

Family Handbook 2022-2023



**MOUNTAIN
LAUREL** WALDORF
SCHOOL
INSPIRED LEARNING

*Our highest endeavor must be to
develop free human beings who are
able of themselves to impart purpose
and direction to their lives.*

- Rudolf Steiner

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Mountain Laurel Waldorf Mission Statement

Welcome to the Mountain Laurel Waldorf School Community! The life of this community depends on the active support and participation of the Parent Body. With this handbook, we hope to share with you a picture of the school and its community, the forms by which we ensure your children will have a rich educational experience, the channels available if you meet with difficulties, and the ways in which you can help support and develop the school. Mountain Laurel Waldorf School brings together families, teachers, alumni and supporters who are dedicated to the principles of Waldorf education and to creating a joyful and inspiring community experience.

SCHOOL MISSION

Mountain Laurel Waldorf School strives to build the foundation of a free human being. Guided by the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, our teachers inspire independent and insightful thinking, empathy for all beings, and a love of meaningful work.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

As a community of learning, Mountain Laurel Waldorf School actively welcomes children, families, faculty and staff of all races, religions, classes, origins, ethnicities, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations and family cultures. We believe that this range of differences fosters a richer learning environment, instilling values of empathy and collaboration more deeply in each of us.

*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

Contact Information

Mailing Address

Mountain Laurel Waldorf School
 PO Box 939
 New Paltz, NY 12561

Website Address

www.mountainlaurel.org

Office Hours

Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Individual staff members may not be available at all times during the workday; please call ahead for an appointment.

Important contacts

| Department/Name | Phone | Email |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| General Office | 845-255-0033 | administration@mountainlaurel.org |
| Head Administrator: Patricia Dewitte-Kuyl | 845-255-0033 xt.101 | pdewittekuyl@mountainlaurel.org |
| Business & Facilities Director: Sue McKenzie | 845-255-0033 xt.102 | smckenzie@mountainlaurel.org |
| Office Manager: Lydia Pidlusky | 845-255-0033 xt.107 | lpidlusky@mountainlaurel.org |
| Reception Office: Jessica Young | 845-255-0033 xt. 104 | jyoung@mountainlaurel.org |
| Fax | 845-245-6533 | |

Groups / Committees

| Department/Name | Email |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Executive Committee | executivecommittee@mountainlaurel.org |
| Care Streams Group | carestreams@mountainlaurel.org |
| Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Group | DEI@mountainlaurel.org |
| MLWS Board of Trustees | board@mountainlaurel.org |
| Parent Council | parentcouncil@mountainlaurel.org |

I. A Brief History of Mountain Laurel Waldorf School

In 1979, following the closing of the State University of New York (SUNY) New Paltz Campus School which served area children from nursery through eighth grade, twelve families came together looking for an alternative elementary school in the area. In 1980, Mountain Laurel School began as a preschool/parent play group which met at the Huguenot School in the Reformed Church education building. In 1983 parents interviewed representatives of several educational possibilities. One of the founding families, Barbara and David Clark, had spent a year living in Germany and were impressed with a Waldorf school they had visited there. Therefore, as part of their process they invited Joel Kolbran, former Waldorf teacher and editor of *The Threefold Review*, to speak about the philosophy of Waldorf education. As a result of presentations by Joel and others, such as Eugene Schwarz, and their own continued research, the parents chose the Waldorf curriculum. Concurrent with these events an anthroposophical group was meeting in Kingston and eurythmy classes were offered in a dance studio in New Paltz. The input of the study group was influential to the pedagogy of the newly forming Waldorf School and many of the eurythmy students became its first enrollees.

By 1992, the school included a combined seventh and eighth grade and was renting a vacant public school building in Tillson, New York on Grist Mill Road. A parent in the school community placed \$150,000 to be held in trust by the Rudolf Steiner Foundation allowing the school to purchase its own home in our current location in New Paltz. This took place in the summer of 1995. The school community embraced the move and began the process of renovating the building and grounds. The building, circa 1876, was built as a private home for a Huguenot family and boasts beautiful light-filled classrooms, a small performance area and administrative offices.

In the summer of 2012, Mountain Laurel School purchased the adjacent property at 6 Elting Avenue. Through the vision of the Campus Expansion Committee and the enthusiastic support from the school community, in 2016, the school purchased the beautiful Victorian building at 7 Innis Avenue which includes a carriage house and gardens, to form a little campus on the hill.

In January 2020, the Administration Department moved into the Victorian building at 7 Innis. The vision for the Carriage House as the MLWS Arts Building was finally executed over the summer of 2022, to hold our sculpture and handwork studios, private music lesson rooms and a serene faculty lounge with meeting space.

II. The School Day

School Hours

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Nursery/Kindergarten | 8:15am - 2:45pm |
| Grade 1 | 8:15am - 3:00pm |
| Grade 2 - 8 | 8:15am - 3:15pm |
| School Bus drop off | 8:00am |
| School Bus pick up | 3:15pm |

Arrival at School

Children should arrive at school five to ten minutes before their classes begin, but no earlier than 8:00 am, as the front doors will remain locked until then. This allows time for a smooth transition and for greeting their teachers and the other children. Students who arrive late almost always disrupt the smooth flow of the class. If teachers and parents are punctual, the children will learn reliability and respect for others.

Departure

At the close of school, children move with their teacher and class to the courtyard for dismissal where there are designated areas for loading of buses, children being picked up in cars, and children who are walking. It is important that children be picked up promptly by parents or other authorized persons. Parents and caregivers who habitually drop off or pick up their children late will be invited to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss solutions.

Students walking home after school must have a signed note from their parents.

After-School Care

Mountain Laurel Waldorf School offers a quality after care program, providing continuity of care in a safe and familiar environment with professional MLWS staff. Children KG through grade 5 are welcome. The program takes place every school day and begins immediately following dismissal until 6:00pm

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Drop-off Locations

Grades 1-8 - All traffic *must* approach the school from Route 208 via Innis Avenue (not from Hasbrouck Avenue) Please drop your children off at the arched gate following a one way direction.

Nursery - Park and walk up the steps to the iron fence gate at Route 208 where the lead teacher will be receiving your children.

Kindergarten - Park and walk to the Mountain Rose (north gate) and Morning Glory (south gate) Kindergarten gates at 6 Elting Avenue where the lead teachers will be receiving your children.

Nursery and Kindergarten parents / caregivers are invited to park and walk their children to the gate and say their goodbyes there, without lingering.

Please arrange to continue conversations with other parents off school grounds. Thank you!

Pick-up Locations

Grades 1-8 - Main Entrance on Innis Ave - all car pick-up, walking & biking.

Nursery - Park and walk to the gate at Route 208 where the PM lead teacher will release your children to you.

Kindergartens - Park and walk to 6 Elting Avenue where the pm lead teachers will release your children to you.

All buses will pick up @ 3:15pm from the bussing steps as usual.

MLWS Traffic Safety Guidelines

Our school is situated in the village and a heavily trafficked area, therefore drop-off and pick-up can be rather challenging. We consider safety paramount. We have carefully considered both safety and ease of traffic flow, and developed the MLWS guidelines:

In order to provide a safe departure for all children, do not engage Faculty/Staff members in conversations during this busy 15 minute period when we all need to remain totally focused.

When dropping off children in the morning or during pick-up in the afternoon, please refrain from parking in our neighbor's driveways, parking lots and lawns. Your car may be towed. The driveway for the 7 Innis and carriage house buildings is not an extension of Innis Avenue/Elting Avenue - it is a private drive.

Make sure to heed the alternate side of the street parking rules as posted on the street. This area is patrolled regularly by the Village Traffic Control personnel, especially during school hours.

Please do not park on school grounds, in designated staff, handicap and “no-parking areas” and “walkways” during school hours. Check in the school office for off site parking lots nearby. **Our school is situated on a public road. Never park in the driving lanes -- it is illegal to leave your car in the street.** During drop-off or pick-up, never leave keys in your ignition or a running motor vehicle unattended!

Do not pick up or drop off children in the designated bus area. Bus drivers will report you to the police department if you pass a school bus while they are loading and unloading and have their red lights flashing.

Bus Transportation

A student whose school district lies within the required miles of the school (by the shortest available bus route) is entitled to free busing by their school district. (These districts are: New Paltz, Highland, Wallkill, Kingston, Rondout, Marlboro) Parents must request transportation for their children. Bussing request forms are available through the home school district or at the Mountain Laurel office and must be returned to the local public school district. Forms are distributed in the Spring for the following year. School districts require that the forms be filed by April 1st.

Parents should call their own bus garage if their child will not be riding the bus on a scheduled day. Contact your district’s transportation service for more information.

By order of some of the school districts, bus drivers may not transport students who live outside of the school district that they serve. We encourage parents to check with their own district.

