



# Morning Garden Preschool Family Handbook

## 2023 - 2024

This Handbook is intended to serve as a primary resource for our school's programs and guidelines.

We encourage you to seek out other resources, such as the school's website [www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca](http://www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca), your child's teacher, other school staff, the Board of Directors and other community members.

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## Welcome to Mulberry Waldorf School

*The child forms [their] being not only according to what we say and do, but according to our inner attitude, the quality of our inner thinking and inner feeling. We need no other method than this to become a human being worthy of the child's imitation.*

*~ Rudolf Steiner*

The Mulberry Waldorf School Faculty, Staff and Board of Directors extend a warm welcome to all returning and new families. We respect the trust that you have shown us by placing your child in our school and look forward to working together for the benefit of your child.

Mulberry's earliest beginnings in 1993 were the dreams of a small group of parents interested in the ideals of Waldorf Education. Our school was incorporated in 1996, became a not-for-profit and charitable organization, moved to our present location in 1999, achieved associate membership status with the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) in 2005 and associate membership status with the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN). Our independent and community-based school has flourished with the participation of generations of new families who offer diverse ideas, skills and experiences. Parents, guardians, and extended community members build and sustain the fabric of the school. Each family's participation is welcome and essential to the continued strength of our school community. Here are a few of the possibilities for involvement:

**Enhance your child's classroom experience:** Parents/guardians and extended family members are welcome to help with classroom laundry, repairs, etc., over the summer; work with the teacher to share a celebration or festival, and/or share knowledge and experience in support of the class curriculum in many different areas. Parents/guardians can also volunteer to be the class representative for their child's class, acting as a point of contact for class parents/guardians, and supporting social and school events.

**Strengthen the school's governance structure:** Parents, guardians, and community members are welcome to join Committees of the Board such as Marketing, Community Development, Finance and Property, among others.

**Join an intentional and collaborative community:** Parents/guardians are welcome to all social events such as socials, festivals, class plays, assemblies, class parent meetings and school parent engagement events.

Parents/Guardians often reflect upon how their involvement provides a holistic contribution to their family's experience at the school. Getting involved is a great way to get to know other families, teachers, staff and the wider community. Most importantly, our students sense the meaningfulness that comes with their parents', guardians', or extended family members' contribution to the school. It cultivates in them a sense of belonging that includes not just themselves, but their whole family.

## Vision

Mulberry Waldorf School nurtures the unfurling of each individual's highest capacities.

We seek to cultivate free-thinking individuals who possess a sense of purpose, rooted in love for humanity.

*“The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul, the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.” ~ Rudolf Steiner*

## Mission

Mulberry Waldorf School endeavours to awaken and nurture a reverence for life, a sensitivity to beauty, and a love of learning in each child.

Our school is rooted in the ideals of Waldorf education, which nourishes students, families, and our greater community.

We strive to educate the whole child: hands, heart, and head. Our curriculum offers an integrated academic, artistic, and movement-based approach to language arts, mathematics, world history and geography, the sciences, French, vocal and instrumental music, physical education, and handwork.

We aim to cultivate freedom in thinking, healthy emotional development, and the compassion and imagination for our students to be active citizens of the world.

## Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility

Mulberry Waldorf School is committed to the following principle from the **Association of Waldorf Schools of North America**, one of our membership bodies:  
 "Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society.

Waldorf schools foster development so that, throughout life, individuals are motivated to serve humanity with strength of will, depth of feeling, clarity of thought, and the ability to work with others. The educational program is designed to strengthen these fundamental human capacities in our students. Schools are committed to enacting Waldorf education in a place-based manner as a vehicle to foster social renewal for the future. Thus it is essential that schools actively engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion, emphasizing truth and reconciliation and/or racial justice, in school policies and practices."

## Administrative Information

A very warm welcome to the Morning Garden Preschool program at Mulberry Waldorf School from the Morning Garden Faculty of 2022-2023:

**Elissa Smith**, Lead Teacher, B.Sc., Waldorf ECE, Doula Certificate

Elissa has a Bachelor of Science from UBC and completed her Waldorf Early Childhood Training in 2014. She has been working with children birth to six years old and their families for 12 years. She has taught at Mulberry since 2019 as a Kindergarten Assistant and enjoys reading, knitting, being in nature and spending time with her family. Her daughter is a current Mulberry student.

**Janie Jang**, Assistant Teacher, BA, RECE, Culinary Arts Certificate

Janie has been teaching at Mulberry since 2013. Janie and her husband have two children, Milan and Mason. Mason graduated from Mulberry Waldorf School in June 2019. In her spare time, Janie enjoys doing handcrafts, needlework, and spending time with her family.

**Julia Miranda, Assistant Teacher**, Assistant Teacher, B.A.H., B.Ed.

Julia has a B.A.H. in History and Spanish from Queen's University, a B.Ed. in Primary/Junior Education also from Queen's University, and a certificate in Foundations of Early Childhood Music Pedagogy from the Royal Conservatory of Music. She has completed Foundations in Anthroposophy Part 1 and has completed Grade School intensive training weeks at the Rudolf Steiner Centre (RSCT). Julia enjoys writing and reading, making art and music, swimming and gardening, and handwork of all kinds.

The Administration of Mulberry Waldorf School also welcomes you warmly:

- Jenny Taylor (Pedagogical Director and Student Support Teacher)
- Peelu Hira (Administrative Head)
- Lois Bulch (Financial Officer)
- Christine Chapman (Administrative Assistant)

The Office is open from 8:15 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday. We look forward to keeping in touch with parents/guardians and community members in person, by telephone (613-542-0669) or by email.

For general enquiries: [reception@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca](mailto:reception@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca)

For financial enquiries: [finance@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca](mailto:finance@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca)

For enrolment and administration: [administrator@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca](mailto:administrator@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca)

For pedagogical enquiries: [jennytaylor.mws@gmail.com](mailto:jennytaylor.mws@gmail.com)

## Operating Hours

The core Morning Garden program begins at 8:45 am and ends at 12:00 noon, Mondays to Fridays. For children staying for the afternoon, the program ends at 3:30 pm.

We are closed for two Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conference days, three Professional Development days, one Health and Wellness day, two weeks over the Winter holidays, two weeks for March Break, and all statutory holidays. Our program does not operate over the summer. Please refer to the school calendar posted outside the Morning Garden classroom and on our website at [www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca](http://www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca).

The Morning Garden program takes place in the licensed classroom and the licensed play yard.

