

MAYFLOWER



EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
MONTESSORI LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Parent Handbook

2015-2016

Mayflower Early Childhood Center
106 East Diamond Lake Road
Minneapolis, MN 55419

MAIN SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER: 612-825-5914

AFTER CARE CELL PHONE NUMBER: 612-212-5341

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Introduction

Welcome to Mayflower Early Childhood Center's Parent Handbook. Please read this handbook in its entirety at the beginning of the school year and refer to it throughout the year for guidance. Thanks for being a part of our community!

*Nanci Olesen, Director, Mayflower Early Childhood Center
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*Julia Coskran, Assistant Director, Mayflower Early Childhood Center
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Mission and Purpose

The mission of Mayflower Early Childhood Center ("MECC") is to serve an economically diverse community, providing high quality Montessori learning environments that meet the developmental needs of the whole child. Our vision is *to prepare all students, regardless of background, for a healthy and productive life*. We seek to instill in children the values of respect, responsibility, grace and courtesy, self-motivation, and self-discipline.

In today's world, where all cultures are fast becoming accessible to each other and where a peaceful future depends on mutual understanding and tolerance, we take pride in fostering familiarity with and respect for many different races, nationalities, and religions. We are a non-sectarian community. Although MECC is an outreach program of Mayflower Church, no religious training is incorporated into our curriculum. Our school does not discriminate in admissions or employment of staff on the basis of race, sex, religion, creed, color, or national origin.

School History

The first school on this property, Mayflower Nursery School, was founded in 1961 by members of Mayflower Community Congregational Church. The nursery school, later renamed Mayflower Preschool, was one of the longest community outreach programs in Mayflower Church history, serving families of all faiths and denominations.

In 2008, the church congregation voted to expand its early childhood education offerings to include a full-day, year-round program to serve families of Minneapolis, including families living in the newly constructed Creekside Commons building adjacent to its property. In 2010, the new full-day Montessori learning environment opened along with a 3-day Montessori program. In 2011, MECC was awarded Parent Aware "Four Star" status. In 2012, MECC became accredited by Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). In 2014, MECC added a Toddler Community. The Toddler Community became AMI certified in 2015. **Both our AMI certification and our Four Star Parent Aware Rating are renewed annually.** In 2015-16, we offer five-day Montessori programs for children ages 3-6 (four Children's House classrooms), and a Toddler Community for toddlers ages 16 to 33 months.

Montessori Education

Montessori education was developed over 100 years ago in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori. It is a scientific method of education. Through research and observation, Montessori discovered that children move through specific developmental levels in which they exhibit different learning

characteristics and needs. Montessori believed that a child's educational setting must change at each developmental level and should correlate with the psychological characteristics of that plane of development.

MECC has many resources to help you understand Montessori education. Our *Parent Resource Center* has Montessori books and articles. Many of our parent workshops are specifically geared toward understanding the Montessori method. Our website has a tab entitled [MONTESSORI RESOURCES](#) (under "[For Parents](#)").

We ask that all new parents attend "Montessori 101," a 1-hour workshop offered during New Child Orientation, and again in September. ALL (returning and new) PARENTS are asked to attend at least one parent workshop in the 2014-15 school year. A full calendar of workshops is available on our [website](#).

For more information, see page 22: *The Parent Resource Center*.

Our Programs

Our Montessori program goals at Mayflower Early Childhood Center are:

- To guide your child to a lifelong love of learning
- To help build within your child a sense of fairness and compassion for others
- To develop your child's curiosity and wonder about the world
- To provide a safe and peaceful learning environment

MECC is not a substitute for your home; rather, it is a supplement. A child's home environment is the primary source of love, security, and stability. When you enroll your child in our program, you are entering a partnership. This partnership between the parents and the school is critical to a child's success.

Records are kept of each child's progress in all areas of development, and these are shared and discussed with parents at parent conferences.

Our five-day Montessori programs are open year-round. MECC is licensed through the *Department of Human Services, State of Minnesota*.

Full day children spend approximately a half hour outside each day, through all seasons (we make adjustments for rain or heavy snow, providing activities in our upstairs "activity room") (see *Outdoor Play and Playground Guidelines, pages 21-22*). *Some classrooms go outside during the morning work cycle.*

Our Montessori programs provide rich learning environments for children ages 16 months to 6 years. Our AMI-trained Montessori guides and assistants engage the children in a prepared environment using a curriculum that spans a 3-year cycle (for Children's Houses) and 16 months (for Toddler Community). We call our classrooms "Children's Houses" and "Toddler Community" because they are set up as home-like environments with everything (furniture, materials, and implements) child-sized for the children.

Children's House:

In the Montessori Children's House (ages 3-6) the "prepared environment" contains four subject areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, and Language. The children are given "presentations" to understand how to manipulate the materials in each area, and they can choose what they will work on during what's called the morning "work cycle." Individual work and group work occurs under the direction and observation of the guide ("teacher") and assistant.

The children are encouraged to work independently and cooperatively. They learn to be responsible to the materials and to each other. Their love of learning is led by their curiosity and their concentration. A Montessori classroom is one that is dedicated to a sense of peaceful cooperation and community. **Throughout this handbook and in all other materials, you will see us refer to the lead teachers in each classroom as "guides." In Montessori education, the teacher is often referred to as a guide, as that more aptly suits the role s/he plays in the classroom.**

"It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience."

—*Maria Montessori*

Our guides ("teachers") take great care in preparing the classroom so that materials are arranged sequentially, children have comfortable workspace and there is freedom of physical movement. It is understood that each child develops in his/her own way and time, and the guides are prepared to assess each child individually.

Toddler Community:

Our Toddler Community is a safe, beautiful and ordered environment prepared to respect, support and respond to the basic needs of toddlers 16 to 33 months old. In this program we seek to help the toddler follow his or her natural path of development, gain independence, be motivated from within by a natural curiosity, interact with the environment as an active explorer, and cultivate the desire to learn.

Toddlers are encouraged and assisted to develop skills in caring for themselves, such as dressing and undressing. Through their own observations, toddlers develop an interest in using the toilet. Simple, easily manipulated clothing assist the toddler in developing this independence. Activities to care for the physical environment aid toddler's development of movement, language, and concentration, while helping them learn to sequence a series of actions and adapt to the culture of the community. Toddlers spend much of their day joyfully washing hands, watering plants, sweeping, scrubbing tables, preparing food, and setting a beautiful table in order to practice the skills needed to be independent. To read more about our Toddler Community, please visit our [website](#).

*Little children, from the moment they are weaned,
are making their way toward independence.
—Maria Montessori*

Our programs have the following characteristics:

- Mixed ages (3-6 years, Children’s House, 16-33 months, Toddler Community)
- Specific materials for language, mathematics and sensorial
- 3-hour uninterrupted “work cycle”
- Staffed by AMI-trained Montessori guides and assistants
- Reading, grammar, spelling, handwriting, literature and poetry
- Science, including botany and zoology
- Everyday living skills, also called “practical life”
- Sensory awareness activities, also called “sensorial materials”
- Gardening
- Music
- Arts and crafts
- Physical education
- Prepared Outdoor Environments

Everything in the classroom is designed to meet the developmental needs and interests of the children. There is no limit to what children can learn, and they are able to advance through the curriculum, as they are ready, without being limited by the progress of their peers.

Before Care and After Care:

Before Care takes place in your child's Toddler Community or Children’s House. You may schedule your child to arrive anytime between 7:30 and 8:15 AM.