Repeated misbehavior by a student may lead to a report by the bus driver to the school district authorities, resulting in exclusion from bussing privileges.

Students who normally travel by bus and wish to go home by other means must bring a note from home to the class teacher; otherwise the child will be placed on the bus. **Telephone arrangements are discouraged. Please reserve telephone messages for emergencies! If it is necessary to call, leave your message on extension 401 prior to 2:00 pm.** The office telephones should not be used by students to schedule play dates, confirm previously made arrangements or just to check in at home. Please make all after school arrangements before the start of the school day.

MLWS Bus Policy

Only children for whom a “MLWS Bus Form” has been submitted will be placed on the bus in the afternoon. Except in the case of an emergency, children who ride the bus will always be put on their bus unless the teacher receives a signed note from the parent to the contrary. **We can in no case be responsible for transportation changes phoned in after 2:00 pm.** All notes must be dated:

Example: *“As Jack will be attending dance class on Thursdays beginning September 19, he will no longer be taking the bus on Thursdays until further notice.”*

Example of change: *“Jack will not be attending dance class this week; he will take the bus today, September 26”*

All changes should be submitted to the class teacher in writing in the morning.

Bicycles

Bicycles should be walked, not ridden, within the school’s gates. They should be left at the bike rack provided outside the school gates. Children will not be allowed to ride their bicycles during the school day.

Student Attendance & Tardiness Policy

Daily attendance at school is critical for learning and establishing healthy rhythms in life. Attendance is taken daily in all classrooms. Grades children arriving after 8:15 will be marked tardy. Grades teachers include tardies and absences in their end-of-year student reports.

Absenteeism in the Grades

Your child's attendance at school is crucial to his/her progress at Mountain Laurel Waldorf School. When a child is absent, he/she misses the material that was presented, which is the foundation for all that follows. In addition, absent students miss the day's social activities of the class, and may return to find he/she was unable to participate in a shared experience. We expect all of our students to develop excellent attendance records, including arriving on time for the first class of each day. Excellent attendance shows a commitment to learning and a respect for the educational environment, and serves as a good preparation for meeting responsibilities later in life.

The State of New York requires that independent schools keep attendance records and record excuses for absence and tardiness. Please help us comply with the law by phoning in when you are keeping your child at home, and by writing excuses promptly upon your child’s return. No child may enter the school premises if they have a positive Covid -19 health screening. Please refer to our covid guidelines for when to keep your child at home.

If a student does not attend at least 145 days of school per academic year, a meeting will be held to determine whether the student may continue into the next grade.

We request that you do your utmost to plan family trips around the school calendar. We discourage families from taking children out of school for a week or two at a time. In the classroom, the Waldorf teacher concentrates on a 3 to 4 week long immersive main lesson block with a focus on one main topic such as math, myths, or geography. If a child is out for a week or two, he/she will miss up to half the unit.

In addition, as teaching is done through a lively give-and-take between teacher and class, it is not feasible to give equivalent work for a child to do while away.

If it is absolutely necessary to take your child out of school for part of the day (e.g. for a doctor's appointment that can't be made at any other time), please take them after the main lesson ends at 10:15 am.

If your child must miss school, please inform the school office by calling 845-255-0033 ext. 401 or emailing jyoung@mountainlaurel.org.

Punctuality in the Grades and Early Childhood

Persistent tardy arrivals are disruptive to your child's education as well as to the life of his/her class. Each day in the Waldorf classroom is planned to provide a rhythmic, harmonious balance between activities that call for self-control and concentration, and activities that allow freedom and expression. To experience this daily rhythm, it is crucial that children arrive on time for the beginning of the school day. The underlying message of persistent tardy arrivals is a lack of respect for the child's experience, the class, the teacher, and the work that is being presented. All grades children are to arrive by 8:10am each day, as Main Lesson starts promptly at 8:15am. Children who arrive after 8:15am will be marked tardy. Children in the Early Childhood programs are expected to arrive between 8:15am and 8:30am.

It is in the child's best interest to arrive at school with some time to spare.

A signed note from a doctor, orthodontist or other specialist for a visit that can not be scheduled outside of school hours supersedes the late policy.

If a student's bus is late, the student will not be marked late. However, the student is required to check in at the school office upon arrival.

Student Participation Policy

Students at all levels must participate fully in all the classes and activities of our school's curriculum, unless there are precluding circumstances (medical, physical etc.) Examples: work shares, music shares, class camps, Olympic games, class field trips, school festivals (Mayday, Michaelmas etc), games program, language program, crafts program, eurhythmy, farm trip.

Cancellation of Classes and Snow Days

Mountain Laurel has children attending from many different school districts. The fact that our students are dispersed over such a large area complicates the question of snow policy, (e.g. it may be raining in Warwick while New Paltz is having freezing rain and Saugerties is having snow).

Over the years we have developed the following protocol:

We will always be at least as conservative as the New Paltz School District (e.g. if New Paltz closes, we will definitely be closed). We follow this protocol because New Paltz makes their decision based on the highway department's judgment of the safety of the local roads and the bus companies will not transport children into the district when New Paltz closes.

Even if New Paltz is open and has no delay, Mountain Laurel may have a delay or closing. We make this judgment based on the other districts that we have significant numbers of children coming from.

Because we don't always go by the New Paltz School District, it is important that you listen for the report on Mountain Laurel rather than New Paltz. Also with changing conditions we may go from a two-hour delay to a full closing. Since we are basing our decision on the status of other school districts, we can not control how long it will take to make this change.

School delays and closings are communicated by text via TADS and via email sent from administration@mountainlaurel.org, typically around 6am.

No matter what our status, parents should always feel free to use their own discretion based on local conditions.

Health

Waldorf education is concerned with the whole child. Because of the close relationship between health and learning, teachers are interested in the child's health; any illnesses, both past and present, sleeping and eating habits, stresses, and rhythms at home. Please feel free to discuss any such matters with the class teacher.

The school office will contact parents immediately if their child becomes ill at school or has had an accident. The office must rely upon the phone numbers provided on the Emergency Contact Form distributed to parents at the beginning of the year. **This form must be completed and submitted to the school before attendance begins.** Please remember to update this form when any of the information changes.

If your child's doctor has prescribed medication, i.e. inhalers, EPI pens etc. that must be administered during the school day, we need explicit written instructions and a note written and signed by the doctor. For any other medication, including antibiotics, aspirin etc. you must come to school and administer it to your child as the school office is not equipped to do so. Children may not keep medications in the classroom. In case of an EPI pen however, one should be kept by the teacher and another one by the office. In an emergency, when a parent cannot be reached, we will call the Rescue Squad if deemed necessary.

For Covid specific health issues please consult our Covid Guidelines.

Immunization Policy

New York State Public Health Law, Section 2164, mandates that schools not permit a child to be admitted unless the parent provides the school with a certificate of immunization. To find the latest NYS Immunization Requirements, search the internet (www.health.ny.gov) for: New York State Immunization Requirements for School Entrance.

All immunizations must be documented by your physician or local health department where the child received the immunizations, or must be from an official copy of the immunizations record from the child's previous school. All immunizations must specify the exact date each immunization was administered.

In order to comply with state regulations, we require that the appropriate medical records be in our office by August 1, for new parents by the beginning of school in Sept. There are no exceptions allowed as MLWS can be fined by the State.

Each year, many school age children of all backgrounds become afflicted with head lice. With care it is not difficult to clear this problem. Please be advised of the school policy and procedure regarding this issue.

Head Lice Policy

Each year, many school age children of all backgrounds become afflicted with head lice. With care it is not difficult to clear this problem. Please be advised of the school policy and procedure regarding this issue.

Mountain Laurel Waldorf School Policy is as follows:

1. Whenever a case of head lice is discovered in the school:
 - a) Any child found to have nits/lice will be sent home.
 - b) We will inform the parent body of the situation and ask that all parents monitor their children for nits.
 - c) Parents should continue to check their children for nits while there is a danger of re-infestation.
2. For treatment contact your health practitioner or the NYS Department of Health. (www.health.state.ny.us)
3. No child will be permitted to return to school until completely lice/nit free.

If you have any questions regarding this health issue, please contact your healthcare provider, not the school.

Medication

Medications should be avoided during school hours when possible. If a physician prescribes medications, parents must come to the school to administer it. School staff will not administer medication including aspirin, Advil and Tylenol. In the case of EPI pen usage for severe allergies brought on by bee stings, peanut exposure, etc, the school must have a letter from the prescribing doctor with permission to administer the medication and clear instructions on how to do so. Written permission from the parent is also required.

