



**2014-2015
Parent & Student
Policies and Procedures
Handbook**

Our highest endeavor must be to help develop humans who are able themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.

Rudolf Steiner, Founder of Waldorf Education



Welcome to Mountain Oak School!

Dear Mountain Oak Families,

This handbook has been prepared to promote understanding and clear expectations for students, parents, teachers, and administrators at MOS for the 2014-2015 school year. These policies are designed to support a healthy academic, artistic and social environment in our school. MOS teachers and staff ask that each family take some time to become familiar with the policies in this book that help to keep your school experience a positive and enriching one. If you have any questions or need clarification on a policy or procedure, please feel free to contact a school administrator or a class teacher and we will be happy to assist you.

We are proud to bring this education inspired by Waldorf methods to the Prescott community. On behalf of the faculty and staff, I wish each student and family a wonderful and successful school year.

Sincerely,

Barbara Schuderer

Interim Director

Mountain Oak School

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Introduction: A History of Waldorf

Waldorf schools originated in Europe in 1919. The curriculum for schools inspired by Waldorf methods and private Waldorf schools is based on a developmentally appropriate curriculum that integrates the arts and music with academic subjects. This unique approach touches and develops the feeling life of the child while enhancing the development of effort and will to participate. It enlivens the thinking capacities necessary for strong academic challenges in the world today.

In both Waldorf private and public-sector schools, the early elementary grades are intentionally designed to protect and nurture childhood and to foster wonder and imagination. The carefully developed environment combining beauty with structure is purposely designed to gradually awaken the thinking capacity of each individual child. We seek to educate the whole human being so that he or she may carry the lively and joyous qualities of childhood into adult life. Early academic lessons unfold in an artistic, active and joyful manner. Simultaneously, the social skills of living harmoniously within a class and a school community are fostered. Many opportunities to use the body skillfully and with intent are structured into the daily life of the academic classes. In the middle and upper elementary years, these elements translate into vigorous academic skills for creatively sustained and original thinking capacities.

Waldorf education seeks to foster and develop a creative, educated, and healthful interest in life. People who develop skills of sensitivity and fortitude in childhood have the ability to contribute positively to all aspects of adult life as responsible individuals.

The first public school inspired by Waldorf methods in the United States opened in 1991 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Many parents and educators who knew the Waldorf curriculum as nurturing and healthy for children began opening charter schools across the country, knowing the methods of Waldorf education would be welcomed as an innovative and inspiring solution to current public education challenges. The first Arizona charter school inspired by Waldorf methods opened in Flagstaff in 1995. MOS is now one of five public schools in the state of Arizona implementing a curriculum inspired by Waldorf. Not all aspects of the curriculum can be

implemented in the same manner as in the private sector. Adaptations have been instituted by each charter school according to the needs and structure of the school staff and administration to meet the needs of each school community.

Mountain Oak School opened its doors on August 21st, 1999. A group of dedicated parents and community members had an educational vision of a Waldorf-Methods charter school for Prescott. The founding members spent several years working together to create this Waldorf-Methods school. We continue to create and define this new school for the Prescott community.

As a public charter school, we meet Arizona College and Career Ready Standards and testing requirements; and comply with health and safety regulations, and all state and federal educational laws.

Teacher Qualifications

Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teacher. You have the right to know the following:

- Whether the Arizona Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the Arizona Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- Qualifications for teachers, assistants or similar paraprofessionals.

You are welcome to see the binder in the office to review the college majors and advanced degrees of our teachers. You may request any of the above information from our office and it will be given to you in a timely manner.

Board of Directors

Mountain Oak School has an elected Board of Directors that is responsible for the fiscal and legal oversight of the school. There are between five and seven seats on the board. The MOS Board is governed by a set of by-laws that describe how the board will operate.

Meeting Times and Places

Regular Board Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month, in the Mountain Oak School Conference room. Times and dates for Special Sessions of the Board are posted online and at the front office. When attendance at the meeting is at room capacity, we move to a larger room. Look for a notice on the conference room or office door. The agenda is posted on the Bulletin Board outside the West building at least 24 hours before the meeting. Minutes are available within 48 hours in a binder in the Office.

All meetings are public. Everyone is welcome to come and we are glad to have you. Because we spend public money, we are governed by what is known as “Open Meeting Law.” Feel free to ask questions of any Board Member about “Open Meeting Law”. The Board is here to serve the school.

We are always seeking people willing to serve as Board members. Please contact us if you are interested.

Rhythm

The rhythmic world of nature is all around us. Only in the human kingdom do we have choices. In Waldorf education, making choices that nurture and foster healthy and dependable rhythms and routines gives children the security of being surrounded by caring and responsible adults who lead and care deeply about the children’s welfare.

Throughout the school year, the faculty consciously works with these rhythms by centering them in monthly, weekly and daily activities. Through steadfastly holding to these rhythms, we are able to weave together intellectual, emotional and will activities (head, heart and hands). By working with the rotating block schedule and different special subjects, we bring joy (the heart) to the learning process. This also sharpens the memory while helping strong and directed ‘will energy’ to unfold in writing, reading, math, science and social studies topics. The special subjects (arts, crafts and music) strengthen and reinforce these same rhythms, but in a medium that encourages the thinking (the head) to work through the will (the hands) and engage artistic faculties.

We also encourage parents and guardians to maintain a regular and rhythmical life in the home. Regular rhythm (meal times, bed-time routines, etc.) can create and build stamina, and can give added surety of purpose and direction.

Admission

Mountain Oak is a public school inspired by Waldorf methods. It is a tuition-free charter school sponsored and contracted with the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. Registration is administered by the Enrollment Team, consisting of the Director, the Office Manager, and the Class Teacher. It is the purpose of this team to oversee registration and to review new student applications. To ensure that our specialized curriculum and program are suitable for each individual registrant, we follow a four-step process:

- 1. Parents/guardian and student interview with the MOS Administrator.**
- 2. Parents/guardian and student interview with class teacher.**
- 3. Parents/guardian and student interview with the Special Education Director, if necessary.**
- 4. All required paperwork is completed.**

A student is formally admitted only after these interviews have taken place, all required school(s) records have been received, and space has become available in the class. Limits for class size have been established for each grade. If that limit is reached, the student will be put

on a waiting list. If a student is applying from out of town/state, a phone interview will take place. In accordance with the State of Arizona, prospective kindergartners must be five years old by September 1 of the school year. Traditionally in Waldorf schools it is considered healthiest for children to turn seven in first grade, giving children time to develop the proprioceptive and vestibular systems, and time for the integration of the left and right brain hemispheres. It is our intention to foster a love of learning and allow for children to develop all capacities. We encourage parents when deciding the appropriate time to enroll their child into kindergarten that most children who enter kindergarten at 5.5 or 6 years of age have greater school success.

