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PARENT/ STUDENT HANDBOOK

2019-20

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

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Fax Number 978-486-3269

EXTENSIONS

Head of School – Jay Scheurle Ext. 224

Director of Beginners, Children’s House & Lower Elementary – Kellie McElhinney Ext. 257

Director of Upper Elementary & Middle School,
Upper Elementary 6 Lead Teacher – Kirsten Wright Ext. 223

School Nurse – Katie Rae Ext. 267

Learning Specialist – Meredith Katter Ext. 258

Director of Communications – Laura Carrier Ext. 261

Director of Enrollment Management, Admissions – Leslie Grossman Ext. 226

Director of Finance & Operations – Sue Wood Ext. 222

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afterschool@oakmeadow.org

Childcare, Before Care & After Care, Summer Program Antonella Fuchser
afuchser@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 all aspects of school life. 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jay".

Jay Scheurle

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 lifelong 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 thirteen 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.

In 2000, a multi-phased renovation began, which consisted of two Children's House classrooms, and a Middle School wing. In 2009, the School completed construction of The Rizzi Center for Athletics and Performing Arts. The School also added a fine arts studio, as well as several community gathering spaces and administrative offices.

In 2016, the School added a program for toddler-aged children, Beginners. In addition, a Campus Master Plan was adopted and outdoor spaces were upgraded and expanded, with emphasis on outdoor classroom spaces for Beginners, Lower and Upper Elementary. A sports court and field enhance play opportunities for students.

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.

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 an excellent 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 a single concept or skill at a time, in the sequence through which they can best be mastered 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 mentor 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 15 months – 3 years, depending on readiness

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

Beginners

Our Beginners curriculum is founded on the premise that students learn by doing. The classroom design, materials, and daily routine support each child's emerging self-regulation. A student's day

will include activities to promote speech and language development, pre-math skills and exposure to mathematical concepts, art and music experiences, science, and practical life activities. The teacher specializes in child development of this age group, including fine and gross motor development, cognitive skills, and the importance of a balance of instruction, exploration, and playtime. Most days, children spend time outdoors in a playground that is specifically designed to meet the needs for this age group. Children who begin in the program at 15 – 18 months are generally still in diapers. Often, they proceed with “toilet learning” as they see their older classmates develop toileting independence.

Children’s House

Students entering the first year of Children’s House must be 3 years old by September 1. Students in the Children’s House program benefit from the Montessori three-year cycle and multi-age classroom.

In the Children’s House classroom environment, students explore a myriad of ways to engage deeply and meaningfully with concrete manipulative Montessori materials that enable students to develop language, math and science constructs, order, movement, and refinement of senses. Through repetition with the materials, students experience opportunities for greater challenge and deeper understanding. Students internalize concepts throughout the curriculum and develop executive functioning skills that prepare them for future success.

Social and emotional learning builds the foundation for becoming responsible global citizens. Lessons are taught proactively throughout the day with hands-on activities, themed stories, visual cues, role-playing, guided discussions and modeling by both teachers and older classmates.

Elementary - Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary

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 ensure strong progress across subject areas. With a low student/teacher ratio and the support of a learning specialist team, teachers are able to devote attention to each student to determine learning style and interests and allowing for immediate feedback between students and teachers. 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.

The curriculum engages each student’s imagination and creativity while working with concrete materials to explore academic areas. Students quickly discover abstract methods to utilize throughout their academic experience. The program is interdisciplinary, hands-on, experiential, and open-ended, presented in an environment of mutual respect and appreciation. Lessons encourage self-discipline and enhance the student’s ability to concentrate.

Lower Elementary students are immersed in a rich curriculum of geography, cultural studies and history, organized around essential questions for inquiry and understanding, providing deep

immersion into world cultures. Students gain the understanding of concrete mathematical concepts that will prepare them for future studies in more abstract concepts such as algebra and geometry. Students begin to gain an understanding of the scientific method for exploration in biology, physics, chemistry, and earth sciences. They explore the importance of the natural world around them and begin to sharpen their senses through specially designed sensorial lessons.

The Upper Elementary program challenges students academically while promoting confidence and independence. Students learn to problem solve, to synthesize information, to work collaboratively, to think critically and analytically, and to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas verbally, in writing, and through project-based work. Each week, Upper Elementary students travel to the Middle School where they participate in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) lab experiences with Middle School science and math teachers.

Middle School

Montessori middle school education emphasizes and puts into practice the idea that students take greater responsibility for their academic, social, and emotional growth, while supported by the partnering team of parents and teachers. The Middle School curriculum includes humanities, math, science, Spanish, drama, art, music, STEM, nature, and physical education/health and wellness. Students participate in numerous outside-of-the-classroom experiences and other experiential learning opportunities. For example, Middle School students run their own businesses on behalf of the community, serve as classroom volunteers and peer mentors, support local and world charities, and attend the Montessori Model UN in New York in alternate years.