Nutrition

Parents must provide their own nourishing snacks and lunches for their children since Mountain Laurel Waldorf School does not offer a lunch program

Morning snack time and lunch are good times for nutritious whole foods. Please – no soft drinks, cookies, candy or chewing/bubble gum! These often raise energy briefly then bring it down with a crash.

Please save desserts for home. Many children will fill up on sweetened yogurt or cookies then throw away the more nutritious part of the lunch. If only wholesome food is offered, only wholesome food is consumed. Of course, on birthdays, celebratory food is appropriate.

In the lower grades, eating utensils, easily opened containers, and foods that are already cut or peeled are essential. No knives should be brought in. This enables the children and teacher to relax and enjoy this peaceful time.

School Rules and Guidelines

Parents need to be aware of the school rules and guidelines. This is especially useful in the case of a child's mistaken insistence that an activity or behavior is allowed.

- Students should not be at school before 8:00am or after 3:15pm, unless supervised by an authorized adult.
- Radios, televisions, computer games, music players, cell phones and other electronic devices are not to be brought to school. They will be confiscated and locked in the school safe until a parent/guardian picks them up.
- Parents and visitors to the school are requested to refrain from using their cell phone on school grounds or during school functions, including field trips.
- Chewing gum and candy should not be brought to school. Eating is not permitted during classes.
- Children should not bring money to school unless the need is specific.
- Children diagnosed with a transmittable illness or condition should not attend school until the period of contagion or transmission has ended.
- Smoking is not allowed on Mountain Laurel grounds or on school outings.
- The use of bicycles or skateboards on school grounds is prohibited at all times. If riding a

bicycle to and from school it must remain at the appropriate rack provided during the school day.

- Dogs, unless service dogs, and cats are not allowed on school grounds.
- No pets of any kind are allowed into the classroom.

Email Policy

- Email is a great way to deliver details and distribute information. Parents are expected to have an email address. In the interest of saving both natural resources and staff time, our primary informational communications are by email.
- Specific issues and concerns will ideally continue to be addressed in person. Big decisions and conversations leading to decisions must be made in person or in an appropriate group.
- Keep email addresses within the Mountain Laurel community – as with phone numbers, this is considered to be private information.
- Remember that even though a family has an e-mail address, they may not check it regularly and time-sensitive information should be relayed in another way.
- Be as courteous as you would in a face-to-face conversation and be aware of how easily it is for email comments to be misunderstood.
- Class emails should be confined to parents. As a school, we do not endorse email communication to students, either from teachers or other parents.

Safety and Civility Guidelines

Students should bring to school only materials needed for their work and school activities.

The following are not acceptable:

- Knives, lighters, toy guns, cap guns or weapons of any kind are not allowed on campus, including on a student's person, in a backpack, lunch pack, desk or locker. This rule applies to any object, tool, or device that could cause bodily harm, including pocket and Swiss Army knives. Violation of this rule will lead to immediate suspension, and after review, possible expulsion.
- Obscene or rude language
- Throwing sticks, stones, mud, snowballs, or other objects that may injure others

Any student found to have defaced property either inside or outside the school building (including walls, desks, classroom supplies, etc.) may be suspended or face other disciplinary action. Parents will be charged for any financial damages associated with these actions.

When parents are present at a school event, please be sure your child is supervised at all times. **This is not the responsibility of MLWS teachers and staff.**

Student Dress Code

In every aspect of Waldorf Education, we strive to surround the children in our care with what is beautiful and true. Our teachers consider this principle before bringing any object or activity into the classroom. Every aspect of one's life can be considered this way and we work toward supporting what is upright and noble in every human being. By surrounding our children with things which are simple, beautiful and real, we help foster a reverence for life and a truly caring attitude toward the earth and other human beings. With this in mind, the following requests will help us create a warm and caring atmosphere for all of our families.

Early Childhood

We feel it is important in this age when children are rushed too soon out of childhood, to do all we can to protect that beautiful time of innocence and goodness. One way we can protect our children is to strive to dress them in simple, well made, natural fiber clothing that is free from advertisement, cartoon characters, and pictures and styles that imply an adolescent sensibility.

Please, send your child to school in clothing that is comfortable as well as seasonally and otherwise appropriate for play both in the classroom and out of doors. Children from Nursery through 5th grade are required to wear snow pants to engage in snow/ice activities.

In the Nursery / Kindergarten and lower school, it is suggested that you dress your child in layers to accommodate changes in the day's temperatures. Rubber boots and hats, raincoats and pants are essential on rainy days. Rubber boots and treaded shoes are not allowed in the classroom. Please, provide your child with a pair of "indoor shoes" that stay in school all year.

Dress Code for Grades 1-8

To create a suitable environment for learning, it is important that the children participate in managing their own habits of dress and behavior. Children should always be prepared to play outdoors with clothing appropriate for the weather. All clothing should allow for full movement and play: comfortable waistbands, nothing too baggy or too tight, and fabrics that allow skin to breath. Ripped clothing can impede movement. Functional, comfortable clothing that provides good coverage is best so children can move freely and get dirty. Children's clothing should not have corporate logos, suggestive logos, advertising, media images, media characters or writing.

Because clothing is part of the class environment, we expect our dress policy to help create an atmosphere conducive to learning, focusing attention on the children and not their clothing.

Concert Dress

For assemblies, both in school and out, children should wear their best clothes. Dignity in dress reflects the children's appreciation both for themselves and those around them. All students from 4th to 8th grade must have orchestra / chorus clothing for performances: white shirts with collar and black pants or skirts, knee length or longer. Please, no T-shirts and turtlenecks.

General Dress Guidelines

- Clothing should fit well and be age appropriate - not too large that it extends over hand or feet. All clothing should allow for full movement and play.
- Since outdoor activities are a regular part of the curriculum at Mountain Laurel, students are expected to be provided with gloves, hats, warm outdoor clothes and footwear appropriate for the season.
- Label clothing with your child's name, especially outerwear.
- Shoes should have non-slip soles and should be sturdy enough for vigorous outside play.
- Students must wear shoes at all times indoors and anywhere on school grounds, at Hasbrouck park and on field trips. No bare feet on campus at any time
- Closed toed shoes are recommended for games and athletic activities. Sturdy well fitting sandals with backstrap are acceptable when weather permits. However, flip-flops, shoes with lights and wheels and high heels are not allowed.
- Hair must be kept off the face so that the teacher can look in the child's eyes.
- No underwear should be visible.

The faculty reserves the right to decide if dress and appearance are disruptive to learning. If a child is not dressed appropriately, parents may be called to bring a change of clothes before the child is permitted in the classroom.

Photography Policy

Our Tuition and Enrollment Contract includes a clause which states: "I allow the school to use photographs of my child(ren) and of their work for MLWS sanctioned public relations material." The assumption will be that, unless you indicated to the contrary in writing, you agree to the above.

Primary to Waldorf education is the child's direct and active participation in experiences and events. For each large gathering, there is an intention to create a certain mood and experience for our students. Photography and videotaping can be distracting to the children and work against the effects that the faculty is trying to achieve. We appreciate your help in allowing children their own first hand experiences and the joy of the moment. Seeing oneself in a video

can alter one's memory of the actual experience and waken self-consciousness prematurely. Students may no longer perform freely or they may be hindered if they have watched an earlier performance.

MLWS therefore requests that parents refrain from taking pictures or taping (including cell phone cameras) of the Rose Ceremony, the Advent garden, the Lantern Walk, music and work shares, May Day and other festivals. An exception may be granted for the school yearbook photographer. Class teachers will make every effort to gather their classes for photographic opportunities before or after a significant event such as the Rose Ceremony and graduation.

While the school would prefer that parents also experience these gatherings directly, instead of through a lens, we understand that many of you treasure the recorded memento of something very special as your child's class plays. Classes may assign one photographer for the year, but we ask that you make every effort to be as unobtrusive as possible. In-school photo opportunities for newsletters, plays, etc., must be scheduled with the school office.

The school arranges for individual and class photographs through a professional photographer in the Fall or Spring of each year. Also, as the 8th grade is traditionally in charge of the production of the yearbook, the 8th grade students may be allowed a window of time to take the necessary photographs.

Students who take photos (including outside of school) and circulate them through social media without permission from the student on the picture may be suspended.

Discipline

Most behavioral difficulties are a natural part of a child's development and can be addressed in the classroom by the teacher. Our policy is designed to deal with those difficulties which persist or grow over time, and with difficulties, the seriousness of which endanger the well being of the class or school community.

Our policy is designed in layers so that, depending on the seriousness and urgency of the situation, the problem can either be addressed in graduated steps or, if necessary, brought to an immediate resolution.

