is typically mandated only for a defined period of time, until a student can return to working comfortably without assistance, so that the full extent of the program can be part of each student's daily routine. Students are expected to use tutoring infrequently and with specific goals that are temporary. The School's resources are designed to assist students individually when needed over the long term, so dependence on tutoring is neither desirable nor necessary. Time available during the day is best used on program requirements, homework assignments, and meetings with teachers. Tutoring arrangements are best made off campus at times convenient for families and not in conflict with regular school obligations.

The School does not have an approved list of tutors, although we have worked productively with some over a number of years, nor do we have a review or evaluation system that assesses tutors' pedagogical skills or places them under any kind of school supervision.

Outside Testing/Evaluation

In some instances, a student's academic difficulties may indicate that outside testing or evaluation is appropriate. In such instances, the School can help parents explore potential resources and may make the necessary arrangements for such testing or evaluation.

When parents arrange for such outside testing or evaluation, the School strongly recommends that this information be shared with the School, in order to enhance the School's ability to assist the student.

Accommodations

Oak Meadow does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of learning differences that may be reasonably accommodated. The School will discuss with families of applicants with known learning differences whether the School will be able to offer their children the appropriate accommodations to help them be successful at the School.

The School is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are provided with equal access to all of the School's programs and services, in accordance with applicable law. For students who need additional support or curricular adjustments, the School requires documentation indicating that the student's disability substantially limits a major life activity, including learning. Students who present the School with appropriate documentation of disability will be granted those requested academic accommodations that are supported by the documentation and considered reasonable in this educational setting. Any adjustments to the academic program would be made through an interactive process between the student and the Head of School, the Program Director, and lead teacher. No waivers of academic graduation requirements will be granted to students.

Even after supportive services and accommodations have been put in place, a student still may not be able to fulfill his or her academic requirements satisfactorily. In such instances, the Head of School and/or the Director of Student Services or other support personnel may notify the student's parents that the accommodations put into place may not suffice to ensure the student's success at Oak Meadow. At that time, the Head of School and/or the Director of Student Services, and/or the program level Director, the student (if age appropriate), and his or her parents will discuss whether it makes sense for the student to continue at the school. If there is a disagreement, the School will decide, in its sole discretion, whether to issue a re-enrollment contract to the student.

Mental Health and Other Counseling

The School maintains a list of referrals for educational, intellectual, psychological, or speech and language evaluations, should parents/guardians wish to consult with the School regarding the necessity for such an evaluation. Parents who need guidance in this area are encouraged to consult the Head of School or the Director of Student Services. It is recommended that the results of such evaluations be shared with school personnel so that appropriate recommendations can be implemented.

Confidentiality

Members of the school community commit themselves to maintaining appropriate professional tact and discretion with regard to confidential information they receive. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the Head of School, appropriate administrators, outside professionals, law enforcement officers, parent/guardians or others when there is a compelling reason for doing so, including, without limitation, in cases of health and safety emergencies (when students or others are in imminent danger of harm); when there is concern about an individual's ability to function academically, emotionally, physically, and/or mentally within the school environment; or when legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

The School is committed to the highest standards of care for its students. The following policy is intended to ensure that students are protected from inappropriate or hurtful actions by adults responsible for their care.

Under Massachusetts law, all professionals responsible for the care of children are required to report suspected abuse or neglect of children under the age of eighteen (18). Massachusetts law requires professionals responsible for the care of children (including, but not limited to, teachers, school administrators, guidance counselors, etc.) to make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) is suffering from abuse or neglect (defined below). The responsibility to report rests both on the School and also on all professionals responsible for the care of children who are associated with the School. The following procedure is established to ensure that reports are made in a timely and effective manner, and that information about students and their families is treated in a way that is respectful of their privacy.

Procedure

When an employee learns of a situation of possible neglect or abuse, the employee should consult immediately with the Head of School (or his or her designee) about the situation so that appropriate action can be taken to protect the child and timely reports can be made to DCF. The Head of School (or the Head of School's designee) will review the information immediately and may consult with the School Nurse, and, if appropriate, the child's family, legal counsel and/or a consultant specializing in the care and protection of children. If the abuse or neglect is suspected to come from the student's family, an approach

to protecting the student will be defined and the family may be notified of the School's obligation to report the information to DCF.