The Children's House After Care. Children gather with the After Care Staff at the end of the school day to have a snack and to engage in Montessori activities as well as crafts and games. Sometimes After Care takes place outside in the courtyard, sometimes it takes place in the Activity Room upstairs.

Toddler After Care. Toddlers who stay for After Care continue their activities within the classroom. Weather permitting they also go outside, and sometimes they join the Children’s House After Care program upstairs in the Activity Room.

Parents may choose what time they will pick up their child from After Care. Parents set the schedule for After Care and Before Care at the beginning of the school year.

- **Before Care** – 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM
- **After Care** – 3:30 PM to 6:00 PM

Before Care and After Care are pro-rated depending on your child's individual schedule.

Before and After Care sign up

For scheduled Before and After Care, parents should fill out a [contract for Before and After Care](#), found on our website.

If a parent needs Drop-In Before or After Care, we ask that you fill out a [Drop In Care Request](#) (found on website or at the Welcome Desk) and return it to the Blue Welcome Desk 48 hours in advance of the need. A scanned copy of the request can also be emailed to Julia@mayflowerchildren.org.

Administration

Staff

The staff of MECC works together in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and appreciation with a common commitment to serving the needs of children. We value work and intellectual stimulation and depend on each other for inspiration and support. The staff meets regularly to discuss routine matters and to plan for school events. All staff complete continuing education hours required by the State of Minnesota, and complete first aid and CPR training.

We value our dedicated and gifted staff, and appreciate their efforts to support our school community.

"If we could say, 'We are respectful and courteous in our dealing with children, we treat them as we should like to be treated ourselves,' we should have mastered a great educational principle and be setting an example of good education." --Maria Montessori

The staff is the link between your child and the classroom activities and materials. Each member of our professional staff has been carefully selected by the Director based on his/her specific qualifications, education, and genuine love and concern for children. Each staff member's credentials meet or exceed State Department of Human Services licensing regulations, and each member is required to complete related training and education on a continual basis throughout involvement with the school.

MECC Staff: 2015-16

Nanci Olesen, *Director*, B.A., M.Ed., AMI Primary Diploma

Julia Coskran, *Assistant Director*, M.B.A., B.A.

Stephanie Melander, *Business Manager*, B.S., M.Ed., AMI Primary Diploma

Leah Popova, *Parent Outreach Coordinator*, B.A., M.Ed., AMI Primary Diploma

Tiffany Heaver, *Guide, CH 1*, B.A., M.Ed, AMI Primary Diploma

Kokila Govindasamy, *Assistant, CH 1*, B.S, M.C.S., AMI Primary Diploma

Erin Haapala, *Guide, CH2*, B.A., M.Ed, AMI Primary Diploma

Anna Davis, *Assistant CH2*, AMI Primary Diploma

Molly Petracca, *Guide, CH 3*, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma

Deborah Getsug, *Assistant. CH3*, B.A., M.Ed., AMI Primary Diploma

Corinne Sundel, *Substitute (Maternity Leave) Assistant, CH3 and CH2*, B.S., AMI Primary Diploma

Kelli Michel, *Guide, CH4*, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma

Gaby Orozco-Delmont, *Assistant CH4*, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma

Laura Fritz, *Guide, Toddler Community*, B.A., M.Ed., AMI A to I Diploma

Zara Idris, *Assistant, Toddler Community*, AMI Assistant Training

Kori Shelden, *Assistant, Toddler Community*, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma

Tamira Omer, *Nap Room Coordinator/Aide*

Daja Barber, *Substitute Nap Room Coordinator/Aide*

Tom Bird, *After Care Co-Coordinator*, B.A., AMI Assistant Training

Alexander Link, *After Care Co-Coordinator*, B.A, AMI Assistant Training

Sarah Farley, *Aide*, B.A., AMI Assistant Training

Kenkesha Warren, *Aide*

2014-15 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors manages MECC, a non-profit (501 (c) 3) organization. The Board's members may be current and former parents, community members, or members of Mayflower Church. Board members serve three-year terms. The tenure of Board members is staggered so that the Board always has a mix of new and experienced members. The Board is self-perpetuating. If you would like to serve on the board, or nominate someone to serve, please contact the Director or any Board member. Board meetings are held quarterly. Biographies of each board member are on our website under [ABOUT US](#).

- Cindy Stauffer, President
- Kevin Myren, Treasurer
- Scott McConnell, Secretary
- Steve Marchese
- Nicole Olson
- Laurie Davis
- Syd Williams

Committees

The following committees welcome new members and communications from parents during the year.

Parent Involvement Committee: Claire DeBerg, Co-Chair; Britta Reitan, Co-Chair; Leah Popova, Staff Liaison.

The Parent Involvement Committee facilitates and encourages parent participation in school projects and events. This committee coordinates efforts such as hospitality at school functions, social events for families, and material-making projects. The Parent Involvement committee seeks to build a sense of community among parents. The Parent Involvement Committee oversees the work of the Room Parents.

Each classroom will have two **room parents** who will serve as liaisons to the guide (for material making, errands, and events). Room Parents will also help organize social activities for the families of that classroom.

2015-16 Room Parents:

- *CH1: Courtney Semke and Matt/Fiona Kelly*
- *CH2: Heather Cooper and Scott Carlson*
- *CH3: Jennifer Baker-Jones and Wes Marquette*
- *CH4: Jane Gallagher and Tim Fries*
- *Toddler Community: Janette Leslie and Jessica Schroeder*

Development Committee: Kelly Nystrom, Co-chair, Kristi Fecik, Co-chair

Development activities at the school are important for funding that portion of the budget which is not covered by tuition. The participation of every family in development efforts is necessary to ensure the financial wellbeing of the school. Your generous support allows us to provide our students with extraordinary staff and learning environments, to offer tuition assistance for families with need, and to keep tuition costs as low as possible.

- **Annual Giving** – In the fall of each year, we invite families to make tax-deductible donations to the school during our Annual Giving campaign. These funds are designated for our scholarship fund.
- **Give to the Max Day (November 12, 2015)**—This annual day of giving online to Minnesota non-profits is an easy and important way to give to [Mayflower Early Childhood Center](#).

- **Target Take Charge of Education** – Support MECC when you shop with your Target Visa card. Target will donate 1% of your purchase to the school when you select MECC as the recipient of your donation. You can designate us [online](#) or by calling 1-800-316-6142.
- **Receipt Box at Kowalskis**- Look for Mayflower Early Childhood Center's receipt box at the Kowalski's Lyndale Market at 53rd and Lyndale Ave. Put your receipt in! A percentage of sales goes toward our school. Thank you!
- **Box tops for Education** – General Mills makes a donation to MECC for every box top we turn in. We use the funds from this program to purchase playground toys. Insert your box tops in the drawer by the White Board.
- **Pointsettia Sale**—We will sell pointsettias and Amaryllis bulbs for holiday giving in November 2015.
- **Spring Fundraiser “How Sweet It Is”** – On March 19, 2016, we will host our fifth annual spring dessert fundraiser – all parents are invited to share their ideas and efforts for this fun fundraising event.
- **May Flowers** – We will sell hanging baskets and other annuals in May 2016.

Building and Grounds Committee: This is a new committee which seeks leadership and members. The primary purpose of the building and grounds committee is to support and help plan for the outdoor environment used by the children: the Naturescape, the Courtyard, and the playground set. The committee also addresses indoor facility needs and improvements. Contact Director Nanci Olesen if you are interested in joining this committee.

