

The logo is a stylized, black line-art representation of a sage plant with several leaves and a central stem.

# Mountain Sage Community School

Parent Handbook 2018-2019

Mountain Sage Community School  
2310 East Prospect Road, Ste. A  
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Phone (970) 568-5456  
Fax (970) 797-1202  
[www.mountainsage.org](http://www.mountainsage.org)

Dear Mountain Sage Families,

The greatest strength of Mountain Sage Community School is our highly skilled and dedicated community of teachers, students, parents, and friends. This Parent Handbook provides an overview of important information, yet no Parent Handbook can anticipate every situation or question. As you gain familiarity with the information here, please do not hesitate to contact me with questions. The need may arise to alter information in this handbook as the school deems appropriate, so please be aware that the school reserves the right to interpret or change these guidelines without prior notice.

Warmly,

Liv Helmericks

School Director

[lhelmericks@mountainsage.org](mailto:lhelmericks@mountainsage.org)

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# Mountain Sage Community School 2018 - 2019 Calendar

August 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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October 2018						
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December 2018						
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January 2019						
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February 2019						
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March 2019						
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31						








April 2019						
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28	29	30				

May 2019						
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June 2019						
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July 2019						
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28	29	30	31			

## Key

-  School Closed
-  Early Release Day (1:30 pm)
-  Parent Teacher Conferences
-  All School Festival/Event
-  Faculty Work Day (No school for students)
-  Kindergarten First/last Day
-  Grades First/Last Day of School

## Important Dates & Events

- August 13 - 17 Faculty Planning & Professional Development Days
- August 22 First Day of School for Grades 1-8 (1:30 pm Dismissal)
- August 23 First Day of School for Kindergarten (12:15 Dismissal for K)
- September 3 Labor Day (No Students)
- October 6 Harvest Festival
- October 18 & 19 Parent-Teacher Conferences
- November 19 - 23 Thanksgiving Break (No Students)
- December 8 Winter Faire
- December 21 - Jan 4 Winter Break (No Students)
- January 7 Faculty Work Day (No Students)
- January 21 MLK Jr. Day (No Students)
- February 15 & 18 Faculty Work Days (No Students)
- March 18 - 22 Spring Break (No Students)
- April 11 & 12 Parent-Teacher Conferences
- May 3 May Faire
- May 17 Faculty Work Day (No Students)
- May 27 Memorial Day (No Students)
- May 29 Last Day of School for Kindergarten (12:15 pm Dismissal for K)
- May 30 Last Day of School for Grades 1-8 (1:30 pm Dismissal)
- May 31 Faculty Work Day

Please visit the [online school calendar](#) for dates and times of Board Meetings, Parent Circle Meetings, and other upcoming events.

Visit our online school calendar: <http://www.mountainsage.org/calendar.html>

### Kindergarten Daily Schedule

8:00-8:25am – Drop off  
8:30-9:30am – Activity/Circle/Movement/Language  
9:30-10:30am - Free Play  
10:30-11am - Snack  
11-11:50am - Outdoor Play  
12:15pm – Dismissal for Half-Day Kindergarten  
12:15-12:45pm – Full-day kindergarten lunch  
(1:30pm Early Release on Thursdays for full day K)  
12:45-1:15pm - Rest Time  
1:15-3:30pm - Free Play/Activity/Chores  
3:30pm - Dismissal

### Grades 1 through 5 Daily Schedule

8:00-8:25am- Drop off  
8:30-10:30 am – Main Lesson  
10:30-11:00 am - Snack and Recess  
11:05-11:50 am - Period I  
11:55-12:40 pm - Period II  
(1:30pm Early Release on Thursdays)  
12:40-1:40 pm - Lunch and Recess  
1:45-2:30 pm - Period III  
2:35-3:20 pm - Period IV  
3:20-3:30 pm - Clean-up  
3:30pm - Dismissal

### Grades 6 through 8 Daily Schedule

8:00-8:10am – Drop off  
8:15-9:00am – Period A  
9:05-9:50am – Period B  
9:50-10:00am – Snack  
10:05-11:50am – Main Lesson  
11:55-12:25pm – Recess  
12:30-12:50pm – Lunch  
(1:30pm Early Release on Thursdays)  
12:55-1:40pm – Period C  
1:45-2:30pm – Period 3  
2:35-3:20 pm – Period 4  
3:30pm – Dismissal

\*A \$1 per minute/child late fee will be charged for any child whose pickup arrives after 4:00pm M,T,W,F or 2:00pm on Early Release day (Thursday), unless prior arrangements have been made with a faculty member. This fee will be due upon arrival.

## **Introduction to Mountain Sage**

### **Mission: Cultivating the Creative Mind.**

Mountain Sage Community School offers Waldorf-inspired, arts-integrated education, fully incorporating sustainable living practices into student learning. Each child is empowered to cultivate meaningful connections to their intellectual, physical, emotional, social and creative capacities in healthy, safe and beautiful learning environments. Through a supportive community of peers, parents and teachers, each child will become a confident, self-directed and engaged learner, invested in their own education.

### **Vision: An engaged community of intelligent, compassionate, and creative individuals.**

Mountain Sage Community School is a highly sought after school providing a rigorous educational program where a whole-child approach to learning results in student curiosity and enthusiasm, allowing each child to reach the fullest expression of their individual potential. Children emerge from Mountain Sage as intelligent, compassionate, creative thinkers, who are engaged citizens with a strong work ethic, prepared to become stewards of the earth and its many diverse communities.

By integrating the Colorado Academic Standards into the traditional Waldorf curriculum, children leave Mountain Sage with a life-long passion for learning, well prepared for the transition into other academic programs.