If the Head of School determines that a report should be made to DCF, the Head of School (or his or her designee) will generally make the first report to DCF by telephone call. As required by law, a written report will follow within forty-eight (48) hours after making the oral report. However, by law, anyone who has a reasonable belief that a student is being abused or neglected may make a report to DCF at any time. School personnel, as "mandated reporters," are obligated to make a report to DCF if they have a reasonable belief that a student is being abused or neglected. In the event it is not clear whether conduct reaches a level of reportable abuse or neglect or there is a disagreement between an employee and the School's administration, any party who believes that the incident rises to the threshold for making a report is expected to make the report. Once again, the responsibility to report rests both on the individual professional and the School.

Definitions

DCF regulations (110 C.M.R. § 2.00) define "abuse" as the non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under age 18 which causes, or creates a substantial risk of, physical or emotional injury; or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth; or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child under the care of that individual. This definition is not dependent upon location (*i.e.*, abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

The term "neglect" means failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (*i.e.*, neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

The term "physical injury" means death; or fracture of a bone, a subdural hematoma, burns, impairment of any organ, and any other such nontrivial injury; or soft tissue swelling or skin bruising, depending on such factors as the child's age, circumstances under which the injury occurred and the number and location of bruises; or addiction to a drug or drugs at birth; or failure to thrive.

The term "emotional injury" means an impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior.

A "caretaker" can be a child's parent, step-parent, guardian, or any household member entrusted with the responsibility for a child's health or welfare. In addition, any other person entrusted with the responsibility for a child's health or welfare, both in and out of the child's home, regardless of age, is considered a caretaker. Examples may include: relatives from outside the home, teachers or school staff in a school setting, workers at day care, and child care centers (including babysitters), foster parents, staff at a group care facility, or persons charged with caring for children in any other comparable setting.

XII. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Enrollment Contracts

An enrollment contract is deemed accepted only after it has been signed by the Head of School. Once accepted by the School, an enrollment contract constitutes a legally binding agreement between the parties, and the parents' obligation to pay the tuition in accordance with the terms of the contract is absolute. In the event that the parents of a student fail to honor their tuition payment obligation in a timely manner, the student may be suspended from school during the period while the non-payment continues, or dismissed from school (at the sole discretion of the Head of School).

Financial Aid/Tuition Assistance

Oak Meadow School is committed, to the extent that the School's finances allow, to meeting the financial needs of our families so that students may have the benefit of an Oak Meadow education. To meet this objective, a limited amount of financial aid is available and awarded on the basis of need. Families who feel the need to avail themselves of financial aid should contact the Director of Finance or the Director of Admission who will explain the application process. Financial aid funds are more likely to be available for families who complete their financial aid applications prior to the February 28 deadline.

Billing

The School uses a billing service for tuition payments. All parents sign up for this service as part of their enrollment or reenrollment process. Billing for non-tuition charges, such as enrichment or after-care, is processed directly by the Business Office.

Fundraising

The Annual Fund is the school's major fundraising activity. The support of our donors helps make possible the following enhancements:

- improvements to facilities including classrooms, playgrounds, and community space;
- additional faculty and staff training, and professional development; and
- expansion of financial aid for deserving students.

The Annual Fund helps keep tuition affordable while providing educational excellence, maintains Oak Meadow School as a financially sustainable institution, and is a tangible expression of appreciation and support for the work that Oak Meadow faculty and staff complete every day to benefit each student. Donations to the Annual Fund are tax-deductible. Donor support makes a difference in the lives of Oak Meadow students. All are invited and encouraged to support the Annual Fund.

XIII. RE-ENROLLMENT AND PARENT SUPPORT

In order to prepare for each school year, Oak Meadow School needs to have an accurate indication of the number of students who will be enrolled. Accordingly, the School begins its re-enrollment process during January of the calendar year preceding the start of the school year for which a student is to be enrolled. Qualified re-enrolling students and their siblings have priority when enrollment contracts are submitted and accepted by the School with the applicable non-refundable deposit, as stated in the tuition payment guidelines, by February 15. After February 15, Oak Meadow School will accept enrollment contracts from other qualified applicants.

