

Mulberry Waldorf School Parent Handbook

Welcome to Mulberry Waldorf School!

The Mulberry Waldorf School Faculty, Staff and Board of Directors extend a warm welcome to all new and returning families. We respect the trust that you have shown us by placing your child in our school and look forward to working together as a team between home and school for the benefit of your child. Please feel free to contact any member of the school's Staff or Board of Directors with any questions, concerns or suggestions.

This Parent Handbook is intended to serve as a first resource on many aspects of the school's educational and social activities. We encourage you to seek out other resources, such as the school's website www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca, and to get to know your child's teacher, other parents and community members.

Mulberry Waldorf School is enriched by its strong, diverse and vibrant community. We invite you to become part of our community and join us in celebrating seasonal festivals, class potlucks, parent evenings, craft circle, artistic workshops and coffee mornings.

***Receive the children with reverence,
Educate them with love,
Let them go forth in freedom.***

- Rudolf Steiner

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Mission Statement of Mulberry Waldorf School



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

We educate the whole child, their head, heart and hands,
through an integrated academic, artistic,
and movement-based curriculum.
Waldorf education nourishes children,
parents and the community.

As part of an international educational association,
our school fosters freedom in thinking,
healthy emotional development,
and the compassion and imagination
to transform the world.

*Approved by the Mulberry Waldorf School
Board of Directors and Faculty
on January 26, 2010*

Administrative Information

OFFICE HOURS

The school office is open from 8:30 am to 3:45 pm Monday to Friday. We look forward to keeping in touch with parents and community members in person, by telephone (613-542-0669) or by e-mail.

For general enquiries: reception@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca

For financial enquiries: finance@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca

For enrolment and administration: administrator@mulberrywaldorfschool.ca

****** Please phone the office if your child will be late or absent. ******

SCHOOL HOURS

Arrival:

- ❑ Early Childhood and Grade School children may arrive in the yard as early as 8:30 am. School begins at 8:40 am.

Before Care:

Before Care is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 8:40 am. The cost is \$8 per day and is billed monthly. Care must be arranged in advance with the Office.

Departure:

- ❑ Early Childhood children staying for half-day programs are to be picked up at 12:15 pm. Please respect staff members' schedules by picking up children promptly. Late pick-ups will be billed.
- ❑ All children attending full days are to be picked up at 3:30 pm. Please respect staff members' schedules by picking up children promptly.
- ❑ Grades 4 to 8 children may be released independently with prior written permission by the parent to be kept on file in the school office.
- ❑ Children who are not picked up on time will be signed into After Care to ensure that they are supervised until the parents arrive. Parents will be billed accordingly.

After-School Care:

After-school Care is available from 3:30 pm to 5:15 pm. The cost is \$12 per day and is billed monthly (snack is provided). Please contact the office in advance to arrange care. Children who are not picked up by 3:40 pm will be signed into After Care where they will be supervised until their parent/guardian arrives. Parents/guardians will be billed the daily rate.

Weather:

Outdoor play is an essential part of each child's day. **Please ensure that your child is appropriately dressed for the weather each day and that you provide sufficient extra clothing (labelled) to be left at school in a clearly marked bag.**

In the event of severe weather and poor driving conditions, our school will remain open and switch to alternative programming (classes may be combined and no new material would be introduced) as per our Inclement Weather Policy. The safety of families, Faculty and Staff is our primary concern.

Classroom Policies and Procedures

Rhythm:

Rhythm is of central importance to the nourishment and orientation of the young child. Mulberry programs follow daily, weekly and yearly patterns.

Daily

Early Childhood: an ebb and flow of creative play and structured time of circle, story, and artistic activities.

Grade School: After the main lesson, during which core academic subjects are taught (including math, language arts, history, geography), children receive instruction in specialty subjects such as French, painting, nature studies, handwork, music, woodwork, choir and games/physical education.