The school wishes above all to provide a warm, safe, and welcoming environment for all of its children. There are some forms of behavior which are considered critical in this light. If actions that are harmful or dangerous to the school community occur, the school will proceed immediately to step 3 of the process outlined below. The school reserves the right to immediately suspend or expel any child if we feel the safety and/or harmony of the child or parent is considered unacceptable by the school. Any student who intentionally physically harms another student or staff member, or uses extremely foul language will be sent home immediately.

- 1) In order to ensure that parents/caregivers are aware of developing difficulties and may help in dealing with them, the teacher will send home with the child a note describing the difficulty. This note is to be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher upon the child's return to school. This note may also be supplemented by a phone call from the teacher.
- 2) Should the disruptive behavior persist after three discipline notes have been sent home, the teacher will meet with the parents/caregivers. The intent of this meeting will be to find ways in which the teacher and parents/caregivers working together can help the child. The child may be called to attend part of this meeting. Another faculty member or administrator may also attend this meeting to record any agreements reached and the agreed upon consequence if the behavior persists. The child (where age appropriate), parents/caregivers, and teacher will sign copies of any agreement.
- 3) If there is no significant improvement in the situation or, if the terms agreed upon in the first meeting are not met, or in a more serious situation, as a first step, a meeting of the Carestreams Group will be held. Parents/caregivers may be asked to attend part of this meeting in a consultative capacity. In concert with the teacher this group will take up the following questions:
 - What is the nature of the problem and what steps have been taken to resolve it?
 - What effect is the behavior having on the health of the class and the school?
 - Are we as a school able to meet the needs of this child and help him or her in resolving this problem?

Based on the outcome of this conversation the Care Streams Group and teacher will develop a plan for dealing with the problem including clear consequences if the expectations of the plan are not met. Suspension and expulsion are included as possible conclusions of this meeting.

Class Trips

Our field trips enrich the children's experience and develop their physical capacities. Teachers usually give at least one-week notice before a trip, and may ask parents to help with transportation.

Our *Off Campus Permission Form*, which must be renewed each year, provides parental permission for all walking trips within the village.

Parents will be asked to sign a separate permission slip for each longer trip. Children will not be allowed to go on these trips without a signed permission slip.

Overnight Class Trips

For overnight trips without structure, a minimum of two MLWS staff members must accompany the students (one male and one female adult). Classes of fifteen students or larger require two staff members plus two additional adult chaperones. Parent chaperones must attend, especially on the 8th grade class trip. The educational values of the trip must be consistent with the school's values and with the particular grade's curriculum. The eighth grade class trip is an exception to the rule of curriculum.

Cost of trips – in any given school year the amount a family is expected to spend for class trips may not exceed 5% of the annual grades tuition. Any additional cost of class trips may be covered by fundraising, up to an additional 5% of the annual grades tuition. Fundraising, or donations, may be used to subsidize families who express greater financial need as we want to encourage a culture of sharing. This subsidy needs to be an all class parent decision. This policy permits only third grade (farm trip), sixth grade (business math) and seventh and eighth grades (class trips) to fundraise. Financial issues should be worked out at least four weeks in advance of the trip. The school will not serve as "middle man" in these financial arrangements, nor will the school cover any shortage of funds for any class trip. The affordability of any trip needs to be a clear decision made in concert with the parents and must be brought at the beginning of the school year. There may not be more than one major trip per class per year. This policy excludes the Wild Earth or other comparable nature trips that teachers and parents together may choose to participate in. In the case of these nature experiences, parents must be informed in the beginning of the school year of such a possibility.

III. Home Life

Supporting Waldorf Education at Home

Parents/caregivers of Mountain Laurel Waldorf School want the education of their children to be successful and to have an important and positive impact on their lives. To ensure this, the school needs your support. The following are some of the ways parents/caregivers can best support and reinforce their children's learning.

- ◆ **Become familiar with Waldorf education.** Through a deepened understanding of the Waldorf approach to child development, parents/caregivers can actively support what is happening in the school. This can be done by reading, or by attending lectures, and participating in study groups offered by the school and others.
- ◆ **Attend class meetings.** These are held throughout the school year and provide a chance for teachers to keep parents/caregivers informed about how they are working with the children and why. These important meetings have a cumulative effect over the years. It is important for parents/caregivers, children, and the social fabric of the class that parents/caregivers attend these meetings.
- ◆ **Follow the rhythm of the day, the week, seasons, and the year.** Paying attention with your child to the changing seasons, and participating in the school festivals, will help mark the rhythms of the year. **At home, especially for younger children, simple rituals help to mark the milestones of the day** – a morning verse, a blessing at snack time, a poem to close the day. Small gestures such as bringing candlelight and a verse to mealtime and bedtime can change these times from being chaotic and draining to being calm and healing.

Regular meal and bed times, and having simple chores that are carried out on a daily basis can provide your child with a true sense of well being.
- ◆ **Provide opportunities for the child to play creatively in the afternoon, outdoors or indoors, with raw materials for creating, building, and pretending.**
- ◆ **Have a set place in the home without the backdrop of music or television, for older children's school work.**
- ◆ **For younger children, having things for school laid out by the door the night before is a big help and makes getting off to school more pleasant.** Many children, initially tired and nervous at school, will settle down and gain in focus, as well as grace of behavior, as soon as the parents/caregivers make a commitment to early bedtime, early rising and avoiding all haste in the morning.
- ◆ **Communicate with the class teacher about private lessons taken after school.** This would include music, dance, martial arts, gymnastics, etc.

Media Guidelines

Early Childhood

MLWS is dedicated to nurturing children's capacities for imagination, healthy feeling, independent thinking, and active willing. Because we recognize the debilitating effects that media, including television, computers, movies, video games and social media can have on the development of those capacities, we ask that parents/caregivers of our students eliminate media exposure from the daily experience of the young child.

Teachers are happy to assist with transitions toward a media-free environment, and welcome conversations with parents/caregivers. If a teacher has concerns about a child's experience of media or screen time, the parent/caregiver should expect, and be willing to engage in, a sincere conversation about the topic. A media-free childhood is a true gift, and one that our school values highly.

We ask all parents and caregivers to refrain from using cellphones during pickup and drop off time. The transition between home and school is an important one for the young child, and it is wonderful if, for that short time, they can have the full and present attention of the adults around them.

Grades

We ask that your family continues to strongly limit media and technology as much as possible during these years. At a minimum, the child should not have screen time on any school day, either before or after school, or the night before school (such as a Sunday). If screen time occurs on weekends or holidays, it should be in small doses and carefully chosen.

Cell phone use by students is not permitted on campus, at school events or trips, or on school buses, without a teacher's explicit permission. If a child is given permission to have a cell phone at school, it must be turned off and kept in the teacher's possession.

We ask that adults also refrain from using cell phones or other electronic devices at school, as much as possible, at pick up and drop off times and when moving through the school buildings and walking on campus grounds.

Summer

When the school year ends, the children are ready to leave the life of indoors for a life of outdoors. They are awakened to the outer world and revel in the warmth of summer and the vitality of nature, putting aside their schoolwork so it can be absorbed and digested. Although summer has a very different quality than winter, children still need some predictable daily activity.



A framework for the long summer days is especially important for young children. Projects, and quiet moments in the day are both restful and engaging. Summer is also a time for reading with a sense of leisure not always available during the school year. For the older children, there is the possibility of helping with farming or gardening, not only at home, but also for local farmers who can truly use a helping hand. Please feel free to speak with your child's teacher if you have questions about what your child might do for the summer.

Fundraising

Like all independent schools, tuition revenue is insufficient to cover the full cost of providing a Waldorf education, and the School must therefore rely on gifts to bridge the gap. One of the primary ways to close this gap is through Annual Giving. Faculty, staff, alumni, parents, alumni parents, grandparents, and friends are asked to participate in the Annual Fund by contributing to the School each year according to their means.

All school fundraising events at Mountain Laurel Waldorf School provide an opportunity for parents, friends, faculty, and children to work together toward a common goal, profiting all those involved. Although ideas and events are always expanding, several events have become somewhat of a tradition. For example, December heralds the Winter Fair & Outdoor Marketplace during which children and adults make candles, wreaths and many other items to be given away at holiday time.

All fundraising and advertising proposals must be made by advanced, written submission to the administrator who will direct them to the Executive Committee as appropriate. Parents, teachers, or other school related groups should not approach parents or other community members for contributions in support of School projects, with the following exceptions:

Class Fundraising Policy

The school limits class fundraising to:

- the 3rd grade class to help defray costs for their farm trip at Hawthorne Valley,
- the 6th grade for introduction to business math,
- the 7th and 8th grade classes for their "wilderness camping trip" and 8th grade graduation trip.

Addressing Your Questions and Concerns

If you have a question concerning curriculum, discipline, homework, schoolwork, progress reports, standards, and so on, speak directly to the Class Teacher or appropriate Special Subject Teacher.

If you have questions about class trips or class social functions, speak with the Class Teacher.