Re-Admission Policy

There are circumstances that may lead the School to question a student's ability to be successful at the school. In most cases, these issues are considered, and decisions are made, prior to the issuance of re-enrollment contracts. If an advisable course of action remains unclear to the School at the time enrollment contracts are issued, families are notified that the enrollment contract will be withheld until a decision can be made in the best interests of the student and the School. Oak Meadow will continue to work with the family to determine if it is the appropriate setting for the student. In such cases, an enrollment contract will be issued only when it is clear, in the sole discretion of the School, that the student should continue at the School.

Parental Comportment and Support for School Policies

At Oak Meadow, we believe that a positive relationship between the School and parents or guardians is essential to the fulfillment of the School's mission. We recognize that effective relationships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, and open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be achieved.

Oak Meadow understands and appreciates that parents and guardians may employ different means to meet the expectations and responsibilities expressed in this policy. Nevertheless, Oak Meadow at all times reserves the right to dismiss a student whose parent, guardian, family member, or other adult involved with the student, in the sole judgment of the School, fails to comply with this or any other policy or procedure of the School, engages in conduct either on or off the school's property that could undermine the authority of the School's administration, and/or otherwise behaves in a manner that is unbecoming of a member of the school community. The School reserves the right to refuse re-enrollment of a student if the School, in its sole discretion, believes the actions of a parent or guardian, on or off the school's property, make a positive, constructive relationship impossible, or otherwise may interfere with the School's accomplishment of its mission and/or educational goals.

To assist in creating the most effective relationship, the School expects that parents will observe the following guidelines.

1. Share in the School's vision.

- Understand and support the School's mission, philosophy, policies, and procedures.
- Understand that curriculum decisions are the purview of the faculty and administration of the school.
- Support the School's disciplinary process, and understand that the School's authority in such matters is final.
- Be supportive of the School's commitment to a diverse and inclusive community.
- Acknowledge that the payment of tuition is an investment in the education of the student, not an investment of ownership in the school.

- Support the School's emphasis on sustainable practices.
2. **Provide a home environment that supports the intellectual, physical, and emotional growth of the student.**
 - Create a schedule and structure that supports a student's study and completion of homework requirements.
 - Encourage students to work independently and not to rely on outside help (tutors, parents, the Internet) inappropriately.
 - Be aware of the student's online activities and use of computers, television, and video games.
 - Encourage integrity and civility in the student.
 - Be a role model, especially when it comes to behavior at school and at athletic events.
 - Encourage the student's participation in events that promote high standards; actively discourage participation in events that can lead to illegal or unwise behavior.
 3. **Participate in the establishment of a home/school and school community relationship built on communication, collaboration, and mutual respect.**
 - Provide a home environment that supports positive attitudes toward the school.
 - Treat each member of the community with respect, assume good will, and maintain a collaborative approach when conflicts and challenges arise.
 - Help build and maintain a positive school environment by not participating in or tolerating gossip.
 - Maintain tact and discretion with regard to confidential information.
 - Respect the School's responsibility to do what is best for the entire community, while recognizing the needs of an individual student.
 - Seek to resolve problems and secure information through appropriate channels (*i.e.*, teacher/advisor/counselor, Head of School, in that order).
 - Acknowledge the value of the educational experience at Oak Meadow by making regular and timely school attendance a priority, scheduling non-emergency appointments outside the classroom day.
 - Support the School through volunteerism and attendance at school events.
 - Financially support the school to the best of one's ability.
 - Share with the School any religious, cultural, medical, or personal information that the School may need to best serve students and the school community.

APPENDIX A

Oak Meadow School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan – revised 9/01/2014

I. Introduction.

At Oak Meadow School (“Oak Meadow”), we want all members of our school community to treat each other with respect and courtesy. As stated in our mission statement, “We cultivate confident, independent and compassionate human beings.” Confidence, independence and compassion are necessary attributes to attain the goal of a better and more peaceful future. Confident students are willing and able to voice their opinions. Independent students know they can, through their own efforts, change the world. Compassionate students care for the welfare of others. Oak Meadow strives to cultivate responsible citizens of the world. Oak Meadow shares Maria Montessori’s belief that “the child is both hope and promise for mankind.”