Volunteerism

An important way for parents to be involved is to volunteer at school. Volunteering on committees is an excellent way to meet other families and help Mayflower realize its vision of being a high quality early childhood program. The realization of the school's vision is a collaborative effort among the key stakeholders in the community, namely the children, the parents, the staff, the board, and the administration. Our fundraiser, “How Sweet It Is,” is an important MECC community event. It is a fun evening that all parents, alumni parents, friends and extended family are invited to attend. This year's fundraiser is on March 19, 2016, 6:30-9:00 PM.

A Family Participation Form will be emailed to you. This form allows us to see where you might be interested in helping at MECC. We need and value the skills and talents of our parent community!

Policies and Procedures

Absences

Please notify the school via our attendance line: 612-825-5914 x124 if your child is going to be absent. Our phone is answered and/or monitored starting at 8 AM daily. If your child is ill, let us know the nature of the illness, as we are required to post a notice if your child is diagnosed with certain contagious illnesses (such as strep). Please refer to “*Illness*” (pages 14-15) for more guidelines.

Admissions

MECC is an equal opportunity provider and accepts children ages 16 months through six years of age. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, gender, national origin, or special needs. We encourage parents to visit our school before applying. Tours are given by the director and other staff on Wednesday mornings starting in November. Check the [website](#) for more information about tours. A non-refundable \$60 deposit is required to secure the child's application. Enrollment priority is given to returning families, families in

need of tuition assistance, and members of Mayflower Church. We encourage all families to register their child for preschool and pre-kindergarten screening through their local public school district. *Our preschool license requires children attending Children's House to be toilet trained upon admission. Immunization records, emergency information and Health Care Summary must be on file by the first day your child starts at MECC.*

Accidents

MECC maintains an "Injury Log" of all injuries/incidents at the school. Parents are given a copy of an injury/incident report to sign. In the event of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and then contact the parents. We require a parent's written authorization for emergency transportation before a child begins attending MECC. You or your designated substitute will be asked to transport your child in less serious situations. In serious cases, an ambulance will transport your child to the hospital. MECC's staff members are not trained to make medical decisions and are required by applicable licensing authorities to call 911 for medical emergencies. However, in the case of an emergency, the staff will apply first aid to the degree they are trained (all staff who work with children have First Aid/CPR training) until the 911 call is responded to. *The school will neither accept nor honor requests to withhold emergency care or do not resuscitate (DNR) / do not intubate (DNI).*

Allergies and other Health Conditions

If your child has an allergy, please discuss the situation upon admission. We will take appropriate precautions to protect your child's health. We keep a record of all children's allergies and medications in the Director's office and in the classroom. If your child has a health condition that requires additional care (such as an Epi-pen or other ongoing medications), a health care plan will be written. This plan must be discussed with the staff within the first week of school. MECC is a nut free environment. No child or adult may bring products containing tree nuts to school.

Attendance and Tardiness

A reliable daily routine answers your child's most basic need for order and consistency. Bringing your child to school on time (no later than 8:30 am for morning sessions) gives your child stability. Tardiness disrupts the work in the classroom, and is often unsettling for a child. **If your child arrives after 8:45 AM, our Hallway Aide will walk him/her from the Blue Welcome Desk to the classroom so that the child can enter the classroom with as little disruption as possible.**

However, we understand that emergencies, sick days, and vacations are inevitable. **Please notify the school in advance if your child is going to be out of school.** Because staff assignments are based on enrollment, we are unable to extend any credit for absences due to illness or for vacations. **Please call the attendance line (612-825-5914x124) to leave a message if your child will not be in school because of illness or emergency.**

Each classroom maintains an attendance record, and attendance is taken daily. We will check the identifications of any individuals picking up children who we do not recognize. Parents should list names of all persons authorized to pick up their child(ren) on the *Personal Profile* form. Attendance records are filed in the director's office.

Drop-Off

Starting in Fall 2015, the guides will be seated near the Blue Welcome Desk to greet your child. We ask that you say goodbye to your child there, giving a hug and/or kiss. The guide will shake

your child's hand and greet him/her and your child will walk down the hall to his/her classroom independently. In September as we begin this new drop off process, extra staff will be available to help your child make this transition.

Pick-Up

Your child will walk with their guides to benches in the south hallway of the building a few minutes before their pick up (Pick up times are 11:30 AM, 1:00 PM, or 3:30 PM). These benches are located just after the Security Door. We look forward to seeing you or your authorized pick-up person. When we see you, we'll release your child to you. Please be on time to pick up your child! If you will be late, we ask that you call us (612-825-5914). Full day children (who are picked up at 3:30 PM) will be sent to After Care if they are not picked up by 3:40 PM.

We will release a child only to the parent who enrolled the child or to someone they have specifically authorized as a designated substitute on the enrollment form. This designated substitute must be at least 16 years of age. We will request to see identification if we are unfamiliar with that person. We are required by law not to release a child to anyone who is inebriated or appears to be impaired in any way. We will not release a child to an unauthorized person, or to a person who is incapacitated or suspected of abuse. If for some reason a child should not be released to a parent or guardian, the family should provide appropriate documentation of this to the school. If the individual picking up the child is intoxicated, we will call 911 to ensure the safety of that child. MECC abides by all legally-served court orders. We ask that you provide appropriate documentation for our files regarding parental custody matters.

Late pick-up at After Care: Please arrive at least 10 minutes before the school closes so that you can help your child gather his/her belongings and leave on time. If you are running late, please text a message to our **AFTER CARE CELL PHONE: 612-212-5341**. If no parent has contacted the school by five minutes after closing, the staff will attempt to call the parents first, and then the people listed in the emergency list. If the staff cannot reach anyone to make arrangements for pick up, they will wait until one half hour after closing. The *Minnesota Department of Human Services* prohibits us from personally transporting a child, therefore, after 45 minutes after closing, the child will be turned over to the Minneapolis Police. The police, along with the school staff and Director, will determine whether the child will be brought to St. Joseph's Children's Home. A note will be posted on the door to let the parents know where the child can be picked up.

Use of cell phones at MECC: Please refrain from using your cell phone in any way, including texting and gaming, when at Mayflower. Many children are overjoyed to see their families after a busy day and often have something to share. As a demonstration of respect for the child, please give him/her your undivided attention during these transitions. Not using your phone while waiting for your child also allows you the opportunity to interact with other parents, building community! We encourage returning parents to introduce themselves to new parents.

The staff also pledge to use cell phones only when on breaks and away from the MECC community. Staff occasionally use their phones to take photographs.

Security

Your child's safety and security are of utmost importance to us. Children are supervised by staff members at all times. Please see that he/she is under supervision before leaving the school. It

is very important that a child not be left unattended at any time anywhere in the school. We sign your child in daily.

Mayflower Church has a security door at the entrance to the Education Wing. Your individualized code will be provided to you by email. Your code will only work during school hours. In addition, MECC has an *Emergency Procedures* plan in place. Staff are trained to be prepared for an emergency. Please address your questions about these procedures to the Director.

Parking Lot Safety: A parent or caregiver must assist a child into the building. **MECC asks that ALL drivers be extremely conscious of small children in the parking lot.** Each week on Thursday mornings there is a business networking meeting at Mayflower Church, causing the parking lot to be full by 7:45 AM. On Thursdays and on any other day that Mayflower Church has events, MECC will reserve at least 8 spaces for drop-off and pick-up close to the building.

