



# **Mulberry School Handbooks, Policies, and Bylaws**

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# PHILOSOPHY & HISTORY

## Statement of Philosophy

The Mulberry School is a parent cooperative school for children 3 years old to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The students, parents and teachers of Mulberry School are guided by three important principles.

1. *Open Discussion:* The Mulberry School advocates open discussion. If a child introduces questions or expresses concern, we feel it must be dealt with on an immediate basis in an honest, sensitive manner. The School gives the teachers permission to use their professional discretion in guiding discussion appropriately.
2. *The Value of Individual Differences:* The Mulberry School values individual differences and welcomes parents and students from a variety of backgrounds. We view diversity of religions, ethnic heritage, racial heritage, and social and economic situations as enrichment for our children.
3. *Stereotype-Free Atmosphere:* The Mulberry School believes in an atmosphere free from traditional stereotyping so that each child will be able to pursue his or her own interests as an individual.

The Mulberry School is proud of its excellent teachers and their teaching methods. One of the reasons for this high standard is the School's ability to keep the number of students in each classroom small. The ratio of teacher per students in each class is approximately 1:12. This enables teachers to give each student the personal instruction they need to comprehend ideas and understand concepts.

The Mulberry School mission is further described in the Bylaws and Policy Statements.

## Mission Statement

Mulberry School is a parent cooperative in which students, teachers, and parents work together to ensure that children grow and learn at their own pace while encouraging exploration, creativity, and self-confidence.

We provide children with the following opportunities:

- Small class size to ensure that individual needs are met.
- Develop a healthy, strong self-image in a nurturing environment and be accepted for who they are.
- Repeated opportunities to discover, explore, and problem-solve through direct experiences.

- Make choices that can lead to independence, self-confidence, self-control, a sense of responsibility, and a respect for those around them.
- Function in a diverse, stimulating environment that considers their social development as well as each one's individual needs, interests, and abilities.
- Balanced Education - structured and unstructured activities, active and quiet activities, individual and group activities, indoor and outdoor activities, and informative and creative activities.
- Pass through developmental stages at their own pace.
- Parent participation in all aspects of both their education and their school.

## Goals

At Mulberry School, our goal is for each child to:

- Acquire the basic academic skills in reading, mathematics, and technology to ensure their success in further learning.
- Develop a positive self-concept and strong feeling of emotional security.
- Become socially competent, able to interact productively with others and to value all people.
- Mature and grow physically and experience a healthy and fit body.
- Become a lifelong learner and problem-solver, able to adapt creatively to change.

## History

Mulberry School has endured nearly 30 years of social change and has, without interruption, provided meaningful child-centered education to a diverse student body of four- through eight-year-olds.

1971 - Founded as the Bloomington-Normal New School by a group of parents and students who were interested in establishing an alternative school which would offer an individualized, open program modeled after the British Infant School concept. The school was originally housed in a church basement in Bloomington-Normal.

1973 - Bob and Barb Hathway signed a \$20,000 bank note to finance a house on Mulberry Street in Bloomington.

1974 - 320 Mulberry Street became the school's first permanent home with one kindergarten and one multi-age class.

1974 - The school moved into a two-story house at 320 East Mulberry Street. Numerous children ranging in age from five years old to eight years old were enrolled. The 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. school offered a Kindergarten class on the first floor and a Multi-age class on the second floor.

- 1979 - A four year old pre-Kindergarten class was added.
- 1992 - The basement was renovated into a multi-purpose room to provide additional indoor recreational and fine arts space.
- 1994 - Due to record enrollments, the basement was converted into rooms for the Kindergarten class allowing a second story of the building to house the Multi-age group and computer lab.
- 1997 A long-range vision committee formulated a plan for the future goals of the school; this plan was ratified by the parent body. These goals were:
- larger campus in a nicer area
  - enrollment growth (limited)
  - physical accessibility
  - music, art, and physical education programs
  - respectable pay and benefits for the teachers
- 1998 - Much needed storage was created out of the last available space for renovation – the attic. In the fall of 1998, Mulberry School made the decision to move the school to a new site.
- 1999 - Capital Campaign formed to raise proceeds to facilitate purchase and renovation of 1101 Douglas.
- 2000 - The Mulberry School relocates to the the corner of Beech and Lincoln at the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School in northeast Normal. Approximately 8,500 square feet within the old cafeteria building and approximately 26,000 square feet of green space was purchased from the current owner to house the new campus. The location provided an opportunity to renovate an existing structurally sound building into spacious classrooms, a commons area, a library/learning center, an art center, and a beautiful green space for outdoor activities and learning.
- 2008 - Full Day 3 year old preschool class was added.

## **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **Location and Hours of Operation**

The school is located at 1101 Douglas, Normal, Illinois, 61761. School Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, during the academic school year. There is before and after school

childcare from 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 - 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$3.00 per half hour or any portion thereof. If your child(ren) is/are not participating in before school care, then they should not arrive to school prior to 9:00 a.m. All children must be picked up promptly at 3:00 p.m. Parents are responsible for transportation of their child(ren) to and from the School. Please inform the School as to who will be delivering and picking up your child(ren) on a regular basis. If there is a change, a written notice is preferred, but a telephone call will suffice if plans change during the day.

## Scholarships

Mulberry School provides need-based financial assistance and scholarships to eligible families. Financial assistance and scholarship applications can be obtained by contacting the Mulberry School Office or by going online at [www.mulberryschool.org](http://www.mulberryschool.org). Each application is considered on an individual basis with consideration given to expenses and family needs in addition to income. All complete applications submitted by the deadline will be considered.

## Illness Procedures and Health Records

All new students entering Mulberry School must have a physical examination prior to admittance. If your child is transferring to Mulberry School, an up-to-date examination will be obtained from his or her former school. Illinois State Law requires the Mulberry School to have all student immunization forms completed and on file prior to admission. The State also requires that all four (4), five (5), and six (6) year olds new to the school must have a lead poisoning screening. Please be prompt in submitting all health forms/records so your child's admission is not unnecessarily delayed.

Parents are responsible for notifying the teacher if your child has contracted a contagious disease. If your child appears to be ill or has a fever or vomiting, keep him or her at home. Do not send your child back to school until he or she is fever and symptom free for at least 24 hours.

**Please Note: SICK CHILDREN WILL BE SENT HOME. Children sent home, from school, with a fever will not be allowed at school the next day.**

## Emergency Information

An Emergency Information Form must be completed and returned to the Mulberry School for all new students prior to the first day of school. It is essential we have this information on file before you place your child in the care of the Mulberry School. If a returning student's form requires updating, please request a new form from the school.

## Mulberry School Food Allergy Policy

All students entering Mulberry School must let the academic director, Administrative Assistant, and teacher know if a child has a food allergy (especially peanut). Please indicate on your child's emergency card of the

allergy and severity, and we ask that you give us a copy of your child's "Food Allergy Action Plan" which will be attached to the emergency card.

For any child who has severe food allergies (especially peanut) and is enrolled all day and eating lunch at Mulberry will have the right to these following accommodations during their enrollment at Mulberry School.

- Lunch Time -
  - An allergen free table will be set aside at one of the lunch areas. During a year when a child has a severe peanut allergy, we will set aside a table for all children who have peanut products in their lunch. They will all wash their hands when they are finished with their lunch before they do any follow up activities.
  - Any utensils such as a knife, fork, spoon, scissors, etc. necessary for the child to eat his/her lunch will be supplied daily by parents of the child with the allergy.
  - The student will have separate books and any other items that may come in contact with peanuts available for his/her use.
  - Any student who sits at the table will be approved by the parent of the allergic child.
- During whole school functions where children are present, we will not offer peanut products. We will not hand out food items that were processed in plants that process peanuts unless approved by all parents with children who have peanut/nut allergies
- All school staff and the parent population will be notified of any children who have severe allergies. The parents of the children in the classroom with the severe allergy will be personally notified. The school will send three official notifications to the parents of all the children at the school. The notifications will be sent prior to the school year, the first week of school, and the first week after winter break.
- Parents of children with severe allergies will supply the school with an "Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan and Treatment Authorization" form, which must be completed by a licensed health care provider and signed by a parent/guardian of the student prior to the student attending Mulberry School. This form provides a variety of information including:
  - Student's personal information and method of identifying the student (photo)
  - Offending allergens
  - Warning signs of reactions of offending allergens
  - Treatment for a food-allergic reaction
  - Permission to/or not to self-administer epinephrine
  - A licensed health care provider's medication authorization and dosing requirements
  - Parent's consent for the school to administer medication
  - A list of staff members trained on the administration of epinephrine
- Parents of children with severe allergies will also supply emergency medication to be kept at the school and used if/when needed.
- Allergen products will be banned from the individual classroom in which the child is enrolled, and a sign that indicates a peanut/tree nut free or other allergen classroom will be posted near the room. (No snacks, cooking products, or birthday treats may contain peanut, tree nut or other allergen products).
- In order to prevent potential contamination of common areas reasonable accommodations will be made to keep food confined to the lunch areas, classrooms, kitchen, and conference room. Exceptions may be made for special events.