We are a publicly funded school that is non-sectarian and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions or educational policies.

Required Forms for Admission

Arizona State Law and MOS require the following forms to be completely filled out by the parent/guardian prior to admittance:

- **A MOS Enrollment Form with current daytime and emergency phone numbers.**
- **A certified copy of the child's birth certificate. Please bring the original and we will copy and certify it for our records, and return your original .**
- **A 'Certificate of Immunization' signed by a licensed physician certifying that the child has received age-appropriate immunizations as required by Law, or a 'Request of Exemption from Immunization' form signed by a parent or guardian. Please bring the original and we will copy and certify for our records.**
- **A 'Guideline to Determine Eligible Students' form**
- **A 'Home Language Survey' form**
- **An 'Arizona Residency Documentation' form**
- **An 'Emergency Medical Information' card. Please notify the MOS office immediately upon change of address, daytime phone number or emergency contact information.**
- **A 'Request for Release of Records' from the child's previous school.**
- **Blank copies of all forms except the birth and immunization certificate are available in the school office.**

Exit Interviews

Although not required, MOS requests an exit interview with all parents/guardians and students should a child leave the school prior to the end of the school year. This meeting will be conducted with the Principal. Participants may include the class teacher, specialty teachers, and the Special Education Director. The exit interview assists MOS in completing paperwork required by the state, and forwarding information to the child's new school, and allows our faculty to process reasons for the early departure.

Volunteers

Mountain Oak School depends on parents to work at the school as volunteers. We encourage every family to donate 35 hours per school year in volunteer time. There is something for

everyone to do: everything from helping with school-wide cleanup to serving on the Board of Directors. Some work is organized into committees, such as Festivals, Fundraising, and Buildings and Grounds. Other parents volunteer in the classrooms. Some are class coordinators. Talk with any Board member, the Office Manager or the school administrator to get started with volunteering. There is a description of volunteer jobs in the Parent Volunteer Binder. Please take time to review the volunteer jobs and sign up to help. When parents help at the school, it shows the child that education is important to the parent. Throughout the year, check in with your child's class coordinator about needs throughout the school. When you volunteer, please log your time in the school office. Thank you for all you do!

Attendance

Arrival:

Students may arrive at school after 7:45 a.m. to the front playground. If weather is severe, a red flag will be posted on the communication white-board and students will go to the assembly hall. Students are not to be anywhere else on campus at this time unless accompanied by a parent or teacher. School starts promptly at 8:15 a.m.

Dismissal:

Teachers' first priority is the safety and well-being of all the students. During dismissal, the focus of the teacher must be directed toward the students; i.e.. escorting the student to the appropriate vehicle, checking that the person picking up the child is authorized to do so, keeping order and calmness while people and vehicles are circulating. **Please refrain from engaging your child's teacher in conversation until 3:15pm.** Thank you for your cooperation.

Kindergarten: The Kindergarten morning ends at 12:00 p.m.,. For your child's welfare, please be prompt. A parent's lateness in picking up a kindergarten child can cause unnecessary stress and worry for the child. If you are unavoidably delayed, please leave a message at the school office so we can assure your child and make necessary arrangements. If your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself, please inform the office and teacher by sending a note or telephoning as soon as possible.

1st–8th Grades: The school day ends at 3:00 p.m. Please be prompt in picking up your child. Any student not picked up by 3:15 p.m. will be taken to the office and parents will be charged \$5.00 per 15 minutes.

Use of the office telephone after school requires permission of the student's teacher and front office personnel.

Absences:

Regular daily attendance is vital to the learning process and social dynamics of each MOS classroom. The days, weeks and months are a carefully prepared sequence involving the unfolding of a whole curriculum. Therefore, it is important that a child be present each day.

Adequate rest is crucial for a child's success in this rigorous, high-school preparatory program. Absences weaken a child's skill development, hinder a child's social and emotional involvement with the class, and can negatively affect total class progress. Parents/guardians are reminded that public schools are funded through all of our state tax dollars and MOS receives funding according to the average daily attendance. Every absence reduces state funding, which negatively impacts our rich curriculum. Lastly, *Arizona Law states that 18 days absent could result in retention.* As a guideline, this is 9 days per semester. A student who is considered to be habitually truant may be subject to administrative dismissal.

Tardiness:

All students are to be in their classroom by 8:15 a.m. A student arriving after that time is considered tardy. Children arriving late must be brought to the office to receive a late pass that the child gives to the teacher or assistant when the child enters the classroom. If your child has excessive tardies, you may receive an informative letter.

Early Release:

Parents/Guardians need to stop in at the school office and sign their child out if a student is being released before the school day ends. Excessive early releases disrupt both the rhythm of the school day and the solidity of the classroom environment, and may result in a meeting between the family and the teacher involved to determine whether further intervention is warranted. Please do not remove your child from school without signing him/her out first. Scheduled early release days for all students are identified in the school calendar.

Festivals & Assemblies:

Festivals, assemblies and class plays are an important part of the school experience. Students are expected to attend all assemblies in which they are performing. Similarly, courtesy expects that all students and their parents/guardians will remain to watch the remainder of an assembly after they have finished performing. We request that video cameras or photo cameras not be used in an intrusive manner. Assemblies and other events strive for a certain mood and photo cameras and video cameras have proven to be a distraction to the event. It may be appropriate to take photos after the event. Festivals and assemblies which honor the traditions of many cultures and celebrate the seasons are held throughout the year. Learning about the ways of cultures and hearing stories told throughout the ages provide our children with an important legacy. As members of a global community, our children are enriched when they have the opportunity to share their experience with the rest of the school. It is important to note that these celebrations do not practice any religious point of view, but are brought in a spirit of celebration, honor, and reverence for life and the world in which we live. As Festivals and Assemblies are special events in the life of MOS, please check the Dress Code section regarding appropriate attire for such events.