Entrance/Exit and Hallway Safety: Children may not enter or exit the building without an adult. Children need to be reminded to wait for their parent before entering or exiting the building. **Please help us remind your children not to run in the halls. Please give attention to your child while exiting the building.**

Behavior Guidance

Our philosophy is that every child has a right to learn and that no student may prevent another from learning. Every child has the right to be safe at school. In our classrooms, your child will learn and acquire skills in practical living, socialization, and academics. To facilitate the learning process, we have established basic rules such as following directions and working independently. Our goal is to provide all children with peaceful learning environments.

Unacceptable Behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate talk (swearing or sexual talk)
- Demeaning name-calling
- Teasing or purposefully hurting feelings
- Consistent noise-making
- Disrespectful talk to any person
- Hitting, spitting or kicking
- Aggressive play, or any form of guns or weapons "play"
- Inappropriate sexual touching
- Purposeful destruction of class materials or equipment
- Biting
- Running away (not responding to and/or running from a staff member)
- Disrupting another child's work
- Interfering with the health and/or safety of another

MECC practices behavior guidance by providing the children with challenging and absorbing activities and by treating them with dignity and respect. We establish clear and realistic limits that are developmentally appropriate and are enforced firmly and consistently. The school will take immediate steps to work with a child and family whose behavior is harmful to him/her, or to the other children in the classroom.

Persistent Unacceptable Behavior: Although most children respond positively to this approach, we recognize that some will continue to test the boundaries established. We will work diligently with the parents and child in these situations.

If the child's behavior threatens him/herself or other children, we will request a meeting with the parents to discuss the situation. The purpose of this meeting is to agree on ways to address the unacceptable behavior, and whether to consult an outside child care specialist who will observe the child (any expenses related to this observation will be covered by the parents). Goals and timeframes will be set at this meeting, and will be documented.

It may also be necessary to separate the child from the group. If a child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, five times or more in one week or eight times in two weeks, the child's parents will be notified and a meeting between the teacher, parents and director will be held within one week. The guides will observe and record the behavior of the child and the staff's response to the behavior. (Note: if the child's behavior is harmful to him/her or other children, a lower threshold may be appropriate. ***For instance, if a child is overly violent, the school may call the parents and ask that they pick the child up immediately.***

If a child is sent home, the director will provide a list of suggestions for the parents on how to manage the child's behavior at home. The child's guide and our Parent Outreach Coordinator are also available for consultation.

If the school recommends that the family consult with a professional (psychologist or counselor), the family must promptly pursue this course of action. After the child has been observed by an outside professional or child care specialist, a meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the guide, the director (and the specialist, if available) to share observations and develop a written plan with specific goals and time lines for the goals to be reached. If at the end of the time line the behavior is still present, the family may be given a termination notice.

MECC hopes to work constructively with families of children exhibiting persistent behavior problems. However, the school reserves the right to terminate at any time the enrollment agreement due to behavior problems which are hurtful to the child, other children, or the staff. The school may also terminate enrollment if a family refuses to allow a recommended observation by a child care specialist, or refuses to cooperate with the goals set up at the parent/school meeting.

MECC does not allow the use of physical punishment or emotional abuse by our staff. If you have specific concerns regarding our behavior guidance techniques, we encourage you to discuss them with the guides or the director.

Biting Policy

Biting is a serious health hazard because of HIV, HBV and other contagious diseases spread through this practice. We have adopted the following biting policy to safeguard the welfare of the children and the staff in our community.

First time: Child is removed from the child s/he bit. The child is re-directed to another activity (see Persistent Behavior Problems). Parents and teachers must work together to help the child cope with anger and/or frustration in a respectful, non-violent manner. Younger children usually need to be given the language to express their emotions. Older children need to be guided toward positive conflict resolution.

Second time: The child is separated within the classroom, where the child can be seen and heard by staff. Child's behavior must be in control before returning to the group. A *Separation Report* must be filed in the *Separation Log* by staff.

Third time: Parents are called to remove their child from school. Parents and teachers review the guidelines agreed upon and together determine if professional help is appropriate at this time. Child is sent home.

Fourth time: Expulsion.

Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy for DHS Licensed Programs

Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting Policies

Who should report child abuse and neglect: Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.

If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to his/her supervisor or anyone else at this licensed facility. If we know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, we must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to report:

- If we know a child is in immediate danger, we will call 911.
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children enrolled in MECC will be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake Line **(651-431-6600)**.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency (Child Protection: **612-348-3000 x 3552**) or local law enforcement (**612-673-5715**). If a report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern our facility, we will call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division (651-431-6500).

What to report: Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556).

A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect, if known, and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within our licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident. An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to Report: A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliation prohibited: An employer or mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review: If we have reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- Related policies and procedures were followed
- The policies and procedures were adequate;
- There is a need for additional staff training;
- The reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- There is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

The internal review will be completed by Nanci Olesen, Director. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Chair of the Board of Directors, Cindy Stauffer, will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of the Internal Review: The school must document completion of the internal review and provide documentation of the review to the commissioner upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan: Based on the results of the internal review, the school must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the school, if any.

Staff Training: The school must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (MN Statutes, section 626.556). The school must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under MN Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

Violence and Harassment Policy

It is the policy of MECC to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment or violence in any form. Harassment, in any form, will not be tolerated at MECC by any of its employees, enrollees, students, or parents. This includes harassment based upon a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and/or other protected category. This policy applies to all employees, enrollees, students, or parents. *If, after appropriate investigation, harassment is found to have occurred, the initiator will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances, up to and including termination of the relationship with MECC.*

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student, enrollee, parent, or employee of MECC to harass another parent, student, enrollee, or employee through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. Similarly, conduct which is disparaging of another's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and/or other protected category is not allowed at MECC.

It shall also be a violation of this policy for any parent, student, enrollee or employee of MECC to be violent towards another parent, student, enrollee, or employee.

MECC will act to investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment or violence and to discipline (or to take action against) any parent, student, enrollee, or employee who harasses or is violent towards another parent, student, enrollee or employee of our school.

Procedure

Definitions:

Violence is an intentional physical act of aggression. Violence may include, but is not limited to: Touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another person; or coercing or forcing the unwanted touching of another. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates and that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfacing with an individual's work performance or ability to enjoy the benefits of the school; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities or ability to enjoy the benefits of the school.

Sexual Harassment is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) as: unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or enjoyment of the benefits of the school, submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual or is used as a basis for determining whom will enjoy the benefits of the school; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfacing with an individual's work performance or enjoyment of the benefits of the school or otherwise creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Examples: harassment can occur intentionally or unintentionally. Some examples of conduct that is prohibited by this policy are listed below. Please note that these are not the only examples: Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category; written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category that is placed on walls, bulletin boards or elsewhere on Mayflower Early Childhood Center's premises or circulated throughout the facility; unwanted sexual comments, innuendos, flirtations, propositions, suggestions or invitations to social events; use of offensive words of a sexual nature describing body parts or the sexual act, telling "suggestive" jokes or stories, and conversations about sexual exploits, sexual preferences, and desires or suggestive or sexist remarks about a person's clothing or body; displaying, in the facility, pictures, objects, cartoons, pornographic magazines, or representations of any action or subject which is sexual in nature, depicting nude, scantily clad or suggestively posed women or men and which can be perceived as offensive; sabotaging another individual's character, reputation, effects, or property because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category; direct and/or indirect suggestions, requests, or demands that an employees' job security, job assignment, conditions of employment, or opportunities for advancement depend in any way on the granting of sexual favors; or sexual relations accompanied by implied or overt threats or promises.