### Drop-Off:

Morning drop-off for Morning Garden Preschool students is between 8:45 and 9:00 AM at the Morning Garden Preschool gate off Markland Street. Attendance is confirmed with the office at 9:00 AM. Parents will receive a phone call if their child is absent or late without notice. Arriving by 9:00 AM allows children the opportunity for movement and socializing before teacher-led programming begins and minimizes disruption to work and play.

***\*\*Please phone the Office at 613-542-0669 if your child will be late or absent.\*\****

Please strive to make your goodbye routine consistent and simple. This is a routine you will have all year long so keep it brief for you and your child's sake. Trust the teachers to guide your child through the goodbye once you have said you are leaving. *Rest assured that if your child experiences prolonged upset over separation, we will contact you.* When you show trust in your child's teachers, your child will learn to trust them too. Please meet with the Lead Teacher if you feel that goodbyes are a challenge. We will be happy to find ways to support you and your child in this process.

### Pick-up:

Students enrolled in the Core program may be picked up at the Morning Garden Preschool gate at 12:00 PM. Children staying for afternoon care may be picked up at the Morning Garden Preschool gate at 3:30 PM. If you are unavoidably delayed at any pick-up time, please call the school.

During early childhood, our children live in the present moment and are unable to recount the day's events intellectually. If you ask at pick-up, "What did you do today in school?" The response is typically a dreamy gaze and/or the statement, "Nothing." Most likely, you'll learn about your child's day by overhearing a fragment of a song or a line of verse, or the name of a new friend. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's experiences, or are simply curious, please do not hesitate to ask a teacher.

***\*It is a legal requirement that each child be signed in and out each day by the teachers. Only authorized person(s) indicated in your child's enrolment forms will be permitted to pick up***

*your child. Photo identification of authorized person(s) picking up your child may be required. \**

### **A Special Note About Your Child's First Day of School:**

#### **Staggered Start Date**

We appreciate that for some students, this will be the first day in a new class or the first experience away from parents/guardians. To ensure a gentle start, we will be staggering the students' start dates and times. Your child's Lead Teacher will contact you with information about when to bring your child to school for the first time.

### **Inclement Weather and School Closure Policy**

Typically, Mulberry Waldorf School will remain open on inclement weather days, but an *Inclement Weather Day* will be declared when driving conditions prevent some students and teachers from safely coming to school. A message will be recorded on the school voice mail (613-542-0669) and a communication will be sent early that morning. We urge parents/guardians to exercise caution when making the decision about whether to walk or drive to school. **Please be advised that some staff members will not be able to travel and we will switch to alternative programming. Classes may be combined to ensure adequate supervision with appropriate health and safety precautions.** No new material will be introduced. If weather conditions become worse during the course of the day, parents/guardians will be called to pick up their child(ren) early. The safety of families and staff is our primary concern.

Mulberry Waldorf School will be closed only when travelling conditions are extremely hazardous or in the event of unsafe conditions at the school. The decision to close the school could be made on short notice in the event of a sudden change in the weather or in the case of an unpredicted extreme situation that impacts the health and safety of students, faculty and staff (e.g., loss of heat during the winter months, power outages, water stoppages). If the school is required to close, each family will receive an email.

### **Emergency Management and School Closures**

Mulberry Waldorf School has an Emergency Management Policy and Procedures to provide clear direction for staff to deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

In the case of any emergency and/or school closure, you will be contacted by telephone. On inclement weather days, the school will remain open and a message will be recorded on the school phone.



## Enrolment

### Age Requirements

The Morning Garden program welcomes children who turn three by the Fall. Acceptance into the program will be contingent on developmental readiness criteria other than age such as independent toileting and readiness for an independent school experience. If a child falls within the age range above but does not show signs of readiness for a September start, they may join a waiting list for January if they are ready and if space is available in the program at that time. This may also apply to families who register to join the Morning Garden program after the start date of the school year.

### Enrolment Process

Our enrolment process provides time for parents to get to know our school as well as the Waldorf educational philosophy and curriculum. It is also important for our Faculty to have a full picture of the student to determine whether we can meet their needs while continuing to meet the needs of the children currently enrolled in the class. The process involves the following steps:

1. Tour of the school
2. Completed Application Form as well as copies of any additional health, educational and behavioural therapy reports
3. Admissions Interview
4. If admission is confirmed, families have one week to complete the enrolment process.

Please contact the office to book a personal tour.

Application Forms are available on our website and through the office. Parents are asked to submit the completed Form to the office. We ask that parents also share any potential or existing health, educational or behavioural concerns, as well as any progress reports and/or assessments (e.g., reports from previous schools and any psycho-educational, speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy assessments). Sharing this information is essential to create a full picture of the student to determine whether we can meet their needs while continuing to meet the needs of the children currently enrolled in the class.

The Admissions Interview is an opportunity for the parents and student to meet Faculty members and allows the Faculty members to observe the student's readiness for the program. For families not able to travel to Kingston, the Interview may be conducted by telephone or videoconferencing. Based on the Interview, observations, and information shared, the Faculty will determine whether the needs of the student can be met within our programs.

We aim to notify parents of admission confirmation within two weeks of the Interview. If admission is confirmed, parents have one week to complete the enrolment process.

To complete enrolment, your family will need:

1. Completed and signed Enrolment Agreement Form

2. Non-refundable deposit of \$400 per child or \$600 per family
3. Tuition Adjustment Form and NOAs if requesting Tuition Adjustment
4. Commitment to pay Music and Materials Fee for Grade School students dated July 1<sup>st</sup>
5. Commitment to pay remaining balance in full or in equal monthly installments due July 1<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>
6. Copy of the student's up to date immunization record or applicable "Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief" Affidavit. Parents must bring the original copy to Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) Public Health (see below)
7. Indication of how you wish to volunteer (e.g., committee work, school events, classroom enrichment, community building) on the Enrolment Agreement Form.

*All required forms and commitment to pay must be on file before children may attend school.*

*All existing families must have accounts in good standing in order to re-enrol.*

### **Tuition Fees 2023-2024**

<b>MORNING GARDEN PRESCHOOL – CORE programs</b> <b>3 mornings (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday)</b> <b>2 mornings (Thursday and Friday)</b> <i>*includes morning meal</i>	<b>\$5,740</b> <b>\$3,826</b>
<b>MORNING GARDEN PRESCHOOL OPTIONAL afternoons – must match morning programming</b> <b>3 full days (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday)</b> <b>2 full days (Thursday and Friday)</b> <i>*includes meal, lunch, and afternoon snack</i>	<b>\$10,144</b> <b>\$6,763</b>
<b>MORNING GARDEN PRESCHOOL – FULL WEEK OPTION - 5 full days</b> <i>*includes morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack</i>	<b>\$14,930</b>

### **Administration Fees**

A \$40.00 fee will be levied for all declined payments.