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 Middle School is founded on the belief that each individual student's strengths and passions should be cultivated and celebrated.

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 as they explore and understand their place in the world.

Tests and Assessments

Student assessment, through observation, dialogue, testing, project-based learning, and portfolios, is an essential part of the Montessori classroom approach. On an ongoing basis, teachers assess their students' work and progress to plan their next lessons and to individualize instruction. Providing regular feedback allows students to take ownership of their learning by making informed decisions. 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, while always ensuring that the student is prepared for their next step in education.

Students in sixth grade and above participate in the Educational Records Board testing, which covers mathematics and language areas. Although this is often a student's first exposure to multiple choice questions and standardized testing, Oak Meadow students generally perform extremely well on these tests, often exceeding levels of both public and private school peers.

Homework

Each program level has specific guidelines about homework based on the developmental needs of the students. It is important that students develop a responsible approach toward their homework by 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, but also allowing them to self-manage as much as they are able.

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.

Progress Reports and Conferences

At Oak Meadow, progress reports are written evaluations detailing how a student is progressing through the curriculum. These reports do not use traditional letter grades, but rather measure specifically how the student's skills are developing based on the classroom environment and their academic progress. Progress reports are prepared by the classroom teachers as well as teachers of special subjects.

Beginners Program

A daily journal with information about the child's day is maintained in the classroom. Parents are expected to review this journal, make their own comments as appropriate, and arrange for meetings as necessary to support the child's progress. Parents receive written reports and have conferences twice during the academic year.

Children's House

Parents receive written reports twice a year from their child's teacher. These reports are given to parents prior to conference days in November and May. 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 written report and conference is offered in late fall to discuss first semester progress and what to expect during the second semester. Each Elementary student receives a final written report summarizing his/her academic year, and a conference is offered at the end of May. Parents and teachers may arrange for a meeting at any time to discuss their child's progress or to discuss specific concerns.

Middle School Program

Middle School students receive progress reports informing parents about their student's academic and social growth during the school year from the perspective of the Middle School team teachers. Students and parents receive written reports three times yearly. Reports are sent home with the students in anticipation of conferences in the fall and spring. Student-led conferences are the result of thorough preparation by students and reflective of their ownership of their own learning. Final progress reports are sent home in June after the end of the school year. Parents and teachers may arrange for a meeting at any time to discuss their child's progress or to discuss specific concerns.

Placement and Progression

Teachers 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. In addition, each student transitioning has opportunities to visit and experience the new program level.

Students do not move from class to class or from program to program during the academic year, but rather remain in the same class for the entire year, providing them with structural consistency and 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 the area's top private and public schools consistently report that Oak Meadow'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 and the Director of Secondary Placement help students and parents navigate the transition from Oak Meadow to public and private high 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

Children completing Children's House, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary participate in a Moving Up Ceremony that is held on the day after the last day of school. Students are expected to dress up 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's calendar.

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 an important issue facing educators and their students today, and academic honesty is the part of the work teachers and students 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.

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. If your child will be absent, email both the classroom teacher and Program Director.

Beginners, Children's House, and Lower Elementary parents, no later than 8:00 a.m.
Program Director, Kellie McElhinney kmcelhinney@oakmeadow.org

Upper Elementary and Middle School parents no later than 7:30 a.m.
Program Director, Kirsten Wright kwright@oakmeadow.org

If a child is not reported absent by 9AM, the School will contact the parent to determine the cause of a student's absence.

Consistent attendance and timely arrival to school supports optimal learning experiences for all children, both as individuals and as a part of a classroom community. Oak Meadow supports families in this effort, while also understanding that occasional and sometimes prolonged absences are inevitable. If a child is missing more than six days of school in a six-month period or is regularly tardy, parents will be contacted by the Program Director to remedy the concern through discussion, development and successful implementation of an agreed upon plan. In the event that attendance concerns remain after the plan is implemented, the Head of School will meet with parents.

Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals

Timeliness is strongly encouraged to ensure a smooth start to the day. Parents are expected to email their child's teacher and the Program Director (see above) when it is known in advance that a student will be arriving late or dismissed early. In the event that there is an unexpected dismissal during the school day, call the school and notify the front desk receptionist in advance. The front desk receptionist 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.

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 desk receptionist. 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 receptionist. Visitors and unknown persons will be asked to identify themselves and to sign in.

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, and fire drills occur multiple times per year.

Dress Code and Appearance

Students are expected to maintain a high standard of cleanliness while at school. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather conditions and the day's activities. Frayed or torn items are not allowed. All outdoor and "spare" clothing must be clearly marked with the student's name. Children may not wear tank tops or tops with spaghetti straps. T-shirts and polo shirts are preferable. 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. While indoors, students wear "indoor" shoes which are not worn outside and therefore do not track dirt into the School. Open-toed shoes, sandals, and crocs are not appropriate. Shoes are expected to be worn during all indoor and outdoor activities.

