



**Morning Garden Preschool**  
**Parent Handbook**  
**2021 - 2022**

***Revised February 2022***

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## **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 children, parents, 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.

## Introduction

We would like to welcome you to our Morning Garden Preschool program at Mulberry Waldorf School.

### **Bek Zolnierczyk, Lead Teacher, BA, RECE, Full Spectrum Doula Certificate, Pre- and Perinatal Attachment Psychology Practitioner Training**

*Bek has been teaching at Mulberry since 2020. She has been working with children birth to six and their families as a RECE and Full Spectrum Doula for fifteen years. In her spare time, Bek enjoys growing food, making herbal medicines, knitting, and spending time in the woods with her partner and dog.*

### **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.*

### **Sue McCoubrey, Assistant Teacher, RECE, Infant Mental Health Certificate**

*Sue has been teaching at Mulberry since 2017. She has worked parents and children in the Kingston community for over 20 years. Sue enjoys reading, knitting, sewing, and being with her grandchildren.*

Please keep this Parent Handbook handy throughout the year as it contains some important program information.

*The child forms his or her 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

## **Morning Garden Preschool Program**

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

The Morning Garden Preschool is a gentle start into the world of peers for 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.

### **Operating Hours**

The 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 Professional Activity days, two Professional Development days, 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. Staff and students do not leave the premises for any field trips.

### **Age Requirements**

The Morning Garden program welcomes children between three and four years old. Children must be three by September 1st, for a September start in the program. Acceptance into the program will be contingent on developmental readiness criteria other than age such as independent toileting. 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. Children may stay for one or two years in Morning Garden.

## **Enrolment**

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 his/her 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 Pre-Interview Form as well as copies of any additional health, educational and behavioural therapy reports;
3. Interview;
4. Admission review by the Faculty;
5. Communication of admission review; and,
6. If admission is confirmed, families have one week to complete enrolment.

Pre-Interview Forms are available on our website and through the office. Parents are asked to submit the completed Form to the office. This holds a student's placement in a program or class in sequence. Once the maximum number of spaces is filled, we will accept additional students in wait list sequence according to the date of submission of the Pre-Interview Forms. These families will be informed of their placement on the waitlist.

Based on the interview, observations, and information shared, the Faculty will determine whether the needs of the student can be met within our programs. The office will communicate the results of the admission review, usually within one to two weeks. If admission is confirmed, parents have a one-week period to complete the enrolment process.

If a family declines enrolment, we will offer admission to the next student on the waitlist.

A complete Enrolment Application determines the child's priority for a space in the program or grade and consists of:

1. Completed Emergency Contact Form
2. Completed Permissions and Releases Form
3. Non-refundable deposit (see enrolment package)
4. A commitment to pay the balance (see enrolment package).

5. Up- to- date immunization record or “Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief” Affidavit.

*Current families must submit the non-refundable deposit and completed Enrolment Forms and arrange for the balance of payment upon registration.*

**2020-2021 Tuition Fees**

<p><b>Morning Garden Preschool (includes morning meal)</b>  <b>3 morning program</b>  <b>2 morning program</b></p>	<p>\$5, 205          \$3,505</p>
<p><b>Monday through Friday Preschool Afternoons for Morning Garden Preschool (includes lunch and afternoon snack)</b></p>	<p>\$4,030 for three afternoons/year          \$2,690 for two afternoons/year</p>
<p><b>Full Week Care for Morning Garden Preschool children (includes morning meal, lunch and afternoon snack)</b></p>	<p>\$13,880</p>

**Probationary Period Policy**

For children new to a program, the first **six weeks** of attendance for the Early Childhood are a probationary period. This can be extended, in writing, at the discretion of the teachers. 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. In consultation with parents, teachers may seek professional consultation. If a student’s needs cannot be met by our program and our staff, we will meet with parents to share observations and discuss options. The school reserves the right to discharge a child if we are unable to meet the child’s needs.

**Tuition Policies**

Our school strives to keep tuition fees affordable and welcomes families from all income levels. We offer tuition adjustment to families based on need and income. We continue to offer the option of ten monthly instalments for tuition. Please contact us for more information.

Applications will **not** be accepted from any family whose account from prior years is not fully paid.

**Withdrawal and Refund Policy**

The non-refundable deposit is due upon registration. The balance of tuition payments is due and payable either in full on July 1<sup>st</sup> or in 10 equal payments beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>.