Weekly

A regular cycle of activities such as handwork, watercolour painting, baking, nature discovery/gardening, and drama/movement/music is explored in each classroom.

Yearly

At Mulberry Waldorf School, we celebrate birthdays and seasonal festivals.

Communication:

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

Parent Teacher Communication

- ❑ Please speak with your child's teacher as an open and respectful dialogue between the parent and teacher is fundamental to the success of each child's well-being. Please schedule an interview time with your child's teacher. At pick up and drop off time teachers are supervising children and are unavailable at that time for in-depth discussions.
- ❑ Please check your child's mail pouch and note that it is for in-school mail only
- ❑ Please read class letters that are sent either as hard copies (in pouches) or by e-mail.
- ❑ Please sign up for parent-teacher interviews.
- ❑ Please attend Parent evenings which enable parents and teachers to discuss aspects of Waldorf education as well as updates of what is going on in the classrooms.

School Communication

- ❑ Bulletin boards
Please refer to the main entrance, first and second floor bulletin boards for notices of school events or information on broader educational issues.
- ❑ Mulberry Website – www.mulberrywaldorfschool.ca for updated school events.

Pedagogical Questions

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

For further advice, please contact the Faculty Chair, who will pursue concerns in collaboration with the parent and teacher. If an additional step is desired, the Administrative Committee (Faculty Chair, Administrator, Board Chair) will strive for a satisfactory resolution. If parents feel that objectivity is a concern, they may wish to contact the Ombudsperson (please see the below description).

Administrative Questions

If you have questions concerning school policies and/or procedures, please contact the Administrator.

Parents seeking further resolution with any concern may submit a letter to the Administrative Committee. If parents feel that objectivity is a concern, they may wish to contact the Ombudsperson (please see the below description).

Ombudsperson:

The role of the ombudsperson is to support and guide members of the school community in conflicts when direct communication between the people involved has failed or seems impossible. The ombudsperson could also be approached as a safe person by parents who don't know yet how to proceed when faced with a difficult situation in the school. Meetings with the ombudsperson would be confidential.

The ombudsperson would listen to the complaints and brainstorm with the parent about possible solutions in an informal way. In some cases, this may be enough for the parents to carry out the next steps by themselves. If not, the ombudsperson could suggest other measures that may lead to an acceptable agreement. These may include meetings with a teacher/the faculty chair or another person from outside the school like a counsellor or an adviser on a specific topic. The ombudsperson could also be present in a meeting with the teacher and faculty chair as a witness and source of support.

Behaviour Management:

A daily rhythm and activities appropriate to the developmental needs of the children keeps problems to a minimum. Boundaries and expectations are established early to ensure the safety and protection of children. Teachers redirect disruptive play and model caring responses to elicit gentle play and learning among classmates. When a problem does exist, teachers will speak with parents to arrange a meeting.

Attendance Guidelines:

*To benefit from the full curriculum children are expected to be at school unless ill.
Please contact the office if your child will be absent for any period of time.*

The Waldorf curriculum follows a rhythm, which builds successively right through each subject block, usually three to four weeks long. There is an academic and social momentum that builds for the whole group of children within a class. Together they become engaged in the subject through listening to stories, artistic activities and group discussions. Absences disturb the learning experience for the child who is away as well as for the rest of the class. For these reasons, worksheets are not a sufficient substitute for being at school. We encourage parents to bring their child to school unless their child is ill.

We recommend that appointments and family holidays occur during school holidays. Please notify the office and your child's teacher of any extended absences.

Children receive a rigorous academic and experiential curriculum which is integrated with art, music and movement. All parts of the day are important. In order to benefit from the full curriculum and to be part of the social fabric of the class and school community, we ask parents to schedule extracurricular activities outside of school hours. Please consult the child's class teacher before scheduling for time away from the class.

Ontario Student Records:

Student records will be kept in confidence and released to another school by written request.