### **Inspired by Waldorf Education & Sustainable Living**

The arts (drama, music, painting, drawing, movement etc.) are integrated into the entire academic curriculum. Education through the arts awakens imagination and creative capacities, bringing vitality and wholeness to learning. Each topic of study is presented with deep regard for its inherent value for the children in relation to their developmental stage, while also integrating the Colorado Academic Standards.

The school's environment expresses an appreciation for beauty and nature. The classrooms have a nurturing and imaginative ambience. We seek to create and maintain a calm and nurturing educational environment.

Mountain Sage defines *sustainable living practices* as daily choices that reflect our striving to nurture healthy and equitable relationships between social, economic and environmental systems. We define *sustainability* as the mindful awareness of the interconnected relationships between our planet and the diversity of life upon it.

### **Student Assessment, Conferences, and Progress Reports**

Student academic growth is assessed through teacher observations, review of practice work, formative and summative assessments, and student portfolio reviews. AIMSweb is a formative assessment tool used throughout grades for various subjects. Third through eighth grade students are assessed using NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) twice per year. We also participate in state mandated assessments; early literacy assessments for kindergarten through third graders compliant with the Colorado READ Act (DIBELS Next), and annual standardized assessments for third through eighth graders (Colorado Measure of Academic Success or CMAS).

Parent conferences are scheduled in October and April. To assist in the development of the child, parent or teacher may request additional conferences. Mid-year progress reports are sent to parents each January. End-of-year progress reports are delivered in June.

## **Homework at Mountain Sage**

At Mountain Sage we view homework as a training of the will. Homework should help to reinforce skills and concepts taught in class, as well as develop healthy habits around individual responsibilities, organization, and time-management. Homework provides an opportunity for parents to see what their child's class is working on, as well as insight into their child's academic practice and progress. We do not want there to be a heavy and overwhelming load on the growing child.

### ***We ask parents to support their child in their homework responsibilities by:***

- Creating an uncluttered, quiet environment for your child to work, with supplies at the ready.
- Establishing a consistent time when homework is done.
- Being available to field questions.
- Asking their child about what homework they have.
- Reviewing homework, if needed, to ensure it is done well and can be turned in on time.
- Reading teacher email newsletters about homework rhythms.
- Helping to plan and prepare when your child is assigned a long-term project (3rd through 8th grade).

If your child works diligently and keeps track of weekly assignments (when applicable) the following time indications and guidelines should apply. If your child has been working diligently for the time indicated for their grade, but continues to struggle with a certain element within a homework assignment, parents may end the homework session and leave a note for the teacher indicating what their child struggled with.

### ***Kindergarten through Second Grade***

- Daily reading time with students is strongly recommended.
- Homework is not typically given in kindergarten through second grade because family responsibilities are the student's home work.

### ***Third Grade***

- Daily reading is strongly recommended, in addition to any homework assignments.
- Regular or periodic homework may begin with no more than 15 minutes on a school night.

### ***Fourth Grade***

- Daily reading may be expected on most weekdays.
- Regular or periodic homework may be assigned and should last no more than 25 minutes on a school night.
- Parents' role should lessen as students learn their homework/independent work rhythms.



### **Fifth Grade**

- Daily reading, of an increasing length, may be expected on most weekdays.
- Regular homework may be assigned and should last no more than 35 minutes on a school night.
- Parents should be monitoring completion and/or helping their child as needed, though most work should be done without parental support.

### **Sixth through Eighth Grade**

- Daily reading, of an increasing length, may be expected on most weekdays.
- Regular homework may be assigned and should last no more than 45 minutes on a school night. There will be an increase in classwork completion, projects/long-term assignments as well as daily practice. This is designed to strengthen the student's' independent work ethic and time management skills.

### **Entrance Age Requirements**

In the 2018-2019 school year Mountain Sage enrolls kindergarten students who are 5 years old by September 15th the year they will start kindergarten. This policy carries on in grades 1 through 8. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, Mountain Sage will enrolls kindergarten students who are 5 years old by August 1st the year they will start kindergarten. However, parents are strongly encouraged to enroll their child in kindergarten only if they have turned 5 years old by June 1st in the year they intend to begin kindergarten.

### **School Supplies Fee**

At Mountain Sage, we do not ask parents to purchase school supplies for their students. Instead, we have a school supply fee that allows us to fund bulk purchases of high-quality curriculum materials used in the Waldorf-inspired classroom. The School Supplies Fee is \$250 per K-8 student. For Homeschool Enrichment students the School Supplies Fee is \$100 per student.

### **Full-Day Kindergarten Fee**

Payment is required in order to participate in this particular program. The total costs for the school year is \$3100, or \$310/month for 10 months. Invoices for full day kindergarten are mailed monthly.

Enrollment in the full-day kindergarten requires a non-refundable one-month payment/retainer (\$310) at the time of registration, to be applied to the total cost of the annual full-day kindergarten cost. If a family fails to pay their monthly invoice for 2 months in a row, the family will be notified that they have 10 business days to pay the outstanding invoices, or their child will be reassigned to the half-day kindergarten program.

### **Communication**

#### **All School News**

All school news updates are emailed to enrolled families periodically. We ask that parents read the newsletter and mark their calendars for relevant dates and events. These newsletters are emailed from "Mountain Sage Community School" by School Director, Liv Helmericks ([lhelmericks@mountainsage.org](mailto:lhelmericks@mountainsage.org)). It is important that you check your spam mail for these messages. If you are not receiving these emails or want to add a contact to the mailing list, please contact us.

## **Website**

The school website, [www.mountainsage.org](http://www.mountainsage.org) is an important informational resource that includes an online school calendar and much more.