If a parent/guardian withdraws a student after July 1, 2020 and before April 1, 2021, one full month's written notice and payment is required. Any future dated tuition cheques for the months after one full month's written notice will be returned.

If Mulberry Waldorf School asks a child to withdraw after the start of school, any future dated tuition cheques will be returned. After April 1, 2021, no refund will be given.

### **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.

## 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.

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

- Food is thoughtfully planned and prepared daily on sight 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 Food Safe certification from KFL&A Public Health Unit.
- 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.

To support positive and responsive interactions between parents and teachers.

- Ongoing open communication with parents is essential for us to work as a team in the best interests of their children.
- Teachers strive to communicate verbally daily with parents and keep records of daily observations and provide monthly newsletters to parents.
- Two formal Parent-Teacher conferences are offered throughout the year: one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents are encouraged to speak directly to teachers with any questions, concerns and/or suggestions.

To 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 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.

To 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 comprehensive evaluation process, which includes a written self-evaluation, peer review, parent feedback, and in-class observation. All this information is documented 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.

To 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.

To 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 aid in 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.

To 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.

To 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

To 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.

To 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 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 will be 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.

## Rhythms

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 story and snack. 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 (staggered times due to COVID-19); Program begins with outdoor play
10:15 AM	Morning Circle (stories and songs), Indoor transition, Washroom
10:30 AM	Morning Snack & Washroom*
11:00 AM	Indoor Play/Fine Motor Activities
11:45 AM	Clean Up, 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).

**\*Weather permitting, we may stay out for snack and extended outdoor play time.**

## **Festivals**

We also mark the rhythms of the year through the changing seasons and the coming and going of festivals. 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 & Chi 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**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<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 Canteloupe 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

## Drop-Off and Pick-up Information

Morning Garden Preschool will meet in the small yard off Markland Street.

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.

Morning Garden Preschool program ends at noon. Children may be picked up in the yard. Children staying for a full day may be picked up in the Morning Garden Preschool yard at 3:30 pm.

### A Special Note About the First Day of School

On the first day of school, please bring your child to the yard where the teachers will meet you. We appreciate that for some children this will be the first day in a new class. Your child will become comfortable with the teachers and the group more easily if goodbyes are heartfelt, but brief. It is helpful for parents to leave the yard without lingering, especially during the first month of school. Your demonstration of confidence in us will give your child the peace to engage with the class. *Rest assured that if your child experiences prolonged upset over separation, we will contact you.*

#### **Staggered Start Date**

To ensure a gentle start for Morning Garden children, we will be staggering their 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.

## **Morning Garden Preschool Afternoons**

Children who are staying for lunch will eat in their own classroom with one of their morning teachers. The school will provide all food and bedding.

Transition to quiet time begins around 12:00 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.

## **Some Important Notes about Drop-off and Pick-up:**

- It is a legal requirement that each child be signed in and out each day. Teachers will ensure that all children are signed in and out daily. 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.
- If your child is going to be late, or absent, *please contact the office* at 613-542-0669 as early as possible.
- If your child is sick, *please contact the office* at 613-542-0669 and let them know the details of your child's illness.
- If you are unavoidably delayed at any pick-up time, please call the school.
- Children's toys, collections, stuffed animals, and 'special' treasures are best left at home (no matter how dear). These may get lost or broken, distract the children, or disrupt the social dynamics.
- During early childhood, our children live in the present moment and are unable to recount a day's event 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.

## Guidelines for Clothing and Dress

The Morning Garden Preschool yard and classroom are places of active work and play. Based on our years of experience working with children in our program, we offer the following guidelines to ensure that your child is comfortable, safe, and fully able to participate in all our activities.

### Outdoor Guidelines for Clothing and Dress

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. Please label all clothing and footwear. We encourage you to:

- Dress your child in appropriate outdoor clothing and shoes/boots each day. Please **NO** CROCs, flip-flops, open-toed shoes or sandals as they do not provide enough support, traction, and protection for play in our yards.
- Send your child in layers to allow for unexpected temperature changes during the day, especially if your child will stay at school for the afternoon (the yards are often much cooler in the morning).
- 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.
- Send mittens (waterproof in winter and on rainy days) rather than gloves in cold weather.