Birthdays

Parents/guardians need to speak with the class teacher regarding any food items brought in to class in recognition of a child's birthday. We ask that invitations for home celebrations not be distributed or discussed at school unless the whole class is invited. Reference note: see our policy on junk food and candy on page 18.

Class Meetings for Parents/Guardians

Each class teacher meets with Parents/Guardians, as a group, at least three times during a school year. These meetings are very important in forging a common understanding of child development, expectations, classroom procedures and curriculum. At minimum, there will be a class meeting early in the school year, another in the late fall and one in the spring. The teacher calls class meetings as necessary and only parents/guardians are asked to attend. Class teachers may arrange childcare; check with your class teacher.

Class Coordinators

Each grade has a parent volunteer who serves as Class Coordinator. The Class Coordinator works in partnership with the class teacher to ensure the health and vitality of the class. Class Coordinators serve in various capacities and may serve as the initial point of contact for a parent in any given classroom. Class Coordinators are asked to attend Parent Association meetings. Please consider taking a turn at being Class Coordinator during your child's attendance at MOS. This position truly supports the class teacher.

Class and School Visits

Teachers welcome and encourage parents to spend time in their child's class, and parents are encouraged to visit the school. Open houses, festivals, assemblies and class play performances are especially good times to bring relatives and friends to visit the school. In addition, a regularly scheduled Walk Through the Grades will occur on the third Thursday of each month. Please call the office to schedule this visit. Please check directly with the class teacher prior to scheduling all other class visits.

Because the safety of our students (your children) and employees is a top priority, all visitors during regular school hours, including parents, must sign in at the front office and obtain a visitor's badge/pass. Note that unless you are a student or a staff member at Mountain Oak School, you are considered a visitor. Visitors may be asked to present a form of ID. Visitors are not allowed to be inside the school at any time without a visitor's pass, which includes dropping off and picking up students. Anyone without a pass will be directed to the office to obtain one. No person will be allowed to conduct or attempt to conduct any activity on school premises that has not had prior approval by administration. The Director and administration have the authority to prohibit the entry of any person to this school or to expel any person when there is reason to believe the presence of such a person would be disruptive. If such an individual refuses to leave the school grounds or creates a disturbance, the Director or administration is authorized to request from local law enforcement whatever assistance is required to remove the individual. The cooperation of all parents, guardians, students and staff members is appreciated.

It is very important to your child that you share in his/her school life. Therefore, you are invited and encouraged to visit the school for special programs or to serve as a volunteer.

Visitors are not allowed to disrupt class during instruction time. If you wish to visit your child's classroom during instruction time, you must make prior arrangements with the class teacher. If you wish to have a conference with a member of the school staff, please call 541-7700 for an

appointment. To keep class interruptions to a minimum, messages to students will be delivered at a convenient time. Lunches or other items should be left with office personnel who will see that it is delivered to your child.

Visitors may not visit the classrooms, assembly hall, outside play areas or enter the hallways during the drop off times, pick- up times or during the day without obtaining a pass. Special events such as festivals, assemblies, parent information/education nights are the only exceptions. We request that all visitors sign in when visiting the school for class plays.

School and Classroom Visits/Observations:

- In visiting the school and classrooms, parents must realize that the teacher's first responsibility is to the students and class as a whole, and the teacher will be unable to converse at any length with the visitor.
- When visiting a classroom, please do not bring small children or pets with you that may disrupt the learning process.
- Follow the guidelines set by the class teacher for involvement in classroom activities.
- If others are observing, please do not converse with them, as this will distract the class.

Communication

Often children and parents need to know who and where to go for answers to questions and/or to most appropriately resolve issues and concerns about their child or the school. Please refer to the following to address questions, concerns, and issues:

Administrator for school finances and budgets, student discipline and behavior issues, etc.;

Faculty Chair for pedagogical festivals and assemblies, faculty meetings and in-services;

Office Manager for student health, enrollment or withdrawal, records and attendance issues, school communication, student fees and payment plans;

Classroom Teacher for philosophy, program and curricular questions, grade and child specific program information, such as how the student is performing, developing socially, etc.;

Parent Association for school wide events, parent support and education, fundraising, newsletter communications;

Special Education Director for special needs, gifted and 504 issues and services, accommodations, modifications, etc.

Please adhere to the following Board of Director-approved Process Steps to further resolve continuing issues:

Step One:

- State and discuss the concern with the classroom teacher
- Develop and propose a strategy to remedy the concern
- Teacher and parent(s) document the date and time of the meeting

Step Two:

- Check for satisfactory progress; meet again to discuss the progress
- Document the date and time of the meeting, including progress made.

The vast majority of issues are resolved through the first two steps

Step Three:

- ⊗ If satisfactory progress on any issue has not occurred, request a meeting with the teacher, parent, (and child if appropriate) and the Director. Develop a written plan of action to remedy the concern.

Step Four:

- ⊗ The Director follows up to check progress on the plan from the parent and teacher.

The majority of any remaining issues are resolved through the second set of steps. If satisfactory progress is still not achieved, the child/parent should seek further intervention through direct consultation with the Administrator.

For subjects or concerns not related to student or classroom issues, please contact administration who will address the subject or help direct you to the appropriate person(s). Our school's weekly newsletter, The Wednesday, is published and distributed through the children to the entire community on each Wednesday throughout the school year. This publication contains timely information about upcoming events and activities of interest to our families as well as regular dialogues about the programs, philosophies, and status of the school. Each week there are additional copies available in the front office as well.

Our school's website, www.mountainoakschool.org, contains a wealth of information about our school including The Wednesday newsletter, news and calendar of events, information about Waldorf, admissions, and much more. We are always grateful for parents with web design skills to help keep our site updated.