If you have a question concerning non-pedagogical school policy procedures, or regulations, speak to the Head Administrator.

IV. The School Year

Calendar

The calendar of the school year lists all the holidays, vacations, festivals and major events during the school year. To avoid scheduling conflicts please refer to this calendar in planning parties and other social occasions.

The Festivals

Festivals have always marked the passage of time and change of seasons underlying our sense of place in the cosmic order of events. Our thoughts and feelings often mirror nature's rhythmic changes. At Mountain Laurel Waldorf School the festivals play an important part in the education of our children.

Many of the festivals we celebrate have been carried in the Christian tradition. They have roots that long precede Christianity and that reflect the underlying spiritual forces expressed in the seasonal transformation of the Earth's countenance. We celebrate these festivals in a manner intended to give the children a meaningful experience of these underlying forces.

In the Fall, as the light begins to wane, the children's attention is brought to Michaelmas, in honor of St. Michael the archangel, whose mighty sword of light fends off and conquers the dragon of evil. The ancient festival of courage and right action is particularly apt in these challenging times. It gives our children an image of inner strength, rightfully applied, that they can understand and identify with.

In November, as the natural world darkens, the inner light of man wants to shine forth. During our annual Lantern Walk, this light appears as the flame enclosed in each child's lantern. This walk celebrates loving brotherliness through the story of Saint Martin – a soldier who, by sharing his own cloak with someone in need, is blessed by God.

In December the days are shorter still. Our Winter/Advent Garden presents yet another picture of the brightness brought by the human spirit into the world. In the Winter Garden, each child takes an inward journey to find the source of light and then carries it out to the world. By the end of the evening, the room glows with the light of many candles. This celebration usually coincides with Advent and Hanukkah, which are traditionally celebrated by lighting increasing numbers of candles.

At the time of the Winter Solstice, when the nights are the longest, we fully experience the darkness, which allows the birth of new light to occur. Although the school does not have a special Christmas celebration, different teachers mark this very special time of year in different ways within the classroom. Parents, families, and friends who wish to join the faculty in holiday caroling are warmly invited to do so, and so many holiday gifts are made at our annual Gift Making Faire featuring an Outdoor Craft Market held in early December.

In February, as we struggle through the bitterness of winter, we honor the contributions made and hardships endured by Martin Luther King Jr., George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln – all fighters for and upholders of freedom.



In March and April, around the time of Easter and Passover, we celebrate the rebirth of life in nature and in our souls, and in May we celebrate the budding and flowering of life. Our Maypole dancing is a much anticipated and joyous event.

Many of these celebrations are accompanied by assemblies to which the parents, and often the community at large, are invited. Singing, choral recitations of poetry and speech, eurythmy, instrumental music, and plays all show the progress the children have made in school and the gifts they can offer to the world.

Grades and Reports

The year-end report is completed with great care by both the class teacher and all special subject teachers. It provides a comprehensive picture of the child's development, academically and artistically, as well as in character and personality. It is intended to be read by parents and generally should not be read by the child before Sixth Grade.

In addition to this end-of-the-year report, parents/caregivers are asked to meet with their child's teacher during the year to review the child's progress. Also, parents' attendance at scheduled class meetings allows them to become aware of how their child is doing by understanding the class as a whole.

V. Organization of the School

Governance Overview

As a self-administered institution, our school is organized around the impulse which gave rise to the first Waldorf School. This means that the individuals working most closely with the children are responsible for the pedagogical decisions and policies of the school, without outside interference. To effectively achieve this goal, the faculty, administration, Board of Trustees and the Parent Council work together on behalf of the students; each group acknowledging and supporting the expertise of the other.

The overall responsibility for and authority over Mountain Laurel Waldorf School is shared by the College and the Board of Trustees. The College is fully responsible for pedagogical issues; the Board is responsible for financial and legal issues. Much of the authority of the College and Board has been dispersed through the body of the school by means of a system of mandate groups. These groups have been given authority to act on behalf of the College and the Board.

Parent Council

The mission of the Parent Council is three-fold in its intention:

First, it bridges communication among the faculty, administration, board and parent body. In addition, the Parent Council meets regularly with the Executive Committee to ensure that parent initiatives are closely aligned with the needs of the school.

Second, it organizes and utilizes the gifts and energies of the parent body to initiate and support events that enrich the life of the school community.

Many of their initial efforts for the current school year are focused on this mission.

The following committees have been established, prioritized based on the Parent Council's discussions with the Executive Committee and insights gained from surveying both the College and the parent body.

- Newsletter Committee
- New Family Welcome Committee
- Social Engagement Committee
- Brown Bag Lunch Speaker Series Committee
- Community Outreach Projects Committee

Parents/caregivers are invited to join one of these committees or to come forward with other ideas they feel passionate about to advance our mission. Class Parent Reps are required to attend Parent Council Meetings.

Third, it encourages and supports parent understanding of Waldorf education by inspiring and facilitating learning opportunities.

As the Parent Council gains momentum, the group is inviting faculty speakers to Parent Council meetings to help engage parents and caregivers, encourage the study of relevant topics and broaden parents' perspective on Waldorf education. As areas of interest, questions and concerns are identified and speakers will be coordinated to broaden parents' perspective on Waldorf education. Through this, parents will be better able to support their children, the class teachers and the school community as a whole. Contact the Parent Council at parentcouncil@mountainlaurel.org. All are welcome to join.

If you have questions about financial matters, speak to the Business Manager or Head Administrator.

If you have questions or concerns about a teacher or anyone on the Administrative Staff or Board of Trustees, speak to him or her directly. If your concerns continue, speak to the Head Administrator who will refer you to the appropriate mandate group.

Mountain Laurel Waldorf School Grievance Procedure

When a parent/caregiver has a concern regarding a teacher, the Executive Committee directs the parent to the teacher and encourages both parties to speak directly to each other.

In the event of a communication breakdown, the Executive Committee (EC) serves as a bridge between parents/caregivers and faculty. The EC receives parental concerns and complaints and mediates with parents and teachers as needed. The EC refers parents to and schedules meetings with the appropriate groups.

1. When personal conflict arises, the first step is for the parties involved to speak directly to each other.
2. If conflict persists, a letter from one or both of the parties describing the conflict and the desire for further assistance and mediation must be submitted to the EC. Upon receiving the aforementioned letter, the EC will conduct a meeting with both parties within one week. If the conflict involves a legal or financial issue, the EC will notify the Board of Trustees in writing. If both parties do not agree to meet, the process immediately moves to step three.
3. After meeting with the EC, if conflict persists, an outside mediator will be chosen by the Person and mediation will be conducted within three weeks of the meeting in step two.
4. If conflict persists, the EC will make a decision with a report to the Board of Trustees. Possible decisions include nullification of Tuition and Enrollment contract.

VI. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

DEIJ Mandate Group

The MLWS College has approved a mandate for a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Group (DEI). The DEI group meets weekly and also participates, once a month, in the College meetings on Thursday afternoons, to share highlights of their study together. This mandate group welcomes all interested Mountain Laurel School parents and staff.

The mandate for the DEI group states the following:

“Mountain Laurel Waldorf School’s DEI Mandate Group will study unconscious systemic social injustice in our school, community, nation and the world. From this they will recommend school policy changes to the College and/or the Board of Trustees. These recommendations look to address the school’s DEI position statement, staff professional development, hiring, curriculum, materials, enrollment, parent education, student and faculty retention, and community outreach.”

If anyone in our school community is interested in joining our work, please contact 4th grade teacher Mr. Lundin via email at dei@mountainlaurel.org.

DEIJ Committee

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Committee, is a working group of faculty and administration that seeks to catalyze and support meaningful transformation in critical areas of diversity and inclusion at Mountain Laurel Waldorf School.

We seek to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity within our school and are striving to better represent the many cultures of the world we live in. Doing so, we hope that our students may learn from one another, to see themselves in their peers and become citizens of the world, enabling them to understand and appreciate varying viewpoints and ways of being.

During the June 2021 work week, the College examined Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice pertaining to pedagogy, and took a deeper dive into its anti racist training with Amy Brown-White. The College has also consulted with Alma Partners during the June 2022 work week. In addition to DEIJ study at our weekly College meetings, 4 afternoons have been set aside on the school calendar to allow focused DEIJ work.

DEIJ Statement

As a community of learning, Mountain Laurel Waldorf School actively welcomes children, families, faculty and staff of all races, religions, classes, origins, ethnicities, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations and family cultures. We believe that this range of differences fosters a richer learning environment, instilling values of empathy and collaboration more deeply in each of us.