### Indoor Guidelines for Clothing and Dress

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 indoor footwear (to be left at school): supportive, soft soled slippers or light shoes with flexible bottoms (traditional running shoes are too heavy for inside).
- 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, buttons, and belts) and is free of distractions for your own child and the other children in the class (e.g., clothing that is simple and free of logos, advertising, or images from electronic media\*; images that may upset some children (skulls, monsters); shoes without lights, wheels, or sound effects).
- Provide an extra clothes bag (see below for more information).
- Label all clothing and footwear.

\*A central value of the Morning Garden Preschool program is to protect our 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. Thank you for your support.

### **Extra Clothes Bags**

Please provide a change of clothes including trousers, 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.

### **Rules for Parents Who Send Food with their 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 in tot 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.
- ***Mulberry Waldorf School does not have parents send any food in. We have a designated Nutritional Coordinator and a licensed kitchen.***

## Health, Safety and Development

Please call the school if your child is sick or absent a day. Mulberry Waldorf School's **Illness and Attendance Guidelines** below outline precise expectations around illness. Please keep in mind that the lively Morning Garden Preschool classroom is not a soothing environment for a child who is not well.

Dietary restrictions should be communicated to us so that necessary adjustments can be made.

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

- Children learn by experiencing the world through play, imitation and human interaction.
- Children thrive on predictable daily rhythms and not being overly scheduled with extra activities
- Times of vigorous play with friends balanced with periods of quiet on their own will give them a sense of satisfaction and peace.
- A regular bedtime and ten to twelve hours support health, development, and participation at school.
- A well-rested child who is dressed warmly and who is 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

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

**With COVID-19, we have a separate policy and procedures related to enhanced health and safety protocols. Please see Infection Control Policies and Procedures.**

### When a child becomes ill during the day:

Parents will be contacted immediately, and arrangements made for the child to be taken home if an illness:

- prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- results in greater needs for care than the staff can provide without compromising the care of other children
- may be contagious and therefore infect others.
- Please refer to KFL&A's Childhood Illness general guide for details ([www.kflapublichealth.ca](http://www.kflapublichealth.ca)).

**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. Your child should be kept home until a health care professional indicates that the child can attend the program.
- ❑ *Diarrheal:* An episode of diarrhoea within the past 24 hours. Children should stay home until the child is symptom-free for 48 hours.
- ❑ *Vomiting:* An episode of vomiting during the previous 24 hours. Children should stay home until the child is 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 the child is 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 health care professional. (See Impetigo)
- ❑ *Colds and Coughs:* We request that a child 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. This kind of discharge makes the child more contagious. (A persistent runny nose with a green/yellow colour may indicate an infection.)

In the case of a severe or 'chesty' sounding cough exclusion could be required until a health care professional has been consulted. A health care professional's note may be required to return to the program. Teachers should be informed when cold or cough like symptoms are due to allergies, asthma or other non-contagious conditions.

- ❑ *Sore Throat:* May be accompanied by head cold, runny nose or ear infection. Majority are due to minor viral illnesses. One third of cases are diagnosed as 'strep' which is highly contagious and requires seeing a physician ASAP.
- ❑ *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. Enlarged lymph nodes lead to possible secondary infection if scratching. Check for adult lice or nits (eggs). Notify school if there is any suspicion of head lice as it is highly contagious. Children **must 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.

### **A Special Note about Media**

Many families at Mulberry have made a commitment to reducing or eliminating screens in their homes and there is much evidence to support this action, especially for the young child. The presence of the television and other electronic devices in a child's life is often clearly seen in the classroom. The strong influence it has on young children is visible in many ways. A child may speak in the tone of a certain character or machine, where speech can be reduced to the sound of robots or mechanical noises and movements. A child may seem "stuck" in creative play, unable to play anything but a superhero, transformer, or "emergency." Other children seem to lose their imagination and can't think of anything to play. 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.

We request that the children are not exposed to any electronic media or computers during the school week or any day preceding school. In ***Simplicity Parenting***, Kim John Payne states that, "although 'media saturation' characterizes our era, it need not flood our children's childhood". He also offers three compelling reasons to eliminate media exposure in children under seven years: A) Negative long-lasting effects strongly outweigh any benefits to young children; B) Its absence greatly supports the goals of simplification; C) Based on experience, dispensing with television is not as hard as most families fear. Our experience is that whatever one child is exposed to, affects the rest of the class. We make this request out of respect for all families at Mulberry and for the protection of the children.