## Parent Participation

The survival of the Mulberry School is contingent upon the efforts of the school parents. Each family is *required* to devote a minimum of thirty five (35) hours of work towards the School, or pay the set fee in lieu of contributing time to support the needs of the school.

Classroom involvement of the parents is extremely important, and parents are requested to share their talents in enrichment activities on a regular or one-time basis. Some parents in the past have contributed in the following activities: Crafts, Sports, Music, Games, Field Trip Supervisors/Drivers, Art, Languages, Science, Child Care, Teacher Aide, Gardening, Substitute Teaching, Playground Supervision, School Renovation, Building Maintenance, Janitorial Duties, School Repair, Lawn Care.

At least one parent from each family is *requested* to attend the parent meetings to not only keep informed, but to become involved in the direction and needs of the school to ensure our children are receiving the best overall education possible.

Fund raising is a very crucial aspect of our school's operation. The annual school budget is dependent on successful fund raising to cover our operational expenses. Please be aware that tuition represents only a portion of our operating budget, the remainder is derived through successful fundraising that requires the total involvement of our parents. Fund raising projects have included survival kits for Illinois Wesleyan students during finals week, the Mulberry Gala and the annual art auction. Parents may be occasionally asked to sell raffle and event tickets to support the school.

Parents are highly encouraged to volunteer for the Mulberry School Board of Director positions that are available annually. The member parents elect their Board of Directors from the membership group as specified in the Mulberry School bylaws. Scheduled meetings for the Directors do count as parent participation hours.

# PARENT HANDBOOK

## Welcome

Welcome to Mulberry School! This handbook contains information about our school's daily procedures, guidelines and policies and school events. Mulberry School is an atmosphere where staff and parents work together to provide a successful school year for all children. We are a community of learners all working together to make a difference in all our lives! Please feel free to contact any of us with your questions.

## Contact Information - Teachers and Staff

- Mulberry School, [info@mulberryschool.org](mailto:info@mulberryschool.org), 309-862-0510 phone, 309-862-0582 fax
- Kim Walk (Academic Director and Preschool Teacher), [kim@mulberryschool.org](mailto:kim@mulberryschool.org)
- Shawna Stanley (Administrative Asst.) [shawna@mulberryschool.org](mailto:shawna@mulberryschool.org)
- Kathy Bihn (Preschool Teacher), [kathy@mulberryschool.org](mailto:kathy@mulberryschool.org)
- Colette Brown (4K Teacher), [colette@mulberryschool.org](mailto:colette@mulberryschool.org)
- Brandi Winston, (Preschool Teacher), [brandi@mulberryschool.org](mailto:brandi@mulberryschool.org)
- Teresa Klaege (Kindergarten Teacher), [teresa@mulberryschool.org](mailto:teresa@mulberryschool.org)
- Zarina Plath (1st/2nd Grade Teacher), [zarina@mulberryschool.org](mailto:zarina@mulberryschool.org)
- Nicole Learned (Art Teacher), [nicole@mulberryschool.org](mailto:nicole@mulberryschool.org)
- Scott Ersland (Summer Camp Director), [ersland@mulberryschool.org](mailto:ersland@mulberryschool.org)

## Contact Information - Board of Directors 2016-2017

- Megan Kerns, President of the Board of Directors, [megan@mulberryschool.org](mailto:megan@mulberryschool.org)
- Kim Walk, Academic Director, [kim@mulberryschool.org](mailto:kim@mulberryschool.org)
- Rohit Kale, Director of Technology, [rohit@mulberryschool.org](mailto:rohit@mulberryschool.org)
- Andy Litwiller, Director of Facilities and Vice President, [andy@mulberryschool.org](mailto:andy@mulberryschool.org)
- Mary Moran, Director of Communications, [mary@mulberryschool.org](mailto:mary@mulberryschool.org)
- Seth Carter, Director of Marketing, [seth@mulberryschool.org](mailto:seth@mulberryschool.org)
- Jena Tarnowski, Cooperative Liaison, [jena@mulberryschool.org](mailto:jena@mulberryschool.org)
- Jessica McConaughay, Director of Finances, [jessica@mulberryschool.org](mailto:jessica@mulberryschool.org)
- Kristin Lamb, Director of Advancement, [kristin@mulberryschool.org](mailto:kristin@mulberryschool.org)

## Payment and Fees Policy

The following items are to clarify financial obligations of Mulberry Families:

### Tuition Payment Policy

- Tuition is due on the **10<sup>th</sup>** of the month, **August 10 – May 10**. Per your contract, if full payment is not received by the **12<sup>th</sup>** of the month, a \$35.00 late fee will be assessed. **Please note: There are NO exceptions to this policy.**
- **If the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a non-school day or over a break, payment must be made the following day after the 10<sup>th</sup> in order to avoid assessment of the \$35.00 late fee.**
- If a balance remains on the account after 30 days, a finance charge of 18% will also be added to any past due amount.
- Any returned check will be assessed a \$35.00 fee. Furthermore, if the returned check is not replaced by another form of payment prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month, the account will be considered past due and will be subject to the \$35.00 late fee mentioned above.
- Tuition Statements will be sent via email on a monthly basis.

### Before and After Care Payment Policy – (B&A)

- Before and after care payments are due on the **10<sup>th</sup>** of the month, along with your tuition payment. If payment is not received by the **12<sup>th</sup>** of the month, a late fee of 18% (or a minimum of \$5.00) will be assessed. **Again, there are NO exceptions to this policy.**
- **If the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a non-school day or over a break, payment must be made PRIOR to the 10<sup>th</sup> in order to avoid the 18% finance charge.**
- If before and after care payments are 2 (two) month in arrears, before and after care usage will be suspended until the entire account is paid in full (including any outstanding tuition balance).
- After 30 days an additional finance charge of 18% will be added to any unpaid account balance.
- Before and After Care charges will be included on your monthly tuition statement.

### General Payment Policy

- If a family has 2 (two) returned checks in any given school year, personal checks will no longer be accepted as payment on their account for the remainder of the school year. Future payments will need to be in the form of cash, cashier's check or money order.
- In situations where two families are paying tuition, both families will be notified when all or part of the tuition is late or there is a returned check; furthermore, both families will be responsible for any outstanding balance on a monthly basis.
- If tuition, parent participation, before/after care, or any other accounts become past due, and collections efforts become necessary, the Parent (s) will be held responsible for all collection fees, court fees, attorney fees and other applicable fees as may result from any collection efforts.

## Before and After School Care

### Mission Statement

The Mulberry School Before and After School Care Program ("B and A") is in place for students whose parents elect for them to attend. Care is provided for Mulberry students who range in age from 3-9 years, on a daily basis from 7:30 am – 9:00 am and from 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm. The program provides affordable childcare solely for Mulberry families. Time spent in the B and A program will be structured to be relaxed and comfortable with

the opportunity to participate in activities that are productive and engaging. *B and A is not a pre-cursor to the school day nor an extension of it.* Activities will be open-ended enough to allow for the staggered arrival and departure schedules of the students.

### **Costs and Obligations**

The fee to use B and A is **\$3.00 per half hour (or any portion thereof)**. Parents will be billed on a per use basis at the end of each month. There is a 20% discount for the 2<sup>nd</sup> child enrolled in Before/After Care. Parents are required to sign the children in and out of the program by logging the time in in the morning and the time out in the afternoon, and initialing each procedure. Children may not be dropped off before 7:30 am and must be picked up by 5:30 pm. Late charges will be added to your monthly total at the rate of **\$5 for every 5 minute (or any portion thereof)** increment that you are late picking up your child. Children will only be released to parents or specifically designated “others.” When releasing children to anyone other than a parent, we may require identification until we get to know all designees. If you have a last minute change of plans, a telephone call to inform us is acceptable.

### **Behavioral Expectations and Consequences**

Children participating in the B and A program will be expected to exhibit the same behaviors that are appropriate during the school day. We cherish our differences and our uniqueness as individuals, but we are also a community. It takes time to form relationships of trust and leadership with children. We assume that the child is reasonable and will exert self-control if he or she understands what is expected and the reasons why these expectations exist. All children participating in the B and A program will be expected to: Work cooperatively with the supervisor and the other children; Play quietly and safely; Respect him/herself and others at all times.

The supervisor will keep anecdotal records of any behaviors that are not in compliance with these expectations. If the supervisor feels that a student's behavior warrants it, she will speak with the parents in an effort to alleviate the behavior. If the behavior does not subside, it will be her prerogative, after careful consideration and consultation with the director, to suspend the student for anywhere from one day to the remainder of the semester, depending on the number of times the behavior has been addressed. This will be done only after all other avenues have been exhausted.