Any changes to programming after September 20, 2023 will incur an Administration Fee of \$25.00.

We strive to meet requests for letters, forms or record completion within 5 to 7 business days unless otherwise notified. Each request will incur a minimum Administration Fee of \$25.00.

### **Family Rates**

Mulberry Waldorf School offers a 20% sibling discount on tuition for a second child and a 50% sibling tuition discount for the third child and each subsequent child for Kindergarten through Grade 8.

Exception: The Morning Garden Preschool program offers an exceptional child to teacher ratio and we offer a maximum overall discount of 20%.

Please note that the sibling discount does not apply to Extended Care programs.

\*Family rates for Enrolment Applications received after May 15, 2023 will be considered only if funds are available.

### **Tuition Adjustment**

Mulberry Waldorf School offers Tuition Adjustment to families based on financial need and household income, as well as the school's budget. To apply, please submit the following documents:

1. Completed Enrolment Form and Non-Refundable Deposit
2. Completed Tuition Adjustment Application Form
3. All parents' Notice of Assessments (NOAs) from the previous tax year

The school will notify the parent(s) of Tuition Adjustment as soon as possible. After receiving notification, the parent(s) have a one-week period to complete the enrolment process.

The Morning Garden Preschool program offers an exceptional child to teacher ratio and we offer a maximum overall discount of 20%. Tuition Adjustment does not apply to Extended Care programs and is not available in conjunction with Family Rates and/or Staff Discounts.

\* In order for our school to establish a budget for the 2023-2024 school year, Enrolment Applications received after May 15, 2023, requesting Tuition Adjustment will be considered only if funds are available.

### **Probationary Period Policy**

For students new to a program, the first 6 weeks of attendance are a probationary period. This can be extended, in writing, at the discretion of the Faculty. During the probationary period the family will have the opportunity to become familiar with the school, and the Faculty will be able to observe the student's needs and abilities. If a student's needs cannot be met by our program

and our staff, we will meet with the parents to share observations and discuss options. The school reserves the right to discharge a student if we are unable to meet the student's needs.

### **Withdrawal and Refund Policy**

Morning Garden Preschool, Kindergarten, and Grades 1 through 8:

If a parent withdraws a student after July 1, 2023 and before March 1, 2024, one full month's written notice and payment is required.

For withdrawals from all core programming, Morning Garden Preschool afternoons, and Friday Kindergarten programming, amounts owing (if any) will be calculated based on our July 1st through April 1st standard schedule less the Non-refundable Deposit and Music and Materials Fee if applicable. A \$25 Administration Fee will be applied.

If a parent withdraws a student from extended care programming, one full month's written notice and payment is required.

After March 1, 2024, no refund will be given.

If Mulberry Waldorf School is unable to meet the student's needs, the school reserves the right to discharge a student. All prior payments are considered non-refundable. No future payments will be required if the family is on a standard payment plan of July through April. If a family is not on a standard payment plan, any amounts owing will be calculated on a July through April schedule.

### **Wait List Policy**

We maintain a wait list upon request from parents. This wait list will be made available in a manner that maintains the privacy and confidentiality of the children listed on it, but that allows the position of a child on the list to be ascertained by the families of children on the list.

## The Morning Garden Preschool Program

*Licensed for full days under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA).*

The Morning Garden Preschool is a gentle start into the world of peers for young children ages three to four years old. Children in this age group are often still very much in their own world, absorbing their environment through independent play. Our role as teachers is to create a learning setting in which children can explore the world through play. As the year progresses and the children naturally become more sociable, they will grapple with sharing, communication, and problem solving. We support the children through attentive observation and gentle intervention, making their interactions with their environment and their peers healthy and meaningful.

In line with Waldorf philosophy, the Morning Garden Preschool room remains very simple, free from excessive toys and visual/auditory distraction. We strive to create a home-away-from-home atmosphere, complete with daily rhythms and chores, shared snack time, circle, and story. Children imitate the adults engaged in happy and purposeful work around them. Joyful music and verse mirrors the rhythms of their heart, breathing, and the cycles of the year. Circle time provides children with specific exercises in gross and fine motor development. Our stories, told through puppetry, assist children in forming strong inner images, and model healthy language development. Both circle and story time, and our daily activities are strongly tied to the seasons and the rhythm of the natural world.

Mulberry Waldorf School has opted-out of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System for 2023 and will reconsider for future. Our Preschool program is licensed under the CCEYA, but does not financially operate as a Child Care Centre. We allocate tuition fees that strive to pay for operations. Families are able to choose to come to our Preschool based on their needs and interest in Waldorf Education.

### Program Statement

Mulberry Waldorf School's Morning Garden Preschool program aims to promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of children. We value children in this age group as being competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. The following program statement is consistent with the Ministry of Education's policy statement on programming and pedagogy issued under subsection 55 (3) of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. It is Mulberry Waldorf School's policy to review the program statement at least annually.

#### **We strive to:**

Promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of the children.

- Food is thoughtfully planned and prepared daily on site by designated staff.
- Our menus consider information from the KFL&A Public Health Unit and Ministry Education nutritional guidelines.
- We strive to use whole foods that are locally purchased and organic when possible.

- We offer a vegetarian menu avoiding excess sugars, artificial flavours, colours, and additives.
- Every effort is made to provide wholesome foods, prepared with attention to safe food handling and storage.
- Care is taken to serve food in an aesthetically pleasing manner in a home-like setting which fosters a sense of community.
- Foods from various cultures are enjoyed.
- We ensure that all our staff have up-to-date First Aid training and an up-to-date police check for working with the vulnerable sector.
- Our Nutritional Coordinator has Food Safe certification.
- We have policies and procedures related to health and safety. We perform monthly fire drills and conduct daily, seasonal, and annual yard safety checks. We document all these checks.

Support positive and responsive interactions between parents/guardians and teachers.

- Ongoing open communication with parents/guardians is essential for us to work as a team in the best interests of their children.
- Teachers strive to communicate verbally daily with parents/guardians. Conversations of concern will be held outside of core programming hours.
- Teachers keep records of daily observations and provide regular newsletters to parents.
- Two Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences are offered throughout the year: one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents/guardians are encouraged to speak directly to teachers with any questions, concerns and/or suggestions.

Support positive and open communications among staff members.