Discipline

Discipline at MOS is to be considered an aspect of social guidance and student accountability. The purposes of discipline are these:

1. To provide a classroom situation conducive to learning.
2. To promote character training, i.e., to cultivate the virtues that ensure ethical living and to redirect misguided behavior.
3. To develop self-discipline.

In order for a discipline program to be consistent and effective, parents and guardians are expected to support teachers and administrators.

When a MOS student chooses not to follow the rules and guidelines of the classroom, playground, or other school facility, a choice will be made for the student by the adult responsible for the supervision of the children, i.e., the teacher, playground monitor or administrator. At times, removal from the group is necessary to protect the student and/or the learning environment of the school. This removal is necessary when a student:

1. is irrational or unreasonable,
2. puts another in danger,
3. pushes beyond the limits of respect in speech or actions,
4. has continued and chronic lack of responsibility
5. has chronic misbehavior

If possible, the adult will work to help the student regain self-control. In some instances upper grades students (5-8) will be referred to detention.

If regaining control does not happen, the following discipline cycle will be set in motion.

Step One: A student referred to the office will meet with the administrator, an incident report/referral form will be completed by the attending adult, and the administrator may inform the student's parents of the meeting by telephone or letter. Documentation of the behavior will be entered into the school's student behavior data system and a hard copy placed in the student's file.

Step Two: If a student has chronic misbehavior, a conference with parents/guardians, teacher, student and the administrator will be scheduled and a contract will be drawn up listing actions that will be taken by each participant in the conference. A date to review the contract will be scheduled. This step may be excluded in specific cases as indicated in the Discipline Guidelines.

If a student is sent to the office repeatedly, or in extreme cases, the administrator determines that the seriousness of the action warrants starting at Step Three as indicated in the Discipline Guidelines.

Step Three: The student will meet with the administrator and the administrator will notify the student's parents/guardian that a suspension of up to three days has been imposed. The administrator will determine the length and type of suspension (in-school or out-of-school). A conference will be held with student, parents, teacher and administrator in attendance and a written plan will be created to assist the student with self-control. This plan will be monitored within specified time limits. A recommendation may be made to have the family visit with a counselor or other specialist. All school work missed must be completed and a probationary time period to monitor and review progress will be set once the student is ready to return to class.

Step Four: When little or no change is evident and school personnel have exhausted all available means to effect change, the student will move to Step Four. The administrator will recommend expulsion or permanent removal from the school. The student's parents/guardian

will be notified in writing, the reasons for removal will be given, and the right to request a hearing will be explained. The expulsion may be reconsidered by the administrator when a written request for a special hearing is made by the student's parents/guardian.

School Rules, Classroom Rules

The Mountain Oak student body, faculty, staff and administration work with socially inclusive models for school-wide positive behavior and discipline, and observe the following school rules:

1. We are Kind
2. We are Responsible
3. We are Respectful
4. We are Safe

General Classroom Rules

1. Raise hand to speak in class.
2. Strive for courtesy at all times.
3. Interrupting is not permitted.
4. Permission from the teacher is required prior to leaving one's seat.
5. Vulgar language is not permitted.
6. Outdoor behavior (running, loud talking, ball play, etc.) is unacceptable inside the classroom.
7. Food or drinks, other than water, are not permitted during class time.
8. Chewing gum is not permitted.
9. All classroom materials and furnishings need to be handled with care.
10. Students shall not operate air conditioner/heaters, lights, or fans, nor open and close windows without permission from the teacher.
11. Follow the dress code.
12. Hats are to be removed in classrooms and buildings.
13. The classroom is to be kept neat and all personal and school materials are to be stored in an appropriate manner.
14. Snacks and lunches must be cleaned up prior to the next activity.
15. Going into other students' or teachers' desks, packs or jackets is not permitted without permission from the person.
16. Respect, kindness, responsibility and safety in all behavior are expected.

Serious Misbehaviors Warranting an Incident Report/Referral Form or More Severe Responses:

1. Obscene or abusive language.
2. Gossiping about, teasing or harassing another student.
3. Stealing.
4. Showing disrespect, lying to, or deceiving a faculty member or other adult.
5. Cutting classes.
6. Leaving the school grounds without an adult.
7. Fighting-including hitting, kicking, scratching, biting, spitting.
8. Defacing school property.

9. Throwing hard or pointed objects, such as rock or sticks.
10. Physical or emotional abuse towards peers or adults.
11. Possession of tobacco, alcohol, or any intoxicating or controlled substance.
12. Possession of firearms, knives, or other weapons.
13. Possession of sexually explicit subject matter.
14. Persistent misbehavior or disregard for school rules.

Substance Abuse: Substance abuse is an extremely serious matter and is not to be considered lightly. All rumors of substance abuse, regardless of how petty or where the alleged abuse took place, will be investigated, including the questioning of students involved and the reporting of the allegations and findings to their parents/guardians and, if necessary, the police.

Weapons: The possession of firearms, knives (with the exception of approved pocket knives on camping trips), or any other weapon or other item that can be construed as a weapon is prohibited on campus or at school events. Any student found in possession of such an item risks the most severe disciplinary response. Any conversation between students, including joking, about the possession or use of a weapon will be thoroughly investigated and reported to the student's parents/guardians.

A student who threatens to cause physical injury or serious damage to property, or intimidates another person, by word or conduct, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Threatening to commit any physical injury to a school employee or student; threatening to damage any school property, school employee's property, or student property may result in any or all of the following: Report to the police, suspension or expulsion. All incidents will be reviewed and handled on a case-by-case basis and will include review protections afforded by special education law for special education students.

Harassment & Bullying: The school strives to nurture the emotional well-being of its whole community. In order to feel good about yourself, you need to feel good about how you treat others. All students are expected to refrain from any comments, attitudes, bullying, physical touching, or attentions that are unwanted by or upsetting to another person. It is of the utmost importance that each student develops and practices a respectful sensitivity for the physical and emotional boundaries and well-being of the other people in the school. A good guiding principle is this: if something would make you feel uncomfortable it will probably make another person feel the same way, usually more so.