Permission to Leave Campus

Students may not leave campus without permission.

Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation

At Oak Meadow, parents are valued as partners in the education of children. This includes each child's social and emotional development. Our philosophy of teaching and learning at Oak Meadow is rooted in the conviction that a child's intellectual, social, and emotional growth are inseparable. Focusing intentionally on each child's social and emotional development, at school and at home, develops skills that are invaluable in school and life, including an ability to better achieve one's academic potential. Parents at Oak Meadow are encouraged to understand and embrace this philosophy of teaching and learning and its implementation through a proactive approach to discipline (please read next section) and also student learning as students improve in their ability to navigate the inevitable daily challenges of life through growing self-awareness, self-management, social problem solving, and empathetic communication .

Because we are a school that focuses on the social-emotional lives of children, this significantly shapes our approach to issues of discipline that occur when students disregard behavioral expectations either intentionally or unintentionally or act in ways that are unkind or disrespectful to others. Our focus is primarily on proactive skill-building. This includes the development of social-emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, positive relationship skills, and responsible decision making. It's essential to build the solid foundations for these social-emotional skills during your child's school years at Oak Meadow. We want parents to know that it is normal for children to test the rules and have missteps socially as they learn to relate to others. This is part of every child's normal learning experience. At Oak Meadow, we are respectful in the way we hold children accountable for these errors in social judgment. Our teachers establish clearly defined rules and boundaries, while also providing an environment that provides space, freedom, and support for students to learn from their own mistakes. These rules, boundaries, and freedoms are designed to help students value appropriate behavior, understand the consequences of their actions, make amends when their actions or words impact others, learn from their mistakes, and provide them with opportunities to learn and practice the social-emotional competencies essential to success in school and life.

Given the high visibility of discussions of bullying and harassment in society and the media, it is certainly easy to understand why parents may worry that any unkind actions or words at school could rise to the level of bullying and harassment. At Oak Meadow, we partner with parents to utilize these social conflicts as opportunities for students to be carefully guided to learn and practice their emerging social-emotional skills and to make amends to anyone involved in the social situation. If you become aware of a social conflict at school that affects your child or other children, please first discuss this with the teacher. When such incidents occur, parents can be assured that teachers are actively working with the students and parents involved. This work includes developing and implementing specific learning plans for the students involved to ensure that amends to students who have been directly affected have been made, appropriate consequences have been implemented, and school rules and boundaries are respected moving forward. Our community response to social conflicts is to minimize judgment and maximize social emotional learning. In the event that the parent doesn't feel comfortable bringing the matter to the teacher, it is our hope that he or she will reach out to the program director or head of school, who will help facilitate the best path for the parent, teacher, and administrator to work in partnership to address the concern.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Bullying and harassment are not typical or routine social behaviors at school, and as such they are unacceptable and interrupted by teachers, parents, and administrators. If your child is experiencing repeated behaviors from an aggressor resulting in physical or emotional harm, please carefully read the school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan which can be found in Appendix A of this document. We believe it is of utmost importance that all students feel safe at school. Sustaining a culture of self-advocacy at Oak Meadow, for students and adults, is crucial to accomplishing this end. Students are encouraged to speak with parents about what's happening at school. If a student witnesses or experiences anything defined as bullying or harassment in Appendix A, please speak with your child's teacher immediately. Teachers will discuss with parents any specific incidents you bring to their attention, and help to clarify if and when a particular incident rises to the level of bullying or harassment. It is important for students to understand that we all have a responsibility to help in sustaining a safe and respectful school community by reporting any inappropriate behaviors or words. We want students to understand that there is a big difference between tattling and informing. Every student and adult in our community has a responsibility to inform an appropriate adult when bullying or harassment is suspected. The school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan defines our commitment to address such instances directly and effectively.

What should parents do if they are concerned about something affecting their child or the school environment?

Your child's teacher is dedicated to your child's success and wellbeing. Your child's teacher values the unique insights you have as the parent, and is committed to working in partnership with you to ensure that your child has the best learning experience possible at school. Your voice is important. Your child's teacher is interested in listening to you and seeking to understand any concerns you might have. If something occurs that concerns you, please send an email to your teacher and make an appointment to talk by phone or meet in person. Your teacher will make it a priority to set a meeting time as quickly as possible. If timeliness is imperative (there is information the teacher needs to know that is important to the day going smoothly for your child), please convey to the front desk receptionist your need to connect with the teacher as soon as possible and how you can be reached. The front desk receptionist will get a message to the teacher as soon as possible. Please refrain from entering the classroom without invitation or appointment, as it is the primary responsibility of the teacher to be present for students without interruption. Effective resolutions are most likely to occur when parents and teachers create an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness to better understanding each other's perspectives.