- An open, respectful, and honest relationship between Morning Garden teachers is fostered. Teachers speak daily about children and programming.
- A trusting relationship between faculty, staff and administration is fostered. We are proactive rather than reactive and this opportunity for frank and open discussion enables us to support children and families.
- Weekly pedagogical and business meetings provide opportunities to discuss issues related to the children and topics related to the principles of “How Does Learning Happen?” as well as the Waldorf philosophy.

Support the personal and professional development of the teachers.

- Teachers complete an annual assessment of their personal and professional development needs for the Human Resources Committee.
- Teachers in their first and second year of teaching undergo a comprehensive evaluation process, which includes a written self-evaluation, peer review, parent feedback, and in-class observation. All this information is documented by the Human Resources Committee and shared with the individual teacher.
- The school strives to support each staff member’s personal and professional development within its budget.

Protect the imaginative state of childhood and to foster the children's exploration, play, and inquiry.

- Free and child initiated creative play with plenty of time during the program for outdoor and indoor creative play.
- Teachers' observations of children's play help to inform and develop the emerging curriculum.
- Learning through imitation, exploration, discovery, and observation.
- Transitions through songs and rhymes to facilitate smooth movement from one activity to another.
- The oral tradition of storytelling, reciting verses, and rhymes, and singing songs is integral to Waldorf early childhood programs. Every day the children gather around the teacher. Stories are told with puppets and told over a period – two to three weeks. The story is learned by heart by the teacher, in this way the images and characters live in the teacher allowing for a human connection to language. Through the oral telling of a story, the children are free to create inner pictures of the contents of the story. Creating mental pictures is a precursor to, not only reading, but also to abstract and symbolic thinking. Oral stories help to develop speech and vocabulary in children as they are introduced to words and phrases that they may not hear in everyday language. Story and circle times assist in developing memories and imagination and in lengthening children's attention span. The ability to sit for an extended time and to focus is another important skill for continued academic learning.
- Science and mathematics are rooted in a phenomenological approach. Children's learning is experiential; we recognize that the young child learns best by being a participatory observer. Outdoor time in nature helps children to develop capacities for observation and understanding processes as well as helping them to see the interconnectedness of life. By encouraging children to explore and to develop their senses a heightened experience of the world occurs. Our approach to teaching also cultivates an attitude of awe and reverence.

Enhance the cognitive and physical development of each child.

- We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and are inclusive of children with individualized plans.
- Free, unstructured movement and gross motor play, daily outdoor and indoor time: every purposeful creative movement is wiring a child's nervous system. Movement helps to strengthen the proprioceptive and vestibular systems. The proprioceptive system helps with posture, motor control, sense of personal boundaries, sense of self, as well as literacy development. The vestibular system helps with muscle tone, balance, coordination, gross motor skills, auditory processing, and visual/spatial perception. The Morning Garden program provides many opportunities for movement in both fine and gross motor activities.
- Gestures with songs and rhymes
- Free, child-initiated creative play
- Useful work/tasks to imitate and help with learning

- A rich oral language environment full of stories, rhymes, fingerplays, and songs
- Focused fine motor activities: seasonal crafts, painting, drawing, baking, cooking, beeswax modelling, play dough. The fine motor activities help to develop children's hand/eye coordination, concentration skills, and dexterity.
- Sensory experiences indoors and outdoors
- Children of this age group are showing interest in self-care and independence. We encourage this interest by allowing them to undress/dress on their own (we help with buttons and zippers as needed) and to develop independence in the bathroom.
- The children take great pride in doing things for themselves and in helping with daily and weekly tasks in our classroom and yard. With repetition, practice, and encouragement, children will develop the capacities to care for themselves and their environment. The daily task and rhythm are important parts of the children's day; their responsibilities grow as they do, moving from guided activities towards mastering these skills independently.

Hone and develop the emerging social skills of each child.

- Communicating clearly and politely with others.
- Using kind and inclusive language.
- Experiencing and accepting boundaries.
- Taking turns, delayed gratification, and patience.
- Developing and expressing awareness and concern for others.
- Feeling a part of the group and experiencing belonging to a community.
- Teachers help to support self-regulation as well as each of the above social skills.
- Teachers model appropriate behaviour with each other and the children.

Provide a beautiful, calming environment for the young child.

- Daily routine and predictable rhythm with outdoor and indoor play time, active play, times for quiet and rest.
- Gentle and calm approach with the children.
- Simple, open-ended toys of natural materials.
- Minimal amount of clutter and "stuff" in the room.
- Frequent use of songs and music; human voice, lap harp, glockenspiel, bells, and other instruments.
- Children absorbed in active, productive play
- Breathing in and out of their day: time for active play and time for rest and quiet

Foster the development of the child's will.

- Child-initiated play.
- Encouraging self-motivation (avoiding praise and criticism).
- Acceptance and recognition of each child.
- Taking joy in work and play.
- Predictable routine.
- Repetition of songs, rhymes, and stories.



Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff.

- We are an integral part of our community and we are committed to collaborating with community agencies, other schools, and professionals to support the children, their families, and staff.
- Some of these agencies include City of Kingston, KFL&A Public Health, St. Lawrence College, Child Development Centre, Pathways, and Community Living.
- We receive some funding from the City of Kingston and submit budgetary, attendance, and other information as required.
- We submit enrolment information to KFL&A Public Health on an annual basis. Health Inspectors perform annual inspections of our kitchens and cleaning procedures. We follow Public Health guidelines to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children, their families, and staff.
- We offer placements for St. Lawrence College ECE and Queen's B.Ed students.
- We partner with Child Development Centre, Pathways, and Community Living when needed. For example, we have had presentations from OTs regarding sensory integration.

This program statement will be read by all staff, volunteers, and students prior to interacting with the children and at any time when the program statement is modified. The program statement will also be read during the annual policy and procedures manual review. We see this as a living document which will change over time. Staff meetings will be a time for teachers to reflect on the program to further their understanding of the organization's philosophy and practices and to find opportunities for improvement. This is a time for us to reflect on the program statement to ascertain whether we are achieving our goals or if new goals are necessary. These findings will be brought forward to the Board Chair.

## **Rhythm**

Children are carried along by the rhythms of the world they live in—from the rhythms of breathing in their bodies to the daily rhythms of sleeping and waking. The yearly cycle of the seasons and the rhythmic procession of stars across the heavens are both part of life's experience for adults and children. The Waldorf view is that children flourish when their daily activities reflect the natural order of life with a rhythmic arrangement of the day. Thus, our program flows with a sense of "breathing in" and "breathing out"; from the quiet moments of story and snack to the active moments of rigorous work and play. For example, the children begin with vigorous outdoor play time, followed by a snack and a story. Then the children are involved in creative indoor play followed by activities which require concentration and group participation. Each day there is a specific activity, and children are encouraged to help with daily household chores. All transitions between activities are graced with a song as the teacher creates a rhythm of quiet and active experience for the child.