The Academic Director will be the person who will support this program and to whom the supervisor, as well as parents, will communicate any concerns, needs, or other pertinent information.

## Bathroom Accident Policy

Updated May 2016

I. Students enrolled at Mulberry School need to be potty trained to be admitted in our 3 year old preschool and older classes.

II. A potty trained preschool child:

- A. No longer wears diapers or pull ups at school
- B. Can tell the teacher when he/she needs to go to the bathroom
- C. Can attend to his/her own hygiene. A teacher will assist when needed.

III. We understand that children will have occasional bathroom accidents. However, if a child is having consistent bathroom accidents, the classroom teacher will take these steps.

- A. The teacher will meet with the child's parent to determine a cause and/or if a plan of action can be developed to help the child be successful. Some examples are developing positive charts and giving bathroom reminders at specific times.
- B. If the student continues to have repeated accidents, then the parent will be called and expected to come to school to either change the child or take the child home when he/she has a bathroom accident.
- C. The parent will be called for every accident after the child has had two accidents in the same week. A parent or caregiver must be here within 30-45 minutes. If this situation doesn't improve we will need to look at changing the student's school hours or withdrawing.
- D. For any child who has two accidents in one day, on the second accident the parent will be called and expected to come to school to either change the child or take the child home when he/she has a bathroom accident.

## School Daily Schedule

- 7:30 Before Care is until 9:00 a.m. Please walk your child to the supervisor and sign your child in.
- 9:00 Teachers in the classroom ready to greet your child!
- 9:00 School begins at 9:00. It is important for your child to be ready at 9:00 so we can begin our day ALL together. Kindergarten and Multiage classes do have a tardiness policy. If a Kindergarten or Multiage student arrives after 9:00 they are considered tardy and tardiness and absences are recorded on his/her permanent record.
- 11:30 Half Day Student Dismissal
- 11:40 Kindergarten/Multiage Lunch followed by recess\*\*
- 12:00 Full Day Pre-K Lunch followed by recess\*\*
- 12:30 School begins for Half Day Afternoon Students
- 3:00 Dismissal for Full Day students. The teachers will walk their students to the front of the building. We ask that you park and come and get your child. The parking lot is a busy place at this time and we

do not want any children walking to a car without adult supervision. Once your child says “goodbye” to his/her teacher, the parent or guardian is responsible for the child.

**After Care:** If your child goes to after care on an occasional basis, please inform your child’s teacher upon arrival at school or you can email your child’s teacher prior to 2:30. You may call the school and leave a message time as well.

- 3:10 We will walk any child NOT picked up to Aftercare.
- 3:00 After Care is until 5:30 p.m. You will need to come in to the school to sign your child out of aftercare. \*

\*Please see B & A Parent Information Section in this Handbook

\*\* All classes try to go outside every day, barring extreme cold and rain. Please send children in clothes, coats, and shoes that are made for outside play. We do have pea gravel and sand so we suggest closed toe shoes to allow your child to have maximum fun safety. As it begins to get cold, please send snow pants, mittens, hats, boots and etc. Every student should have an extra set of clothing marked in a bag with his/her name.

## Snow Days/Inclement Weather

Mulberry School cancellations due to weather are at the discretion of the Academic Director. We do not want you to risk your safety, so if traveling to school is risky, please stay home, and call in your child’s absence. If we are opened we will stay open until 3:00 (no after care). We do not do early dismissals. Once again, you may always pick up your child early.

## Illnesses and Absences

- **Absences:** Absences should be called into the school prior to 8:30 in the morning. It is suggested that you email your child’s teacher prior to 8:30. We only have one phone line and there are times where the phone is not answered. The Illinois Department of Public Health has required that we register children with highly contagious illness such as strep throat, chickenpox, mumps, measles, to name a few. Please let Mulberry School know immediately about your child’s illness. **Your child is to be temperature/symptom free for 24 hours before he/she returns to school. If your child gets sick at school or has a fever of 100 degrees or more, we will ask you to pick up your child.**
- **Medicine:** With the exception of self-carry asthma medication(s) and epi-pens, all medicines will be administered by Administrative Assistant, Academic Director, or your child’s teacher. ALL medicines (except asthma medicine[s] and epi-pens) should be turned into the front desk; clearly labeled with your child’s name, the dosage and time to administer. If the medications need to be refrigerated, we have a plastic container clearly marked "medications." No medicine (except asthma medicine and epi-pens) should be kept in a child’s lunchbox or backpack. Please include a signed letter giving us authorization to administer the medications. NO medicine will be administered without this information. Self-administered asthma medications and epi-pens may be administered by your child as needed and

with your approval. All medical needs should be addressed by the completion of a Medication Authorization Form.

## Student Property

- **Share:** Children love to share! We encourage your child to share books, science discoveries, etc. Please keep toys and electronics at home. However, items are welcomed if it is related to what your child is studying in the classroom or a special “share time” the teacher has requested.
- **Lost & Found:** We encourage you to label your child’s name on all personal belongings; backpacks, lunchboxes, jackets, snow boots, etc. We do have a “lost and found” container by the front desk.

## Backpacks Share Important Information

- **Papers:** Please see that your child brings a backpack to and from school every day. Take time to check your child’s backpack nightly and go over your child’s papers together. This is a great way to reinforce what your child did that day. Each class has a homework folder. Please check it nightly to see if there is any work for your child to complete as well as notes from your child’s teacher.

## Celebrations

- **Birthdays:** Birthdays are very important in the life of children. If you want to send special treats for your child’s birthday please make arrangements with your child’s teacher. We ask that you are considerate of dietary needs in your child’s class. If your child is having a party outside of school and inviting the entire class, invitations may be distributed at school. Be sure you include the guest’s name on the envelope and on the invitation. Please give invitations to your child’s teacher and she will put them in folders. If only selected students are being invited, please email or handout the invitations, at dismissal, as not to exclude others in the class.
- **Holidays:** Room Parent Coordinators will have an active role in planning all school celebrations. The success of these events relies heavily on parent volunteers.

\* See Room Parent Coordinator in Parent Volunteer Section.

## Field Trips

Mulberry school believes in exposing children in a variety of ways to learn about his/her community and sharing the arts with young children. We will attend performances at BCPA, outdoor field trips, the museum, planetarium to just name a few. Field trips are chaperoned by your child’s teacher, and parents/guardians. Children are expected to cooperate with his/her chaperone and be responsible and safe at all times. We suggest that your child wears a Mulberry t-shirt on field trips. It is an easy way for us to identify a Mulberry child. The chaperone is responsible for the children they transport in his/her car. We choose trips to coincide with the curriculum your child is learning. Please follow the guidelines for field trips:

- All drivers will need a proof of driver's license, car insurance and a recommended MVR. The school will need a copy of these on file prior to your first time to drive on a field trip.
- Drivers/Parents will be informed prior to the field trip with information as to who you are transporting in your car. It is the responsibility of the parent of the child being transported to install his/her child's car seat or give the driver of your child's permission to install car seat.
- Chaperone/driver is responsible for the children they are transporting on the field trip.
- Siblings are not allowed on field trips (unless a nursing infant). This may sound harsh, but this is your time as a parent to share with your Mulberry child and his/her peers.
- Chaperones will cover his/her cost of ticket or other expenses that the trip may accrue.
- Parent Participation hours will be assessed by chaperoning children other than your own child on field trips.
- Drivers whose background check indicate a vehicle or alcohol related police record may be excluded from transporting children other than their own for field trips.

## Assessments

- **P/T Conferences:** There will be 2 parent/teacher conferences. The first conference is in the fall and the second one is in mid spring. Samples of children's work will be shared at conferences. If the need arises, conferences may be scheduled at any time throughout the year.
- **Evaluations:** Your child's teacher will be doing individual evaluations throughout the school year to track progress and areas for improvement. You will receive an end of the year written evaluation.

## Healthy Food Choices

- **Go Green:** Mulberry has gone green! We do streamline recycling. We encourage children to bring reusable containers, silverware, drink containers in his/her lunchbox. We ask that you refrain from sending glass for safety concerns.
- **What to pack?** We encourage healthy food choices. Children are given 30 minutes to eat. Children will keep lunchboxes in their cubbies until lunch, so please pack their drinks and meal with a cold pack if they need to stay cool. Please send foods already prepared so it is an easy heat and eat. We do have microwaves for heating purposes.
- **Snacks:** Think healthy! Snacks are welcome. Birthday treats can be "treats". Your child may also be involved in preparing a variety of foods with his/her classroom teacher or parent. Please let your child's teacher and Mulberry School aware of any dietary restrictions. Please see our **Food Allergy Policy** in the handbook.
- **Who helps at lunch?** We have parents and teacher assistants who assist children during lunch time. This is a great opportunity for you to interact with your child's classmates and earn parent hours. Consistency is important in a child's life so we hope to have commitments from the same person each day of the week. We hope to have a semester long commitment for volunteering. Lunch rules are posted in lunch areas and we will have lunch supervisor trainings at the beginning of each semester.