Because your child's teacher is the one adult at school who is most focused on your child's growth and success, we ask that you not bring concerns or issues to the attention of the program director or head of school until you have first worked to resolve the issue with your child's teacher. There are two reasons for this request. First, your child's teacher is in the best position to address any issue or concern you have about your child. Second, this is a way for the adults in the school community to set an example and be models for our children in addressing problems and

challenges directly and effectively with the people who understand them best and are closest to them.

It is important to sustain a culture of safety and respect in our school community. That is only possible when individuals have honest conversations with the individuals who are most involved in any particular situation. Complaining to other parents or adults who are not directly involved works against creating a safe and respectful community. Raising a generation of students who are effective in conflict resolution and building safe and respectful communities is one of the goals of education. It is the responsibility of the adults in our community to model this behavior for the benefit of our children and the community as a whole. If a teacher is not able to bring about a resolution to a problem raised by a parent, the program director will join the conversation with the parent and teacher. The head of school will become a partner in this process if attempts to resolve a situation have been ineffective, or when the situation involves more serious infractions of school rules and boundaries.

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 according to the incident.

Electronic Communications, Computers and Acceptable Use

The Technology Acceptable Use Policy is intended to provide guidelines for behavior for technology use by students at Oak Meadow School. Because technology and devices are rapidly changing, this

policy may be amended at any time by the School, and any changes will be communicated to students, parents, and staff.

Technology in various forms is an important part of the School's curriculum, and the School emphasizes that the School's network, computers and other technology is to be used for educational purposes. Technology is integrated into the curriculum to varying degrees depending on the program. In the youngest programs, access to technology is limited to closely supervised work on school computers. Technology use increases in the elementary programs. By the time a student is in the Middle School program, he or she is using technology for classroom project research. When a student uses technology at Oak Meadow School for access to the School network or the Internet, they 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 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 as 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, texts, 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 and 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 websites or 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 to school computers from the Internet, home, or by any other means;
- carry cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices on their person without permission of their teacher; 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, in a chat room, or on a website or social networking site accessed either from within school property or elsewhere may result in disciplinary action;
- no email, voice mail or other information created or maintained on the School's network, Google's G Suite, school-related online 3rd party applications, or school-issued devices will be private or confidential (even those marked "personal" or "confidential"). The School has the right to monitor student-owned devices. The School has the right to access and monitor school-owned devices.
- in the event that any information or images displayed on a device are inappropriate or concerning to any student, the student is to close/shut off the display and notify a teacher or administrator immediately.

Every Oak Meadow parent should understand that:

- it is the responsibility of the parent to read this policy and discuss it with the student;
- the School will provide technology orientation in order to inform students of this policy;
- 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. and
- the safety and care of devices brought to school from home is the responsibility of the student and the parent(s).

Sexting

The School prohibits students from using technology devices (whether owned by the student or the school, and whether through the 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 in addition to disciplinary action, the School reserves the right to contact law enforcement should any student violate this policy.

Student Personal Devices

Accommodations to allow students to bring their personal devices such as tablets or laptops will be made on a case-by-case basis. The need to use personal devices will be assessed by the teacher and the Technology Director, based on specific learning needs. The School will not be held responsible for computer loss, theft, or damage that may occur to personal devices. Personal devices (including cell phones, tablets, etc.) must be stored securely when not in use. Student personal cell phone/tablet use is not permitted unless explicitly granted by the teacher. Smart watches should not be used for any type of communication or gaming during the school day.

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 a current email address for each parent. Email addresses will be used for school, classroom, and administrative announcements. No school and/or classroom emails are to be used for sales or marketing purposes. Contact information remains private within the school. 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 is inappropriate and may result in disciplinary action.

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.

DAILY LIFE AT SCHOOL

School Day Schedule

	Beginners	Children's House	Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary	Middle School
Drop-off	8:00 a.m.	8:20 a.m.	8:20 a.m.	8:20 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
Classes Begin	8:20 a.m.	8:40 a.m.	8:40 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	8:10 a.m.
Pick-up	11:30 a.m. (Half-day) or 3:20 - 3:30 p.m.	11:30 a.m. (Half-day) or 3:20 -3:35 p.m.	3:30 - 3:40 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	3:40 p.m.

Arrival

Arrival of Beginners Students

Weather permitting, parents bring their Beginner student to either the playground door or the classroom door. As an important part of emerging independence, Beginner students hang up their own coats and backpacks, change their shoes, and get ready for the day. Parents are encouraged to leave promptly so that the children can fully participate in their activities.

Arrival of Children's House Students

Children's House students must be walked through the playground gate to the appropriate exterior classroom door between 8:20-8:40. The classroom teacher or teacher's assistant will meet the student at the door. Classroom doors are closed at 8:40 a.m. Parents arriving after 8:40 must park their car in a parking space, walk with their child to the main entrance and wait with their child inside the School foyer until a designated staff member escorts the student to their classroom. It is important that students begin the day calmly and peacefully by participating in the start of class. Please plan ahead to arrive on time.