Repeated, unwanted and disrespectful attention is called harassment. It takes many forms, all of which are serious personal and social offenses. Your feelings and conscience will tell you whether you are caught up in harassment, either on the receiving or the giving end. If you find yourself in a situation involving harassment, it is of the utmost importance that you seek immediate guidance and help from a trusted adult. You should always speak to a parent/guardian; he/she will contact your teacher, who will then do what is needed to put a stop to the harassment. Similarly, if you witness a situation involving harassment you have a moral obligation to report this situation to a parent or teacher so the harassment is stopped.

Anti-Bullying

HB2368 was signed into law and became effective Aug. 12, 2005. ARS 15-341(A)(40) requires all public school governing boards “to adopt and enforce procedures that prohibit the harassment, bullying and intimidation of pupils on school grounds, school property, school buses, school bus stops and at school-sponsored events and activities.”

The Mountain Oak School Board, administration, faculty and community have created and established an Anti-Bullying Policy which was adopted by the Mountain Oak School Board on December, 12, 2005. The policy, which is summarized in this handbook, is available in its entirety in the Policies and Procedures Manual in the school office.

The purpose of the Mountain Oak School anti-bullying policy is to outline our community’s responsibilities as noted below as staff, faculty, students, parents/guardians, and families to eliminate social, emotional, and physical intimidation and bullying in any form within the Mountain Oak community.

Faculty and Staff Responsibilities:

- ☼ Be a positive role model in word and action at all times,
- ☼ Work to remove opportunities for bullying and/or harassment through active supervision at all times,
- ☼ Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying and/or harassment,
- ☼ Intervene appropriately when acts of bullying and/or harassment are suspected or observed,
- ☼ Report suspected or observed incidents of bullying and/or harassment to the appropriate administrator, faculty/staff member, and to parent/guardian,
- ☼ Complete documentation when appropriate,
- ☼ Work to build, support and maintain a bully-free campus environment,
- ☼ Attend annual policy manual meeting. Read, sign, and uphold policy.

Student Responsibilities:

- ☼ Treat others with respect, kindness, and courtesy,
- ☼ Be aware of how your words and actions affect others,
- ☼ Uphold the Mountain Oak School anti-bullying policy,
- ☼ Refrain from participating in acts of bullying and/or harassment,
- ☼ Report suspected or observed acts of bullying and/or harassment to the appropriate administrator, faculty/staff member, and/or parent/guardian,
- ☼ Work to build, support and maintain a bully-free school environment.

Parent Responsibilities:

- ☼ Be a positive role model in work and action at all times while on the Mountain Oak School campus,
- ☼ Demonstrate respect and courtesy in all Mountain Oak relationships,
- ☼ Read, sign, and uphold the Mountain Oak School anti-bullying policy,
- ☼ Discuss and clarify the policy with your child/children,
- ☼ Take an active interest in your child’s social relationships and friendships,

- ⊗ Watch for signs of distress in your child or sudden changes in their behavior or demeanor. Any of these may indicate a potential problem.
- ⊗ Communicate with Mountain Oak administrators, faculty/staff members about suspected, observed, or reported incidents of bullying and/or harassment,
- ⊗ Commit to working with Mountain Oak personnel when your child is involved in a bullying and/or harassment incident.

Consequences for bullying and/or harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- ⊗ Meeting with administrator and/or appropriate school personnel,
- ⊗ Mediation,
- ⊗ Removal from classroom, playground, and/or classroom activities,
- ⊗ Individual behavior plans/contracts,
- ⊗ Disciplinary hearing,
- ⊗ Short term suspension,
- ⊗ Long term suspension,
- ⊗ Expulsion

Reporting Bullying Behaviors, including Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Molestation:

- ⊗ *Any student, employee, volunteer or school community member who believes he or she has been the victim of any form of bullying or sexual harassment by another student, employee, volunteer or school community member should report such incident to the school administration. If the school administrator is the alleged perpetrator of the incident or incidents, then the report should be made to a member of the Board of Directors.*

Dress Code

Appropriate student dress is an integral factor in creating a healthy educational setting. The appearance of students has definite influence on the performance of schoolwork, the social atmosphere of the classroom, the comfort of other students, and the perceptions of younger students.

Because of the nature of our climate control systems, it is advisable that students have appropriate indoor clothing so they are not too cold or warm. Students spend time in and out of doors each day and should be dressed appropriately.

Everyday (including field trips): Students should dress in a manner that reflects their intention for academic pursuit: Clothing with subdued colors that is simple, neat, clean, and whole (no rips or cut-offs). Clothing should not draw attention, distract, or display excessive trendiness, particularly with or “by virtue of” writing and illustrations.

Acceptable Dress:

- Trousers or slacks-(non restrictive clothing).
- Minimum length of shorts, dresses and skirts: at or below fingertip length.
- Shirts, blouses and dresses should have sleeves or straps that are at least 3 fingers in width (1 1/2 inches wide) and a finished collar.
- Opaque material.
- Nature illustrations.
- MOS School logo and Events MOS participates in; Safe Routes (Walk to School, Ride with the Mayor) Pentathlon and Medieval Games.
- Thigh length tops worn over leggings.
- Closed toed shoes or sturdy, closed toed sandals with a back strap. Shoes will be worn at all times at school.
- Athletic clothes and shoes that fit the dress code guidelines.
- UV filtering sunglasses are permitted during outside activities, but not in class.

Unacceptable Dress:

1. Excessively loose or tight shorts or pants, which, in a teacher's opinion, impede movement.
2. Trousers or skirts that drag on the ground.
3. Writings on shirts, front or back, including sweatshirts and gym shorts.
4. Illustrations of athletes, rock stars, cartoon characters, and other media figures.
5. Revealing clothing: halter tops, spaghetti straps, low-cut necklines, sports jerseys, underwear, bras, sports bras, camisoles, boxers, etc.
6. Bare midriffs: If your stomach shows when you raise your arms, it is inappropriate.
7. Clogs, high heels, flip flops, water socks, jellies, slides, etc.
8. Neon colors, camouflage or dancewear.
9. Clothing with extreme tears, rips, holes, or which is generally unkempt and/or in severe disrepair.

Make-Up: Make-up that attracts undue attention is not permitted.

Hair: Hair should be neat and not obviously dyed or colored. Hair colors that attract undue attention are not allowed, i.e., blue, pink, green or purple.