## Lunch Guidelines

1. Children sit while they are eating their lunch. Adults should make every effort to sit with the children, too. Feel free to bring your lunch and eat **with** the children and carry on a conversation. If you are the only adult, rotate to all tables. This is a behavior management tool and works very well. When you are engaged in conversation with the children, they are focused and engaged and are less likely to engage in disruptive behavior. Talk about things that the children are interested in.
2. Children can use the lunch scissors to try and open items independently. However, items that have a tendency to explode while pushing on them (Go-Gurts) should be opened by an adult.
3. When children are finished eating, encourage them to clean up their lunch packages. Throw away needed items, place recycles in bin, place returnable items in lunch box. Keep half-eaten sandwiches and leftovers in the lunch box. This helps parents to gauge their child's eating patterns.
4. When a child has finished packing up their lunch box, books are available to read. Feel free to read to a small group of children – especially if there are 2 adults supervising lunch.
5. Pre-k children are dismissed to the teachers. Kindergarten and Multi-age can line up and be taken outside by the playground supervisor.
6. Please clean the tables by using the spray bottle and paper towels or the disinfecting cloths. Chairs may need to be wiped down, too. After 2<sup>nd</sup> lunch period, please sweep the floors of leftover food.
7. Please inform the classroom teacher if any child is not quite themselves or complain of not feeling well.

<b>Kindergarten/Multi-age 11:40-12:00</b>	<b>Pre-K 12:00 – 12:30</b>
11:40 lunch starts	12:00 lunch starts
11:50 remind children to begin cleanup/read	12:20 remind children to begin cleanup/read
11:55 lunch boxes packed up	12:25 lunch boxes packed up
12:00 line up for outside and clean tables	12:30 dismiss to teacher – clean tables/floor

## Safety

The safety of Mulberry School's students and staff is of extreme importance. All Mulberry Staff will have a Crisis Management Plan in their classroom at all times. The students will participate in occasional tornado drills, fire and code red (lockdown) drills. You are welcome to stop by the front desk to review our plan.

Background Checks: All parents, staff, student workers, student teachers, practicum students and volunteers submit to a background check every year.

## Playground Guidelines

Below are guidelines for supervision on the playground. Please note that your responsibilities are for supervising the children, not socializing with other adults on the playground. **Cell phones** should be carried for

emergencies **ONLY**. Please **do not** text or talk on your cell phones while supervising the children. They need your utmost attention. **Please be aware of all aspects of the playground.**

For all equipment, children use their own skills to climb. Placing children on the equipment denies them the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills.

- **Swings:** Children may swing on their bottoms or their stomachs. Help children by reminding them to grasp the links tightly to avoid falling. It's ok to encourage children to pump their legs instead of relying on you to push them the entire outdoor time! Just remember, children may not understand the word "pump" but might better understand "legs out and legs back" or to copy a child swinging next to them. This is a skill that is very complicated and takes much practice to master. Another way to help a child develop this skill is to stand in front of the swing and ask them to "touch your hand" in order to get the feeling of kicking. Or, you can teach a child to "kick the sky" to move forward and to "hide" her legs while going back.
- **Slides:** Preschool children slide down the slide feet first and on their bottoms. Kindergarten and multi-age children may go up the slide. Please check with the teachers to see if it's an "up" day on the slide. Supervision is important at all times when children are learning this gross motor skill.
- **Gravel, sand and wood chips:** Encourage children who are throwing gravel, sand or wood chips to use shovels and buckets instead. Children may need reminders but please do so in a kind and firm voice, not in a harsh tone. Children often forget and it's up to us as adults to provide the guidance. Children may use the small brooms to sweep sand and gravel off the sidewalks.
- **Wagons and bikes:** Children are seated while riding on wagons or bikes. While in the wagon, children need to be encouraged to hold on to the sides of the wagon and sit with legs crossed or extended. Either direction for riding is fine but please be sure everyone is going the same direction.
- **Problem Solving:** Rather than being punitive when play gets rambunctious and taking toys away, lead the children in ways they can be safe with the toys and with each other. Instead of saying, "you can't play this because you are being rough" say, "I'll hold the ball (or any item) while we talk about this. The play looks like it's getting rough. How can we make it safer so no one gets hurt?" Encourage the children to solve the problem, not the adult.
- **Using the bathroom or getting a drink:** During outdoor time, children may use the bathroom or get a drink of water. A child must inform an adult that they are doing so before they enter the building. Please keep track of how long a child has been inside.
- **Clean up:** Teachers and children participate in clean up. Bikes and wagons are parked along the building. Sand toys are put in the bin. Sidewalk chalk is picked up and not left lying on the playground.

## Behavior & Discipline Policy

3 R's = Rights, Responsibility, and Respect

Platinum Rule – “Treat others the way they want to be treated.”

Mulberry School stresses the growth of the whole, individual child. We cherish our differences and our uniqueness as individuals, but we are also a community. In that community every child has **rights**. They have the right to work without disruption, express oneself without interruption, work cooperatively within a group, play and live safely, be different and/or unique without fear or humiliation of censure, and have one’s work and property respected. In order to protect these rights, we feel all members of our community must be **responsible** and **respectful**. We will achieve this by modeling these three beliefs and by using positive reinforcement, redirection, natural consequences, and consistency.

When children disagree or an unacceptable behavior occurs we believe in modeling and teaching the child how to problem solve to handle the situation. Children are expected to use their words to discuss and solve problems (dependent on age – this can be teacher driven).

If a situation arises in which a child is prohibiting other children from their school rights, then a teacher will follow the three steps below. All situations are handled appropriate to the behavior and teachers will talk with the student so that the student will learn from the situation.

1. Verbal Warning
2. Designated Calming Space: “A Place to Pause”
3. Take a Break Outside of the Classroom: The teacher will give the child a yellow Mulberry School card and send the child to the academic director/front desk. If extra help is needed the teacher will call the front desk from her cell phone. The student will have time to cool down and then will discuss the situation using our “What Happened/Next Time I will…” form. This form will be sent home with the child so the parents are aware of the situation.

If an unacceptable behavior is repeated, then the teacher will inform the parent to work together to identify why the behavior is reoccurring and the best plan of action to correct the behavior. At any point, the teacher may take the assistance of the Academic Director.

In the event the behavior does not improve, the teacher will involve the Academic Director. At their discretion, they will continue to work with the child and parents to find a constructive plan to correct inappropriate behaviors. The Academic Director will provide a notice of the behavior issues to the Board of Directors, in an Executive Session, with appropriate background information and action plan details.

An update will be given to the Board of Directors pertaining to the behavior issues and recommendations for further actions at a time determined by the Academic Director to be suitable for behavior to have improved. The Academic Director will also make the recommendations known to the parents of the student. Further actions may include: a reduction in the student’s hours, increased supervision through the hiring of an assistant specifically for the student (at their parents’ expense), or dismissal in extreme circumstances. The Board of Directors will consider the option(s) recommended by the Academic Director and input from the student’s parents in their decision. Appropriate tuition refunds will be made in the case of hour changes or dismissal per the student contract.

The intent of this policy is to avoid the need for dismissal, but it is recognized that there are extreme cases where a student is so disruptive or aggressive that other students feel unsafe. Even in these cases, every reasonable effort will be made before dismissal is considered, as long as the safety of other children is not jeopardized. The Board of Directors and Staff will attempt to assist the student/family in finding a more appropriate educational opportunity going forward if dismissed.

## Bullying

Mulberry School has zero tolerance for bullying. Bullying is defined as **unwanted** repetitive verbal and physical aggressive behavior. In an early childhood setting it can look like name calling, taunting, excluding someone on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone else, spreading rumors, hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, and tripping/pushing.

### Prevention of Bullying

- Discuss and model positive behavior and other ways young children can make friends and interact with their peers.
- Set clear and consistent rules for behavior
- Be vigilant in monitoring for aggression and bullying
- Value kindness
- Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior
- Model alternate behaviors for aggression
- Teach them to report to an adult
- Distinguish between friendly teasing and bullying

Parents are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to teachers or the Academic Director as soon as possible, both for assistance and for investigation purposes.

Incidents of bullying will be evaluated by the teaching staff and Academic Director and brought to the Board of Directors as needed. Actions similar to those outlined in the previous section will apply to bullying.

