

# Parent Handbook

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**For the 2020/2021 School Year**

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)

## A Special Note About the 2020-2021 School Year

This school year is unique. Operating amid a global pandemic, we will start our school year in a fully remote setting and may shift in and out of in-person learning. Our Mountain Sage Parent Handbook has been written with an eye toward the long term; many things reference in-person activities that may or may not take place this school year but have in the past and we anticipate happening in the future. Please refer to the [20/21 Parent Guide](#) for additional information specific to this school year.

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# 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.

## **The Word "Parent" at Mountain Sage**

The word "parent" appears a lot of places at Mountain Sage, including the Parent Handbook and Parent Circle. We understand that not everyone identifies in the same way with the word "parent," so we are providing our own definition: "someone who is a primary caregiver and/or guardian of a child, whether through biological and/or legal relation." When you see the word "parent" used at school, know it is with this definition in mind.

# 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:

The **Board of Directors** provides operational oversight, establishes policy with input from school faculty, develops and implements strategic plans, pursues additional funding, and more.

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.

The **Parent Circle** supports a culture of service, enlivens community, and facilitates parent dialogue. 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 Directors are posted on the school's online calendar. Board Meeting agendas and meeting minutes can be found at our [website](#). Guests are welcome as board meetings. Please review our [guest policy](#) before attending.

Mountain Sage Faculty Meetings are held every Friday afternoon.

Meeting dates and time of the Mountain Sage Parent Circle will be posted on the school's online calendar.

## Enrollment

### Age Requirements

Mountain Sage will enroll 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 Fees

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.

School fees are due in full by May 1st of the current school year. There are three ways to pay your school fees:

1. With a credit card in our online payment portal. [Click here](#) for more information or visit [www.MountainSage.org](http://www.MountainSage.org) and click on My MSCS.
2. With a check in the mail, sent to Mountain Sage Community School, 2310 E. Prospect Rd. Suite A, Fort Collins, CO, 80525.
3. With a check or cash in person. Stop by the school between 8:30 am and 3:30 pm.

To create a payment plan, please [contact](#) Amanda Griffith, Business Manager.

## Commitment to Nondiscrimination

Mountain Sage Community School is an equal opportunity educational institution and does not discriminate based on 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.

## Attendance

If a child will 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 for 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 the Poudre School District [website](#).

If a middle school student (grades 6-8) arrives after 8:15am, they must sign themselves in at the front desk. If a K-5 student arrives after 8:30am, the parent/guardian must walk their 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.

# Curriculum

## 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. Acadience Reading and Math are formative assessment tools used throughout the grades. 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 available in the Parent Vue system. Access information will be provided at the first Parent Meeting of the year and can also be requested at the front desk.

## 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 - 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.
- Traditional homework is not typically given in kindergarten through second grade because family responsibilities are the student's homework

### **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.
- Periodic homework may be assigned & 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 & 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 min. 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 independent work ethic & time management skills.

## **Supplies**

### **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. If a book is lost, a fee of \$10.00 must be paid to the school.

### **Instruments**

All children participate in music class once a week, and those in grades 6 through 8 have an 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.

## Computers

All children enrolled in our regular K-8 program automatically receive Chromebooks to support remote learning. Homeschool Enrichment children may receive a laptop upon request. All parents must sign the [Chromebook Acknowledgment Form](#). In the event a Chromebook is damaged, parents are responsible for paying a fee to commensurate with the damage. All computers remain school property.

## Events & Activities

### 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.

### Festivals

These events are an integral part of our school curriculum and community. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend and participate. Our school celebrates 5 main festivals - Harvest Festival, Lantern Walk, Winter Faire, Winter Spiral, and May Faire. Dates can be found on our [online school calendar](#). Information about each festival can be found on the school [website](#).

### 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. Children must demonstrate the ability to be safe, kind, responsible, and respectful in school before being allowed to participate in events off campus. Whether a child is eligible to participate in a field trip is at the teacher's discretion. Children not attending a field trip must be kept home. If there is a fee for a field trip that is cost prohibitive for your family, please inform your child's teacher.

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 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
- Keep your cell phone on you for emergencies but do not use it while chaperoning.
- Ask the teacher for help if any questions or concerns arise

## 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. If a child's clothing violates the dress code, a teacher may ask the child to change, conceal the clothing in question, and contact 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.

Writing, pictures, or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane or sexually suggestive, or which bear 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. All clothing must fit appropriately and cover undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded; tank tops are not considered 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 always allow students to make eye contact. 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.

# Personal Electronic Device Policy

Use of all personal electronic devices such as laptops, cell phones, video games, iPods, etc. are strictly prohibited on campus for students. In the event a teacher requires a student to use a laptop while on campus, only school-issued Chromebooks are to be used. These laptops are equipped with filters & safety protocols that are necessary to keep our students and school network safe. We understand that some students who bike or walk to school need a phone for safety and communication 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

Mountain Sage does not have a meal program. All students, except kindergartners, need to bring a mid-morning snack in addition to their lunches. Families are encouraged to send nourishing food and well balanced meals. Packaged foods with chemical additives are greatly discouraged. Gum, candy, soda and energy drinks are not allowed.