## **Facebook**

If you have a Facebook account, you can follow the *Mountain Sage Community School* Facebook page.

## **One Call Now**

One Call Now is the automated phone and text message system used to contact parents and guardians about things requiring a timely response such as weather closures, emergencies, and important reminders and school news. For this reason, it is mandatory that parent and guardians be enrolled in this system. Phone numbers given at enrollment will automatically be placed into this system. Keep the school informed about phone number changes, as this system is only as effective as our current data.

## **Emails from Teachers**

Teachers update families about classroom life via email every 1-2 weeks. Emails can include updates on curriculum, classroom events, requests for volunteers, and more. Some of our teachers use class blogs, as well.

## **Email Policy**

Please use email among your class and school communities only to communicate objective and school related information. Disagreements or disputes should be handled using a medium other than email. Sending individual or group e-mails of a contentious or negative nature is strongly discouraged. Failure to comply with this policy may result in being removed from a class and/or school e-mail list.

## **Parent/Teacher Communication Guidelines**

We wish to foster a healthy, effective communication process between staff and parents. To help us achieve this goal, we encourage using the following guidelines when questions arise:

1. Questions about curriculum and instruction should first be brought directly to your child's teacher. Ensuring timely communication with your child's teacher about any concern is very important.
2. In most cases, email should only be used for the dispersal of information, clarifying information, or coordination. A good use of email is to request a phone or personal meeting.
3. If at all possible, sensitive questions or concerns should be brought in person. If a scheduled meeting is not easily achievable, a phone call is the next best option.
4. If you have utilized the above modes of communication and still feel that your child's teacher has not adequately answered your questions or alleviated your concerns, please contact the School Director. The result will mostly likely be a facilitated meeting that helps you and the class teacher solve outstanding issues. A teacher may also request a facilitated meeting if s/he believes it may be helpful for resolution.
5. If, at this point, a resolution has not been reached, the parties involved can request the formal grievance process be initiated.

## **Grievance Process**

This procedure for redress is a series of steps designed to assist in the resolution of disagreements when the parties are unable to settle their differences. Parents, students, or teachers may initiate this process. Such a request must be in writing and submitted to the School Director for further action. The School Director will then communicate with those involved in the conflict. A meeting will take place, resulting in an agreed upon plan of resolution. If, after completion of this meeting, the conflict has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, it may then be taken to the MSCS Board of Trustees for a final ruling. The procedure for filing concerns is as follows:

1. The parties will make every attempt to communicate the concern directly to the teacher, the School Director, or the parent(s) for resolution. If the parties are unable to come to a resolution, they may file their concern, in writing, with the School Director.
2. In cases where the concern has been addressed with the School Director, and any party remains dissatisfied with the decisions made to resolve the conflict at this level, that party may take their concerns to the MSCS Board of Trustees. Such a complaint will be made in a written statement, which details the violation, procedures taken, and requested remedy. The complaint shall be submitted to the MSCS Board of Trustees at least one week prior to the next Board of Trustees meeting. Complaints submitted after that month's board meeting will be addressed at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board of Trustees responding at, or prior to, its next regular public meeting.
3. The Board of Trustees will hear arguments from the parties, review prior decisions and evidence, and make inquiries as it deems necessary. The Board of Trustees will then render a written decision within ten business days after the meeting unless additional time is needed. The Board of Trustees' decision shall be final.

## **Commitment to Nondiscrimination**

Mountain Sage Community School is an equal opportunity educational institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic group orientation, ancestry, or physical or mental handicap in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

## **School and Family Partnership**

### **Visiting the School**

All those who visit the school must first check in at the front office. Additionally, all school visitor school must have a visible visitor sticker on at all times. This shows faculty and students that you have checked in, and are allowed to be inside the school building.

## **Class Parent Information Meetings**

Held at least twice time per year, class parent information meetings are a time for class parents to engage with one another and their child's class teacher. Teachers share curriculum, current happenings, as well as providing insights to how these elements relate to child development. It is also a time for parents to ask questions and share their experiences. Please plan to attend all parent evenings.

## **Mandatory Parent Orientation**

Attending a Parent Orientation in September is mandatory for all families new to the school. Please check the online calendar on the school's website for dates and times.

## **10 Needs for a Healthy Childhood & Educational Experience**

Parents can support their children by agreeing to ensure the following:

1. ***Proper Nutrition***  
A good, hot, nutritious breakfast every day before school. Breakfast, snack and lunch should contain lots of protein, and no sugar or food additives.
2. ***Adequate Sleep***  
Try to be in bed no later than 8:00 PM on school nights. Most children still need 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night.
3. ***Minimal Media***  
No computer, TV, video games or other screen time on Sundays through Thursdays. No murder, mayhem or movies or videos with meant for adults on the weekend, ever.
4. ***Quiet Time***  
Provide some daily quiet time, without radio, screens, or videogames. Give your child the gift of silence.
5. ***Time in Nature***  
Spend some time in nature every day. Experience the weather; pay attention to the seasons, moon, stars and sky.
6. ***Chores at Home***  
Assign some responsibilities for taking care of the home, pets and yard.
7. ***Appropriate Dress***  
Pay attention to keeping your child warm and dry while at school, especially their feet. Dressing in layers is important in Colorado!
8. ***Cultivate Reverence***  
Many traditions offer practices that help develop the reverence for life that supports home, school and community relationships. If desired, create your own.
9. ***Support Your Child's Education***  
Help develop healthy homework habits, participate in school activities, and communicate honestly about your concerns with your child's teachers.
10. ***Support the Class Community***  
Get to school on time. Plan vacations during breaks. Support the class code of conduct. Children thrive on shared values and alignment among their adult role models.