Please be aware that news broadcasts heard from either the radio or television go deep within the child affecting their inner beings. Please help us protect all our young children from these communications.

## **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 shared 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 period 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.

**\*With COVID-19, volunteers, non-essential visitors, and students will not be permitted in our program for the time being.**

# Communication

## Parent-Teacher Communication

Mulberry Waldorf School believes that ongoing communication between parents and teachers is very important in ensuring a positive experience for children, teachers, and families alike. Honest and respectful communication is the key to our success. We will contact you immediately by phone 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. 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. These changes usually do have an impact on the child and manifest in the classroom. We do our utmost to facilitate communication between families and teachers and welcome you to contact us by email to make an appointment with us. If your concerns are not suitably addressed by communicating directly with your child's teacher, please contact the current Early Childhood Faculty Chair. There is also an ombudsperson available to facilitate discussions, if needed.

Please see the section on Parent Issues and Concerns Policy of our Parent Handbook.

If it is necessary to leave a message for a teacher or arrange changes regarding your child (i.e., 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.

Because our focus in the Morning Garden Preschool program is on the child's social, emotional, and physical development, our crafts and activities emphasize process rather than product. We generally do not send many projects home. The ones we do complete often take time and are completed at each child's pace. When all projects are complete, they will all be sent home.

If you have concerns that involve another child or family, please speak first to your child's Lead Teacher. In some cases, we may suggest that you also have an honest and respectful conversation directly with that family.

## Designated Parent-Teacher Interview Times

Mid-term and end of year interviews with your child's Lead Teacher are offered to all Morning Garden Preschool families. Parent-teacher interviews provide a means of strengthening the parent-teacher bond, an opportunity for your child's teacher to share impressions and concerns about your child, and an opportunity for deepening the teacher's understanding of your child. Dates and times will be posted outside of the Morning Garden Preschool classroom prior to interview periods. If the times listed are not convenient, please speak to your child's Lead Teacher to find an alternative.

## **School-Parent Communication**

During the school year, your child's teacher will send newsletters and notices home to keep you informed as to specific classroom activities and school events. These notices are sent via email to cut down on paper use.

The office also sends out messages to the Mulberry community about upcoming events, important news, and requests.

## **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.

## **Parent Evenings**

Parent Evenings provide a valuable opportunity for teachers and parents to learn about Waldorf Early Childhood Education and child development, and to share our experiences, strengthening the loving circle of parents and teachers around each child. Thus, there is both a social and a pedagogical aspect to our parent evenings. It is our strong desire that every child be represented by at least one parent at parent evenings as these meetings provide a vital link between home and school.

## **Parent Representatives**

A Parent Representative (PR) acts as a liaison between the teacher and the parents of a class and eases the administrative burden of the teacher. Each class will have one or two PRs depending on size. The Lead Teacher and the PR(s) will meet in September to determine what tasks the PR(s) will be responsible for. PRs are encouraged to delegate tasks to other parents. PRs may help to support teachers in a variety of ways, such as:

- connect parents and introduce new people to the community
- help coordinate volunteers for festivals
- help to organize potlucks for the class
- organize thank you cards/celebrations/sympathies
- initiate phone tree for school closures

If you would like to volunteer for this important position, please let your child's Lead Teacher know.

## **Parent 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).

### **Policy**

#### **General**

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:
<p><b>Program-Related</b> E.g., schedule, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, menus.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the teachers directly</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p>
<p><b>General, Agency- or Operations-Related</b> E.g., fees, placement.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Administrative Head.</li> </ul>	<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> </ul>
<p><b>Staff-, Supervisor- and/or Licensee-Related</b> E.g., conduct of provider, agency head office staff.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the individual directly</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Lead Teacher, Administrative Head or Early Childhood Pedagogical Chair.</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 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> <p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p>
<p><b>Student- / Volunteer-Related</b></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the person responsible for supervising the volunteer or student</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Lead Teacher or Administrative Head.</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>	<p>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.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>

**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, Early Childhood Pedagogical Chair 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)

Bek Zolnierczyk, Morning Garden Preschool Lead Teacher; Janie Jang, Morning Garden Assistant Teacher; Peelu Hira, Administrative Head.