Arrival of Elementary Students

Parents of Elementary students are encouraged to allow the students to enter the building alone. A member of the Administrative staff will welcome the child at the curb. Parents are also encouraged to stay in their cars when dropping off and/or picking up their children. If a parent must enter the building, the parent must park in a space 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 an important part 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 Middle School 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 Beginners Students

Students are dismissed from their classroom at 11:30 a.m. for half-day morning students and between 3:20 - 3:30 p.m. for full-day students. Parents must park in a parking space and enter and exit through the main entrance.

Dismissal of Children's House Students

Students are dismissed at 11:30 a.m. for half-day morning students and 3:20 – 3:35 p.m. for full-day students. Dismissal is handled on a classroom-by-classroom basis and is communicated to parents during orientation. Parents must park in a parking space and meet their child at the designated location.

Dismissal of Elementary and Middle School Students

Lower Elementary students are dismissed at 3:30 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 Main School entrance. Parents of all Elementary and Middle School students are welcome to stay in their cars to pick up their children. If a parent must enter the building, the parent must park in a parking space.

Early Dismissals

If a student must be dismissed early, a parent should submit an email to the teacher. In the event that there is an unexpected dismissal during the school day, call the school and notify the front desk receptionist in advance. The front desk receptionist 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.

	BG	CH half-day	CH full-day	LE	UE	MS
Pick-up	2:50 - 3:00pm	11:30am	2:20-2:35pm	2:30 - 2:40pm	2:30 - 2:40pm	2:40pm

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 TV stations, but will use SchoolMessenger as an overlay to the public announcements.

When used, SchoolMessenger will 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.

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.

Additionally, a text message will be sent to the cell phones of parents who have opted into this service. Instructions for opting in will be sent to parents at the beginning of the school year.

The Oak Meadow website will also display information about delays and closings on the home page.

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.

Before and After School Care

Before Care and After Care are offered each school day for students in Children’s House and older. Before Care begins at 7:30 a.m. each morning. Students in Children’s House, Elementary, and Middle School programs can attend.

During the school year, After Care is provided from 3:35 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. for students in Children’s House, and from 3:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. for students in Beginners.

Before & After Care Information (2019-20 school year)		
After Care - Beginners Early Dismissal Wednesdays	3:30 – 6:00 p.m. 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	By registration only* See tuition & fees
Before Care - Children’s House & older	7:30 – 8:20 a.m.	\$5 per day/child
After Care – Early Dismissal Wednesdays Children’s House and older	2:30 – 3:40 p.m.	\$5 per day/child
After Care - Children’s House After Care - Lower El & Upper El	3:35 – 6:00 p.m. 3:40 – 6:00 p.m.	\$20 per day/child*

**If a student is not picked up on time, please note that there is a charge of \$1 per minute for every minute after established pick up times (see below).*

Beginners

The day for Beginners starts at 8:00 a.m. There is no separate Before Care for Beginners. After Care for Beginners is from 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. (3:00 - 6:00 on Wednesdays), and is available by registration only, five days a week. Parents register and pay for the fall term and the winter/spring term. Details are available from the Business Office. Parents of students enrolled in the morning Beginners program who fail to pick up their child by 11:30 a.m., parents who fail to pick their child up by 3:30 (3:00 on Wednesdays) and parents of students registered 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 they are late, and are expected to contact the school to give an estimated pick up time. Please be aware that our staffing is planned based on the number of students registered for after-care and this is adversely affected by late pick-ups.

After Care Hours and Fees

Students who are not picked up by their parents by 3:35 p.m. will be checked into the After Care Program. The fee for After Care is \$20.00 per day per student for care provided between 3:35 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. regardless of the amount of time the student stays after 3:35 p.m..

Additional Fee for Late 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. For After Care, this fee is paid in cash directly to the After Care staff member at the time of pick up that day; parents who are late to pick up from the morning Children's House program should submit their late fee in cash to the Business Office.

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.

After School Enrichment Program

There are various classes and lessons available through the After School Enrichment Program, which runs from 3:35 – 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/after-school-enrichment-programs. Some programs fill very quickly and the enrollment is strictly limited. Other programs may require a minimum enrollment. 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 and families are billed by the Business Office.

Parents needing full day coverage must pre-register for full-day coverage. Pre-registration determines the number of staff planned for each event. If a parent fails to pre-register for conference coverage, whether for a 30-minute slot or for full day, the request for care may not be granted if there is insufficient staff to safely run the program.

Summer Program

In the summer of 2019, the School sponsored summer programs for Beginners and Children's House for the majority of the summer. Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary programs took place during the first four weeks following the end of the school year. 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 any Summer Program weeks based on low enrollment.