## **Volunteerism**

Each family is asked to give 25 hours of volunteer time per year. This goal can be achieved through the combined efforts of multiple family members (parents, 18+ years of age older siblings, grandparents etc)

To ensure the safety of students and staff, all volunteers must first be registered and approved in order to volunteer. Visit the school website to register: <http://www.mountainsage.org/volunteer.html>

All volunteers must sign in at the front desk and wear their volunteer name badge every time when volunteering at the school.

Some ways to volunteer are:

- Class plays – costuming sets, lighting, etc.
- Vision and hearing screening clinics held at the school
- Student reading groups
- School festivals
- Sewing projects
- Chaperoning nature walks, field trips and camping trips
- Assist in the classroom or teach a class using special skills you have to offer
- Attend Parent Circle Meetings
- Serve as a Class Support Coordinator
- Help with garden and playground development

## **Mountain Sage Parent Circle**

This mission of Mountain Sage Parent Circle is to support a culture of service, to enliven community, and to facilitate parent dialogue and education. Parent Circle meetings are open to all parents, always.

Each class teacher will retain two key parent volunteers (Parent Circle Representatives) dedicated to furthering the mission of the Parent Circle and supporting the needs of the class. These key parent volunteers will share and accomplish the following responsibilities/tasks, in the way they determine works best for them:

- Attend the monthly Parent Circle meetings
- Attend monthly Team Meetings with the Class Teacher, and Parent Circle Work Sessions as needed
- Coordinate/communicate with parent volunteers for classroom & school-wide needs.
- Communicate with the school Volunteer Coordinator, as needed
- Support parent education about Mountain Sage values and culture
- Enliven class community through various methods (potluck, park gatherings etc).
- Hold a key coordinating role in Mountain Sage Winter Faire
- Understand and promote Mountain Sage scrip program
- Help to facilitate teacher appreciation activities

**Parent Circle Business Meetings** meetings will generally be held on the second Friday of every month, September through May, from 8:30-10am.

**Parent Circle Work Sessions** will be held (as needed) on the third Tuesday of every month, September through April, from 2:00-3:30pm.

**Parent-Teacher Team Meetings** (Parent Circle Representatives and teachers) will generally be held on the fourth Thursday of every month, September through May, from 2-2:30pm at the school. Childcare will be provided. Subject teachers will also have access to Parent Circle Representatives at this time.

## **School Fundraisers**

Fundraising is integral to our continued financial prosperity.

The **Scrip card program** (including King Soopers and Natural Grocers) at Mountain Sage are on-going fundraising programs that function at **no cost** to participants! Simply preload your card for any amount you like and simply use these cards to pay for your purchases. These companies have chosen to donate to non-profits and giving a percentage of the money participants spend at their establishments to our school. You can also support Mountain Sage through these scrip programs with your purchase of "gift cards" using Shop with Scrip (a large database of stores such as Sprouts, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, airlines, hotels and more).

Mountain Sage also invites you to participate in our other fundraising programs:

- Caps4Cash - Morning Fresh Dairy cap collection.
- Vehicles for Charity - Donate your car to provide a cash donation to the school.
- Recurring Monthly Contribution, or a One-time Contribution

To learn more about the ways you can support Mountain Sage visit: <http://www.mountainsage.org/ways-support-our-school.html>

## **Student Health**

### **Illness**

Please keep your child at home when they are ill. A child who has had a fever or vomited within the last 24 hours or has a bacterial infection and has not been on antibiotics for 24 hours is not permitted to attend school. Children who become sick or ill at school will be taken to the Health Office and evaluated. Parents will be contacted if a child's condition warrants, and asked to pick up their child. In the event of a medical emergency, the school will endeavor to contact parents, and if necessary, arrange for the child to be taken to the hospital.

Please notify the school by phone, 970-568-5456, and/or email, Office Manager, Arpad Lazar, (alazar@mountainsage.org) if your child will miss school due to illness. In the case of an extended absence (more than two days), please have your child discuss upon return, what school work needs to be made up.

## **Communicable and Contagious Diseases**

If it is discovered at home that a child has a communicable and contagious disease (i.e. pink eye, lice, ringworm) it is the parents' responsibility to inform the school. It is also the parents' responsibility to keep the school updated as to the status of the medical condition. If there are more than two children per classroom with the same condition, a letter will go out to the parents of all the children in that class. In some cases a medical clearance may be necessary for the child to return to school. The office staff will inform parents as to the protocol for the specific situation at hand.

If it is discovered at school that a child has a communicable disease, the child will be evaluated and parents contacted. The child may be sent home immediately or at the end of the day, whichever is appropriate given the specific situation.

The most important thing when dealing with communicable diseases is to maintain honest and open communication with our office staff. Our duty is to treat every situation with professionalism and compassion, protecting the health of all of the children at Mountain Sage.

## **Immunization/Health Forms**

All children must have a complete series of the required immunizations or a filed exemption according to state regulations. Each child must have a complete and up-to-date Mountain Sage health form on file before the first day of school. If your child has an allergy, have your doctor complete Health Care Action Plan paper work, as well as the Authorization to Administer Medication paper work. Forms can be requested at the front office.

## **Medication**

Colorado Health Department regulations do not permit administration of ANY oral or topical substance whether over-the-counter, homeopathic, or prescription without a physician's approval. Likewise, students are not allowed to self-administer. Only parents may enter school grounds and administer one dose without a doctor's prescription/authorization.