### Policy Updated:

March 2017

## How Parents Can Help Their Children

- **How can you help your child have a great school year?** Parent involvement is the key to success for your child! Volunteer in your child's classroom, at lunch, field trips, social events are just a few ways parents get involved at Mulberry School. We will be using "signup genius" as well as teachers may post sign ups on the outside of their classroom. You may even notice general sign ups on the parent board between the double doors and on the doors as you walk in.
- **Parents make a difference:**
  - **P - Present (be present when your child talks about school)**
  - **A - Ask questions to your child, to the teacher**
  - **R - Reinforce what your child is learning**
  - **E - Encourage your child's efforts and progress**
  - **N - Notice your child's work and school information**
  - **T - Take Time to talk to your child daily about school, what they did and who they played with.**
- **Keep your child healthy:** Good nutrition, and good healthy habits are essential to good health.
- **Have a consistent bedtime:** Children have more energy for school if they are well rested.

- **Spend time with your child:** Talk and listen to your children. Do activities together, even if it is as simple as taking a walk or making a puzzle.
- **Encourage your children:** Recognize and reinforce your child's learning. Learning is hard work. Children need support and encouragement.
- **Read with your child:** Read to your child and have your child read to you.
- **Know what your child is doing in school:** Stop and visit your child's classroom, look at the children's work on the walls, share information with your child's teacher that may be helpful. If you have a concern, contact the teacher, director, or administrative assistant. We are here to make Mulberry School the best learning environment for all!
- **The Importance of Parent Meetings:** Parent meetings are a great way to stay informed on current news/events at Mulberry School. Parent meetings also give parents the opportunity to become involved in the direction and needs of the school. It is requested that at least one parent from each family attends the Parent Meeting. Please refer to the calendar as to dates and time for these meetings. **Attendance at a meeting equals one (1) Parent Participation Hour/Family.** Childcare is offered at \$2.00/child/hour.

## Parent Volunteers

- **Room Parent Coordinator:** All classroom teachers will be seeking for 1 or 2 Room Parent Coordinators.
  - Duties of a Room Parent Coordinator: This person will be the liaison between the classroom teacher and the parents in your class. You will be responsible for, but not limited to, coordinating classroom celebrations, or any other activity that the teacher deems specific to your class. (Ex. Valentine's Day Party)
  - As a group (the classroom coordinators from each class collectively), will be responsible for meeting with the academic director to plan, coordinate, and implement school wide activities such as the Halloween Party, Cultural Diversity Celebration and Field Day. You will be responsible to follow up with parents from your classroom to implement these plans. We will meet 4-6 weeks prior to the event to begin making plans.
- **Calendar:** Please refer to the yearly calendar online to keep yourself informed with the happenings at Mulberry School that will allow you to plan for the future. You will also receive reminders from your child's teacher and school-wide emails.

## Fundraising

Fundraising is a necessity at Mulberry School. The money raised covers our operating expenses, teacher salaries and allows us to maintain an affordable tuition for a private school. This year we will be hosting the following fundraisers:

- **Mulberry Gala** is typically scheduled in the spring.

It is extremely important that we have involvement from **many** families for the fundraisers. Together, we can make this happen. We are a small school but have a mighty group of parents who can make these events successful. Be on the lookout for emails from Cooperative Liaison or signs posted at the school's entrance/exit.

Other Fundraisers Possibilities: Box Tops, Book Fair, State Farm Good Neighbor Grants, Country Financial Company, Employee matching grants, Market Day. We are also open to new ideas and suggestions!

## Publicity and Promotions

Parents are our greatest source of publicity. Word of mouth from other Mulberry School families is the best way to share the wonderful things about Mulberry School. So, bring the whole family out for promotion events such as the Worldwide Day of Play Uptown Block Party, ISU Homecoming Parade, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Christmas Parade or the Lake Run Club Kids Run for Fun. The time you spend at the table contributes to your parent participation hours. It's important that we have lots of parents and kids at these events so please try to participate in at least one promotion event throughout the school year. And, please share posts with your friends from Facebook.

## Why Mulberry?

Here is what our parents had to say:

- Close-knit community for students and parents
- Experiential, play-based learning
- Individualized Teaching
- Parent Cooperative – Parents are welcomed and encouraged to be in the classroom
- Small class sizes
- Curriculum integrates the arts into instruction
- Experienced, caring, certificated teachers
- Children experience meaningful and multiple Field Trips
- Multiage Classroom allows for peer to peer teaching and a variety of group learning opportunities
- Before and After Care Services available
- Warm feeling – My child loves school!
- Structured interaction between classes and grade levels

*"It's been the best decision we've made regarding our children"*

## ASBESTOS STATEMENT

DATE: August 1, 2017

TO: Parents and Staff  
RE: Annual Asbestos Management Plan Notice  
FROM: Academic Director

This is to inform you of the status of Mulberry School's asbestos management plan. It has been determined by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency that asbestos is a potential health hazard, and precautions should be taken to avoid disturbing any asbestos containing materials.

As required, our building was inspected for asbestos on 2015. The AHERA law requires that a visual surveillance of asbestos containing areas be completed every six months, and a re-inspection conducted every three years. Any evidence of disturbance or change in condition will be documented in the Management Plan as required.

The Inspection/Management Plan is available for public review in the Mulberry School administrative office. Should you wish to review the plans, please call to make an appointment during school hours.

Any concerns relative to asbestos containing material should be directed to [info@mulberryschool.org](mailto:info@mulberryschool.org)

# THE MULBERRY SCHOOL BYLAWS

UPDATED 4/22/2017

## Article I. Title

The name and legal title of the not-for-profit corporation is the Bloomington-Normal Mulberry School Corporation.

## Article II. Purpose

The purpose of the corporation is set forth in its Articles of Incorporation and further described as:

Being dedicated to providing McLean and surrounding counties with a play based, cooperative, early education foundation for students Pre-school through second grade in which students, teachers, and parents work together to ensure that children grow and learn at their own pace while encouraging exploration, creativity, and self-confidence.

## Article III. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of July, and end on the last day of June of the next year.

## Article IV. Membership

Membership of the corporation shall include all families under current contract and in good financial standing with the Mulberry School. Membership of the corporation will also include all salaried employees. All Members of the corporation are entitled to vote on matters presented to the membership, unless those matters pertain to a member's employment with the Mulberry School.

## Article V. Meetings

- A. Board meetings are to be scheduled monthly and open to all members in good standing. Member Meetings are to be scheduled at least six (6) times during the school year and are open to all members in good standing. Beginning 10.2016, Member and Board Meetings are to be merged. There will be longer be regularly scheduled Board Meetings, although the Board will continue to meet in executive session following Member/Board Meetings and for specially called meetings.
- B. A quorum is constituted when one-fourth ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of all Mulberry voting members are present at member meetings. A quorum is the minimum number of voting members that must be present at the meeting for business to be validly transacted. A simple majority prevails for items to

pass, so long as quorum is met. Only one vote is allowed per family regardless of how many family members are present.

- C. Elections will be held annually for each Board of Director's position. In the case of a vacancy during the year, an election will be held as soon as possible to fill the vacated position.
- D. Policy may be initiated by the general membership and/or members of the Board.

## **Article VI. Financial Management**

The funds of the corporation shall be deposited in the bank(s) or the savings and loan association(s) designated by the Board of Directors. The funds of the corporation may be withdrawn from the financial institutions designated by the Board by checks or withdrawal orders signed by the Bookkeeper, Director of Finance, or Academic Director of the corporation.

All check or withdrawal orders of non-budgeted nature require signatures of both the Bookkeeper or Director of Finance and the Academic Director. A Finance Committee will meet regularly and provide monthly written reports to the Board of Directors. The Finance Committee will be chaired by the Director of Finance, and include all the Board members or staff with financial access and/or responsibilities (for example, the Director of Finance, the President, the Academic Director, and the Bookkeeper). The Committee is charged with providing clear, up-to-date, and publically available financial policies, determining responsibilities and providing yearly evaluations of the bookkeeper, arranging for and managing yearly audits when required, and providing monthly financial updates and projections to the Board. Any member of the Finance Committee may be removed from the committee by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

## **Article VII. Board of Directors**

The business of the corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors who are members, or former members of the not-for-profit corporation and elected in accordance with these bylaws and the Academic Director. The Board of Directors will include the corporation positions of President, Director of Facilities, Director of Finances, Director of Communications, Cooperative Liaison, Director of Technology, Director of Marketing, Director of Advancement, and the Academic Director. Each director will have responsibility for a segment of school operations.

All Directors will be elected at an annual meeting by the general membership of the corporation. All Directors may only serve two, one year terms in the same position on the Board of Directors. The term of office will begin after the transition meeting takes place. The Academic Director will have voting rights on all issues except those directly related to his/her employment.