Jewelry: The wearing of jewelry is discouraged because of the loss and safety factors. If worn, it is recommended that earrings hang no lower than 1 inch from the lobe. The piercing of nose, lip, tongue, and eyebrows is not allowed.

Body Decor: Tattooing and skin ornamentation such as body stickers, temporary tattoos and other forms of body decor are not permitted. Students will be asked to wash off removable items. Permanent items must be covered.

School Assemblies: Recommended attire for student Performances/Assemblies:

Boys: Long, belted trousers (no sweatpants), collared dress shirt. Clean, non-athletic shoes

Girls: Dress or skirt with length at or below finger length or long, loose-fitting pants.

Clean, non-athletic shoes or sandals (no heels or platform shoes).

Games Classes: Games teacher will make appropriate recommendations.

Emergency Snow Days (School Closings and Delays)

Mountain Oak School closes or delays opening during inclement weather in alignment with Prescott Unified School District's (PUSD) determination of safe driving conditions. Therefore, all Mountain Oak families should:

1. Check PUSD website: <http://www.prescott.k12.az.us>, 'Snow day info'
2. Listen to Mountain Oak phone recording after 6 a.m.
3. Listen to local radio announcements concerning Prescott Unified School District's school delays or closings and apply that determination to the Mountain Oak School.

Depending on weather conditions or other emergency situations, the school will decide on one of the following plans:

Plan 1: CLOSE SCHOOL FOR THE DAY—students and school employees will stay at home and not attend school.

Plan 2: DECLARE A 2-HOUR SHORTENED DAY SPECIAL SCHEDULE—*all schedules will begin 2 hours later. Students should arrive between 9:45 and 10:15.* Regular classes will begin two hours later than usual; Dismissal of school in the afternoon will be at the regular time. Kindergarten will be held and will begin at 10:15 a.m.

NOTE: In the unlikely event of a district-wide early release due to inclement weather, parents are encouraged to pick up their child from school immediately. Listen to the local TV and radio stations for school closing or the Shortened Day schedule announcement. If possible, Mountain Oak School will contact you with a prerecorded message on inclement weather days for an early release or other emergency situations.

Remember to dress your children appropriately for the weather and instruct your children to be especially careful when walking because of the increased danger of slippery roads. DO NOT bring your children to school EARLY on the Shortened Day Schedule. Schools are concerned about the safety of all and unnecessary loss of school time. Decisions to close or not to close school are made very early in the morning, before daylight. Be assured any decision to close or delay school is carefully considered and made only after evaluation of all available up-to-date information and reports. Your cooperation with these plans will be greatly appreciated. Please be aware that district boundaries include varying terrain and elevations that will affect the decision to delay or cancel school.

Food

In Waldorf schools worldwide, there is a conscious effort to keep school snacks and meals as natural and healthy as possible. Many Waldorf schools have gardens and encourage the growing of pesticide-free vegetables and our own Kindergarten classes make and serve healthy grains and breads to our students. Our school strongly encourages salads, sandwiches, fruits, nuts and simple sugar-free natural juices or purified water as our staple snacks and lunches.

Lunch and snack are brought from home and are eaten at the designated snack and lunch times. We encourage foods to be of a wholesome and nutritious nature. Any foods that contains artificial dyes, preservatives, colors, added sugars, corn syrup, or artificial sweeteners are discouraged. *Candy, gum, and caffeinated or carbonated beverages are not to be brought to school.* The school does not provide hot lunches.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for sending a hot lunch in appropriate containers if they prefer this option for their child. Microwave ovens are not used in classrooms. Lunch boxes and other food containers are to be leak-proof, free of advertisements, athletes, rock stars, cartoon characters, and other media images.

Grades and Academic Achievement

Mountain Oak School expects that students will be at school on time and prepared to participate fully in the school programs. When homework (depending on grade level) is assigned, the school expects it to be completed and handed in on time. Students may be referred to detention to complete homework assignments that are overdue. Students who have missed school must take responsibility for finding out what assignments have been given and for making up that work in a timely manner. Excessive absence could lead to academic difficulty.

Academic Achievement

Mountain Oak places a high value on educational achievement and excellence for each student. The academic achievement of individual students shall be evaluated by instructional staff based on established guidelines. The goal for each student is to meet or exceed the established guidelines as outlined in the Charter.

Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. The spring conference is by teacher or parent request. Check your school calendar for specific dates. Conferences for individual students may be held at other times of the year as necessary.

Progress and Grading Assessment

Written progress reports are issued in semesters. Please refer to the school calendar for end-of-term dates and expect the report cards to be issued shortly after the term ends.

Progress Reports

For students in 6, 7, or 8th grade, the grading system of A-F is used.

Some reports may also reflect incomplete work.

Progress reports in grades 1-5 use the following assessment system:

6	Exemplary	Work is both exceptional and memorable. It shows a distinctive and sophisticated application of knowledge and skills.
5	Strong	Work exceeds the standard. It shows a thorough and effective application of knowledge and skills.
4	Proficient	Work meets the standard. It is acceptable work that demonstrates application of essential knowledge and skills. Minor errors or omissions do not detract from the overall quality.
3	Developing	Work does not yet meet the standard. It shows basic but inconsistent application of knowledge and skills. Work has minor errors or omissions that detract from the overall quality. Needs further improvement.
2	Emerging	Work shows a partial application of knowledge and skills. It is typically superficial, fragmented or incomplete and needs considerable development before reflecting the proficient level.
1	Beginning	Work shows little application of knowledge and skills. Work contains many errors.
N- S	Non- Scorable	Work does not include sufficient or relevant evidence to be scored.

Grades and Academic Achievement

When entering Mountain Oak School, a student will be entered in a grade level that most closely approximates the student's developmental stage and current composite academic ability based upon MOS enrollment assessments, state tests, and previous school data. In the case of students coming directly from homeschool programs, a placement test will be part of the determination of appropriate grade as well as alignment with child development principles. Students attending Mountain Oak School will participate in the full curricular program including specialty subjects unless otherwise specified in an IEP.

Students will be challenged and will be provided assignments commensurate with increasing ability levels. Academic progress is also greatly dependent upon each student. A key aspect of learning relies upon the student's on-task behavior and parental support.