Medication prescribed or authorized by a physician for a child may be brought to the school only if both:

1. The medication is in its original container and (if prescription) must have the original label showing date filled, physician's directions for use, and child's name.
2. Parents or guardians have physician fill out and sign an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form (available at the front office).

For asthma or allergies, an action plan must also be completed in order to keep medications at school and administer them.

Visit the school Health Office webpage: <http://www.mountainsage.org/health-office.html>

## **Child Abuse Reporting**

State law requires administrators and teachers to report cases of suspected child abuse immediately. This includes suspected abuse occurring at or away from school.

## **School Safety**

### **Supervision Before, During, and After School**

1. There is NO FACULTY SUPERVISION on school grounds before 8:00am on school days. From 8:00am to 8:30am faculty supervision is available on the playground (occasionally, on inclement mornings, this supervision will be in classrooms). Before this time, you are solely responsible for supervising your child(ren).
2. Students remaining after the pick up line is through will be brought to the front desk area to wait for their parent/guardian. Parents/guardians of students picked up after 4:00pm on regular school days, and after 2:00pm on early release days (Thursdays), will be charged \$1 per minute per child after such times. Payment will be due upon arrival.
3. Students may not go beyond the school property, fenced or not. Only with permission and supervision will they be allowed to leave.
4. Once picked up, students are the responsibility of their parents/guardians.

### **Field Trips & Nature Walks**

Class field trips are selected and planned by the teacher with parent support, and are designed to enrich the students' experience of a particular aspect of the curriculum. Parent assistance is appreciated and necessary to help facilitate field trips. Field trips/Nature Walks are a privilege. Whether a child is eligible to participate in a field trip is at the teacher's discretion.

If a child requires medication, the medication (along with appropriate information related to the medication) will be kept by the class teacher. Children will not keep the medication in their possession.

### **Field Trip/Nature Walk Guidelines for Chaperones**

Chaperones must be registered and approved volunteers. Volunteers act as assistant teachers/supervisors on field trips. We ask parents to participate actively in field trip supervision, with the guidance of the teacher, to help ensure the success of any trip off campus. To accomplish these goals, we ask volunteers to follow these guidelines:

- Be prompt
- Plan to stay for the entire duration of the field trip
- Keep your assigned group together and on time
- Remember that all children in your assigned group are your responsibility
- Do not bring or buy special treats for your assigned group
- Model appropriate behavior for the students
- Supervise cleanup if it is required
- Ask the teacher for help if any questions or concerns arise

### **Parking Lot Safety and Transportation**

#### **Vehicle Transportation**

Please pay attention to Mountain Sage traffic attendants at all times. Please do not exit your vehicle in pick-up/drop-off lanes. If you must park, enter the pick-up/drop-off lane and signal to an attendant that you will be parking. Note that there are very few parking spaces available and if you choose to park you may need to wait to be released until after the pick-up line has subsided or until a traffic attendant can assist you.



**Parking is not permitted in lots adjacent to the school or in the business parking lot on the south side of Prospect. All other parking lots in the business park are private property. Cars will be towed at the owner expense.**

**Compliance during pick-up and drop-off times is essential.** Make safety and attention to traffic attendants your priority. Being kind, safe, respectful and responsible are values actively taught to the children. Please model these behaviors during drop-off and pick-up time.

### **Morning Drop Off**

Follow the traffic flow arrows on the diagram below. Beginning at 8am at the attendant's signal may pull forward into the loading/unloading zone (dashed line on the diagram), allowing their children to exit the car and go directly to the playground (grades K-5) or follow the sidewalk toward the building to their classroom (grades 6-8) . Watch for the attendant's signal to slowly move forward out of the loading/unloading zone, exiting safely from the parking lot.

### **Afternoon Pick Up**

Hang your Driveline number tag on your rearview mirror. At the attendant's signal cars in the first lane may pull forward into the loading/unloading zone. Following cars should fill in the waiting lanes, starting with the southern most lane. Wait in one of three lines until an attendant signals you to move forward to the loading/unloading zone (dashed line on the diagram). Once in the loading/unloading zone, all cars are stopped and children are released from to walk to their cars. When all children are safely loaded, the attendant will signal to slowly move forward out of the loading/unloading zone, safely exiting the parking lot.

**If biking or walking,** children and parents must enter and exit the playground via the sidewalk along the western and southern perimeters of the parking lot. At pick-up, you are free to meet your children at the playground and escort them to your transportation. Please walk your bikes, scooters etc. on school sidewalks and traffic areas.

- Please note that the east-west roadway is a common road for the business park. Do not impede other traffic on this roadway.
- Parking is very limited at Mountain Sage, and parking is not allowed in surrounding lots.
- Students cannot be dropped off anywhere other than the loading/unloading zone (the dotted line on the map).
- Do not let your child(ren) out of the car until you are directed to do so by the attendant. Please do not get out of your vehicle.
- Do not use your cell phone during during the drop off/pick up flow.
- Watch for students who are biking or walking to school.
- No idling! When parked in front of the school building, or while waiting in the drop off/pick up zone, turn off your car.
- Do not use the handicap parking spaces unless you have the proper licensing or permit.
- Consider biking, walking or carpooling. This reduces congestion and speed up the pick-up/drop-off process.

## **Public Transportation**

At Mountain Sage we encourage alternative modes of transportation to school. The Transfort Bus #18 drops off at Prospect Parkway directly across Prospect Road from Mountain Sage.

## **Non-Motorized Transportation**

Please walk your bikes across the parking lot to bike racks located at the northeast corner of the building. Bikes, roller blades, skateboards, and scooters are not allowed in front of the school building, and should be stored at the racks located on the north side of the building.