Our community grows stronger as it grows in diversity. Now, more than ever, a verse from Rudolf Steiner the MLWS College recites as we open our weekly meetings, strengthens this understanding:

*“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.”*

Our teachers recognize the value of including a variety of cultures, experiences, opinions and life stories in each classroom. We strive for lessons that are filled with world perspectives, preparing the students to be conscious citizens and empathic leaders of the future.

A fundamental principle of Waldorf Education is the respect of human rights and the diversity of humankind, as well as the belief that inclusivity and equality is both a moral and educational imperative.

We strive to have all learners, families and staff feel a sense of belonging and true inclusion. The Waldorf pedagogy stands on principles that embrace our common humanity and the equality of people.

However, understanding and appreciating differences, working through implicit biases and making conscious the undermining, systemic messages about “others” takes work. So is striving for honest communication and authentic listening, especially when hard topics arise. It takes work to open ourselves to new perspectives and find common ground in our humanity.

The MLWS College is committed to do this work, including the ongoing practice of courageous self-reflection, organizational development, and individual inner work. At the foundation of Waldorf education lies the mission of social renewal. The MLWS College studies and draws inspiration from the insights of Rudolf Steiner. Anthroposophy is the materializing impulse behind the founding of the first Waldorf School, which opened in Stuttgart in 1919.

The MLWS College acknowledges that some of Steiner’s early writings are unacceptable, racist, misogynistic and bigoted. We condemn and fiercely separate ourselves and our school from such misguided and harmful impulses. Waldorf Schools, like many institutions founded over a century ago, and the people associated with them, have evolved.

Steiner’s own thoughts and beliefs evolved dynamically over the course of his life. He planted many seeds knowing that future generations would nurture and lead his initiatives, morally, toward their most upright realization. We therefore embrace Rudolf Steiner’s evolution, self education and later appeals that:

“We must seek to unite people of all races and nations, and to bridge the divide and difference between the various groups of people. Anthroposophy does not exist to send people off to sleep, but to make them really wide awake. We are living at a time when it is necessary for people to wake up.”

-Rudolf Steiner, The Universal Human lecture



AWSNA Statement of Inclusion and Equity:

www.waldorfeducation.org/awsna/statement-of-inclusion-and-equity

The Benefits of Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms:

tcf.org/content/facts/the-benefits-of-socioeconomically-and-racially-integrated-schools-and-classrooms

How Students Benefit from School Diversity:

greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_students_benefit_from_school_diversity

“Rudolf Steiner gave us powerful tools. We really can begin with the path of self-knowledge that requires the condition of freedom and the recognition of and respect for that freedom for every other human being. This is called moral tact or discernment and is the foundation for the virtue of justice in the relational world. And if we can deeply listen rather than speak in the relational world, trust will come toward us.”

- John Bloom – General Secretary – The Anthroposophical Society

VII. MLWS Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harrassment Policy

MLWS prohibits any and all forms of discrimination and harassment which includes behaviors commonly recognized as bullying, hazing, sexual harassment and sexual abuse/assault. Discrimination includes acts of discrimination or harassment based upon actual or perceived religion, race, color, national origin, gender, physical or mental abilities/disabilities, physical traits, academic achievement, grade level, gender identity socio-economic status, neighborhood/area of residence, sexual orientation, personal characteristics or beliefs, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law. Discrimination and harassment can take place in person or in writing and can be physical, verbal, demonstrative, or electronic. Regardless of its form, MLWS prohibits it.

Anti-discrimination Policy

As per New York State Human Rights Law (Executive Law, Article 15), Mountain Laurel Waldorf School does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, sex, disability, domestic violence victim status, or marital status in admissions, employment, policy, or in any other aspects of school activities.

To Whom this Policy Applies:

This Policy applies to all MLWS students, their parents/guardians, all MLWS employees (faculty, administration and other staff, whether full-time or part-time), MLWS volunteers, employees of contracted service providers, and independent contractors working at MLWS.

Where the MLWS Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy Applies:

The MLWS Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy applies to the physical school itself; to all school-sponsored and affiliated activities and events, whether in school or out of school, including, but not limited to, special events, field trips, overnight trips, sleepovers, sporting events and practices; to all forms of transportation used by MLWS personnel and students to come and go to school and school-affiliated activities; and to all forms/use of technology.

Furthermore, because students' and employees' behavior, whether inside or outside of school, reflects on MLWS and can have a significant impact on life at school, there are times when it is appropriate and important for MLWS to respond to incidents that occur outside of school and beyond school hours. Therefore, MLWS reserves the right to discipline those who engage in discrimination or harassment of MLWS students and employees at any location and at any time if such discrimination or harassment causes a substantial disruption to the MLWS community.

No matter where one is located, whether inside or outside of school or in cyberspace, any use of technology whether personally or school-owned must comply with this Policy, and any other policies set forth in the MLWS Student and Employee Handbooks.

Definition and Examples

“Bullying.” Definition: Any form of physical, verbal, demonstrative, or electronic harassment that one should reasonably expect would demean, threaten, or physically or emotionally hurt its victims. It can be of a sexual nature or otherwise. It can take place in person, over the phone, in cyberspace, or through an online communication, or any other means that communicates such harassment. It can be one-on-one or group-based. Both adults and children can be bullied or be the bully.

Examples (include, but are not limited to):

- pushing, elbowing, poking, tripping, sitting on, kicking, or hitting; · threatening another with physical harm;
- taunting others because of their physical traits including, but not limited to, age, voice, height, weight, athletic skill, or any other personal characteristic; · demeaning others intellectual ability, academic performance, or grade level; · taunting others about their social skills, e.g., making jokes at the expense of someone socially awkward;
- taunting others either verbally or using gestures about their actual or perceived sexual orientation;
- taunting others either verbally or using gestures about their actual or perceived gender identity;
- taunting others about their actual or perceived race, color, or national origin using derogatory terms to refer to someone’s race or ethnic background;
- excluding someone from a group or activity purposely to hurt them, e.g., refusing to let someone sit at a particular table;
- damaging, hiding, taking of property;
- calling someone offensive or demeaning names;
- making jokes involving offensive stereotype;
- posting on Facebook, or any other online social networking site, mean, offensive, demeaning, embarrassing, or threatening comments or images;
- texting, whether individually or as a group, mean, offensive, demeaning, embarrassing, or threatening comments or images;
- creating fake web pages or fake profiles or assuming another’s identity in any social media context to create content likely to cause embarrassment or concern; · spreading mean and hurtful rumors verbally or online; or
- creating offensive graffiti.

“Hazing.” Definition: Any activity expected of someone joining a group (e.g., athletic team, co-curricular activity, student publication), grade, or the school itself or expected of someone to maintain any status in a group, grade, or the school that: (1) humiliates, (2) degrades, or (3) risks emotional and/or physical harm or embarrassment to the individual or the MLWS community, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate and regardless of its intended result or effect. MLWS administration does not consider hazing activity to be harmless pranks or comical antics aimed at developing bonds of brotherhood or sisterhood among young men or women. Such behavior will not be tolerated.

Examples (include, but are not limited to):

- requiring someone to: drink alcohol or use drugs;
- consume any vile or hazardous substance, or allow such a substance to be smeared on the body;
- endure any physical striking, beating, burning, branding, or to engage in self mutilation or requiring one to commit such acts upon another;
- endure acts of sexual abuse/assault;
- be subjected to abusive and demeaning speech;
- participate in acts of personal servitude;
- proceed through any type of gauntlet;
- suffer sleep deprivation;
- restrict personal hygiene;
- engage in indecent exposure;
- participate in any illegal activity;
- participate in physically dangerous activities such as exposing oneself to extreme weather conditions without appropriate protective clothing;
- submit to being tied up, abducted, or blindfolded;
- engage in any degrading or humiliating act, or any activity that violates any aspect of MLWS codes of conduct.

“Sexual harassment.” Definition: Any unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, physical, demonstrative, or electronic conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment or educational experience; or
2. Submission or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for an employment, academic, or school-related decision;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or participation in a school program or extra-curricular activity; or
4. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, learning, studying, or school environment.

Any type of sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal, physical, demonstrative, or electronic conduct or communication of a sexual nature made by any MLWS employee, volunteer, employee of a contracted service provider, or other adult towards a student, whether welcomed by that student or not, is sexual harassment and a violation of this Policy.

Sexual harassment may occur in a single incident or be a series of incidents. It can occur between two adults, an adult and a student, two students, a group and an individual, or people of the same or different gender.