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 their own means for celebrating student birthdays.

## Recess

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 always expected of everyone on the playground.

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.

## Problem Solving and Redirection

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](#).

## Behavior and Discipline

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.

## Consequences

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 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 their 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 consequences and restorative practices.

## School Safety

### Supervision Before, During, and After School

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).

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 will be charged \$1 per minute per child after such times.**

Students may not go beyond the school property. Only with permission and supervision will they be allowed to leave. Once picked up, students are the responsibility of their parents/guardians.

## Parking Lot Safety and Transportation

Safety must be your top priority during drop off and pick up. Please read the important rules below.

### Rules to Remember

- Always drive slowly!
- Carefully follow directives of traffic attendants.
- Watch for students who are biking or walking.
- If not parking, drop off is only allowed via Driveline in the loading/unloading zone located along the west side fence of the playground.
- Do not use your cell phone during the drop off/pick up flow.
- Do not impede traffic on the east-west roadway.
- Parking is very limited at Mountain Sage, and parking is not allowed in surrounding lots.
- No idling! When parked at the school or waiting in the drop off/pick up zone, turn off your car.
- Keep your Driveline number private. Remove the tag from your rearview mirror when not in use. Talk to your children about who is allowed to pick them up and inform them of what/who they should expect at pick up each day.
- Inform the school if you have any safety concerns.
- Model the 4 Pillars during traffic. Be Kind, Safe, Respectful, and Responsible.

## Morning Drop Off

Beginning at 8am when teachers and traffic attendants arrive outside, all students will go directly to their classrooms. Drop off is only allowed via Driveline in the loading/unloading zone located along the west side fence of the playground. The bell rings at 8:25am. The drop off Driveline ends at 8:30am. If you arrive after 8:30am you must park and walk your child inside the building to sign them in.

## Afternoon Pick Up

Beginning at dismissal time: 3:30pm on M, T, W, TH, and 12:45 pm on early release, the pick-up Driveline ends 20 minutes after dismissal. If you plan to use our Walk-Up area during pick up time, please park in the school parking lot or use our remote park & walk locations (see info below). If you arrive after the Driveline closes, you must park and come inside to pick up your child.

Additional details for pick up and drop off for the 20/21 school year can be found on the [Drop Off & Pick Up](#) page of our website.

## School Weather Policy

We believe all children should spend time outdoors daily. On very cold mornings (when the temperature is less than 18 degrees F, including wind chill), when raining heavily, hailing, or lightning, students will 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°F (including wind chill). If the temperature is between 18°F and 0°F 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°F, it is hailing, or lightning, 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 =No outdoor activities

Yellow = Teacher discretion for outdoor activities

Green = All outdoor activities are a go

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

We align with PSD's delayed start and school closure announcements. Parents and staff will be notified through School Messenger, via text and/or email, and will be posted on the Mountain Sage website. Please keep your email and phone information current so we can reach you. Please note we do not follow PSD's heat day modifications.

## 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 can always 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.

## 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 parents are informed about the symbols and actions corresponding with this Standard Response Protocol. Visit this link to learn more about the [Standard Response Protocol](#).

# IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



## **HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.**

### **STUDENTS**

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced  
Do business as usual

### **ADULTS**

Close and lock the door  
Account for students and adults  
Do business as usual



## **SECURE! Get inside. Lock outside doors.**

### **STUDENTS**

Return to inside of building  
Do business as usual

### **ADULTS**

Bring everyone indoors  
Lock outside doors  
Increase situational awareness  
Account for students and adults  
Do business as usual



## **LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.**

### **STUDENTS**

Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door

### **ADULTS**

Recover students from hallway if possible  
Lock the classroom door  
Turn out the lights  
Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door  
Prepare to evade or defend



## **EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)**

### **STUDENTS**

Leave stuff behind if required to  
If possible, bring your phone  
Follow instructions

### **ADULTS**

Lead students to Evacuation location  
Account for students and adults  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



## **SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.**

### **STUDENTS**

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

#### **Hazard**

Tornado  
Hazmat  
Earthquake  
Tsunami

#### **Safety Strategy**

Evacuate to shelter area  
Seal the room  
Drop, cover and hold  
Get to high ground

### **ADULTS**

Lead safety strategy  
Account for students and adults  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

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[Haga clic aquí](#) para obtener una versión en español.

# Health

## COVID-19

Please see our [COVID-19 page](#) for resources specific to the illness, including government websites, family support, mental health, and more.

## 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, 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 school health technician 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 the children at Mountain Sage.

It is highly recommended that you encourage your children to follow good practices to avoid communicable disease. Encouraging your student to not share hats, shoes, and coats, to wash hands often, and to cover coughs helps to keep everyone healthy.

## 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 paperwork, as well as the Authorization to Administer Medication paperwork.

## 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. Students are not allowed to self-administer ANY medication. Only parents/guardians 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: 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.

Parents or guardians must have a physician fill out and sign an [Authorization to Administer Medication](#) form (also available at the front office and in the Forms section of My MSCS on our [website](#)).

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 for more information.