### **Daily Rhythms**

8:45 AM	Drop-off. Program begins with outdoor play
10:15 AM	Morning Circle (songs and movement), Indoor transition, Washroom
10:30 AM	Morning Snack & Washroom
11:00 AM	Indoor Play/Fine Motor Activities
11:30 AM	Clean up, Story, Washroom, Outdoor Transition
12:00 PM	Morning Dismissal (Outside)
12:00 PM	Lunch for Children Staying All Day
12:15 PM	Washroom & Rest Time
2:15 PM	Wake Up and Snack
2:30 PM	Transition to outside; Outdoor Play
3:30 PM	Afternoons Dismissal (Outside).

### **Morning Garden Preschool Afternoons**

Children who are staying for lunch will eat in their own classroom with the lead teacher. The school will provide all food and bedding.

Transition to quiet time begins around 12:15 PM. Resting is followed by a gentle wake up, and a time for washroom, snack, books, and quiet play; transition to outdoor play occurs around 2:30 PM. Pick up for the Morning Garden Preschool Afternoon program is at 3:30 PM in the Morning Garden Preschool yard.

### **Festivals**

We also mark the rhythms of the year through the changing seasons and the coming and going of festivals reflecting a variety of cultural experiences. As the year weaves from one festival to another we are provided with a true reason for preparation and celebration. For the young child the preparation is half the joy. They love decorating the room, baking special treats, and learning songs and verses chosen just for that festival. The stories that are told give the children a pictorial

understanding of the festival and speak very deeply to them without our need to explain anything.

### Sample Menus

#### Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Morning Snack</b>				
Trail Mix Carrots	Oat Cakes and Sunflower Butter Apple Slices	Homemade Bread & Chia Blueberry Jam Cucumbers	Breakfast Cookies Apple Slices	Homemade Blueberry Muffins Cucumber Slices
<b>Lunch</b>				
Glory Bowls: Brown Rice, Chickpeas, Shredded Carrots and Spinach Tahini Sauce Apples	Pasta Bowls: Pesto, Tomatoes, Olives Cantaloupe Chunks	Vegetables and Lentil Soup Bread Pears	Noodle Bowls: Brown Rice Noodles, Mixed Vegetables, Tofu Honeydew Slices	Vegetable, Beans and Barley Soup Crackers Apples Slices
<b>Afternoon Snack</b>				
Rice Crackers Hummus	Homemade Applesauce Muffins Cucumbers	Homemade Oatmeal Squares Apple Slices	Energy Balls Carrot Sticks	Bean Dip & Vegetables

#### Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Morning Snack</b>				
Breakfast Cookies Cucumbers	Applesauce Bread Carrots	Trail Mix Apple Slices	Hummus and Vegetables	Homemade Bread and Jam Carrots
<b>Lunch</b>				
Soup with Chickpeas Vegetables Rice Crackers Orange slices	Lentil and Chickpea Stew with Carrots and Sweet Potatoes Pears	Pasta Bowls: Pesto, Broccoli, Tomatoes, Olives Cantaloupe Chunks	Rice Bowls: Fried Brown Rice with Carrots, Bok Choy, and Edamame Beans  Watermelon Slices	Vegetarian Chilli with Vegetables and Kidney Beans Tortilla Chips Honeydew Chunks
<b>Afternoon Snack</b>				
Hummus Carrot sticks	Energy Balls Cucumber Slices	Rice Crackers Bean Dip	Oat & Flax Squares Apple Slices	Applesauce Muffins Cucumbers

## **Health, Safety, and Development**

Dietary and allergy restrictions should be communicated to us so that necessary adjustments can be made. The Administrative Head and Class Teacher must be advised of all allergies and medical issues and updated as soon as possible if there are changes.

Staff will not generally administer medication. On an "exception only" basis, medicine prescribed by a physician in the original container may be administered if accompanied by completed Medication Information and Parent/Guardian Consent forms, which are available in the Office.

All classroom volunteers (including parents/guardians, grandparents) must have a current Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) criminal record check (including a vulnerable sector check) and provide a copy to keep on file in the school Office.

Mulberry Waldorf School strives to provide a healthy environment for students, staff and families. To avoid many common illnesses, teach children HOW and WHEN to wash their hands properly: Wash regularly before eating and after using the toilet.

Due to the developmental needs of the child, we encourage you to consider your child's activities and routines. Waldorf philosophy, child development research, and our own experience lead us to believe that:

- Times of vigorous play with friends balanced with periods of quiet on their own will give children a sense of satisfaction and peace.
- A regular bedtime and ten to twelve hours of sleep support health, development, and participation at school.
- No-screen or low-screen exposure in the evenings or mornings before school days allows children to be fully present and engaged in a day based on social interactions and multi-sensory learning.
- A well rested child who is dressed appropriately for the weather and fed a wholesome diet is best prepared to participate fully in our programs and to withstand the onslaught of winter colds and ailments.

### **Illness and Attendance Guidelines**

*\*\*Please phone the Office at 613-542-0669 if your child will be late or absent.\*\**

When a student becomes ill during the day, parents/guardians will be contacted to make arrangements for their child to be taken home if the symptoms:

- prevent the student from participating comfortably in program activities
- result in greater needs for care than the staff can provide without compromising the care of other students
- may be contagious

Mulberry Waldorf School's Illness and Attendance Guidelines (below) outline expectations regarding illness. Please keep in mind that lively classrooms are not a soothing environment for a student who is not well. Please keep your child home when they are exhibiting symptoms of illness to prevent germs from spreading through the class (more details below). Additional information can be found at [Infections and infectious diseases - KFL&A Public Health](#).