Examples (including, but not limited to):

- intentional touching of a sexual or other private area of a person's body, e.g., grabbing, patting, poking, or slapping the breasts, buttocks, or groin area; · supposed inadvertent contact with the sexual or private parts of the body, e.g., brushing up against someone's leg with one's groin area and acting as if it was unintentional.
- full body hugs;
- sexually-oriented verbal kidding, teasing, or joking made to or in front of someone who finds it offensive;
- making suggestive comments about physical characteristics or appearances; · making offensive gender-based remarks, e.g., saying that a male is too feminine and that a female is too masculine;
- commenting or asking questions about someone's sexual experience or abilities; · spreading rumors of a sexual nature;
- exposing another person to the display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, or posters, e.g., showing another person pornography;
- photographing, videotaping, or making any other visual or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body without their knowledge and consent, and, in addition, if the person being photographed or recorded is a student, doing so even with their consent, as such images may constitute illegal child pornography;
- sending via electronic means images of sexual activity or sexual or intimate parts of the body, i.e., "sexting".

"Sexual abuse/assault." Definition: Physical contact with a sexual or intimate part of the body without consent engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse. It includes various forms of sexual intercourse as well as lesser forms of sexual touching.

Sexual or intimate body parts include, but are not limited to: Breasts, buttocks, genitals, the groin area, the mouth and upper thighs.

Lack of Consent: Occurs when one is physically or verbally forced or intimidated into doing something sexual or submitting to a sexual act, or when one has explicitly indicated a lack of consent, or when the circumstances make it obvious that consent has not been given. Circumstances that make it obvious that consent has not been given include, but are not limited to: (1) being too intoxicated to say "no" or resist, (2) being asleep and therefore unable to consent, or (3) situations in which someone is deemed to be physically or mentally incapable of giving valid consent whether due to the use of intoxicants or any other reason. Children under 17 years of age cannot legally consent under New York State Law to having sex or sexual conduct with an adult.

Examples of sexual assault or abuse include, but are not limited to:

- touching, grabbing, pinching, rubbing, or fondling another person's buttocks, breasts, or genital area, whether over or under clothing, without consent as defined herein and engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse;
- rubbing one's genital area up against another person, whether over or under clothing, without consent as defined herein and engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse;
- touching another person with one's genitals without consent as defined herein and engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse; · engaging in sexual behavior with someone too intoxicated to give informed consent; · physically or verbally intimidating someone to engage in a sex act or sexual contact, whether done so expressly or implicitly.

Response to Violations of the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy: Desired Immediate Response

This section details the immediate response MLWS encourages when an incident of discrimination or harassment is occurring. The section below, "Reporting Protocol," details how and when such an incident should be reported after the incident has occurred.

Victims: MLWS strongly encourages anyone who feels that he or she is a victim of discrimination or harassment, whether a student or an adult, to tell the offender to cease his or her offensive behavior and thereby make it clear that the behavior is offensive and unwelcome. Confronting someone in this manner has been shown to be an effective way to end such actions. However, MLWS understands that not all victims will feel comfortable confronting their offender in this manner and, therefore, wishes to be perfectly clear that there is no requirement that a victim do so in order for MLWS to address a reported violation. Reported violations of this Policy will be handled by the School in the same manner regardless of whether the person victimized confronted his or her harasser directly.

Witnesses: Prevention of harassment is the responsibility of the entire MLWS community. MLWS expects its students, employees, volunteers and other adults to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and respect for all members of the MLWS community. Therefore, upon witnessing harassment, students are **encouraged** to intervene by telling the harasser to stop his or her offensive behavior and by thereafter reporting the violation. All MLWS employees and volunteers are required by this Policy to intervene in this manner and then report the violation. It is important to note that failure of any such adult to intervene on behalf of a victim upon observing the harassment often emboldens the harasser to increase his or her harassing conduct, while making the victim of harassment feel more powerless. For this reason, all MLWS employees and volunteers are **required** to intervene and tell the harasser to stop his or her offensive behavior upon witnessing an act of harassment.

Reporting Protocol

MLWS believes any violation of this Policy is a serious matter requiring immediate attention and a thorough investigation as it is a threat to the safety and well being of a member of our MLWS community, as well as being antagonistic to our core values. Students, their parents and

guardians are strongly encouraged to report such violations. MLWS employees, volunteers, employees of contracted service providers, and independent contractors working at MLWS are required to do so. This should be done no matter who the suspected harasser is.

Students, Parents/Guardians, & Other Concerned Non-MLWS Employees & Volunteers Reporting Protocol

Students, parents/guardians, and any other concerned individuals not working for MLWS who are aware of a violation or suspected violation of this Policy should tell any member of the MLWS faculty or staff with whom they are comfortable speaking about the suspected violation. MLWS encourages reporting incidents of harassment as soon as possible; however, there is no time limit on when such a report may be made. The faculty or staff member who is informed about an alleged violation is obligated to report the suspected violation to the MLWS administrator.

If for any reason, a student, parent/guardian, or other concerned individual who does not work at MLWS is uncomfortable reporting the violation to a MLWS faculty or staff member or a member of the MLWS Administration, he or she may instead report directly to one of the following outside individuals:

Designated Non-Vested MLWS Board Member

Should any MLWS student, his or her parent/guardian, or other concerned non MLWS employee wish to report a violation of the MLWS Policy anonymously, he or she may do so. Regardless of how a violation is reported, it will be addressed and investigated to the extent possible given the limitations inherent in investigating anonymous reports. Such an anonymous reporter may decide to reveal his or her identity at any later time which will greatly increase MLWS' ability to deal effectively with the reported violation.

MLWS Employee, Volunteer, Employee of Contracted Service Providers, and Independent Contractors Working at MLWS Reporting Protocol

Promptly upon learning of a possible violation of the Policy, whether as a victim, witness, or recipient of such information from someone else, MLWS employees, volunteers, employees of contracted service providers and independent contractors working at MLWS **must report** the possible violation to one of the following people: 1) Executive Committee/Administrator, 2) Care Streams Group, 3) the MLWS College. If anyone other than the Executive Committee / Administrator is notified, that person must promptly inform these two of the report so that the School is always made aware of all possible violations. Once the Executive Committee/Administrator is notified, he or she must also notify the MLWS College.

If the report involves either the Executive Committee/Administrator, the report should be made directly to the MLWS College. If for any reason, a MLWS employee or volunteer is uncomfortable reporting the violation to one of the above denominated individuals, he or she may instead report directly to the Designated Non-Vested MLWS Board Member: Livia Vanaver, livdance@gmail.com.

Retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports a violation or suspected violation of this Policy, or who participates in the investigation of a complaint, is strictly prohibited. See Retaliation section of this Policy.

When Report Must be Made by MLWS Employees, Volunteers, Employees of Contracted Service Providers and Independent Contractors

All MLWS employees, volunteers, employees of contracted service providers, and independent contractors working at MLWS who have reason to suspect that a violation has or may have occurred are under an obligation to promptly report this information or suspicion to the indicated persons set forth above in this Policy. A "reason to suspect" may be predicated upon being told directly or indirectly that a violation has occurred, overhearing talk that a violation has occurred, or observing behavior which gives rise to a suspicion that a violation has occurred. The obligation to report is mandatory regardless of whether the alleged violation involves another MLWS employee, volunteer, an employee of a contracted service provider, or a student, as the victim or the offender. When in doubt of whether you have sufficient reason to suspect a violation has or may have occurred, always err on the side of caution by reporting what you know or suspect.

Special Reporting Requirements for Reports of Sexual Abuse/Assault

In cases of sexual abuse/assault, due to the heightened seriousness of such allegations, reports must be made by MLWS employees, volunteers, employees of contracted service providers, and independent contractors working at MLWS immediately upon coming into the possession of the information that such an act has or may have occurred and that such an act has or may have occurred and the person so notified, must immediately ensure that the other designated individuals are made aware of the report. The MLWS Board should be told about the report as soon as practicable.

Mandatory Reporting to State Authorities

There are circumstances in which a MLWS employee may be required to report to State authorities their reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused or maltreated. See, sections regarding Mandatory Reporting to the New York State Hotline.

Protection of Reporter's Identity

The reporter's identity and the information he or she reports will only be shared with those necessary in MLWS' judgment and discretion to appropriately address the situation. Retaliation of any kind against a person or persons who have made such a report will not be tolerated and will subject anyone who engages in it to disciplinary action which may include expulsion or termination. (See, "Retaliation Prohibited" below.)

Amnesty Provision

MLWS has a strict policy about the use of alcohol and other drugs by its students. MLWS will not tolerate alcohol or drug use among its students. It is absolutely forbidden at any time, on any

part of the MLWS campus, and at any school-related function, including the bus ride to and from school. Under normal circumstances, if a student possesses or uses drugs or alcohol, his or her parents/guardians are notified and the student may be expelled. However, because the health and safety of MLWS students is the School's paramount concern, to minimize any hesitation a student may have to report a violation of the MLWS Non-Discrimination and Anti Harassment Policy, while not overlooking a violation of its drug and alcohol policy, the School will place great weight on the positive impact of reporting an incident in deciding if any action is appropriate for the reporter's breach of this policy.