School Meetings and Assemblies

Monday Morning Meeting, scheduled most weeks, is an important school-wide (Children's House through Middle School) event beginning at 9:00 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 or share ongoing projects or travels according to their program. 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 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 rental bus services or by school-owned vans. Past field trips have been to the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord, MA, 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 Nature's Classroom locations, New York City or Washington, DC. These trips complement their studies and they are an important part of the curriculum. 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. Parents will also receive email notifications from individual classroom teachers regarding these trips. Transportation for local field trips is provided by rental bus services or by School-owned bus or van.

What to Bring to School

Parents are provided with program-level supply lists prior to the start of each school year and are expected to provide these materials for their children.

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. Beginners and Children's House students are provided an Oak Meadow canvas 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).

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.

Beginners, Children's House, and Lower Elementary students use library materials available in the Community 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. Students and parents follow the proper procedures for borrowing library materials. Families will be held responsible for the cost of lost or unreturned books and materials.

Upper Elementary and Middle School use online resources, their local public libraries, and selections of provided resources to support their learning. Each program has an evolving small library located in its Great Room and Great Hall.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Accreditation

Oak Meadow School is accredited by the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE), and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), the Enrollment Management Association (EMA), and the National Business Officers Association (NBOA).

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/board-of-trustees-2.

Family/School Communication

Each family receives an electronic, single-page calendar 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, called *E-Highlights*, which often includes a message from the Head of School, articles about recent events, topical items of interest, announcements, and information about upcoming events. Teachers communicate detailed 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 empty envelope each 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, in addition to a working email address. If a parent is going to be away from home for an extended length of time, please leave a forwarding address and telephone number as well as information regarding who will be responsible for the student and how they may be reached in case of illness or other emergencies.

Families are provided with a roster to assist in planning carpools, play-dates as well as to send birthday party invitations. These lists are for internal school use only, and may not be used for any other business or personal activity.

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 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.

Opportunities to Learn about the Curriculum

Throughout the year, there are opportunities for parents to explore and deepen their understanding of the curriculum and its progression both within individual programs and across program levels. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend these events.

Parent-Child Day

Parents are encouraged to visit on specified days/times with their children in the classroom. This is an opportunity to engage in the classroom during the work cycle.

Curriculum Nights

During the course of the school year, parents hear their children talk about what they are learning in school. They refer to their 'work,' the materials that they are using, and what they are doing with their peers in the environment. Curriculum nights provide an opportunity for parents to learn about the materials, the scope and sequence of the curriculum, and to engage with faculty and parents in a collegial and relaxed evening experience. In addition to attending curriculum nights for programs currently attended by their children, parents are welcome and encouraged to attend the curriculum night of the older program level to get a sense of what their child will learn at the next program level.

Program Level Coffees

These morning programs are designed to introduce parents to the next program level. They are held during the winter, when students are deep into their work and are able to explain the concepts they are learning. Your attendance (and annual visit) at these events is welcome regardless of your child's current grade. As a Montessori parent, deepening one's understanding of the Montessori philosophy and the solid foundation it provides for life-long learning increases the benefit of a Montessori education to your child both at home and at school.

Head of School Parent Coffees

Parent reflection, ideas and input are important at Oak Meadow. Parents meet by program level with the Head of School to consider educational philosophy, trends in education, developments in the curriculum at Oak Meadow and more.

Building relationships within our parent community is also important to our overall goal of having a vibrant community. We model this for our children by participating in parent-only programming and by being active in the Parent Association and at the program level.

Classroom Participation by Parents

Parents who have developed special talents and interests are encouraged to share them 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.

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 the communication loop. These situations can be stressful for parents and confusing for students. Open communication about any required arrangements will minimize the need for frequent phone calls from the School. Unless otherwise specified in writing, 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 or expression 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).

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 required to check in with the front desk receptionist to obtain a Visitor's Pass and to sign in. Visitors are escorted to their intended location. At no time should a visitor wander the hallways or look into classrooms. Special events for an entire class and all school meetings are exceptions to this policy.

Family Pets at School

Family pets must be left at home at all times for health and safety reasons. They should not be in attendance in the parking lot, 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, typically in an outdoor setting to protect students with allergies. 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 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, or update the student's Emergency Information Form if that person will be picking up the student long term. 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 Beginner students are to park their car in a parking space and walk their child through the front door to their classroom. Parents of Children's House students are to park their car in a parking space and walk their child through the playground gate to the outside door of their classroom. 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." Please drive very carefully and slowly. Cell phone use is not permitted in the School's driveway or parking lot – 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. Please communicate this policy and procedure to other adults who may be transporting children in your place.

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

All student clothing and personal items should be labeled 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 or other employees 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.

Yearbook

Oak Meadow School produces an annual yearbook with individual and class pictures. In the fall, you will have an opportunity to order a yearbook.