Keep your child home if any of the following are present to avoid spreading illness to other children or staff:

- **Unusual behaviour:** including extreme lethargy or irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible illness.
- **Diarrhea:** An episode of diarrhea within the past 24 hours. Children should stay home until symptom-free for 48 hours.
- **Vomiting:** An episode of vomiting during the previous 24 hours. Children should stay home until symptom-free for 48 hours.
- **Fever:** Oral/tympanic temperature equal to or greater than 38C (100.4F). Auxiliary temperature equal to or greater than 38C (100.4F). Temperature above 102F is likely a sign of influenza or infection. Children should stay home until fever-free without medication for 24 hours.
- **Rash:** A rash appearing with fever or behaviour change. Exclusion from school should continue until the child is evaluated by a healthcare professional. (See Impetigo)
- **Colds and Coughs:** We request that a student be kept home for the first 24 to 48 hours of a cold if it is accompanied by a fever, extreme lethargy or irritability or a runny nose that is persistent and/or of a clear colour. In the case of a severe or 'chesty' sounding cough exclusion could be required until a healthcare professional has been consulted. Teachers should be informed when cold- or cough-like symptoms are due to allergies, asthma or other non contagious conditions.
- **Impetigo:** Rough, cracked reddened area, commonly on face or legs. Itching lesions (pinhead to bean sized); fluid filled blisters form and change to honey coloured crusts; fluid from blisters spreads a highly contagious infection.
- **Pinworms:** Itchy and irritated anal area. Persistent scratching; difficulty sleeping. Wash hands often and see a physician. Notify school if there is any possibility of pinworms as it is highly contagious. Children **must be treated** before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.
- **Lice:** Child complains of itchy head; persistent scratching. Check for adult lice or nits (eggs). Notify school if there is any suspicion of head lice as it is highly contagious. Children **should be treated** before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.
- **Pink Eye:** Itchy, red, weepy or watery eye(s) with or without mucous. Highly contagious. Children **must be treated** before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.

## **Guidelines for Gear and Clothing**

PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING, GEAR, AND PERSONAL ITEMS! Mulberry has an ongoing fundraiser through Lovable Labels: [Lovable Labels - Mulberry Fundraiser](#)

The Morning Garden Preschool classrooms and yards are places of active work and play. Based on our years of experience working with children in our programs, we offer the following guidelines to ensure that your child is comfortable, safe, and fully able to participate in all our activities. For all clothing and accessories (e.g., lunch bags, backpacks, hats), we ask that you choose items that are free of distractions and support unselfconsciousness for your own child and the other children in the class (e.g., items that are free of logos, advertising, or images from electronic media); images that may disturb some members of the class (skulls, dinosaurs, monsters, sharks); shoes without lights, wheels or sound effects, shirts without reversible sequins. A central value of our Preschool program is to protect young children from the influence of consumerism and commercialism. We also strive to protect our children from the premature awakening of vanity or envy related to their appearance and/or clothing. If your child has favourite clothing items that do not meet these guidelines, it may be helpful to explain that some clothes are for school, and some clothes are for home. Thank you for your support.

### **Outerwear and Gear**

The Morning Garden Preschool children play outside every day in many kinds of weather, except for extreme conditions. They run, climb trees, jump in puddles, dig in sand, skip, and play in mud and snow. To allow the child to experience nature and the elements in an enjoyable, open way, clothing is extremely important. We encourage you to:

- Send your child in layers to allow for unexpected temperature changes during the day (the yards are often much cooler in the morning). Note: Natural base materials improve breathability and warmth.
- Dress your child in rain pants or splash pants on days when the ground is wet or it is raining.
- Include an appropriate hat in every season.
- In the warmer months, you may provide a bottle of labelled sunscreen for your child to use.
- Send mittens rather than gloves in cold weather. Fingers stay warmer when together. Always send an extra pair of mittens.
- No Crocs, flip-flops, and open-toed shoes or sandals as they do not provide enough support, traction, and protection for play in our yards.

### **Indoor Clothing**

In the Morning Garden classroom, the children sing, dance, stretch, jump, draw, paint, and help with a variety of classroom tasks, just to name a few of the ways in which we move! In order that your child can participate without hindrances in all our activities we ask you to:

- Provide slip-on indoor footwear: supportive, soft soled slippers or light shoes with flexible bottoms (traditional running shoes are too heavy for inside).

- Choose clothing made of natural fibres when possible (more breathable, insulating and flexible)
- Dress your child in layers for inside play as well (our classrooms are heated with radiators and the temperature fluctuates)
- Choose clothing that allows freedom of movement and independent changing (we suggest avoiding jeans and belts)
- Save makeup, nail polish, temporary tattoos, jewelry and watches for home (we have observed these items to be distracting and/or unsafe during our activities).

### **Items Needed from Home:**

- Indoor shoes to be left at school (please see above guidelines).
- A complete change of clothes including pants, socks, three pairs of underwear, and shirt, **all labelled**, to be left at school. We will provide labelled bags for the Morning Garden Preschool extra clothes.
- Extra fleece or sweater to be left on coat hook at school for use as necessary
- One small comfort item for rest time to be left at school (e.g. stuffed animal, blanket)
- We are pleased to have children bring in treasures from nature to share. These will be returned home. Toys, collections, books and other 'special' items are best left at home (no matter how dear). These may get lost or broken, distract the children, or disrupt the social dynamics of play.

### **Rules for Sending Food to School**

Wholesome daily snacks and lunches are provided by the Morning Garden Preschool program. We have a designated Nutritional Coordinator and a licensed kitchen. If your child has any food allergies or intolerances, please make sure that the school has all pertinent information.

If you need to send alternative food for your child, please note the following excerpt from our anaphylactic policy:

- If parents bring food to the Preschool program, it must be labelled with the child's full name and if applicable, the date the food was brought into the program.
- Parents must advise the Preschool program teachers of all ingredients in food supplied by the parent or any ingredients to which children may be allergic.

## **Electronics and Media**

Mulberry Waldorf School recommends reducing or eliminating screen use, especially during early childhood. We are not anti-technology; rather, we are pro-connection--human connection between teachers and students and between peers. Screens and talk about what we do or see on screens gets in the way of this. Whatever one child is exposed to through social or entertainment media may affect the rest of their class.

The strong influence of television and other electronic devices in a child's life is often observed in the classroom. A child may speak or move in the manner of a certain character or machine. A



child may seem "stuck" in their play, unable to play anything but a superhero, transformer, or other character. Other children seem to lose their ability to engage in imaginative play. There may be an expectation on the child's part to be entertained rather than to co-participate in learning. Subtle changes may be noted in a child who cannot sit still during a story, making it a distressing time instead of a time of wonderment and delight. The core of Waldorf education is imaginative, pictorial teaching and learning. Frequent exposure to images on screens depresses the development of the part of the brain that creates its own images and makes it hard for children to form mental pictures from oral stories.

Mulberry Waldorf School strongly advises against personal electronic device ownership and use (e.g., cell phones, tablets) by children under the age of 14. We strive to protect the childhood of our students and decrease pressure felt by students and parents/guardians over having personal electronic devices. Cell phone and other personal electronic device use has been shown to have adverse health effects on growing children (e.g, attention, fitness, anxiety, addiction), and can cause severe social problems amongst peers [Digital media and screen time | Canadian Paediatric Society](#)

News broadcasts heard from either the radio or television go deep within the child, affecting their inner beings. Please help us protect our youngest children from the stress associated with upsetting world and local events.