- A. *Resignation*: A Director who wishes to resign shall do so, in writing, giving the effective date of resignation. If three (3) consecutive meetings are missed by a Board member, the Board has the option of removing said board member, thus creating a vacancy.
- B. *Impeachment*: Impeachment of a member of the Board of Directors requires the unanimous consent of all other Board members.

- C. The Directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or other obligations of the Mulberry School.
1. The Board of Directors hereby affirms the need for all of the following:
    - a. effective and respectful communication between all members of the school including the Academic Director, the Board of Directors, teaching and support staff, student workers, and families.
    - b. effective and respectful leadership and mentoring of staff
    - c. clear and consistent goals and expectations for staff and the Academic Director
    - d. clear, consistent, and transparent direction from the Board regarding long-term changes to the school
    - e. respect for teacher's autonomy in the classroom and input into decision making processes and school policy
    - f. clear, consistent, and up-to-date school policies including behavior management plans, bullying policy, and field trip policies
  2. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that all interactions among the Board, Academic Director, and staff should reflect our shared values of integrity, respect, openness, preparedness, and communication.
  3. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that Academic Director and individual teaching staff will work together to identify individual goals for each teacher's pedagogy and classroom environment at the beginning of each school year. These goals will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval no later than the October meeting of the Board of Directors. The Academic Director and teaching staff will work together to achieve these goals in a way that is consistent with the core values of the school.
  4. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that Academic Director and teaching staff will meet twice a semester to review goals and report on progress. Reports on progress will be submitted to the Board of Directors once each semester.
  5. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that reports on progress will be developed by the Academic Director in consultation with the teaching staff and the Board of Directors.
  6. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that individual meetings between the Academic Director and teaching staff to discuss reports on progress and evaluations should be structured to provide clear and constructive feedback using research based best-practices methods for mentoring and effective leadership.
  7. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that, as stated in current guidelines, the Academic Director is "responsible for establishing and distributing the the Mulberry School calendar of events, prior to the beginning of the academic year." The Academic calendar will include the dates of board, staff, and parent meetings.
  8. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that the Board of Directors must provide clear deadlines for completion of tasks required of the Academic Director, the staff, and the Board itself. In addition to guidelines, the Board must hold itself, the Director, and staff accountable for meeting deadlines.
  9. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that, as stated in the by-laws, the Board of Directors is responsible for setting school policies and is responsible for keeping these policies current and up-to-date. In the 2015-2016 school year the Board will work with the Academic Director and teachers to update or create school policies regarding bullying, behavior management, field trips, playground

supervision, and expectations for the conduct of parent volunteers and teaching assistants in the school.

10. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that the Cooperative Liaison shall serve as an available, neutral party when listening to Mulberry staff and will serve to relay information and improve communication between the board, director, and staff.
11. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that while, in accordance with school policy, it is the Academic Director's responsibility to keep the Board and teachers "informed of current needs, developments, and trends in..." education fields, and, in accordance with the by-laws, it is the Board of Directors' responsibility to determine the "direction of the program and policy of the corporation", we also respect each teacher's unique contributions to the school and value their autonomy in the classroom. The Academic Director and Board of Directors will seek to implement curricular changes while also respecting teacher autonomy.
12. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that the the Board of Directors and Academic Director should, at the beginning of each school year, communicate a clear statement of the current mission of school, a status for the development of the school, and current expectations for staff.
13. The Board of Directors hereby affirms that the following Bathroom Policy shall be in effect.

All salaried teachers may vote to select a Teacher Representative to attend Board meetings and other official functions on behalf of the teachers. The Teacher Representative is entitled to present motions to the Board, to participate in policy discussions, and to vote on Board actions; however, the Teacher Representative is not a member of the Board of Directors, and is not entitled to participate in Executive Sessions.

The Teacher Representative will be elected by the vote of salaried teachers at the conclusion of each school year. The elections will be conducted and votes tallied by either the President of the Board of Directors or the Cooperative Liaison. The Teacher Representative's term will begin at the same time the new Board of Directors begin their service. The current Teacher Representative may be re-elected in subsequent terms, but may serve no more than three years consecutively. The Teacher Representative may be removed from their position at any time by a majority vote of salaried teachers. In such cases, a new Teacher Representative will be elected immediately. The Teacher Representative may also resign at any time by providing written notice to the Board of Directors and staff. Service as the Teacher Representative is voluntary, is not compensated, shall not be considered a part of a teacher's normal duties, and shall have no bearing on a teacher's evaluations.

## **Article VIII. Duties of the Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors shall have the general direction of the program and policy of the corporation; shall have charge of its property, its administration, including appointment of such committees deemed necessary. (Duties of each Director are detailed in the policy pages, and updated annually).

## **Article IX. The Staff**

The staff shall consist of all employees of the corporation and shall be chosen according to policies established by the membership of the corporation. Terms of the appointment shall be for no more

than one (1) year and be renewable. Staff members may from time to time ask membership to help him/her carry out responsibilities and/or duties.

## **Article X. The Bylaws**

- A. *Adoption.* These bylaws shall become effective when adopted by a two-thirds vote of all voting members present at any lawful meeting and shall constitute the rules adopted by the corporation of the regulation and management of its affairs.
- B. *Amendment to the Bylaws*
  - 1. A proposed amendment to these bylaws shall be considered by the membership at any lawful meeting that such proposed amendment is distributed to the members at least five (5) days before a vote is taken.
  - 2. A proposed amendment shall be accepted when approved by two-thirds of the members present at a lawful meeting.
- C. *Dissolution.* The corporation will be dissolved in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation.

## **POLICY STATEMENTS**

The School Board will comply with these three required policies:  
Applicable sections of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5), relevant case law including Plyler v. Doe 457 U.S. 202 102 S. Ct. 2382 (1982), and 23 ILL. Admin Code Part 425.

### **Declaration of Rights Policy**

The Mulberry School is an alternative school that stresses the growth of the whole, individual child. We cherish our differences and our uniqueness as individuals, but we are also a community. The children's understanding of the concept of community and their responsibilities as individuals within a community are an important part of their education and growth. Adults have a special responsibility to help children with these group expectations. Any adult who works in the school has a right to object and to control behavior, which is not in the best interests of the community. It takes time to form relationships of trust and leadership with children. We assume that the child is reasonable and will exert self-control if she or he understands what is expected, and the reason why these expectations exist.

All individuals in the Mulberry community have the right to:

1. work without disruption.
2. express oneself without interruption.
3. work cooperatively within a group.
4. play quietly.
5. live safely.
6. be different and/or unique without fear or humiliation or censure.
7. have one's work and property respected.

Behavior must preserve these rights. Examples of specific behavior that deprive other members of the community of their rights include but are not limited to:

1. demeaning or profane language directed at another person.
2. threatening, menacing or intimidating behavior.
3. destruction of another person's work or property.
4. destruction of community property.
5. disruptive or noisy behavior that infringes on another's right to concentrate and work.

## **Parent Participation Policy**

Each Mulberry School family is required to contribute a minimum of thirty five (35) hours of volunteer time to the school. The time contributed is a necessity to facilitate the proper operation of the Mulberry School. Families may only be exempt from the Parent Participation policy by contractually agreeing to pay an annual fee to be paid in addition to the contracted tuition payment. Families who fail to achieve the participation hour minimum requirement by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic year will be assessed a fee equivalent to \$40.00 per hour for each hour less than the required hours. Failure to complete the hours or pay the fee is a breach of contract. Attendance at parent and/or board meetings may be counted towards parent hours by only one family member. Any hours completed beyond the contracted hours will be considered a donation to the school and will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Due to the emphasis and priority of parent participation projects, all families will be encouraged to contribute time to at least one of the following projects: Gala planning, Gala business contacts, Gala mailing lists, Gala cleanup, field trip supervision, holiday party supervision, yardwork, school repairs and maintenance, school clean up and playground supervision.

## **Admissions Policy**

Admission priority will be given to all students in the following manner, contingent on the capacity of the Mulberry School.

1. Currently enrolled students in good standing.
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students.
3. Siblings or children of formerly enrolled students.
4. New students on a first-come, first-contracted basis.

The Mulberry School does not exclude children with severe physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabilities unless these disabilities prevent their complete and unimpeded participation in the school program. Enrollment of children with special needs will be conducted with consideration by the Academic Director and the teaching staff.

Children must be three (3) by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic school year in order to apply for the preschool program; four (4) by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic school year in order to apply for the 4K program; and five (5) by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic school year in order to apply for the Kindergarten program. Children must be potty trained in order to be considered for enrollment.

Notice of Nondiscrimination: The Mulberry School does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by law in the administration of its student admission process, financial aid awards, educational policies, rights,

privileges, programs, and activities, or employee hiring. The President of the Board of Directors will be responsible for ensuring Mulberry School's compliance with this Notice.