Students who are currently below grade level in one or more academic areas will need to spend more time on task in order to increase their rate of learning. They will need to have high attendance rates, stay focused in class and take advantage of any remedial opportunities provided at the school. Additionally, parents will need to be active and implement home study strategies provided by the student's teacher.

Mountain Oak will not promote students based solely on social promotion; all students must evidence progress and proficiency based on ongoing class assessments and/or state testing.

Academic Probation – Specialty Class Probation

Grades 5-8

When a student's work falls below Mountain Oak School's minimum requirement of 75% mastery, the student will be placed on probationary status. The student will also be placed on academic or specialty class probation if the student's grade approaches a D, unsatisfactory, a 3 or below (grades 5 and 6), not proficient or an F in any subject on a report card. If a student is on academic probation, the student and his/her parent will sign an academic improvement plan devised by the teacher. If grades have not improved by the end of the next reporting period, and/or the student has failed to abide by the academic improvement plan, an academic intervention will be scheduled with parents, teachers and administration to determine whether the program offered at Mountain Oak School is the appropriate charter school curriculum for the student.

Other consequences of academic probation may include the following:

- a. The student will repeat the grade to ensure the student possesses a sufficient level of proficiency to achieve success.
- b. The student will attend mandatory afterschool or summer school academic programs.

Students with an IEP (Special Education – Individual Education Plan) will be expected to meet the differentiated instruction. Accommodations may be made on the above policy of students with IEPs.

Extra Credit/Re-Do Policy

MOS classes are direct instruction, with a minimum 75% proficiency requirement on class assignments unless otherwise stated in a student's IEP. Our dedication to all students will consist of re-teaching and allowing for additional opportunities to demonstrate a high level of mastery to increase student confidence and provide for a strong foundation for future learning. If a student scores below 60% on any given assignment, he/she will be offered the opportunity to "re-do" the entire assignment. Students will be allowed one additional attempt on the assignments: the "re-do" must be completed three school days from the day the teacher has requested the work. Failure to complete the "re-do" within the specified timeframe will result in the original score becoming part of the student's term grade point average.

Additionally, students who have reached the minimum 75% proficiency requirement or better on an assignment may request extra credit work in order to receive an improved grade; however, the determination for extra credit is at the discretion of the teacher. If assigned, the extra credit work will be an alternative but equally rigorous task. Students are allowed one additional attempt on extra credit and must have the work completed in the amount of time prescribed by the teacher or in one school day.

Summative Assessments

Summative block assessments will, at a minimum, be given at the end of each block or term. The teacher may also administer interim summative assessments. Summative assessment and/or major projects are a final completion and the opportunity to "re-do" these assessments will not be an option. The original score will stand and become part of the student's overall grade. MOS has determined that summative block assessments are necessary to prepare students for K-12 state-mandated testing as well as for the type of assessments that they will encounter upon entrance to high school, college or university.

Homework and Academic Assessments

With the increased rigors inherent in Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards and to ensure that each student is ready for entrance into high school, college or university and prepared for the extensive homework requirements at the post-secondary level, homework will be required of students in grades 4-8. Homework should be a positive addition to your child's academic experience and Mountain Oak School. It is the student's responsibility (with encouragement and support from the parent) to complete and turn in all assigned homework. Mountain Oak teachers will coordinate the work load so as to not overwhelm students and allow for essential family time. Homework is considered an integral part of the student's overall grade. Failure to complete and turn in homework will result in students being placed on academic probation.

Makeup Policy for Tests and Assignments

Grades 5-8:

If a student should miss a test or class assignments, it is the student's responsibility to meet with the teacher on the same day the student returns to school to schedule a time when assignments should be turned in and/or the test can be made up. The student must take the makeup test within two days of returning to school.

Incompletes

Incompletes will be given in place of a letter grade when a student fails to complete the assigned course work for a class due to an extended illness or other extenuating circumstances. Any student receiving an incomplete grade at end of term will be allowed a predetermined amount of additional time in order to complete the unfinished assignments.

Parent/School Communication

Grades 1-8:

MOS will communicate through hard copy, email or the school website regarding homework, incomplete or unfinished assignments and master/enrichment support work.

Handling Concerns

Any concerns regarding a teacher, a class, grading or other classroom-related matters should first be assessed with the teacher. In the event that bringing your concerns to the teacher does not resolve the matter, a meeting may be arranged with the administrator and the teacher by scheduling an appointment.

Academic Jeopardy

Tutoring: If a student demonstrates the need for additional academic help beyond that which can be reasonably expected of teachers during the school day, tutoring or an evaluation process may be recommended. The school may provide names of resource people or offer in-house help if available.

Media

The violence, consumerism and passive entertainment that are taken for granted in today's mass-media culture do not support the well-being of children and work against what is being developed in our Waldorf-Methods education. Watching television and videos and playing computer games, regardless of their content, inhibit children's innate capacity to form their own inner pictures, an ability crucial for creative thinking and problem solving. Limiting the exposure to electronic media has been shown to improve the mood of open-minded concentration and social stability in the classroom. The cumulative effect of repeated exposure to television, video games, movies, radio and computers can negatively impact a child's development and it is especially hindering for the development of the finer artistic faculties.

We at Mountain Oak strongly encourage parents to take full responsibility for determining the type and extent of media exposure their children receive. Your child's teachers will be providing information regarding media use and your child's education, and engaging you in a dialogue that we hope will be stimulating and rewarding. Our goal in doing so is to do our utmost to create a learning environment that is conducive to active, imaginative learning.

Our recommended guidelines regarding media use are as follows:

1. For children in preschool and kindergarten: None, or as little as possible.
2. For children in grades 1 – 3: None, or as little as possible is our ideal, but recognizing the pervasiveness of media in our current culture, we strongly encourage the following minimum expectation: no television, video games or movies during the school week; minimal parent-directed media use on weekends and during vacations.
3. For students in grades 4 – 8: None, or as little as possible is our ideal, but recognizing the pervasiveness of media in our current culture, we strongly encourage the following minimum expectation: no television or video games in the morning before school; minimal parent-directed media use during the school week; parental involvement in determining appropriate media and computer-use choices at all other times.