We firmly believe that there is a developmentally appropriate time for the introduction to screens and their uses. Our upper year's curriculum includes keyboard skills, digital literacy, and building a healthy relationship with technology, including social media. For more information, please ask to see a copy of our *Recording and Electronic Device Policy*.

## **Prohibitive Practices**

Our program is licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act and complies with regulations outlining Prohibitive Practices as follows.

### **Ontario Regulation 137/15**

With respect to a child receiving child care in our program, we **do not** permit the following:

- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his



- or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

### **Intent**

This provision forbids physical punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of children. It sets out clear direction regarding prohibitive practices to support the overall well-being of children. These practices are never permitted in a child care centre.

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

### **Compliance Indicators**

1. None of the following practices are observed in the program:
  - a. corporal punishment (which may include but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching);
  - b. physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless for the purposes described in the regulation (to prevent self-harm, harm to others and only until risk of harm/injury is no longer imminent);
  - c. locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency;
  - d. use of harsh, degrading, measures or threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
  - e. depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
  - f. inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Teachers verbally confirm that these practices are not allowed and do not occur in the program.

## **Sleep/Rest Policy**

Sleep or rest times are essential for healthy development and an important part of the children's busy day. Sleep or rest procedures shall be safe and meet the needs of all the children.

Mulberry Waldorf School will ensure:

- That all children sleep in a clean and safe environment.
- Teachers consult with families to meet the individual sleep/rest requirements for each child.

- All sleep procedures and equipment are purchased and maintained in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act.

### **Practices:**

- At the time of enrolment and at any other appropriate time, staff will consult with parents about their child's sleep preferences, required accommodations, and precautions.
- The Supervisor will review the Sleep policy with each parent at the time of their child's enrolment and parents are informed about the Sleep policy by being provided with a copy of the policy in the parent handbook.
- This information on each child's sleep preferences will be documented and share with all staff, students, and volunteers.
- Each child's sleep preferences will be documented with their enrolment forms.
- Parents will be consulted about their child's sleeping arrangements at each parent-teacher interview and upon a parent's request.
- Each child will have their own cot and all cots meet the Child Care and Early Years Act's standards and are used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Two hours of sleep time from 12:30-2:30 pm are provided.
- Cots will be positioned away from blind or curtain cords and heaters.
- Staff will ensure that cots are arranged so there is easy access to every child and that accessibility to an exit is maintained always.
- Cots are cleaned with disinfectant regularly.
- Clean sheets and blankets are provided to each child. Each child's bedding is to be stored separately and washed regularly.
- A staff person remains in the room always. Children are always monitored during sleep/rest time. Teachers will perform periodic direct visual checks of each sleeping child every fifteen minutes by being physically beside the child while the child is sleeping and looking for indicators of distress or unusual behaviours. There is documentation of these direct visual checks being conducted on every child in the daily health/sleep assessment document kept in the Supervisor's binder.
- Observance of any significant changes in a child's sleeping patterns or behaviours during sleep will be communicated to parents by the Supervisor and will result in adjustments to the way the child is supervised during sleep.

### **Review**

This policy will be updated when:

1. Changes are made to regulations or legislation.
2. We become aware of information indicating that best practice requires us to make alterations to our existing policy.
3. As part of the policy review cycle of three years.

## **Volunteer and Student Supervision**

Every child who is in attendance in the Morning Garden Preschool Program is supervised by a teacher always, and

- No child will be supervised by a person under eighteen years of age.
- Direct unsupervised access (i.e. when an adult is alone with a child) is not permitted for people who are not employees of the centre.
- Placement students are not counted in the staffing ratios of the centre.
- Volunteers are not counted in staffing ratios of the centre.

Volunteers and students will meet the following Child Care and Early Years Act requirements;

- Behaviour management policies and procedures will be reviewed with and signed off by volunteers and students who will be providing care or guidance at the centre before they begin and at least annually afterwards;
- The individual plan(s) for a child with anaphylaxis and the emergency procedures will be reviewed with and signed off by volunteers and students who will be providing care or guidance at the centre before they begin and at least annually afterwards;
- The supervision policy for volunteers and students will be reviewed with volunteers and students who will be providing care or guidance at the centre before they begin and at least annually afterwards;
- Criminal reference checks are required for all volunteers having direct contact with children in the centre.

## **Communication Guidelines**

Healthy communication between parents/guardians, teachers, and the school community is important to all of us and vital to our school's success. We strive to use parent/guardian-teacher communication to support learning and strengthen relationships. We have found that overuse of certain forms of communication, email in particular, can be draining and time-consuming for both teachers and parents/guardians, and can take away from the important work of lesson planning and teacher-student interactions. We have created these guidelines in the interest of fostering healthy relationships among all members of our school community.

- Teachers will not discuss student information via email (this is due to a number of reasons, including confidentiality and the potential for misunderstanding).
- Teachers will respond to emails within 24 – 48 hours. When emails are sent after school hours or on weekends, teachers will respond within 24 hours - 48 hours of the next **working day**.
- Families are requested to avoid sending emails that are longer than one paragraph. If there is a need to communicate more information, please outline the issue briefly and arrange a time to speak in person.
- Emails that are sent to the class list by the class teacher will be sent blind carbon copy (bcc).
- Other forms of communication are encouraged: giving the teacher a note at drop-off, or speaking briefly at pickup time. For non-urgent issues, waiting a day or two can allow time for the issue to surface in class and be dealt with by the teacher in the classroom.
- At pick-up and drop-off times, teachers are supervising children and are unavailable at that time for in-depth discussions. You may use email or a written note to schedule a time to speak with your child's teacher by phone or in person.

- Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences with teachers are scheduled twice a year. In the event that an additional meeting is necessary, we ask everyone to be considerate of each other's time, to keep meeting lengths within the agreed upon timeframe and to consider other forms of communication first.

The Mulberry Waldorf School Faculty, Staff and Board of Directors are committed to ongoing improvements in the area of communication as our school continues to grow. We are committed to working in partnership with parents/guardians in order to build and strengthen bridges between home and school. All pedagogical, administrative and financial questions are treated with respect and confidentiality.

### **Pedagogical Questions**

Please speak to your child's teacher directly on matters concerning the curriculum, discipline, social relationships, schoolwork and academic standards.