Reporting

Persons who believe they have witnessed or have been victimized through harassment or violence should report those incidents so that we may promptly address the problem. You may make your concerns known by telling the person engaging in harassing or violent conduct or communication that the conduct or communication is offensive, against this policy and/or the law and must stop; by telling the Director of MECC both verbally and/or in writing. This option may be useful if the individual does not wish to communicate directly with the person whose conduct or communication is offensive, or if direct communication has been unsuccessful.

Determination

All complaints involving a claimed violation of this policy will be examined impartially without prejudice and without malice toward the reporting party regardless of the status of the person accused. Information provided will be released only on a need to know basis. After an investigation of the allegations, a determination will be made and resulting action will be recommended by the Director. The investigation may include interviews with the person(s) making the charges, the accused individual and appropriate witnesses. All determinations are made on an individual basis. MECC has the discretion to apply any sanctions or a combination of sanctions to eliminate any unlawful conduct and remedy the impact of any discrimination, including termination of employment or enrollment. MECC encourages individuals to make accurate reports of complaints under this policy and provide as much information as possible so that we may properly and thoroughly investigate the report. MECC will not condone retaliation against any individual who reports possible harassment or violence or who assists in an investigation of possible harassment or violence. Under circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under the Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under the *Maltreatment to Minors Act, Minn. Stat. 626.556*, may be applicable. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the school from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

Because the children participate in many daily activities, both indoors and out, it is important that they be dressed in comfortable, durable, weather-appropriate play clothes that will adapt to food spills, paint, sand, and water play.

Children should wear closed-toed shoes at all times. Sandals, flipflops, and other open toed shoes may not be worn to school. Tennis shoes or other soft-soled shoes are recommended.. ***Children will need a pair of indoor shoes that will remain in the classroom.*** Choose a pair of shoes or slippers that are plain and easy for your child to independently put on and take off.

Your child's comfort is important to us. Please bring a spare set of clothing for your child to change into in case of toilet accidents or water spills/art work soils. **Please keep in mind that toys, jewelry, hats, party dresses, other clothing and lunch boxes with media images (action figures, movie and animated characters) may create a disruption in the classroom, and are discouraged. Media images include those of super heroes and animated characters that encourage violent or excited play.** We sympathize with you about the pressures that the media creates with these images, however, it does create a great distraction not only to your child, but also to other children in the classroom.

Your child should be able to put his/her clothing on and off without assistance. When you buy clothing and shoes, take care that your child can don them independently. We recommend good quality shoes that slip on or have Velcro straps; elastic waists so the child can get them off; shirts with sleeves that do not hang down over the child's hands. Soft comfortable clothing is best. Children sometimes have toileting accidents because they cannot get their pants unbuttoned, unsnapped or unzipped in time!

Please label all clothing!

Every year, we have an extensive Lost and Found of children's clothing: sweatshirts, outerwear and dozens of socks. We encourage you to purchase iron-on name tags for all of your child's clothing. They can be purchased [online](#) at a very reasonable price. For small articles of clothing such as socks and underwear, please write your child's name in with an indelible marker. Write your child's name on the outside of his/her lunchbox. Should your child lose clothing or other possessions, **check the Lost and Found drawer near the Blue Welcome Desk.** MECC is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Communications

It is very important for us to maintain our commitment of excellence in providing an early childhood education for your child. If you have a question, concern, or comment, please talk with Director Nanci Olesen. Nanci is available by phone, email or in person during school hours.

Daily Communications: MECC knows the importance of being well informed about each and every child. Because a child's general behavior and daily eating and resting habits can significantly affect behavior, our staff attempts to informally talk with you to inform you of anything unusual, as well as your child's progress. This allows both parents and staff to better anticipate a child's behavior and, equally important, to better understand your child.

However, the guides may not always be available to talk to parents during drop-off or pick-up when their entire attention is focused on the safe arrival and departure of children. To facilitate communication, you may email the guide. You can also request a phone call or a meeting if there is a matter you wish to discuss when the child is not present. Please be aware that your child's guide is not expected to respond to email or phone calls in the evening. Our staff will respond to requests from parents during school hours.

Please check the white board near the Blue Welcome Desk for daily postings. Please check our website: <http://www.mayflowerchildren.org> to view "[THIS WEEK AT MAYFLOWER](#)". You can also find our blog [PARENThesis](#). The Parent Resource Center has a bulletin board with pertinent information. Each week we publish an electronic newsletter called the **Mayflower Memo**, which is sent directly to the email address you provide to us.

Please check your child's file folder daily, located near the Blue Welcome Desk. Important announcements are inserted in your child's file folder. This is also a place for you to share birthday party invitations or other communications with other children and their families.

Parent Feedback

We value your opinion about our programs and want to communicate with our families in a variety of ways. The Director is available on a daily basis, and parents should feel free to come to her office to talk. We ask you to complete the *Family Participation Form (this form will be sent to your email to complete online)* when your child enrolls to encourage your participation in the various committees and activities to support the school. In February of each year, we invite you to complete our year-end survey online or on paper. This survey asks questions about the different aspects of our program, and results are reviewed with our Board of Directors. Parent Workshops are offered throughout the year through the Parent Resource Center. Guides are available to discuss specific questions or concerns you may have about your child in person, by phone or email.

Surveys: The school conducts a survey of parents once a year to solicit ideas and opinions about our programs. These are available on surveymonkey.com, or by hard copy. Your opinions are important to us, and we welcome full participation in these surveys. The results of our parent surveys are reviewed by the Board of Directors, and used to plan programming for the future.

Grievance Procedure

We hope to have open and honest communications with all of our families. In the event that a parent has a complaint they wish to formally make, s/he may use the following procedure to address grievances with MECC:

- Submit grievance in writing to any of the staff. If you wish to receive a written response, you must sign your grievance.
- Submit grievance anonymously by putting it in the tuition box in the PRC. The director will address this grievance at a staff meeting.
- If your grievance has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you may request a meeting with a staff member and the Director for mediation and resolution.
- Meet with a staff member, the Director, and a Board representative for resolution.

Data Practices Notice

MECC strictly complies with the Minnesota Data Practices Act. The Director has been designated the responsible party to collect, use, and disseminate data considered private and confidential. Information is only accessed when necessary for the administration and management of our school or as authorized or required by state or federal law. The Hennepin County Community Services Department is an agency with whom we share client data on an “as required” or “as needed” basis. You may choose not to provide us with this information. However, we may not be able to admit your child for school without this information. We only request information required by law or regulations promulgated by the state or federal government.

Conferences

Parent/Guide conferences are scheduled each fall and spring. Please refer to the [school calendar](#) (link is on our homepage) for the exact dates. These conferences are an opportunity to meet one-on-one with your child’s guide to discuss your child’s progress. Transitions to the next level of education are also discussed at conference time. It is important to us that parents make every effort to attend conferences twice a year. If in-person attendance is too difficult for the family, a phone conference may be arranged with the guide. You will receive a written report at the time of your parent conference.

Transitions

Your child’s guide will discuss upcoming transitions as they occur (from Toddler to Children’s House). The child’s *Work Sampling* records will stay with the child during his/her entire stay at MECC, so that a complete record of progress can be available to the parents and future schools.

Daily Schedule:

Children’s House

The schedule may vary slightly depending on weather and other occurrences.