## **Holiday Policy**

Mulberry School is made up of children from a wide variety of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Mulberry School teachers attempt to portray all cultural, ethnic, and religious groups with self-worth, dignity, and value. A portion of this portrayal may involve description or enactment of a variety of religious or cultural festivals. In particular, major Cultural Holidays, practiced by a large number of Americans, will be recognized and special activities may be organized (for example, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and Christmas). These festivities will be presented objectively, (no indication that people who participate are inferior or superior to others) as part of the "Common American Culture". (effective in 1995).

These events will be noted on the school calendar and parents will be notified prior to their child's participation. Any parent who does not wish their child to participate may send a note to the child's teacher and alternative activities will be found. In addition, any parent wishing to present information on cultural, ethnic, or religious activities not covered by the school, is welcome to work with the teacher to set up an appropriate presentation.

## **Political Statement Policy**

The Mulberry School will neither advocate nor condone "Political Statements", such as boycotts, picketing, marches, solicitations, or rallies. The Mulberry School will not participate in these events as an organization. (Effective 1996)

Justification for policy:

1. The goal of the school is to educate our children. To achieve this goal requires cooperation and support of all parents. Political statements by an organization are divisive. Because the statements do not reflect the feelings of all members, the individuals that do not support the statement may feel like outcasts.
2. Mulberry School already has a very diverse set of families. The only thing they may have in common is the school. If we start politicizing the school, parents are more likely to drop out or not participate in school activities.
3. The Board would be forced to act as referee. The Board would have to ensure that both sides of the issue would be presented, and then the Board would have to determine which issues to act on. Serving on the Board takes enough time and the members do not need the extra burden of this type of political decision.

## **Field Trip Driver Policy**

Each Mulberry classroom takes multiple field trips throughout the school year. These field trips rely upon parent volunteers for transportation to and from the destinations. Any parent wishing to drive

students on field trips must have on file at the school, copies of proof of current insurance card and a current driver's license. These are to be given to the administrative assistant to keep on file.

## **Business Policy**

The conducting of all business of the corporation shall be done according to the policies established by the Board. The policies are the articles contained in the bylaws and the statements approved as policy and reported in the minutes of the corporation. Such policies shall be added to the Handbook. In the absence of a policy covering a matter of concern, the membership as a whole can function to reach a resolution of the matter. Any action of the corporation not covered by policies requires membership approval.

## **Building Use Policy**

In an effort to protect the Mulberry School property and its contents, the following policy regarding use of the physical building for non-school related functions has been established.

If an interested party would like to request use of the physical building for a non-Mulberry school purpose, the following steps must be taken:

1. A written proposal must be submitted to the Chairman of the Board of Directors so that it can be placed on the agenda for the upcoming Board meeting.
2. The person proposing use of the building will appear in person in front of the board to make the proposal to the board members present and to allow for discussion among the party making the request and the board members.
3. Discussion among the board members will be allowed
4. It is recommended that the board give a timely response to the interested party making the request.
5. Simple majority vote will prevail in decisions regarding building use.
6. Regardless of the proposal for building use, the following contracted stipulations must be met:
  - a. Independent insurance coverage (when warranted) by the responsible party for the intended use.
  - b. Payment to Mulberry School will be \$50.00 per hour (for for-profit organizations) and \$25.00 per hour (for non-profit organizations) for the use of the building. Payment for building use must be received at least one week before building is used.
  - c. The interested party is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and security of the building immediately before, during and after the approved use.

Building use is at the sole discretion of the board and requires a majority vote for approval.

# **JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND NON-TEACHING STAFF**

## **Responsibilities of All Board Members**

The following are adapted from the National Council of Nonprofits:

- Take care of the Mulberry School by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will; and provide oversight for all activities that advance Mulberry School's effectiveness and sustainability.
- Make decisions in the best interest of Mulberry School; not in his or her self-interest.
- Ensure that Mulberry School obeys applicable laws and acts in accordance with ethical practices; that the nonprofit adheres to its stated corporate purposes, and that its activities advance its mission.

## **Responsibilities of Individual Board Members (Job Descriptions)**

### **President of the Board of Directors**

- shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Corporation
- shall serve in a leadership capacity, instilling a cooperative spirit in the teachers and staff of Mulberry School
- may authorize the Director of Finance to sign any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Board of Directors has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Directors or by policy to some other officer or agent of the Corporation
- will oversee all committees and perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors and by policy
- will work in partnership with the Academic Director to make sure Board resolutions are carried out
- will call special meetings of the Board or the Membership as necessary
- will prepare agenda for board meetings in consultation with the Academic Director and Director of Finance
- will work with the Academic Director to conduct new board member orientation
- will chair searches for a new Academic Director
- will coordinate the Academic Director's annual performance evaluation
- will work to recruit new board members
- will act as a spokesperson for the organization
- will consult with Board members on their roles and helps them assess their performance

### **Vice President and Director of Facilities**

- will attend all Board meetings
- will serve all duties of the President of the Board when he or she is absent

- will be responsible for the physical plant and recruiting parent members to assist him/her in the building maintenance and renovation
- will keep cleaning supplies available and replenished on a regular basis
- will coordinate the removal of snow and mowing the grass
- will perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors and by policy

### **Director of Communications and Cooperative Liaison**

- will attend all Board meetings
- shall be the custodian of the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Policies and meeting minutes of the Board of Directors and Corporation
- shall tally and record voting issues and policies
- shall be responsible for internal communications keeping members informed of the workings of the school
- will take and record attendance at both the Board of Directors and the parent membership meetings
- will be responsible for writing and distributing the Parent/Board meeting minutes within one (1) week of the meeting date. (In his/her absence, a temporary Director of Communications shall be appointed to the Board to record proceedings).
- Assume responsibilities of the chair in the absence of the President and Vice President
- Provide notice of meetings of the Board and/or of a committee when such notice is required
- shall coordinate an annual review of the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Policies
- shall be responsible for assessing donated time by parents, taking appropriate action when necessary, while encouraging equitable parent participation and a cooperative spirit.
- will work closely with all other Board members to coordinate sufficient and equitable distribution of parent participation hours to each project undertaken by the Board
- shall serve as an available, neutral party when listening to Mulberry staff and will serve to relay information and improve communication between the Board, Director, and the staff
- will perform other duties as directed by the Board and policy

### **Director of Finance**

- will attend all Board meetings
- will understand financial accounting for nonprofit organizations
- will serve as the chair of the finance committee
- will manage, with the finance committee, the board's review of and action related to the board's financial responsibilities
- will work with the finance committee to ensure that appropriate financial reports are made available to the Board on a timely basis
- will present the annual budget to the board for approval
- will review the annual audit and answer board members' questions about the audit
- shall perform other duties that may be prescribed by the Board of Directors and policy.

### **Director of Advancement**

- will attend all Board meetings
- will direct and coordinate all fundraising events including recruiting and train volunteers for events
- will work with the Director of Marketing to develop marketing strategy and plan for fundraising events
- will develop and manage relationships with current and potential donors
- will solicit sponsorships, donations, corporate matching gifts and charitable bequests

- will maintain an accurate and complete donor and prospective donor database
- will coordinate grant writing activities and work with the Academic Director to identify new grant opportunities
- will maintain a schedule of grant opportunities, deadlines, follow-up activities and reporting requirements for grants received
- shall perform other duties that may be prescribed by the Board of Directors and policy

### **Director of Marketing**

- will attend all Board meetings
- will be responsible for increasing public awareness of the Mulberry School and its activities
- will be responsible for coordinating public relations events such as upkeep and updating of the school's web site, contacting the media for upcoming fund raising, school or alumni events, and preparing documents for press releases
- will work closely with the Director of Advancement, assisting them with media releases and media interactions.
- additional duties may include submitting grants or special projects, applying for special awards for teaching, school activities, potential scholarships, etc
- may recruit other Mulberry parents to assist him/her in these duties. It will then be the Director of Marketing's responsibility to coordinate and oversee activities of any sub-committee.

### **Director of Technology**

- will attend all Board meetings
- shall be responsible for the administration and oversight of the school's technology resources.
- will perform other duties as directed by the Board and policy.

### **Academic Director**

The Academic Director is employed by the Mulberry School Board of Directors and is directly responsible to the Board. He/she must have educational administrative abilities and experience.

The primary responsibilities of the Academic Director are as follows:

1. improve the student's academic and social skills through involvement.
2. the purchasing and distribution of all academic materials.
3. keep informed of current trends and developments in the elementary educational field by attending meetings, conferences, workshops, and visiting other schools, not to exceed two (2) days per academic year. In the case where the Academic Director is also a teacher at the Mulberry School, these two days are in addition to the 2 days allowed for the teaching position.
4. to register and orientate all new students and their parents.
5. make recommendations to the board on hiring and firing of school staff, and to monitor the staffs' performance levels.
6. to establish and distribute the Mulberry School calendar of events, prior to the beginning of the academic year.
7. to coordinate and distribute information to parents on upcoming events, fund raisers, parent/teacher conferences, contracts for upcoming school year, student physical updates, etc.
8. to coordinate all relevant information with teachers about their respective students.