Although not always possible due to publishing deadlines, every effort will be made to include photos of students who enroll later in the school year.

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, Cultural Heritage Fest and End of Year Picnic.

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

SPECIAL EVENTS

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.

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. Please mail these invitations to families. The topic 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.

Special Gatherings on Campus

During community-wide events, musical and dramatic performances and any other event during which parents and children are in attendance, parents are expected to closely supervise their child/ren and to ensure that they are being respectful to performers, other students, guests, faculty and staff and school property. Children must remain seated during performances and should sit together, or in close proximity with their parents.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS

Eligibility

All students must have on file an annual physical completed and signed by a medical doctor. In addition, all families must provide a complete immunization record. If a family has religious or medical exemptions to the immunization protocol, a release form must be signed and given to the School Nurse. For all medical exemptions, Massachusetts requires written documentation from a physician to be kept on file at the school. No one will be allowed to participate until these items are 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 and personal items should be labeled with the student's name.

Montessori Athletic Conference (Big MAC)

Oak Meadow is a member of the Montessori Athletic Conference. In the 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, to meet other participants in Montessori schools, 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;
- looking at athletic participation as a potentially beneficial learning experience, regardless of the outcome of the game;
- 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 actions on the court/field.

The School expects 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 negative cheers or jeering that would redirect that focus;
- learn, understand, and respect the rules of the game, as well demonstrate respect for 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;

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 for information on practices and meets. In most cases, an email or phone call will go out to parents should an athletic event be postponed or canceled under any circumstances. Parents may also call the School for up-to-date information regarding athletic events.

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 and understand how to manage their own 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 regain composure or any other appropriate actions as the teacher may deem to be warranted according to the conflict at hand. 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
- students posing a safety hazard to themselves or others.

The School assists students and parents through many difficult circumstances, and as mentioned above, age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate disciplinary action may be given according to the nature of the conflict. However, the Montessori environment may not be the best for students who exhibit persistent 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. Instead they should contact the School and allow the School to investigate the situation and implement the appropriate disciplinary measures when necessary. 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.

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

School Nurse, Injuries 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 or injured 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 discolored discharge from the nose or eyes or rash of unknown origin. If a student complains of a persistent earache, sore throat, rashes, or joint pain, such complaints warrant a call to the student's pediatrician.

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 nurse if their child contracts a contagious illness such as strep throat, chicken pox, or head lice or if an injury has occurred.

Medications at School

Students may not bring, and will not be permitted to retain, medicine, including Over-The-Counter (OTC) medications with their personal belongings. Examples are cough drops or throat lozenges. If needed, OTC medications are kept in the school health office. With parental permission (OTC permission form), the nurse, based on assessment, may offer an OTC medication. 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 request that the pharmacy 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. 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 annually 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, the Permission to Medicate Form and a physician's order should be filled out prior to the student's entry to school. Two Epi-Pens must be provided by the parent/guardian, and will be kept in an easily accessible place in case of emergency. 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 about head lice will be sent home with the student.

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.

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

Emergencies

The School Nurse will attempt to contact parents via phone or email 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 by phone immediately. Emergency situations arising on campus will generally be referred to Emerson Hospital, which is close to school.

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

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Tutoring

Learning differences can be encountered in the classrooms that may cause student, teacher, and parent concern. The teacher is always the first line of remediation, and it is the teacher who offers suggestions to parents about home assistance or teacher help in any area that the student may be struggling. 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 to keep the student at their best pace to complete their particular program. If problems persist, more diagnostic testing might be recommended, often in consultation with the Learning Specialist. 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 School's program can be part of each student's daily routine. Students are expected to use tutoring as a supplement to their work at school 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 has worked productively with several tutors over a number of years. While Oak Meadow often provides tutoring space for these tutors when working with our students, the school does not assess a tutor's pedagogical skills or place the tutor under any kind of school supervision. The teacher may offer advice to parents about their student, based on their experience with tutors in the past.

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. The School wants to work in partnership with parents and other professionals who may be involved in assessing a student's needs. Occasionally, it may become clear that Oak Meadow is not the best educational environment for a student. In this case, the School will work with parents to support a smooth transition to a new environment.

If you have questions, your Program Director can discuss the Student Support Guidelines, and the process for seeking services.

Professional services such as outside evaluations or classroom aides are paid for entirely by the parents.

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 progress satisfactorily toward achieving his/her academic potential. The School is committed to the total success of each of its students, and in some cases may not have the resources to allow a student to reach their full potential. In such instances, the Head of School, Program Director and/or the Learning Specialist 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 Learning Specialist, 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, Program Director or the Learning Specialist. 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 daycare, 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.

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 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 seek financial aid should contact the Director of Finance & Operations or the Director of Enrollment Management 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 register for this service for each child enrolled as part of their enrollment or re-enrollment process. Billing for non-tuition charges, such as enrichment or after care, is processed directly by the Business Office.

