

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 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 1st 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 1st of the academic school year in order to apply for the preschool program; four (4) by September 1st of the academic school year in order to apply for the 4K program; and five (5) by September 1st 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.

Bathroom Accident Policy

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

A potty trained preschool child:

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

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.

1. 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.
2. 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. The parent will be called for every accident after the child has had 2 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.

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.

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