## **Bike & Walk to School Program**

Mountain Sage Community School is committed to seeing as many students biking and walking to school as possible. Even if you live far away, we hope all families will be able to at celebrate the major Bike & Walk to School Days (International Walk to School Day in October & National Bike to School Day in May). Even a reaching the goal of walking or biking once per month, is a great achievement. Walking or biking part of the way from a remote "Park & Walk " location is excellent (see below)!

Mountain Sage is right off the Spring Creek Trail. If you live near the Power Line, Poudre or Spring Creek Trails, you may even be able to bike to school without crossing many streets!

## **Remote Park & Walk Options**

Any families that have the extra time to park away from the school and walk a short distance, even once a week, will greatly assist the school in reducing the car traffic, congestion and air pollution at school. Also, it will give your child time for some energizing morning exercise, or the time after school to chat and reconnect.

- Bath Nursery has given us permission to use their parking lot any time.
- Riverbend Ponds Natural Area on the north side of Prospect. It is a ¾ mile walk on the sidewalk and/or Spring Creek Trail.
- East parking lot of Edora Park near EPIC (Riverside Ave & Prospect Rd) once a week in the morning or afternoon. It is 20-minute walk on the Spring Creek Trail.

## **School Closures Due to Weather and/or Road Conditions**

Decisions about weather-related school closures are made by 5:30am. Parents and staff will be notified through One Call Now, email, and the Mountain Sage website. Please keep your email and phone information current so we can reach you. Please note that we do not follow PSD's delayed start or heat day modifications.

## **School Weather Policy**

We believe all children should spend time outdoors daily. On very cold mornings (when the temperature is less than 18 degrees, including wind chill) or when it is raining heavily, students may be directed into the building after drop-off. Students will report to their regular classroom and may visit quietly, read, or play a game while waiting for school to begin. During the school day, all children must go out when the temperature is greater than 18° (including wind chill). If the temperature is between 18° and 0° the decision to go outside for recess will be the choice of the teacher (depending on the preparedness of the students) and recess may be shortened depending on conditions. When the temperature reaches 0°, all students will remain inside for recess and planned outdoor activities. Games class, nature walks and

arrival/dismissal situations will follow the above guidelines.

Our front desk uses a colored card system to indicate current weather guidance to teachers:

Red = below 0 degrees

Yellow = between 0 and 18 degrees

Green = above 18 degrees

## School Emergencies

Mountain Sage utilizes the Standard Response Protocol developed by the *I Love You Guys Foundation*. This is a widely used standard response protocol, familiar to first responders in our community. It is important that parents are informed about the symbols and actions corresponding with this Standard Response Protocol.



### STUDENT SAFETY

A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the classroom response to an incident at school. Weather events, fire, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by students, teachers, staff and administration.

### SRP

Our school is expanding the safety program to include the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). The SRP is based on these four actions. Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. In the event of an emergency, the action and appropriate direction will be called on the PA.

**LOCKOUT** - "Secure the Perimeter"

**LOCKDOWN** - "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"

**EVACUATE** - "To the Announced Location"

**SHELTER** - "For a Hazard Using a Safety Strategy"

### TRAINING

Please take a moment to review these actions. Students and staff will be trained and the school will drill these actions over the course of the school year. More information can be found at <http://iloveguys.org>



### LOCKOUT SECURE THE PERIMETER

Lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building.

#### STUDENTS:

- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

#### TEACHERS

- Recover students and staff from outside building
- Increased situational awareness
- Do business as usual
- Take roll, account for students



### LOCKDOWN LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SIGHT

Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the school building.

#### STUDENTS:

- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence

#### TEACHERS:

- Lock classroom door
- Lights out
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Wait for First Responders to open door
- Take roll, account for students



### EVACUATE TO A LOCATION

Evacuate is called to move students and staff from one location to another.

#### STUDENTS:

- Bring your phone
- Leave your stuff behind
- Form a single file line
- Show your hands
- Be prepared for alternatives during response.

#### TEACHERS:

- Grab roll sheet if possible
- Lead students to Evacuation Location
- Take roll, account for students



### SHELTER FOR A HAZARD USING SAFETY STRATEGY

Shelter is called when the need for personal protection is necessary.

#### SAMPLE HAZARDS:

- Tornado
- Hazmat

#### SAMPLE SAFETY STRATEGIES:

- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room

#### STUDENTS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies

#### TEACHERS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies
- Take roll, account for students



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## **Safe2Tell**

We encourage students to engage in direct communication with Mountain Sage staff when faced with a potentially serious situation involving the school/school community. However, if direct communication feels intimidating, there is another avenue to take. Safe2Tell is a valuable resource for this that we share with our students. By calling the Safe2Tell hotline or submitting a report through the website or mobile app, students (and community members) can ANONYMOUSLY REPORT anything that is scaring or endangering them, their friends, or their family. If you, or someone you know, is struggling and you don't know where to turn for help, you always can start by making a report to Safe2Tell™ Colorado.

Call 1-877-542-7233, make a web report using the submit a tip button to the left, or download the Safe2Tell Colorado mobile app on the [Apple Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

## **Student Life**

### **Attendance Policy**

If a child is going to be absent from school, parents should notify the school office by 8:30am the day of the absence. Any absence requires a written or telephoned explanation from the student's parent or guardian. Assignments to catch up on missed material will be determined at the discretion of the teacher. Encourage your child to inquire with their teacher regarding missed work. This teaches them responsibility.

Per PSD guidelines, students who have 4 unexcused absences in a month, or ten in a year are considered truant. To see a list of what is considered an excused absence please visit: <https://www.psdschools.org/sites/psd.psdschools.org/files/PSD/policies//JH-JHB.pdf>.