Tuition Refunds

Oak Meadow School relies upon enrollment contracts to determine staffing and facilities requirements for each school year. As a result, the School expects parents to honor their obligations to pay tuition so the School can fulfill its financial obligations. Under no circumstances shall parents be entitled to receive a refund of any portion of their tuition. There is no tuition insurance plan available at this time. Parents must understand that upon enrollment, they are liable for the entire year's tuition, even if their child leaves the School before the end of the academic year.

Fundraising

The Annual Fund is the School's major fundraising activity. The support of 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 each 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 parents are invited and encouraged to support the Annual Fund.

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 using input from the students' teachers and records of their progress and behavior. Decisions are made by the School 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 and ensure that all are being used appropriately.
- 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 also recognizing the needs of an individual student.

- Seek to resolve problems and secure information through appropriate channels (*i.e.*, teacher/program director/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

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

(Reviewed on 8/2019)

I. Introduction

At Oak Meadow School, 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. We cultivate responsible citizens of the world. We share Maria Montessori's belief that "the child is both hope and promise for mankind."

It is the policy of Oak Meadow to maintain a safe learning environment for all members of its community; one that is free from bullying.

The Oak Meadow Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is published in response to the recently enacted Massachusetts law against bullying and is an integral part of our 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, cyberbullying, and retaliation, as required by the law.

It is important that this Plan be understood by all members of the Oak Meadow community. The Head of School and his designee(s) are responsible for its implementation and administration. The Head of School or his designee(s) 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(s).

1. Definitions

The following definitions are from the Massachusetts law against bullying.

Aggressor. An aggressor is a perpetrator of bullying or retaliation as defined.

Bullying. Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students 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 school for the target;
- Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the School.

Bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall 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. Cyberbullying shall also include:

- 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.

Cyberbullying 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 school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

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.

Target. A target is a student victim of bullying or retaliation.

III. Policy against Bullying and Retaliation.

Oak Meadow expressly prohibits bullying and retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation about bullying, or witnesses, or has of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the School. Nothing contained herein shall require the School to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Oak Meadow prohibits retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

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

A target of bullying or retaliation, or a student, staff member, parent, or other person who witnesses bullying or retaliation or who is made aware of bullying or retaliation, shall report the bullying or retaliation to the Head of School or his designee(s). The reporter may request anonymity in reporting, although he or she will not be guaranteed anonymity in the event that law enforcement becomes involved. If an anonymous report is made, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of the anonymous report.

The report of bullying or retaliation may be made in person, in writing, electronically by email, or through a telephone message. The Head of School or his designee(s) will acknowledge receipt of the report. The Head of School or his designee(s) will document the report.

V. Response to a report of bullying or retaliation.

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Head of School or his designee(s) 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. The Head of School or his designee(s) may, at their sole discretion, work with teachers, staff members, or other persons to restore a sense of safety. The Head of School or his designee(s) may, at their sole discretion, work with teachers, staff members, 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(s) shall promptly investigate the alleged bullying or retaliation. Steps may include but are not limited to interviewing the alleged target(s) and aggressor(s), other students, staff, parents, or other persons who may have knowledge of the alleged bullying or alleged retaliation. The Head of School or his designee(s) 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(s) will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Head of School or his designee(s) will maintain a written record of the investigation.

If the Head of School or his designee(s) determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Head of School or his designee(s) shall:

- promptly notify the parents of the target and the aggressor of the determination and the School's procedures for responding to the bullying or retaliation, and
- inform the target's parent of actions that school officials will take to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation.

Nothing prohibits the Head of School or his designee(s) 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(s) determines that bullying or retaliating has occurred. The Head of School or his designee(s) 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(s) shall notify the local law enforcement agency if the Head of School or his designee(s) has a reasonable basis to believe criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. The parents of the target will be informed if law enforcement is notified. The Head of School or his designee(s) shall document the reasons for his or her decision to notify law enforcement. Nothing in this plan shall be interpreted to require reporting to a law enforcement agency in situations in which bullying and retaliation can be handled appropriately within the School.

A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

The Head of School or his designee(s) 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(s) 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. Similarly, the Head of School or his designee(s) may not disclose to a parent any student record information regarding a target or aggressor who is a student and who is not the parent's child.

VI. Dissemination of this Policy.

This policy shall be referenced in the *Student and Parent Handbook* which is distributed annually to all Oak Meadow parents and students. This policy shall be included in the *Oak Meadow Employee Handbook*, which is distributed annually to all Oak Meadow employees. This policy shall be posted on the School's website, www.oakmeadow.org.

The policy shall be reviewed at least biannually, and shall be updated in accordance with Massachusetts law and with practices of the School.

APPENDIX B

**Annual Notification, August 15, 2019
Required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act**

August 15, 2019

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

**From: Jay Scheurle, 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.



Jay Scheurle

8/15/2019

Date