Clothing Guidelines:

We strive to provide an environment that nurtures the children in their learning. We want to protect their childhood innocence from the influence of consumerism and commercialism. We also strive to protect our students from the premature awakening of vanity or envy related to their appearance and clothing.

Students are expected to be dressed in neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate school clothing that does not impede their participation in any activities. In order to promote good health, positive self image and a good learning environment, please abide by the dress code.

1. Clothing should be free of logos, advertising or images from electronic media.
2. Shorts and skirts must be as long as the fingertips when hanging straight at sides.
3. Midriffs must be covered. Tube tops and spaghetti straps are unacceptable.
4. Caps and hats must be removed before entering the classroom.
5. Students must have indoor footwear. Good supporting shoes are important to support the broad variety of activities in the curriculum. For safety, avoid sandals without backs, flip-flops, rubber clogs and slippers. Shoes should be free of rollers, lights, sound effects, etc.
6. Make-up and nail polish should not be worn. Children in the Early Childhood programs and Grade 1/2 are asked not to wear jewelry or watches.
7. Neither very tight fitting nor very loose fitting clothes, such as sweat suits, large jeans or baggy shirts, may be worn.
8. Being able to see clearly is imperative. Please be sure that there is no interference with vision. Hair should be tied back if necessary.
9. Running shoes are required for Games and PE class.
10. Upper grade school students require gym clothes.

The teachers of the Early Childhood programs also ask that children wear:

1. Indoor footwear: soft soled slippers or shoes through which the ground can be felt.
2. Clothes made of natural fibres whenever possible.
3. Seasonally appropriate hats for outdoors.

What to Bring from Home:

All Children:

- Full change of clothing in a **well-labelled** cloth bag (underclothing, socks, shirt, pants, etc.). Clothing should be labelled and must be weather appropriate (e.g., rubber boots and raincoats and pants for rainy days; snow jacket, pants and lined boots for winter days).

Early Childhood programs Children Staying Full Days:

- ❑ A healthy lunch and afternoon snack, including sufficient water.
- ❑ Labelled toothbrush and labelled cup to remain at school, if parent chooses.
- ❑ “Class” toothpaste and sunscreen will be provided. Parents are welcome to send their own for their own child if they choose.
- ❑ A cloth labelled bag to hold bedding and a small pillow (to be provided by school).

What *not* to Bring from Home:

Items from home can change the friendly dynamics of the children's interaction. They can also be misplaced or broken. We ask that children **not bring** personal items such as toys, books, and electronic devices (please see electronics section below) to school, unless requested by their class teacher. Please avoid logos and pictures on clothing and belongings such as lunch-boxes and backpacks. Plain colours and simple patterns are preferred (please refer to above clothing guidelines).

- ❑ Bikes should be locked up outside on the bike rack.
- ❑ Scooters and car seats may be left inside at the YARD door only (not in the main entrance).
- ❑ Lost and found, located by the office, will be emptied at the end of every month.

Food:

Our school supports the belief that what we eat and drink has a profound effect on the health of our bodies. Natural, pure and health giving foods with minimum processing will be prepared and served for morning snack in Early Childhood programs. If your child is on a special diet, please notify the teacher and, if necessary, provide the teacher with appropriate snacks for him or her.

Grade School children and others who stay for a full day are to bring their own lunches and snacks from home and plenty of water. Our school strives to have litter-free lunches. Garbage and compost will be sent home. Please provide plenty of simple, wholesome and unprocessed food for your child.

Suggestions:

- ❑ Whole fruits: apples, oranges, pears, peaches, dried fruit.
- ❑ Vegetables: carrot sticks, celery, salad, cherry tomatoes, green/red peppers.
- ❑ Grains: whole grain crackers, breads, rice/pasta salad, tortilla chips, rice cakes, granola.
- ❑ Proteins: beans, legumes, meat, nuts and nut butters (**EXCEPT IN NUT-FREE CLASSROOMS**).
- ❑ Dairy: yoghurt, cheese and milk.
- ❑ Drinks: water, milk, soy/rice drinks.