It is the policy of Oak Meadow to strive to provide and maintain a safe learning environment for all members of its community; one that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, retaliation, unlawful discrimination, harassment, or any other verbal, physical or emotional misconduct that disrupts the learning environment or makes it unsafe.

The Oak Meadow Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the “Plan”) is published in response to the Massachusetts law against bullying and is an integral part of Oak Meadow’s efforts to promote learning and to prevent behavior that can impede the learning process. This Plan spells out Oak Meadow’s comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, as required by the law.

Oak Meadow recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

This Plan is consistent with broader protections at Oak Meadow against discrimination, harassment, bullying and retaliation that appear in the *Parent and Student Handbook* and the *Employee Handbook*.

It is important that this Plan be understood by all members of the Oak Meadow community. The Head of School is responsible for its implementation and administration. The Head of School may delegate authority for implementation and administration of this policy. Questions and concerns related to this Plan may be referred to the Head of School or his designee.

II. Definitions.

Several of the following definitions are drawn directly from the Massachusetts law against bullying, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O. In some instances, Oak Meadow has added language to these definitions to clarify them, but not to alter their meaning or scope.

Aggressor. An aggressor is a student or a member of a school faculty/staff who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, as defined, towards another person.

Bullying. Bullying is the use by one or more students or by a member of a school faculty/staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at Oak Meadow for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at Oak Meadow; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of Oak Meadow

Bullying includes cyber-bullying as defined below.

Cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which may include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying also includes:

- the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or
- the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions listed in the bullying definition.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions listed in the definition of bullying.

Hostile Environment. A hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the Oak Meadow environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education or a member of the faculty/staff's work.

Parent. A parent is a student's mother, father, or guardian.

Retaliation. Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation about bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Faculty/Staff. Faculty/staff members include, but are not limited to, teachers, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, support staff, or a paraprofessional.

Target. A target is a student or a member of the faculty/staff, against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Oak Meadow Community Expectations and Legal Definitions. It is important to bear in mind that stricter standards of behavior may apply under Oak Meadow's policies in order to prevent inappropriate verbal and physical conduct before a person has been subject to harm that may result from bullying or cyber-bullying as it is defined under the Massachusetts law. For example, although the law defines bullying as "repeated use" of certain expressions, acts, or gestures, Oak Meadow may impose disciplinary measures and other corrective action in a case of a single expression, act or gesture, if Oak Meadow determines that it is of sufficient severity to warrant disciplinary measures or other remedial action or that the repetition of that expression, act, or gesture might result in bullying.

III. Policy Against Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, And Retaliation.

Oak Meadow expressly prohibits any form of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation about bullying, or witnesses, or has reliable information about bullying.

This policy applies to all of Oak Meadow students and faculty/staff; it also may apply if one of Oak Meadow's current students is subjected to bullying by a former student who comes on Oak Meadow grounds or who engages in cyber-bullying against one of Oak Meadow's current students.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at Oak Meadow, at Oak Meadow-sponsored activities, functions, or programs, on Oak Meadow's grounds, on grounds adjacent to Oak Meadow's grounds, at Oak Meadow-sponsored or Oak Meadow-related activities (whether on or off Oak Meadow's grounds), on vehicles owned, leased, or used by Oak Meadow, or through use of technology owned, leased, or used by Oak Meadow.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are also prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not Oak Meadow-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Oak Meadow, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at Oak Meadow for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at Oak Meadow, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of Oak Meadow.

IV. Procedures for Students, Faculty, Staff, Parents, or Others to Report Bullying or Retaliation.

A target of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, or a student or parent who has witnessed an incident of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, or who is made aware of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation or otherwise has relevant information about bullying, cyber-bullying, retaliation or related conduct prohibited by this policy, is urged to promptly report the matter in person, in writing, electronically by email, or through a telephone message to the Head of School or his designee. The Head of School or his designee will acknowledge receipt of the report and generally will memorialize the report in writing if it was made orally.