If you arrive after 8:15am (for grades 6 through 8), or after 8:30am (for Kindergarten through grade 5), you must walk your child into school and sign them in at the front desk. Students who arrive late will be marked as tardy.

### **Early School Departure**

If it becomes necessary for a parent to pick up their child before the scheduled school dismissal time, the parent must come into the school and sign the student out at the front office. If the student is returning during the school day, they must be signed back in at the front office upon their return. Whenever possible, parents should schedule routine appointments outside of school hours.

### **Dress Code**

Mountain Sage Community School requests the support of all parents in encouraging moderate clothing and personal grooming to create a student community focused on learning. We ask that students wear clothing that is clean, simple, in good repair, comfortable, modest, and safe. All teachers have the discretion, if they deem a child's clothing to be distracting to the learning environment, to ask the child to change, conceal the clothing in question, and/or call the child's parent. The faculty is responsible for monitoring the dress standards within their class. If you have questions, please consult your child's teacher.

Mountain Sage strongly encourages parents to provide their children with clothing free from media

advertisements, cartoon images, slogans, and commercial logos of any kind. Writing, pictures, or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane or sexually suggestive, or which bare drug, alcohol or tobacco advertising, promotions and likenesses, or which advocate racial, ethnic, political, or religious prejudice are prohibited.

**Shoes:** Children should come to school wearing comfortable, practical shoes that are firmly attached to the feet and are appropriate for movement activities and the weather. Shoes must be worn at all times on campus. Flip-flops are not acceptable footwear. Kindergarten through fifth grade students should have a comfortable pair of "indoor shoes" with a firm sole that securely attach to the foot (no slippers please).

**Clothing:** Attire that exposes the chest, midriff, or buttocks is not allowed; shorts and skirts must reach the bottom of fingertips when arms are held at sides. All clothing must fit appropriately. Outer clothing must conceal undergarments. Chains or studs hanging from clothes are not allowed.

**Hair, hats, and makeup:** Hair should be maintained in a style that does not cover the face. All clothing must allow students to make eye contact at all times. Small, modest, pierced earrings may be worn. Modest make-up is allowed in grades 6, 7 and 8.

### **Weather Preparedness**

Because Colorado weather can change very quickly, children should come to school dressed in seasonally appropriate layers and shoes. Students should have rain/winter gear (weatherproof coat, boots and hood or hat) for cold, rainy and/or snowy days, as outside play is allowed in all but the most severe weather. Sunscreen and/or a sunhat should be worn to protect the skin on sunny days.

### **Electronic Device Policy**

Use of all hand-held electronic devices such cell phones, video games, iPods, etc. are strictly prohibited at all times on campus for students. We understand that some students who bike or walk to school need a phone for safety and communication with their parents after school. Such uses are acceptable, but the electronic device must be kept in the students backpack or with the class teacher and remain off until the end of the school day.

### **Lunch & Snacks**

All students, except kindergartners, need to bring a mid-morning snack in addition to their lunches. All food arriving at school with your child should be well balanced and nutritious. Packaged foods with chemical additives are greatly discouraged. Gum, candy, sugary foods, and sugary or caffeinated drinks are not allowed.

We ask that lunches be brought in sacks, baskets or cloth lunch bags that are free of media characters, slogans or advertising logos. In consideration for the earth, we ask whenever possible food items be packaged in reusable containers. Mountain Sage Community School is committed to waste reduction, as part of our sustainability mission.

Mountain Sage is currently a peanut restricted school. Due to the severe allergies of some students, we ask that families avoid the use of peanut products at school.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

In accordance with health code regulations, food prepared at home should not be served to classes for birthday celebrations. At Mountain Sage, each classroom teacher will determine her/his own means for celebrating student birthdays, which may or may not include food.

## **Recess Guiding Principles**

Recess is a magical time when children get a chance to experience the world and express themselves in their own imaginative ways. It is usually a joy to observe their play and we try to interfere as little as possible, only doing so when necessary for their safety and wellbeing. Kind, safe, respectful and responsible behavior is expected of everyone on the playground at all times.

The most important work of the teachers on the playground is the ability to observe. While staying aware of the overall activity we are watchful for any escalating disagreements, for any behavior that seems unusual or inappropriate, and for any children who seem unhappy or anxious.

**Inclusion-** Everyone is always welcome to join another group at play. A supervised class-specific game or activity may be off limits to others. Generally we encourage children not to rely on grownups for company at recess, though we can certainly comfort them for a moment or do things like twirl the jump rope to get things going or even to keep them going.

**Accepting change-** Children are encouraged to problem solve on their own unless it becomes a question of safety. We encourage them to accept changes in the direction of play in a group and to be easy going enough to find something else to do if they no longer like the game, rather than demanding their own way. Similarly, one child should not be allowed to insist on a change in play for all the others.

**Sharing resources-** Materials and forts on the playground are not “owned” from one recess to the next, though the children are encouraged to be respectful of others’ creations. Children need to practice courteous manners with each other when working out how to share things. They sometimes need assistance with this.

**Physical wellbeing-** Children should always be free to move. As much as possible, they are encouraged to stay at least a few feet from the fence so their range of motion remains open in all directions. The only contact allowed is a light tap on the shoulder, back or hip when playing tag. Tackling or wrestling of any kind is not allowed.

**A complete list of Mountain Sage Playground Rules is available upon request.**

## **Festivals**

These events are an integral part of our school curriculum and community. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend and participate. Dates for festivals are on the all school calendar. Information about each festival can be found on the school website.