Electronics

Students are welcome to use the office phone to make phone calls after they have obtained teacher and office staff permission. We appreciate that some students will have cell phones with them; however, cell phones should remain in student backpacks and **turned off** while on school property. Any visible cell phone will be taken from the student and kept in the office to be returned at the end of the day.

We recognize that children naturally imitate the adults around them. We also appreciate the need for the use of cell phones and pagers in a professional capacity. We ask parents not to use cell phones in the building and on the playground. There will be reminders at gatherings such as assemblies to turn off cell phones. Faculty and Staff should keep cell phones turned off and only use them in the office or in their classroom after hours when there are no students present, unless there is an emergency.

Student use of cameras or video equipment during the school day is not permitted without prior approval by their teacher. Cameras are never permitted in washrooms or change rooms.

The taking of pictures or videos during performances or assemblies can be disruptive. We ask that parents delegate the filming to one parent and take photos at the conclusion of the event.

Please note that Mulberry Faculty and Staff strive to document artwork, handwork, school environment, and field trips through photographs for advertisement and/or communication purposes. If you do not want your child in these photos, please indicate this in your child's enrolment forms.

Illness and Attendance Guidelines

General:

Please call the school at 542-0669 if your child will be absent or late.

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

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

When a child becomes ill during the day:

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

- ❑ prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- ❑ results in greater needs for care than the staff can provide without compromising the care of other children
- ❑ may be contagious and therefore infect others.

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

- ❑ *Unusual behaviour:* including extreme lethargy or irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible illness. Your child should be kept home until a health care professional indicates that the child can attend the program.
- ❑ *Diarrhea:* An episode of diarrhea within the past 24 hours. Children should stay home until the child is symptom-free for 48 hours.
- ❑ *Vomiting:* An episode of vomiting during the previous 24 hours. Children should stay home until the child is symptom-free for 48 hours.
- ❑ *Fever:* Oral/tympanic temperature equal to or greater than 38C (100.4F). Auxiliary temperature equal to or greater than 38C (100.4F). Temperature above 102F is likely a sign of influenza or infection. Children should stay home until the child is fever-free without medication for 24 hours.
- ❑ *Rash:* A rash appearing with fever or behaviour change. Exclusion from school should continue until the child is evaluated by a health care professional. (See Impetigo)

- ❑ *Colds and Coughs:* We request that a child be kept home for the first 24 to 48 hours of a cold if it is accompanied by a fever, extreme lethargy or irritability or a runny nose that is persistent and/or of a clear colour. This kind of discharge makes the child more contagious. (A persistent runny nose with a green/yellow colour may indicate an infection.)

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

- ❑ *Sore Throat:* May be accompanied by head cold, runny nose or ear infection. Majority are due to minor viral illnesses. One third of cases are diagnosed as 'strep' which is highly contagious and requires seeing a physician ASAP.
- ❑ *Impetigo:* Rough, cracked reddened area, commonly on face or legs. Itching lesions (pinhead to bean sized); fluid filled blisters form and change to honey coloured crusts; fluid from blisters spreads a highly contagious infection.
- ❑ *Pinworms:* Itchy and irritated anal area. Persistent scratching; difficulty sleeping. Wash hands often and see a physician. Notify school if there is any possibility of pinworms as it is highly contagious. Children **must be treated** before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.
- ❑ *Lice:* Child complains of itchy head; persistent scratching. Enlarged lymph nodes lead to possible secondary infection if scratching. Check for adult lice or nits (eggs). Notify school if there is any suspicion of head lice as it is highly contagious. Children **must be treated** before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.
- ❑ *Pink Eye:* Itchy, red, weepy or watery eye(s) with or without mucous. Highly contagious. Children **must be treated** before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.