7:30–8:30 AM	<i>Before Care</i> –(parent brings child directly to classroom)
8:15-8:30 AM	Drop-off (parent/caregiver drops off child at Blue Welcome Desk)
8:30–11:30 AM	3-hour uninterrupted work cycle
11:30 AM	Morning-only children depart
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Lunch, clean-up, outdoor play
1:00 PM	Morning “plus” children depart
1:00–3:00 PM	Younger children nap (full day program)
1:00-3:30 PM	Older children work in classroom (full day program)
3:30 PM	End of school day—(Pick up at benches in South Hallway)
3:30 PM – 6:00 PM	<i>After Care</i> (AC ends at 5:30pm in the summer)

Toddler Community

7:30-8:30 AM	<i>Before Care</i>
8:15-8:30 AM	Drop-off
8:30-10:30 AM	Two-hour Montessori program
10:30-11:30 AM	Collective, then outdoor play
11:45 AM -12:45 PM	Lunch, cleanup
1:00-3:00 PM	Nap
3:30 PM	End of school day
3:30-6:00 PM	<i>After Care (AC ends at 5:30 PM in the summer)</i>

Fire and Severe Weather

MECC has a well-defined plan for emergency evacuation. Evacuation plans are posted at appropriate locations in the doors of the school, and we schedule and document monthly emergency drills. Should an emergency occur that requires evacuation to an emergency shelter, you will be called immediately and a notice will be posted at the school. During severe winter weather, please check KARE11.com. We most often follow the Minneapolis Public Schools on severe weather closings. ***If school is closed, a notice will be sent by email to parents and the information will be posted on the home page of our [website](#).***

Holidays and School Closures

We follow the Minneapolis Public Schools for winter and spring breaks, as well as some severe weather closings. MECC is closed in observance of the following national holidays: Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, President's Day, Martin Luther King Day, and Thanksgiving. We also close for parent conferences, MEA staff development, preparation of the classrooms before the start of our summer program, and before the start of the school year.

Please consult the school calendar [on the homepage of our website](#) for a complete list of school closures. Should a traditional holiday occur during a weekend, we will observe the holiday in accordance with the national Monday Holiday Bill. The tuition schedule takes school closings into account; hence, no discount is available for school closures or absences.

Childcare during some School Closings

We offer Childcare for Parent Conference Days and select days during Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring Breaks. Please refer to the school calendar for these dates. Sign-up for Childcare takes place two weeks in advance of the date.

Hours

MECC's full day program is open from 7:30am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday, 9 months a year (with the exception of school closures listed on our calendar) and Monday through Friday, 7:30am to 5:30pm in the summer months.

We ask parents to arrive at least ten minutes before the school closes so they have time to gather belongings and be out of the building by the time we close.

Illness

We take every precaution to safeguard your child against illness. Parents should not bring a sick child to school. Children who are too sick to go outside are too sick to be at school. Please refer to the **General Exclusion Guidelines for Children/Staff Hennepin County Dept. of Health** (at the back of this handbook) as a guideline for when your child should not be at school.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will call you to pick up your child. We will provide a quiet place for your child to rest until you arrive. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will call the emergency contacts for the child. *Parents or other designated persons should pick up their child within one hour of being notified that the child is ill at school.*

If your child is exposed to any infectious disease outside the school, please report it to us immediately. If your child has a contagious reportable disease such as strep, lice, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, or chicken pox, please report that to us. We are required to post a notice to parents if a child in the school has been diagnosed with certain contagious conditions.

Your child should be fever and vomit free, and off of all fever reducing medication for 24 hours before he or she returns to school. If your child is given antibiotics to treat an infection, s/he can return to school 24 hours after the antibiotic has begun. ***Children returning to school before they are well are more susceptible to illness and may expose others. Please do not give your student medication to treat a fever and then send him or her to school.***

Illness – Exclusion of Sick Children

A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors is a sick child and must be excluded from school. We are required to exclude a child:

- With a reportable illness or condition that the commissioner of health determines to be contagious and a physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others;
- With chicken pox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over;
- Who has vomited (***child may not return to school until 24 hours vomit-free***)
- Who has abnormally loose stools;
- Who has contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye;
- Who has a bacterial infection such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy;
- Who has unexplained lethargy;
- Who has lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others;
- Who has a 100 degree Fahrenheit axillary (under the arm) or higher temperature (***child may not return to school until 24 hours fever-free***)
- Who has an undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition;
- Who has significant respiratory distress;
- Who is not able to participate in our program activities with reasonable comfort;
- Who requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in our care.
- **An email will be sent out to parents that an infectious disease has been reported. This information will also be posted at the Blue Welcome Desk.**
- ***The Parent Resource Center has materials to help you plan ahead for the inevitable sick days that will come your way!***

Medical Forms:

By law, you are required to submit your child's current immunization record upon admission to the school. Immunizations must be up to date at this time, and **it is your responsibility to notify the school when your child receives new immunizations and to furnish proof to the school.** On the first day of school each year, you must furnish the [health care summary](#). It is important that your child's physician, dentist, and preferred hospital be listed in our records.

Insurance and Health Consultations

MECC carries general liability insurance which meets or exceeds the limits required by the *Minnesota Department of Human Services*. We do everything possible to minimize accidents through various safety programs, frequent inspections, and regular maintenance. To maintain its high quality of service, MECC annually has a consultation with the Minnesota Visiting Nurses Association. For the health and safety of all children enrolled at MECC, it is important that parents provide complete information on their children and keep it updated at all times (see [Forms](#)). **It is important for parents to report any changes in address, cell phone numbers, emergency numbers, employment, and persons who may or may not pick up your child.** Report this information to Assistant Director Julia Coskran (Julia@mayflowerchildren.org, 612-825-5914).

Licensing

Mayflower Early Childhood Center is licensed by the *State of Minnesota Department of Human Services*. Our operations meet or exceed the programming standards established for children ages 16 months to 6 years. These standards are related to our facility, staff, health and safety, nutrition, staff-to-child ratios, and record keeping. State and city health, fire, and licensing officers routinely inspect our center. A complete review of our Health and Safety Procedures are conducted annually with all staff members. If you have questions, contact the **Department of Human Services, 444 Lafayette Road, St Paul, MN 55155, 651-431-6500**. We are also licensed through the *Hennepin County Department of Health*, which annually examines our kitchen, bathroom and classroom facilities for health safety.

Record Keeping

We maintain a record of any emergencies, accidents and injuries that occur at our center. We have written policies for first aid and safety rules, daily inspection for hazards, fire prevention, disaster procedures, missing child procedures, unauthorized pick-up of a child, medical emergency, recording procedures and annual analysis of center policies. Children and staff records are maintained according to current regulations.

Lunches and SnacksBag Lunches

When preparing your child's bag lunch, remember to pack a food item from each of the four food groups: protein, carbohydrate, fruit, and vegetable. **Please choose food items that contain 10 - 12 grams of sugar or less. Sugary treats will not be served to your child if they are included in the lunch.** Since we do not have a microwave to warm up food, we recommend that warm lunches be sent to school in a thermos. Items can also be kept cool in your child's lunchbox by adding an icepack. Children have snack in the classroom in the morning, so they are occasionally not extremely hungry at lunch time. Please keep this in mind when packing the lunch, as we find that children often have more food than they need in their lunchboxes. We provide 1% milk and water. If another type of milk is needed for your child, we ask that you provide this milk to us and we will administer it to your child.