Faculty/staff members who witness or otherwise become aware of bullying or cyber-bullying in violation of this policy, or any retaliation against a student in violation of this policy, is required to report it immediately to the Head of School or his designee. Any faculty/staff member who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation but does not report it, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Faculty/staff may not make reports under this policy anonymously. Oak Meadow also urges students and their parents/guardians not to make reports anonymously, but anonymous reports by parents/guardians or students of either bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation are permitted, although they will not be guaranteed anonymity in the event that law enforcement becomes involved. Although there are circumstances in which an anonymous report can sometimes be better than none at all, it is more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously, and no disciplinary action will be taken against a student *solely* on the basis of the anonymous report.

While Oak Meadow cannot promise strict confidentiality, because information must be shared in order to conduct an effective investigation, Oak Meadow releases information concerning complaints and investigations of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation only on a legitimate need-to-know basis.

If a member of the faculty/staff witnesses an act of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation in progress, the faculty/staff member is expected to take reasonable steps to stop the act by communicating directly with the person whose behavior is considered unacceptable, offensive, or inappropriate.

V. Response to a Report of Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, or Retaliation.

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, the Head of School or his designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan, pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a faculty/staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the alleged aggressor’s schedule and/or access to the target. The Head of School or his designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as may be appropriate, including implanting protocols for protecting individuals who report or witness bullying, or who are interviewed regarding bullying.

The Head of School or his designee may, at their sole discretion, work with faculty/staff, or other persons to restore a sense of safety. The Head of School or his designee may, at their sole discretion, work with faculty/staff, or other persons to protect from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

The Head of School or his designee will promptly investigate the alleged bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation. Steps may include, but are not limited to, interviewing the alleged target(s) and aggressor(s), other students, faculty/staff members, parents, or other persons who may have knowledge of the alleged bullying or alleged retaliation. The Head of School or his designee will remind the alleged aggressor, alleged target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited. To the extent practicable, given the obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Head of School or his designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Head of School will maintain a written record of the investigation.

All persons involved in an investigation should understand that false or exaggerated accusations can be extremely damaging to innocent persons; therefore, all claims require the

honest and full disclosure of acts by all involved persons. Any student found to have made a false allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action. If, as the result of an investigation, the Head of School determines that faculty/staff should also be subject to disciplinary action, such disciplinary action will be handled in accordance with the policies set forth in the *Employee Handbook*.

If the Head of School or his designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Head of School or his designee will:

- generally notify the parents of the target and the aggressor of the determination and Oak Meadow's procedures for responding to the bullying or retaliation; and
- inform the target's parent of actions that Oak Meadow personnel will take to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.

Nothing prohibits the Head of School or his designee from contacting a parent of an alleged target or alleged aggressor about a report of bullying or retaliation prior to a determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred.

There are a range of disciplinary actions that may be taken (from educating to suspending or dismissing the aggressor) in the event that the Head of School or his designee determines that bullying or retaliating has occurred. The Head of School or his designee may, at their sole discretion, consult with teachers, staff members, or other persons when determining appropriate disciplinary actions. The disciplinary actions shall balance the need to teach appropriate behavior with the need for accountability.

At any point after receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, the Head of School or his designee will notify the local law enforcement agency if the Head of School or his designee has a reasonable basis to believe criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In appropriate circumstances, such as when a crime may have been committed or a child may have been abused or neglected as reportable under M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A, law enforcement or another appropriate government agency may be notified.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Head of School (or other designee of the School who conducted the investigation) will meet individually with the target(s) of the alleged incident, the alleged aggressor(s) and relevant parents/guardians (if the target was a student) to report the results of the investigation and, if disciplinary or other corrective action has been determined to be appropriate, to inform the parties of the steps that will be taken to correct the situation. The amount of information provided in these meetings, however, may be limited by confidentiality laws protecting student and employee records.

Follow-up contacts may be made with any student or other person found to have been targeted in violation of this policy and his/her relevant parents/guardians (if the target was a student) to inquire as to whether there have been any further incidents.