Surfing the Internet and visiting chat rooms is even more strongly discouraged because both these activities not only undermine the work of our teachers but are emotionally dangerous for the young child and adolescent.

No electronic entertainment devices of any kind are to be brought to school, or at a school event or field trip without the permission of a class teacher. Any such device found on campus will be confiscated and returned at the end of school. Electronic musical instruments may be brought to class with the permission of the class teacher.

Games and Toys: Toys are not to be brought to school. Traditional card and board games may be brought to school with the permission of the teacher. Faddish, consumer-oriented games are not to be brought to school. The student is advised to confer with his/her teacher prior to bringing a newly-developed game to school.

Medication and Illness

No medication of any kind is allowed on school grounds. Please turn in all Tylenol, aspirin, cough drops, inhalers, naturopathic remedies, etc. to the front office.

If a student needs to take medication during school, please bring all medications to the front office in the Original Prescription Bottle with a note from Parent/Guardian giving permission to school personnel to administer it.

Exceptions to above:

Student Self-Administration of Medication through Handheld Inhaler Devices

A student may carry and self-administer prescribed emergency medication through a handheld inhaler device ONLY if:

- The student's name is on the prescription label on the medication container or device, and
- The student's parent has provided written consent to the front office prior to the student bringing the inhaler on site.

By state law, the district and its employees are not responsible for loss or misuse of medication by students at school, or by the good faith implementation of this policy. The front office must be notified as soon as possible following use of emergency medication.

A student who is authorized to carry and self-administer a medication through a handheld inhaler device must not distribute the substance or misuse the device while on school property or traveling between school and home. A student who violates this regulation will be subject to immediate and severe disciplinary action.

Illness: If a student is injured or ill and not able to participate in Movement Education (P.E.) for the day, bring a note from home or a doctor's excuse to the front office before school starts.

If students become ill during the day, the class teacher sends the student with a pass to the front office. Front office personnel will contact parents.

All students leaving campus must be signed out in the office.

If your child is ill, please keep them at home. Students are sent home if their temperature is over 100 degrees, they are vomiting, or if seriously injured. If there is a medical condition or medication administered at home, please notify the front office so we can work with you and your child in an informed manner.

Head Lice: Mountain Oak School has a head lice policy on hand in the school office, with guidelines printed and available for all parents regarding procedures. Please stop in to the office and pick up a copy.

Money

During the school day, the students normally have no need for money, with the exception of days when fundraising activities or field trips are scheduled. The school strongly discourages students from bringing wallets and cash with them and cannot assume responsibility for loss.

Public Displays of Affection

While the school supports modest physical affection between students, such as holding of hands between friends or embracing after a good shot in a ball game, romantically based physical affection is strongly discouraged as distracting from school work and undermining of the social well being of the class and school. Teachers will ask students to refrain from public displays of affection that, in the teacher's opinion, are distracting or disturbing to other students.

Telephone/Cell Phone for Student Use

School Phone: For non-emergency use, the school's office telephone may only be used with permission of the student's class teacher and the Office Administrator. All other teachers will refer students to their class teacher for permission to use the phone. No more than two students will be permitted phone access at any one time. After school activities are not to be arranged during school hours. Cell Phones: No cell phone use during school hours or at any school activity. Cell phones are to be turned off and kept with the student's personal belongings, not on their person.

Parent Behavior

Our school's primary focus is to provide the best possible learning environment for the children in our care. In order to do this, we believe it is necessary to pay close attention to our interactions with each other as adults. If we are hurried, unkind or unfeeling to each one another as we busily work "for the sake of the children", we miss a tremendous opportunity to contribute meaningfully to our children's education.

We believe that it is what we do on a day-to-day basis that speaks most loudly to our children. All adults in the community – teachers, staff members and parents – should consider themselves at all times to be role models. The benefit to the children is immense when we speak respectfully to each other, avoid gossip, take concerns to their source, forgive readily, observe school policies and courtesies, and follow through with what we say we are going to do. Our goal is to develop a culture where we work together to hold ourselves accountable to these ideals.

Any person on the school campus is expected to uphold the school-wide code of conduct outlined in the Discipline Policy. Additionally, parents must follow these guidelines when interacting with students on campus (extending 100 feet from the school boundary) or during any school sponsored activity (on or off campus):

1. We are a drug-free and smoke-free campus. Drugs, alcohol and tobacco may not be consumed on campus or in the presence of students.
2. It is expected that everyone interacting with students use appropriate language at all times. Profanity is not permitted.
3. We all come from different backgrounds and have differing views and tolerance levels. A comment intended innocently may be interpreted differently. The best policy is to avoid “joking” and “teasing” and focus on constructive communication.
4. Any person chaperoning a field trip or school activity must follow the school’s Discipline Policy. Make sure you have a clear understanding of this policy and the teacher’s expectation of you in this role. If you are not functioning in an official chaperone or supervision capacity, do not take it upon yourself to discipline any student.
5. Be aware of the types of conversations you are engaging in. For example, it is not appropriate to discuss a concern about a teacher or other staff member in the presence of students. This also includes negative “parking lot” talk.
6. Teachers are on campus to teach our students. Please respect their work. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in classroom activities, however these visits must be pre-scheduled with the teacher and or office. Parents are not permitted to enter a classroom unannounced. Each teacher has office hours when they can be contacted to discuss any questions or issues you may have. If you have an issue that requires immediate attention, it must be brought to the office.
7. We ask that you follow the guidelines set forth in the Nutrition Guidelines section of this handbook when contributing food or drinks to a school activity, including class trips. The class teacher should approve any food or drink that you plan to contribute.

Notes:

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this material. We hope that it has been informative and helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. We are looking forward to getting to know you and your child and having a year full of wonder!

I/We have read this handbook and agree to support the information contained herein. My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the information contained in the Mountain Oak School Parent/Student Handbook.

In addition, my/our signature(s) below indicates that I/we have expressly read and understand the attached Mountain Oak Discipline Guidelines. I am also aware that Mountain Oak Charter School has approved discipline and student conduct policies available for my review.

Student Name(s)/ Grade(s)

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please sign and return this page to your class teacher.

Thank you.