Mayflower Early Childhood Center is a nut free environment. **Because several of our children have nut allergies, please do not send any item containing nuts, peanut or almond butter or other nut products to school. A good alternative to nut butters is “sun butter”—from sunflower seeds. Thank you!**

Grocery List

A morning snack is served daily, and a snack is served at 4:00 PM to those children staying for *After Care*. Each week each classroom guide will assign one family a grocery list to provide items needed for snack and other classroom activities. The list varies weekly, depending on activities offered in the classroom. Each family will have one or two turns in a school year. The grocery list is given to the parent the week prior, and we ask that you bring the items the following Monday. *Please contact the director if purchasing groceries is cost prohibitive. MECC can provide funds to the parent in advance of the grocery purchase if needed.*

Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated in the classroom. Your child’s guide will tell you what the guidelines are for birthday treats and celebrations in the classroom.

Missing Children

In the event that a child is missing, we will call 911 and then contact the parent(s). We will provide the authorities with the child’s name, hair color, eye color, general description, clothing, ability to communicate, medical history, and information regarding a divorce or custody situation.

Nap (Full-day program)

To balance the day, we schedule a nap after lunch for the younger children. We encourage your child to rest quietly during that time. Each child has his/her own napping cot. A cotton sheet is attached to each cot. **If your child will be napping, please bring one blanket and one small pillow in a cloth bag.** Cots are cleaned once a week, sheets are washed, and your child’s nap bag and all its contents are sent home (on Friday) for laundering. We use two classrooms as Nap Rooms: Room 107 (first floor—for CH3 and CH4) and Room 212 (second floor—for CH1 and CH2). Toddlers nap in their classroom.

The transition from nap to spending the afternoon in the classroom is based on the child and his/her readiness to be incorporated with the older children in the afternoon program. The staff continually observes the child for readiness. The criteria for readiness includes the ability to choose work, focus on activities chosen, and comply with guidance given to older children.

Outdoor Play and Playground Guidelines

Fresh air and exercise are important to a child’s good health. Weather permitting, we take all of the children out daily. We carefully monitor outdoor activities and provide adequate water and shade (see Playground Guidelines). Children should have appropriate clothing for all seasons. Sunscreen can be applied at home before school OR is available at the Blue Welcome Desk. Snow pants, mittens, boots and a hat are required clothing for recess during the winter. *During extreme weather, we provide indoor activities.*

Playground Guidelines

It is important that all children understand and adhere to our playground rules. These rules ensure that the outdoor environment will be safe and enjoyable for all children. Please discuss these rules with your child.

All children are required to be outside for recess. If your child cannot participate in outdoor recess, please call the Director and discuss the issue. In most cases, if a child cannot participate in outdoor recess, he/she should probably not be at school.

Play safely: Pushing, pulling, hitting, tackling games, wrestling, kicking, fighting, blocking other children's activities, or throwing snow, ice, sand, wood chips or equipment in the play area is not allowed.

We encourage children to include other children in games and activities.

Toys and equipment: No toys, games, bats, balls, dolls, action figures or other materials are to be brought from home for recess use. The school supplies buckets, shovels, brooms, rakes, appropriate garden tools, and balls for work and play.

Conflict resolution: Children should come to an adult if they have a problem they cannot resolve themselves. We encourage children to "use their words" when in conflict. All of the adults supervising the playground carefully observe the playing children for any such conflicts, and are prepared to help the children resolve them peacefully.

Respect for materials: Children are expected to respect all materials, tools and equipment, and to use all playground materials for their intended use.

Slides and Monkey Bars: Children are not allowed to climb on the inside or outside of any slide. There is one person at a time on the slide, and no head first sliding is allowed. Hanging upside down on the Monkey Bars is not permitted.

Fence: If a ball goes outside the fence, children should tell an adult so he/she can retrieve it. There is no climbing on the fences.

Bushes, trees, plants, grass: Unless children are gardening, they should avoid digging in, pulling on, picking at, breaking off, or hanging on vegetation. We have a large sand area for digging, and lots of sand toys for the children's enjoyment. Our enclosed *Naturescape* is an environment that toddlers will use daily and older children will use in small groups with a staff member.

If a child does not adhere to the playground rules, the adult supervising the playground will discuss the matter with the child, and reiterate the rules. If the child continues to break the playground rules, he/she will be asked to take a five-minute rest. If, after the child returns to play, he/she continues to break the playground rules, he/she will be removed from the playground and brought into the school in the company of an adult for the remainder of recess. If an adult is not free to leave the playground (in order to maintain required adult/child ratios), the child will be seated for the remainder of recess. Repeated unsafe play outdoors may result in the child losing his/her playground privileges for one or more days. We will discuss this with the parent, should it occur, and encourage the parents to talk with the child about playground safety.

Parent Resource Center

Our Parent Resource Center is a space dedicated to supporting parents during the important years of raising young children. Parent Outreach Coordinator Leah Popova coordinates a series of workshops and discussion groups for our parents. She is also available to meet with parents to discuss any topics or concerns related to early childhood and to Montessori education. The

PRC is available for parents for meeting, coffee and tea, and quiet reading. We encourage you to take advantage of this welcoming space and to check out our Lending Library.

Pets

Parents are always informed of the presence of a pet in the classroom. We have guidelines to follow regarding pets: Pets are chosen carefully, considering animal temperament, ease of maintaining, and risk of disease transmission. We obtain pets from a licensed pet source. Any pet, indoors or outdoors, should be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, and be a friendly companion for children. Pets should be routinely tested and inoculated. Pets and cages are prohibited from food prep, food storage and eating areas. Pets should be accessible to children only under staff supervision. Staff is responsible for routine care, cleaning cages, obtaining pet care supplies (stored out of reach of children), arranging for weekend/vacation care, feeding and exercising.

Animal waste is discarded in a covered container away from children and food areas.

Preschool (Early Childhood) Screening Through Minneapolis Public Schools

We encourage families to sign up for Early Childhood Screening through the Minneapolis Public Schools. This screening can identify health or learning concerns. Screening is for vision and hearing, growth and development, immunizations and family history. Call 612-348-TOTS to make an appointment.

Registration Fees and Forms

When filing the initial application to the school, there is a non-refundable application fee of \$60.00. Re-enrollment also requires a non-refundable \$60 fee. Upon enrollment, appropriate registration forms, medical forms, and other pertinent information must be filled out and submitted before the first day of school. Current immunization records and a Health Care Summary completed by the child's health care provider must be on file, as well as medical and emergency information.

Staff Development

Staff development includes a review of the policies and procedures of the Department of Human Services (Rule 3), the health policies from the Department of Health, the school's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures, and the renewal of our commitment to providing the highest quality early childhood education. The staff is required yearly by the Department of Human Services to meet a certain number of hours of continuing education in our field. These hours are based on each staff member's education and experience. Records are kept for each staff member's continuing education hours. The MECC staff has an annual *staff retreat* over the MEA weekend.

Termination of Enrollment

MECC's commitment to you is to provide a stable, nurturing environment for your child. Our staff all sign school year contracts with us, and we seek to have long term working relationships with our staff. It is also our hope that all families will remain with us for the entire school year. ***If you decide to withdraw your child from the school for any reason, please provide four weeks written notice to Mayflower Early Childhood Center.*** This gives the school one month to replace your child's enrollment with another student. We strive for stability both in our staff and our community of children and families. Scheduling decreases and mid-year enrollment terminations jeopardize the operating budget and disrupt the consistency we strive for in the classrooms.