9. to update and maintain academic records pertaining to both previously and currently enrolled students.
10. to coordinate with parents about teacher/student relationships, concerns, and emergencies.
11. to arrange and be responsible for all work-study students, before and after care program, and teacher specialists.
12. to establish and update a list of substitute teachers and advertise and interview applicants when required.
13. to arrange for the use of non-school facilities.
14. to immediately notify local law enforcement officials of written complaints from school personnel concerning instances of battery committed against school personnel.
15. to immediately notify local law enforcement of firearm incidents at the school and to notify parents or guardians of students found in possession of firearms on school grounds.
16. to notify the police department of verified incidents involving drugs occurring in a school within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

The Academic Director shall maintain a good working relationship with the Board of Directors, ensuring that the policies as authorized by the Board are followed. The Academic Director will also keep the Board informed of current needs, developments, and trends in the elementary education fields as well as the Mulberry School staff and the hiring of new staff members. The Academic Director will be available for public relations in regards to speaking, writing, and distributing of information pertaining to the Mulberry School as requested by the general public or the Board of Directors.

The Academic Director also has summer responsibilities, which are as follows:

1. Recruitment: To show the school and explain educational philosophy and processes when needed. Make call backs to interested people. Process applications.
2. Supplies: To work with teacher(s) on lists of supplies needed for fall session. Compare teacher lists, prioritize items based on cost efficiency, and place orders.
3. Orientation: Secure health, permission, and release forms for each student entering or returning to Mulberry School in the upcoming academic year.
4. Logistics: Handle daily mail, keep up with summer correspondence, in terms of forwarding records and report on alumni children, updating forms needed for Regional Office of Education and the State Board of Education.
5. Administer Accounts Receivable function: Generate and present an annual operating and capital budget to the Board of Directors; generate monthly financial reports for presentation to the Board of Directors; alert Board about significant financial issues.
6. Office: Inventory remaining textbook/workbook supply and reorder materials. Handle all telephone correspondence, and establish and maintain record keeping procedure with Director of Finance and Bookkeeper concerning all financial transactions over summer.

## **Bookkeeper / Administrative Assistant**

Under the direction of the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, maintains all financial transactions/records related to Mulberry School. Under the direction of the Academic Director, provides administrative support to ensure the smooth day-to-day operations of the school.

### *Bookkeeping Responsibilities:*

1. Maintain all financial records relating to Mulberry School.
2. Collect and post payments to appropriate student accounts in QuickBooks.
3. Allocate all payments received to appropriate ledger accounts.
4. Audit accounts for adherence to credit policy; pass on to the Board of Directors those accounts with past due balances for follow-up.
5. Prepare bank deposits; reconcile bank accounts.
6. Prepare monthly budget documents for board meetings.
7. Record and Process Reimbursement to individuals for items purchased for school (example: items for maintenance, teaching supplies, etc...)
8. Administer Accounts Payable:
  - a. Pay and record all bills in a timely manner so as to avoid any service/late fees.
  - b. Allocate all money disbursed to appropriate ledger accounts; reconcile and balance all ledger accounts.
  - c. Track expenses for adherence to budget.
  - d. Oversee payroll / wages / and benefit function.
    - i. Supply all approved payroll and benefit information to payroll processor; ensure timely and accurate processing of such.
    - ii. Ensure compliance with Human Resource law, i.e. completion of I-9 forms, etc.

### *Administrative Assistant Responsibilities:*

1. Assist Academic Director in all aspects of school administration, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Enrollment and registration.
  - b. Correspondence, including composition of letters, bulletins, memorandums, etc.
  - c. Maintenance of all student records, including collection and auditing of student physical forms for compliance with state immunization requirements.
  - d. Arranging for substitutes in teacher's absence; tracking professional days, tracking personal days taken or rolled over and arranging reimbursement as necessary.
  - e. Tracking / shopping for / ordering of all school, office, and janitorial supplies.
  - f. Arrange for and admit maintenance vendors and repair staff for school (example copy machine maintenance, pest control).

- g. Maintenance of current mailing/email list of members, alumni, and patrons of Mulberry School.
- h. Student record requests.
  - Checks with Illinois State Police's missing person website to flag record requests for any current or former student.
  - Requests certified copies of transfer students' records within 14 days of enrollment. Sends unofficial records of students transferring to other schools within 10 days of the request.
2. Greet visitors to school, determine nature of business, and direct visitors to destination.
3. Answer and direct all incoming communications in professional manner.
4. Stay informed of all activities relating to field trips, special events, school calendar, etc., in order to answer any and all questions from parents.
5. Administer to sick children by taking their temperatures, making them comfortable, and notifying parents if/when the illness is deemed to be of a serious nature.
6. Send weekly illness reports via email (every Monday).
7. Keep record of all school key assignments.
8. Demonstrate professionalism and integrity and maintain confidentiality of the staff, membership, students, and Board of Directors at all times.
9. Perform other duties as assigned by Academic Director and/or Board of Directors.

# ADDITIONAL POLICIES ADOPTED IN THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

## Leaves of Absence Policy for Salaried Employees

### Purpose

It is the intention of the cooperative to provide salaried employees with a policy allowing for various leaves of absence. Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate the requests of employees as a part of this policy

### Policies

#### a. Personal Time

- i. All full time salaried employees will receive 10 days of personal time at the beginning of the school year to use as necessary. All part time salaried employees will receive 5 days of personal time at the beginning of the school year to use as necessary. Employees will give a minimum of one week of notice of intended time off to the Administrative Assistant, with the exception of illness and emergencies, so a substitute can be arranged.
- ii. All salaried employees have the option to roll over unused personal days at the end of each school year. Employees may choose how many days they would like to roll over yearly (with a maximum of 5 days rolled over yearly); however, total personal days may not exceed 20 days (10 days for part time salaried employees). In the event of the termination of employment for any reason, the maximum number of personal days that can be reimbursed is 10 days. The value of these days is determined by the current rate of substitute pay.
- iii. In the event of a change to this policy that would alter banked leave days, payment shall be made at the current rate of substitute pay for banked days lost due to the change.

#### b. Bereavement Time

- i. All salaried employees may be excused from work for up to three days with no reduction in pay for the death of family members: spouse, child, stepchild, parent, stepparent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law.
- ii. An absence of one day without loss of pay may be granted to attend the funeral of the following relatives: aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law.
- iii. In all cases the employee shall notify the Academic Director or Administrative Assistant that time off is needed as early as possible to allow for substitute to be arranged. If more time off is

needed beyond the above allowances, the employee shall notify the Academic Director as soon as possible, and utilize any unused personal time. Unpaid time off may be granted on a case-by-case basis upon appeal to the Board of Directors.

iv. Paid bereavement time off does not count against the ten personal days allotted for each employee.

c. Medical Leave Policy

i. In the event a salaried employee of Mulberry School should need to take time off for a medical leave and their available personal time has been exhausted, Mulberry School will pay said employee 60% of their current salary for up to 5 weeks. Medical leave may only be taken when a physician has determined that employee is unable to work. Written proof of this determination must be provided to the Mulberry School. During their period of medical leave, employees must first use all available personal days. After personal days have been used, Mulberry school will pay the employee 60% of their current salary for up to five weeks.

ii. The employee will notify the Academic Director in advance of the medical leave as far in advance as they are able with the exception of emergencies. In the case of planned medical leaves, the employee will work with the Academic Director in creating their classroom lesson plans for the duration of the anticipated leave.

iii. During this extended leave, a substitute will be hired at the current substitute pay rate, until said time that this person becomes responsible for devising lesson plans. At that time, the pay for the substitute will increase.

iv. No more than a total of five weeks of medical leave paid at 60% of the employee's salary may be taken by an employee in any school year

v. Employees of Mulberry School are not eligible for protection under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

d. Extended Leave Policy

i. Upon Board approval, a salaried employee may take unpaid leave during the school year up to the date of their contract's expiration without adversely affecting their chances of re-hire the following school year.

ii. All requests under this policy shall be made to the Academic Director and presented for approval to the Board of Directors in writing a minimum of 60 days prior to the requested beginning of leave. The request should contain the reason for the request, return date, and a recommendation of a plan for their classroom.

Responsibility

The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the administration of these policies. Appeals for exceptions to these policies may be made directly by the affected employee to the Board and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Approval and Revisions

a. Board approved November 2015

b. Revised June 2016

## Parent Participation Hours

Beginning in the 2017-18 academic year, parents will be required to perform a minimum of thirty-five (35) participation hours per year.