## **Class Plays**

Plays begin with the simple observation of fairy tale puppet plays in kindergarten and can culminate in a complex offering or even Shakespearean play in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Plays are unique to

each class while sharing a common pedagogical thread of oral recitation, choral and/or instrumental music, costumes, set creation, teamwork and problem solving, curriculum enhancement, enlivenment, and fun. Please plan to attend these wonderful events in support of your child and their class achievements.

### **Instrumental Music**

All children participate in music class once a week, and the in grades 6 through 8 have a additional recorder ensemble class. Pentatonic flutes and recorders are the main musical instrument learned by students both in the classroom and in music class. Class teachers and the music teacher bring these instruments to the students with reverence, heralding the craftsmanship and care taken in their creation. Students are taught not only how to correctly play these instruments but also how to properly care for them. If however, a student damages his/her instrument or another child's instrument beyond usability, parents are responsible for paying for the cost of replacement (approximately \$100). On occasion, new parts can be purchased. If this is possible the school will only charge for the individual pieces required. All instruments remain school property.

### **Books**

Checking out library books is a privilege. All library books are due two weeks from check out date, unless other arrangements have been made with the librarian. If a book is lost, replacement of the same book in good condition, or a fee of \$10.00 must be paid to the school. Library privileges will be suspended until the library account has been cleared.

Use of classroom readers is also a privilege. Classroom readers must be returned in good condition upon completion of the assignment and as indicated by their teacher.

### **Behavior Expectations**

Students and staff at Mountain Sage are expected to model and follow our four Positive Behavior Values: *Kind, Safe, Respectful, and Responsible*.

We seek to put into practice the values necessary for a compassionate community; a loving community in which each child is valued and appropriately supported, a community of respect in which conflicts are resolved or mediated, a community of responsibility in which we (children and adults) show up on time and do our best.

In order to provide a school environment that fosters these values children are expected to learn to follow several basic guidelines:

- 1) *Safety first* - Including but not limited to: no hitting pushing, shoving, tripping, pinching, destruction of property and other unsafe physical actions. We are a drug, alcohol and weapon-free school.
- 2) *Be kind, and respect others and yourself* - Name calling, putdowns, teasing and bullying are not tolerated.
- 3) *Be responsible for your own learning* - Come to school on time and be prepared.
- 4) *Be supportive of everyone's learning* - No disrupting the learning environment.

Teachers will communicate specific expectations, and the consequences of failing to meet such expectations, to their students. When there is divergence from these expectations, the teachers will seek age-appropriate interventions to redirect behaviors.

We believe that all children want to be successful and want to learn. If they are having difficulties, it is our task as teachers and parents to help remove or mitigate those impediments. Angry words and actions or long lectures increase anxiety and self-blame in a child whose actions are an expression of anxiety and poor self-esteem. We strive to give fair and appropriate consequences for behavior in a manner that lets children know we love them, but not the poor choice they made.

When a child misbehaves, consequences should be appropriate to the offense. For example, if property is damaged, it can be replaced or repaired. If someone is hurt, apologies and amends must be offered. If time is wasted, free time may be used to make it up.

More serious, repeated behaviors (bullying, defiant behavior, willful disruption) are given firm consequences (including suspension) if the problem cannot be solved using restorative justice practices to repair the harm done. The goal is to change the offending behavior while protecting the emotional and physical safety of all of the children. Teachers use class meetings, instructional and literary examples, and a variety of techniques (role playing, conflict resolution, pedagogical stories, etc.) to address these social problems.

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

The School Director, at his or her discretion and on a case-by-case basis, may initiate suspension for a student if the above consequences are ineffective at improving student behavior, regardless of the incident(s). Suspension can provide time for teachers and parents/guardians to plan a strategy for the student to return. It also allows the student and parent/guardian an opportunity to reflect on behaviors and develop a new relationship to the expectation of the teacher and school. Suspension can teach reasonable consequences directly related to negative actions. Generally, suspension will not result from a specific conduct violation, but rather due to a student's repeated inability to successfully respond to aforementioned consequences and restorative practices.

## **Governance and Organization**

Mountain Sage Community School is an independently operated charter school authorized the Poudre School District (PSD).

Mountain Sage uses a threefold approach to governance and school community structure:

- 1) The *Board of Trustees*** provides operational oversight, establishes policy with input from school faculty, develops and implements strategic plans, pursues additional funding, and more.
- 2) The *Faculty and Staff*** uphold pedagogical and curriculum expertise, integration of state standards, integration of sustainable practices, upholds the school's mission through daily school life practices and procedures, directs the school's festival life, and more.



**3) The *Parent Circle*** supports a culture of service, enlivens community, and facilitates parent dialogue and education. Parent Circle is open to all parents/guardians.

The School Director, with help from the Director of Curriculum & Instruction, ensures and facilitates communication within and between these groups by attending group meetings. The administrative team provides operational compliance and oversight and guides the school's continued positive development.

Meeting dates and time of the Mountain Sage Board of Trustees are posted on the school's online calendar. Board Meeting agendas and meeting minutes can be found at our website:

<http://www.mountainsage.org/meetings-and-minutes.html>

Guests are welcome at board meetings. Please review our guest policy before attending:

[http://www.mountainsage.org/uploads/5/5/1/4/55142477/board\\_guest\\_policy.pdf](http://www.mountainsage.org/uploads/5/5/1/4/55142477/board_guest_policy.pdf)

Mountain Sage Faculty Meetings are held every Thursday from 2-5pm. Faculty Committee meetings are held from 3:30-4:30pm M, T, W, Th.

Meeting dates and time of the Mountain Sage Parent Circle are posted on the school's online calendar. Parent Circle generally meets the second Friday of every month from 8:30-10:30am.