Tuition

The total cost of our program is divided into equal monthly payments for our families. The number of school days in each month may change, but the tuition remains the same. Your child's tuition is for days present and absent. The school does not give refunds or pro-rate tuition for days a child is absent from school. Any changes to a child's schedule should be submitted in writing prior to the change so that the school can determine if it can accommodate your request.

Tuition is billed monthly, and is due on the first day of the month. **Please deposit your tuition payment (make check out to MECC) in the Tuition Payment box in the Parent Resource Center.** *Arrangements can be made to have your payment come to us electronically. Ask our Business Manager for details.* Failure to pay tuition and other fees on time may result in termination of enrollment and/or denial of future registration. Please talk with the director if you are having difficulties meeting tuition payments.

Tuition Assistance

Mayflower Early Childhood Center welcomes the opportunity to provide financial support where possible to help families send their children to our school. Tuition assistance is available to families that qualify to the extent that funds are available. Because families' financial status can change from year to year, families must reapply for tuition assistance every year. Applications are available in the school office and on our website. We ask that each family applying for Tuition Assistance contact Hennepin County Child Care Assistance to inquire about qualifying for Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP). The Director has information on these programs and will work with families during the application process. Families on Tuition Assistance are also asked to apply for Early Learning Scholarships, a state program. Leah Popova, Parent Outreach Coordinator, helps families apply for this program. For more information, see our [website](#).

Child Care Assistance

MECC is qualified to accept children receiving Child Care Assistance. Please ask in the Director's office if you have questions about this program, or visit your county's CCAP program online. We ask that all families applying for Tuition Assistance from MECC also call the Child Care Assistance hotline to see if they qualify for help paying for child care. Some families qualify for a sliding scale payment system; other families qualify for almost their entire tuition. Most often, families are put on a wait list, and it may take several months for them to move to the top of that wait list. But being on the wait list is important to our funding sources at MECC.

Visits (Observation)

Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time, but each guide will determine when a parent may enter the classroom during the day. Each Thursday morning, starting October 22, 2015, observations will be held in our classrooms. Notes about observations are on our website. **We ask that each parent observe once in the classroom each school year.** These visits are an opportunity for you to see all the activities and materials available to your child during the day, and to get a glimpse of the relationships developing between the children and the staff. Observations are key to understanding how a Montessori classroom (Children's House or Toddler Community) works. Sign up for an observation in the Parent Resource Center. Work with your child's guide to set up an alternate observation time if Thursdays are not available for you.

Thanks for reading this Parent Handbook. Please keep it handy throughout the year for questions about our program.

APPENDIX 1

General Exclusion Guidelines for Children/Staff Hennepin County Dept. of Health

The Hennepin County Department of Health recommends that children with any of the following be excluded from the school environment:

Illness

Unable to participate in routine activities or needs more care than can be provided by the school staff.

Fever

With an elevation of body temp above normal when accompanied by behavior changes, stiff neck, difficulty breathing, rash, sore throat and/or other signs or symptoms of illness; or is unable to participate in routine activities. Measure temperature before giving medications to reduce fever. Axillary (armpit) temp 100 degrees or higher. Oral temp: 101 degrees or higher.

Signs/Symptoms of Possible Severe Illness

Until a health care provider has done an evaluation to rule out severe illness when a child is unusually tired, has uncontrolled coughing, unexplained irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child.

Diarrhea

Until diarrhea stops or until a medical exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a child's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form and/or stools that are watery, bloody, or contain mucus.

Vomiting

Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless determined to be caused by a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

Mouth Sores with Drooling

Until a medical exam indicates the child may return or until sores have healed.

Rash with Fever or Behavior Change

Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not those of a communicable disease that requires exclusion.

Eye Drainage

When purulent (pus) drainage and/or fever or eye pain is present or a medical exam indicates that a child may return.

Unusual Color of skin, eyes, stool, or urine

Until a medical exam indicates the child does not have hepatitis A. Symptoms of hepatitis A include yellow eyes or skin (jaundice), gray or white stools, or dark (tea or cola colored) urine.

APPENDIX 2

Mayflower Early Childhood Center (MECC) Public Policy Procedures Overview

Mission

Mayflower Early Childhood Center's (MECC's) is an independent non-profit organization with a mission of providing high quality early childhood education to an economically diverse group of students.

MECC's public policy efforts are structured to meet the standards for civic engagement and public policy set forth in the Minnesota Council of Non-profits [*Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence*](#):

“Influencing public decision-making is a critical and legal means for nonprofit organizations to accomplish their missions. Open communication between policymakers and constituents contributes to well-informed policies and their effective implementation. To the highest extent possible, nonprofit organizations should educate their community, provide opportunities to deliberate on public policies and engage their constituents in advocacy activities in order to achieve their missions, and promote community interests. Because participation in government decision-making is a highly regulated and sometimes contentious area, nonprofit leaders need to be familiar with the regulations and requirements for nonprofit organizations to participate in policy making. They also need to know the reporting requirements and restrictions on partisan political campaign activity.”

MECC recognizes that our ability to succeed in providing care and education to an economically diverse population is related to the state, federal and local policies that govern early care and education and the resources dedicated to Minnesota's youngest children. Thus, MECC may and should advocate with state, federal and/or local policy makers in support of policies that help MECC advance our mission or with potential to significantly impact the families served by MECC and/or the our program and staff.

Policy Committee

The MECC Board will establish a Policy Committee with responsibility for identifying policy proposals that impact MECC's ability to achieve its stated mission. The Policy Committee shall include the Board Chair, one other Board member and the MECC Director. The Policy Committee will review policy issues and identify positions consistent with MECC's mission that merit action by MECC. Those positions will be presented to the Board electronically and will become the official policy positions of MECC, unless a majority of the Board responds electronically in opposition to the positions taken by the Policy Committee.

When the MECC Policy Committee approves action on a policy issue, the Policy Committee should then alert MECC families, staff, and Mayflower Church's social justice ministry team about such proposals, and encourage them to take action if they

are willing. MECC actions may include: testimony, letter writing, video testimonials, calls to action, lobbying, meetings with elected officials and other activities designed to advance or oppose policy proposals on which MECC has taken a position.

Criteria for Issue Selection

The MECC Policy Committee will deliberate and recommend MECC's position on each proposed policy. The deliberation should be based on the intended impact of the proposed policy on MECC, including our economic diversity, our program quality, and our financial stability. Key criteria for issue and position selection by the include:

- Is the issue consistent with MECC's mission?
- How relevant is the issue to MECC's family, staff and/or program?
- Does MECC have expertise on the issue?
- Will MECC add value to the policy debate?
- Is there enough legislative/public interest in the issue that there is likely to be action on the issue?
- Is MECC likely to be perceived as a stakeholder and valuable source of information on this issue?
- Is the issue a high priority, in terms of its impact on MECC's mission?
- Does the issue merit investment of the time and other resources required for MECC to take action?
- Are there important MECC stakeholders who would oppose MECC's position on the issue?
- Are there important MECC stakeholders, including Mayflower Church, who would support MECC's position on the issue?

Compliance

MECC's Director is responsible for ensuring that all policy actions are compliant with relevant 501c3 laws and reported to state and federal entities in accordance with the law.

Approved by MECC Board May 1, 2015

MECC is grateful to the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits for their generous assistance in developing this document, including their permission to use language from their policy procedures overview.