For further advice, please contact the Pedagogical Director, who will pursue concerns in collaboration with the parent and teacher. If an additional step is desired, the Administrative Committee (Pedagogical Director, Administrative Head, and Board Chair) will strive for a satisfactory resolution. If parents/guardians feel that objectivity is a concern, the Administrative Committee will appoint an agreed upon party to facilitate communications.

### **Administrative Questions**

If you have questions concerning school policies and/or procedures, please contact the Administrative Head. Parents/guardians seeking further resolution with any concern may submit a letter to the Administrative Committee. If parents/guardians feel that objectivity is a concern, the Administrative Committee will appoint an agreed upon party to facilitate communications.

### **Parent-Teacher Communication**

Honest, respectful, and timely communication is the key to our success. We will contact you immediately if there are any concerns about the safety, development, or well being of your child. In turn, we encourage you to speak to us about your concerns or questions. If you have concerns that involve another child or family please speak first to your child's Lead Teacher. Please inform us as soon as possible of any significant changes in home life or routine so that we can be sensitive to your child's needs.

If it is necessary to leave a message for a teacher or arrange changes regarding your child's routine (e.g., going home with someone else) *please write it down* and give the note to a teacher in the morning. Although we try to remember everything, it is always best to have it in writing. If your child is going to be late or absent, please contact the office as early as possible.

Please read **class letters** that are sent by email (let your child's lead teacher know if you would prefer to receive a hard copy).

**Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences** (Fall and Spring) provide an opportunity for strengthening the parent/guardian-teacher relationship, allowing your child's teacher to share observations about your child, and deepening the teacher's understanding of your child. Dates and times will be posted in the Office and/or sent in a google doc. If the times listed are not convenient, please speak to your child's teacher to find an alternative.

**Parent/Guardian Engagement Evenings** provide a valuable opportunity to learn about Waldorf Education and child development, what is happening in your child's class, and to share our experiences. They strengthen the loving circle of adults around each child. Thus, there is both a social and a pedagogical aspect. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend.

**Student Support Plans** are created for students when the need for extra academic, social/emotional, or physical support is identified by a teacher or parent. These plans are created jointly by the teachers, the Student Support Coordinator, and the parents/guardians.

### **School Communication**

Please read the **Mulberry Week at a Glance** and **monthly newsletters** that are sent by email and let us know if you are not receiving regular communications.

We encourage parents/guardians to review the Mulberry Website – [www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca](http://www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca), Facebook, and Instagram pages for updated school events.

### **Class Representatives**

A Class Representative acts as a point of contact for the parents/guardians of a class. Class Representatives help to support the class and school community in a variety of ways, such as:

- create a class social contact directory
- create a class social media group (e.g. WhatsApp) for social communications
- connect parents/guardians within the class
- introduce new families to the class and school community
- participate on the Community Development Committee to help coordinate volunteers for festivals or other school events
- consult with class teacher about topics for class meetings and field trip ideas
- help to organize potlucks or other social gatherings for the class families (e.g., meeting at the park)
- organize thank yous/celebrations/sympathies
- direct parent/guardian questions/concerns/feedback to the appropriate staff member

If you would like to volunteer for this position, please speak to the Pedagogical Director or Administrative Head.

## **The Mulberry Care Tree: Social, Behavioural, and Academic Integrative Student Support**

At Mulberry Waldorf School, it is our intention to build healthy human relationships and create a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment, which is essential for student well-being. This will be achieved through continuous collaboration and communication between faculty, staff, parents/guardians, and students.

Our current Healthy Relationships policy refers to relationships between “children” or “students,” but the spirit of the policy applies to relationships between all members of our community, including faculty, staff, and parents/guardians. Our policy strives to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying behaviours, harassment, and aggressive behaviours.

The vision of Mulberry Waldorf School as a loving and compassionate environment is reflected in the ways that Faculty and Staff guide and respond to children at all times. Behaviours that are troubling to adults, intrusive to other children or are harmful to the child call for the deepest understanding from adults. They model in words and deeds how best to solve disputes, valuing and protecting the fragility of children’s self concepts and each child’s efforts to explore how their world affirms them.

When responding to any social, emotional, behavioural, or academic concerns we will act promptly, follow-up with appropriate communication between teachers and parents/guardians, and follow through with ongoing monitoring of behavioural issues.

We are currently working with Kim John Payne and the Integrative Student Support Network to further develop our student support processes. Stay tuned for more information!

### **Parent/Guardian Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, Mulberry Waldorf School’s Morning Garden Preschool program (the child care licensee) and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

#### **Definitions**

*Licensee:* The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates.

*Staff:* Individual employed by the licensee (Morning Garden Lead Teacher, Assistant Teachers, Kinder Care Lead Teachers and Administration).

#### **General Policy**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children,

parents/guardians, and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Mulberry's Staff and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within two business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial, and respectful to parties involved.

### **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students, and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g., to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

### **Conduct**

Our agency maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication, and role-modelling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, and/or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused, or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

### **Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidd/reportingabuse/index.aspx>.



### Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Provider, Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<b>Program-Related</b> E.g., schedule, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, menus.	Raise the issue or concern to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the teachers directly or</li> <li>- The Lead Teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised; or</li> <li>- Arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within two business days.</li> </ul>
<b>General-, Agency- or Operations-Related</b> E.g., fees, placement.	Raise the issue or concern to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Administrative Head.</li> </ul>	Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:
<b>Staff-, Supervisor- and/or Licensee-Related</b> E.g., conduct of provider, agency head office staff.	Raise the issue or concern to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the individual directly or</li> <li>- the Lead Teacher, Administrative Head or Pedagogical Director.</li> </ul> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of the provider or staff that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the date and time the issue/concern was received;</li> <li>- the name of the person who received the issue/concern;</li> <li>- the name of the person reporting the issue/concern;</li> <li>- the details of the issue/concern; and</li> <li>- any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.</li> </ul>
<b>Student- / Volunteer-Related</b>	Raise the issue or concern to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Lead Teacher or Pedagogical Director</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> All issues or concerns about the conduct of students/volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.  Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within three business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.



Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Provider, Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
		Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.

**Escalation of Issues or Concerns:** Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to Jenny Taylor, Pedagogical Director or Peelu Hira, Administrative Head

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 must be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g., local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers) where appropriate.

**Contacts:**

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

Elissa Smith, Morning Garden Preschool Lead Teacher; Janie Jang, Morning Garden Assistant Teacher; Julia Miranda, Morning Garden Assistant Teacher; Jenny Taylor; Pedagogical Director; Peelu Hira, Administrative Head.