## 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.

## Communication

### All School News

#### ***The Beat***

Our twice-monthly school newsletter comes to your inbox from [connect@mountainsage.org](mailto:connect@mountainsage.org).

Containing important all-school information, inspiration from across the grades, and fund tidbits, it's a must read. Be sure to check your spam/junk/promotions folders for these messages. If you are not receiving these emails or want to add a contact to the mailing list, please contact us.

#### **Other All-School Emails**

Whenever there are timely announcements to be made outside of *The Beat*, you will receive an additional all-school email. This may come from [connect@mountainsag.org](mailto:connect@mountainsag.org) or directly from Director Helmericks at [lhelmericks@mountainsage.org](mailto:lhelmericks@mountainsage.org).

#### **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 and our private Facebook group for current families and staff, Mountain Sage Family Community.

## SchoolMessenger

SchoolMessenger 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.

## Class Parent Evenings

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 insights on how these elements relate to child development. It is a time for parents to ask questions and share their experiences. Please plan to attend all parent evenings. The class teacher will try to arrange child care in order to make it simpler for parents to attend these very important meetings.

## 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.

## 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 emails 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 email list.

Additionally, email communication sent to the school or your child's teachers between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm, Monday through Friday, will receive a timely response. Email sent outside of those hours will be attended to the next business day.

## 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:

- 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;
- 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;
- If 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;
- 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;

- 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 Directors 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 Directors. 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 Directors at least one week prior to the next Board of Directors meeting. Complaints submitted after that month's board meeting will be addressed at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board of Directors responding at, or prior to, its next regular public meeting.
3. The Board of Directors will hear arguments from the parties, review prior decisions and evidence, and make inquiries as it deems necessary. The Board of Directors will then render a written decision within ten business days after the meeting unless additional time is needed. The Board of Directors' decision shall be final.

## Family Involvement

### Visiting

When in a [Phase 1](#) fully remote setting, all visitors must make an appointment prior to coming to the school by calling 970-568-5456. When in a [Phase 3](#) hybrid setting, visitors will be allowed on a restricted basis only. All those who visit the school must first check in at the front office. Additionally, all school visitor must always have a visible visitor sticker or nametag on. This shows faculty and students that you have checked in and are allowed to be inside the school building.

## Volunteering

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+ year old 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. All volunteers must sign in at the front desk and wear their volunteer name badge when volunteering at the school.

Here is a small list of possible ways to volunteer. There are countless others.:

- 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 Parent Circle Representative
- Help with garden and playground development
- Serve on the school’s Board of Directors, or on a board sub-committee

For more information, contact our volunteer team at [volunteer@mountainsage.org](mailto:volunteer@mountainsage.org).

## 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. 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. Learn more on the [Parent Circle page](#) of our website.

## Donations and Fundraising

Each year we hope that families will support our school financially. Whether this is with a one-time donation, monthly contributions, participating in Mountain Sage Scrip, attending and supporting the spring time party, running your own class fundraiser, donating a car, or something else entirely, we welcome and encourage your efforts! Learn more on the [Donate](#) and [Fundraise](#) pages of our website.

## Support at Home: Healthy Childhood & Educational Experience

Parents can support their children by providing:

- ✓ **Proper Nutrition** - A nutritious breakfast every day before school and well-balanced meals are strongly encouraged. If you need support finding food resources, please [let us know](#).
- ✓ **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.

- ✓ **Minimal Media** - Limit computer, TV, video games or other screen time on Sundays through Thursdays. Avoid murder, mayhem, or movies or videos meant for adults.
- ✓ **Quiet Time** - Providing some daily quiet time, without radio, screens, or videogames, is essential for resetting the nervous system and helps your child meet the demands of the day.
- ✓ **Time in Nature** - Spend some time in nature every day. Experience the weather; pay attention to the seasons, moon, stars and sky.
- ✓ **Chores at Home** - Assign some responsibilities for taking care of the home, pets, and yard.
- ✓ **Appropriate Dress** - Pay attention to keeping your child warm and dry while at school, especially their feet. Dressing in layers is important in Colorado!
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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.

### ***Some Thoughts on Rhythm***

by Susan Gray Weber

Life is full of rhythm! Our bodies are full of it: our heartbeats, our breathing, our organs, for example, all have rhythms. We walk rhythmically, and we talk with rhythm. We dance and sing with rhythm, and we wake and sleep rhythmically.

The natural world also has rhythms: picture the moon and its in and out pull upon the tides as they visit the land, only to leave it again. The growing of the plants, the falling of the leaves, the ripening of apples and tomatoes - each has its moment. Our human activity also traditionally has had many rhythms: planting and harvesting; cutting, splitting, and gathering wood for warmth, household work - the laundry, the baking, the cleaning. And not only was there a rhythm to the week, but the activities had their own rhythms – kneading bread, swinging an ax, plowing or hoeing the field – and there were even songs to accompany work. After the hard physical effort came rest. The seasons had a profound effect on daily life - what people ate, what tasks they did, and even how comfortable they felt.

Today technology has freed us from freed us from these natural cycles and much of the physical activity of work [... read more](#)