The Head of School or his designee may refer aggressors or targets and appropriate family members to counseling or other appropriate services.

In order to maintain confidentiality of records, the Head of School or his designee may not disclose to a parent any student record information regarding an alleged target or alleged aggressor who is a student and who is not the parent's child. The amount of information provided, however, may be limited by confidentiality laws protecting student and employee records.

Follow-up contact may be made with any student or other person found to have been targeted in violation of this policy and his/her relevant parents/guardians (if the target was a student) to inquire as to whether there have been any further incidents. If Oak Meadow receives a report of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation involving students from another school, the Head of School may notify the appropriate administrator of the other school so that both may take appropriate action.

VI. Prevention of Bullying, Cyber-Bullying And Retaliation.

Students at Oak Meadow are taught that as members of the community, they have a right to be treated with civility and respect and are expected to treat others in the same manner. Our curriculum emphasizes respect for differences, and teachers are clear in their expectations for student behavior. Furthermore, parents/guardians are notified and asked to reinforce standards for membership in the Oak Meadow community.

The *Parent and Student Handbook* is reviewed with students and shared with parents/guardians each fall. This Handbook includes, among other rules of conduct, explicit policies regarding prohibitions against bullying, harassment and retaliation, as well as the acceptable use of technology at the school.

Meetings of all students and teachers are used by the Head of School to help students be well informed about what is expected of them and to reinforce positive conduct. Health classes focus on peer relationships and help empower students to take action if they feel targeted or if they witness other students engaging in bullying or other unacceptable behavior.

The administration and faculty recognize that expectations for student conduct extend to corridors, locker rooms, lunch, recess, carpool, buses, and the like. Oak Meadow strives to ensure that ample adult supervision is provided on the school's premises, including in the corridors and locker rooms, at lunch and at recess, and on transportation throughout the school day as well as at events sponsored by Oak Meadow.

Oak Meadow conducts an annual training for faculty/staff (and more often, as deemed necessary by the Head of School), which includes: (a) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (b) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (c) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying; (d) research findings on bullying, including information about students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (e) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (f) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

VII. Dissemination of this Plan.

This Plan is referenced in the *Parent and Student Handbook* which is distributed annually to Oak Meadow parents and students. This Plan will be included in the Oak Meadow *Employee Handbook*, which is distributed annually to Oak Meadow employees. This Plan will be posted on Oak Meadow's website, www.oakmeadow.org. The policy shall be reviewed at least biennially, and shall be updated in accordance with Massachusetts law and with practices of Oak Meadow.

VIII. Conclusion.

This Plan, which is consistent with Oak Meadow's mission and policies that appear in its *Parent and Student Handbook* and *Employee Handbook*, outlines Oak Meadow's bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation policy and is consistent with Oak Meadow's ongoing commitment to fostering a safe, supportive, and respectful learning environment for all members of the Oak Meadow community. This Plan and the policies incorporated into it are intended to: (a) prevent bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation at Oak Meadow and in the Oak Meadow community; (b) encourage students, their parents/guardians and faculty/staff to have confidence in Oak Meadow's policies and procedures and to come forward promptly if a student or other member of the Oak Meadow community is subject to conduct that is prohibited by this Plan or any other of Oak Meadow's policies; and (c) implement appropriate discipline and other corrective measures when they are found to be warranted.

APPENDIX B

**Annual Notification, September 1, 2015
Required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act**

September 1, 2015

To: Faculty, Staff, and Parents of Oak Meadow School Parents

**From: William Perrine, Head of School
Oak Meadow School
2 Old Pickard Lane
Littleton, MA 01460**

This notification is required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHER, 40 CRF PART 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substances Control Act).

An Asbestos Management Plan has been developed for the Oak Meadow School. It is accompanied by an Architect Statement that indicates the absence of asbestos materials.

Facilities Manager, Jeffrey Nelson, is trained by the Division of Occupational Safety in the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. He is the designated person in this plan.

This plan is available and accessible to the public at the Oak Meadow School Business Office.

Bill Perrine
Signature

9/1/2015
Date