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports a violation or suspected violation of this Policy, or who participates in the investigation of a complaint, is strictly prohibited. Any person who engages in such retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, expulsion, if a student, or termination, if a MLWS employee, volunteer, an employee of a contracted service provider, or an independent contractor. Prohibited "retaliation" includes, but is not limited to: threats, intimidation, harassment, any other adverse action threatened, expressly or impliedly, or taken against anyone who reports a violation or suspected violation of this Policy or who participates in an investigation of a complaint. Any MLWS student, their parent or guardian, or other non-MLWS employee who either observes or becomes aware of such retaliatory behavior is strongly encouraged to report it to School authorities. All MLWS employees, volunteers, employees of contracted service providers, and independent contractors working at MLWS are required to do so.

Intentional False Reports Prohibited

MLWS considers any allegation of harassment to be a serious matter. Therefore, if it is determined at the conclusion of an investigation that a reported violation was intentionally falsely made or that false information was knowingly provided regarding the complaint, MLWS will take appropriate disciplinary or other action against such individual.

Investigation of Reported Incidents

After a report is made, MLWS will direct that an investigation be conducted by appropriate individuals who will be selected based upon the nature of the report and the individuals involved. This investigation may be conducted by MLWS personnel, or by counsel and/or by an outside investigator, depending on the facts and circumstances of the report. MLWS recognizes that reporting a violation of the Policy will often involve discussing matters of a sensitive nature. Therefore, MLWS and any outside investigator it retains will bear this in mind and use the utmost discretion when conducting the investigation in order to minimize the chances that information about the matter will become known by unnecessary individuals.

As part of any investigation conducted pursuant to this Policy, the reporter, the alleged victim (should that be someone other than the reporter), and the alleged offender will be interviewed



separately about the reported facts. They will be advised of the prohibition against retaliation for making such a report and/or cooperating with an investigation. Furthermore, others who may have relevant knowledge may also be questioned, and they too will be reminded of MLWS' anti retaliation policy and the need for discretion. Given the fact that these investigations help to preserve the safety of our community, MLWS expects all members of the community to cooperate in an investigation if requested to do so. All MLWS employees, volunteers, employees of contracted service providers, and independent contractors working at MLWS are under a duty to cooperate. MLWS will try to be as discreet as possible during the investigation and confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible given the facts and circumstances of the complaint and the need to do a fair and thorough investigation.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to limit the options of any person who believes that he or she has been subject to unlawful harassment or discrimination. Such a person may at any time in addition to participating in the MLWS Policy procedures pursue his or her rights with an outside agency, governmental entity, or legal counsel. At the conclusion of the investigation, and after the decision regarding what, if any, disciplinary or remedial action is to be taken has been made, the alleged victim and alleged offender will be informed about the disposition of the matter. If either party is dissatisfied with the outcome, remedy may be sought by contacting the Executive Committee. Communication of any information regarding the matter to other members of the MLWS community, whether that be faculty, staff, the student body, or parents/guardians, will be decided on a case-by-case basis with all due consideration being given to issues of privacy, confidentiality, and the emotional and physical well-being of all those involved.

Disciplinary decisions will be based on the facts and circumstances of each case and will take into account the offender's prior conduct and the wishes of the victim, although the latter will not be the controlling factor as MLWS must act in the interest of protecting the entire School community as well as the victim. In addition to being disciplined for engaging in an act of prohibited harassment or retaliation, MLWS employees may also be disciplined for not following all aspects of this Policy, including but not limited to, the reporting protocols.

Possible disciplinary outcomes for **students** include, but are not limited to: a verbal warning, parental notification, loss of privileges, counseling, sensitivity training, probation, suspension, expulsion, dismissal, and/or notification to local or state authorities. MLWS has the sole discretion as to appropriate discipline and can expel/dismiss, in appropriate situations, when no prior discipline has been taken.

For certain offenses, expulsion/dismissal may be the first and only disciplinary step taken. Any disciplinary step or steps may be skipped at the sole discretion and judgment of MLWS after investigation and analysis of the total situation. Although expulsion/dismissals generally include prior notice to the affected student, MLWS reserves the right to bypass any notice.

Possible disciplinary outcomes for **employees** include, but are not limited to: verbal coaching, verbal warnings, written warnings, sensitivity counseling, probation, suspension with or without pay, termination and other appropriate discipline. MLWS has the sole discretion as to appropriate discipline and can terminate employees, in appropriate situations, when no prior discipline has been taken. For certain offenses, termination/dismissal may be the first and only disciplinary step taken. Any disciplinary step or steps may be skipped at the sole discretion and judgment of

MLWS after investigation and analysis of the total situation. Although involuntary terminations/dismissals generally include prior notice to the affected employee, MLWS reserves the right to bypass any notice.

In addition to disciplinary action with regard to the accused, MLWS will consider what, if any, remedial actions should be taken with regard to the School as a whole to prevent similar offenses from occurring in the future.

MLWS will keep records of all such investigations and such records will include, but not be limited to, information about the allegation as gathered from the reporter, the alleged victim, the person accused, and others interviewed. In addition, the decision reached regarding appropriate disciplinary action and any other relevant followup action engaged in by the School will be documented. Documentation of harassment investigations is necessary to provide an accurate record regarding the reported violation and how it was handled, one that does not have to rely on the recollections of people whose memories may become inaccurate over the passage of time.

Mandatory Reporting to the New York State Hotline

Under Section 413 of the New York State Social Services Law, all school officials, including, but not limited to, administrators, faculty, guidance counselors, and health care professionals employed by MLWS are “mandated reporters” and have an affirmative duty to report when they have “reasonable cause to suspect” that a child has been abused or maltreated by a parent or legal guardian or someone else legally responsible for their care and such information has come to the school official’s attention in the course of his or her official or professional capacity.

“Mandated reporters,” as defined above, must call the New York State Central Registry (“SCR”) at 1-800-635-1522 upon having such “reasonable cause.” This is the **personal** duty of the person who has such reasonable cause and is not satisfied by telling a supervisor at the School. Consulting with a supervisor at the School before making such a call, however, is allowable, and indeed advisable, but the consent or approval of such supervisor is **never** a requirement for making a call to the SCR.

This reporting duty applies to knowledge obtained during the course of any out-of-school activity, as well as when on school premises, and indeed to any knowledge of abuse or maltreatment of a child “coming before them in their official or professional capacity” at any time or place. Thus, even if a MLWS employee learns of reportable abuse or maltreatment while on a retreat or a trip, or anywhere else outside of the School, a report must be made to the SCR.

MLWS employees are reminded that the MLWS administrators are always available to discuss such situations, offer advice and support, and be present should a call to the SCR need to be made. Oral reports to the SCR Hotline must be followed up within 48 hours with a written report using form LDS- 2221-A which can be obtained from the New York State Office of Children’s Services (OCFS) website at www.ocfs.state.ny.us.

Penalties for failure to report: Failure to report a suspected case of child abuse or maltreatment perpetrated upon a child by a parent, legal guardian, or someone else legally

responsible for the child's care, as defined in the New York State Family Court Act above, is a class A misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and/or a fine of \$1000. In addition, it is a violation of MLWS policy and is therefore an offense for which an employee may be terminated.

Immunity from liability for Mandated Reporters: Under New York State Social Services Law, any school employee who in good faith makes a report to the State hotline has immunity from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise result by reason of such action.

Reminder: required reporting to MLWS administration

In addition to the requirements of New York State law, as set out above, pursuant to the MLWS Policy, all MLWS employees, volunteers, employees of contracted service providers, and independent contractors working at MLWS, as well as other adults have a duty to immediately report their suspicions of child abuse or maltreatment committed by **anyone**, not just a parent, guardian, or other person legally responsible for the child's care, to one of the appropriate MLWS administrators set forth in the Reporting section of this Policy. This internal report must be made regardless of whether a call has already been made to the State Hotline listed above.

Penalties for failure to report: Any person violating the provisions of Title 9, including the failure to report an act of child abuse having reasonable cause to believe that an act of child abuse has been committed is considered a "disorderly person" and faces criminal penalties. In addition, it is a violation of MLWS policy and is therefore an offense for which an employee may be terminated.

Immunity from liability for Mandated Reporters: Anyone acting pursuant to this act in the making of a report under this act shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such person shall have the same immunity with respect to testimony given in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

Reporting to State or Local law enforcement

While recognizing that it is under no legal duty to do so, if MLWS has *reasonable cause to suspect*¹ that a MLWS employee, volunteer, employee of a contracted service provider, or any other adult at MLWS has committed a physical or sexual assault, as defined by the New York State Penal Law, against a MLWS student, MLWS will report this information to State or Local law enforcement authorities.