



## MPA PREK FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025-26

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Welcome to PreK at Mounds Park Academy! This class is truly special, with faculty committed to providing the best education full of care, joy, play, and belonging. Our entire community is thrilled to welcome your child as they begin their educational journey. This document serves as a family handbook, which contains essential information about the class and our policies.

# Section I: About MPA PreK

MPA PreK admits students ages three to five years old. Children must be three years old by September 1 and able to independently use the bathroom in order to be admitted to the program. The PreK class can accommodate up to 20 students per day. Children are supervised in the required adult-to-student ratio at all times. The program operates Monday through Friday and follows the MPA school calendar, with care provided on some non-school days (registration required). The regular school day is 8 AM–3 PM, with before-school care starting at 7:30 AM and after-school care from 3–5:30 PM. Parents/guardians are invited to visit the program at any time it is in session.

## PREK PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The MPA PreK class is a welcoming, inclusive community where each person is respected and valued and where warm, nurturing relationships are evident. Through child-led learning experiences, teachers help students gain independence, build confidence, and practice problem-solving skills. We address all areas of the young learner, including cognitive, physical, and social/emotional development. We value parents/guardians as partners in their child's learning by providing regular communication and feedback. Together, we build upon a foundation of trust to provide a positive, joyful beginning to each child's school journey.

Our PreK class is a play-based learning environment that emphasizes opportunities for students to learn through both self-directed and teacher-guided play experiences. These include free choice time, large and small group activities, art exploration, music, and movement. We encourage students to be curious, take risks, and explore their interests.

The classroom environment is carefully planned and organized into learning centers: art and writing, sensory, dramatic and symbolic play, large group, quiet reading, math exploration and\_blocks, science, and small group areas.

#### MPA YEAR-ROUND PROGRAM

MPA's PreK summer program is a continuation of the school year experience. The class size is smaller at 10 children, with a 5:1 student-to-teacher ratio (a 10:1 ratio may occur at the beginning and end of the day due to staggered teacher schedules). Though we do not have subject-area specialists during the summer, we continue to use practices that meet the children where they are and challenge them to reach their full potential. With the summer program, we promote the wonders of one's imagination and create a stronger connection to both phonemic awareness and literacy. The summer PreK program is a play-based summer experience that exposes students to the MPA community on a smaller, more personable scale.

#### LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

While children thrive in a class made up of different age groups and skill levels, curricular differentiation is a hallmark of an MPA education.

Examples of differentiation of individual children:

- Students who are ages three and four focus on emerging number sense, sound-symbol relationships, patterns, counting, and data handling.
- Students who are ages four and five focus on number and letter writing, letter sounds, subitizing, complex patterns, and beginning encoding (writing) and decoding (reading) skills.

Specific skill goals as students transition into kindergarten:

#### Literacy Skills

- Identify the names and sounds of all 26 letters in the English alphabet
- Can write first name with upper- and lower-case letters
- Effectively use a writing utensil
- Identify parts of a book (cover, title, spine, pages, etc.)
- Understand print directionality (right to left)

#### Math Skills

- Count from 0-20 (cardinality)
- Create a simple ABAB pattern
- Sort objects by size, color, or shape
- Develop number sense with objects from 0-5
- Identify basic geometric shapes

MPA focuses on educating the whole child. Not only does the program provide opportunities for the academic instruction described above, but we consider other areas of development to be just as important. We promote physical development and well-being through our Phy Ed class and daily outdoor recess. PreK students take part in our CHAMP character development program to nurture their social and emotional growth. The class is designed to provide plenty of free choice time for peer interaction and social skill building in an age-appropriate manner.

## Section II: What to Know Before School Begins

#### ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT RECORDS

MPA's PreK is licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services. Per state rules, MPA is required to gather and maintain information about each child, much of which is done through the enrollment process in TADS. Within this system, parents/guardians indicate their preference for using their child's photo in public relations activities, for participating in educational research at MPA, and for attending field trips. Please note that the PreK class typically does not attend off-campus field trips, but if we were to do so, a special notice and permission slip would be provided. The following forms must be submitted prior to your child starting school:

- Health Care Summary signed by a physician
- Immunization Form or Records

Students are not permitted to attend school without this documentation. These forms are required to be resubmitted annually if your child will be in PreK for more than one year. A person who has not received the recommended number of vaccines for his or her age may need to be excluded from class should the virus/illness be present in the school. Additional information regarding those who are not fully immunized can be found in MPA's PreK Policies and Procedures and is available to parents/guardians upon request.

Students with allergies, special medical needs, or those requiring medication administered at school must submit documentation from a physician and work with MPA to complete an Individual Child Care Program Plan, per state rules.

Prior to the school year, we will survey parents about their student's strengths and opportunities for growth, and some initial goals for their student. We will discuss these goals at Parent-Teacher Conferences and may set additional goals for the rest of the school year as we get to know the student better.

#### Statement regarding the IDEA Special Education Law

As early care and education professionals, we continually monitor the development of all children in the program through ongoing observation and documentation. The best outcomes are desired for all children. Early care and education professionals are considered primary referral sources for early intervention under the IDEA special education law. As a result, we are required to refer a child who has been identified as having developmental concerns or a risk factor that warrants a referral. While this is a mandate, we will keep open communication with parents/guardians about the child and any concerns we have before a referral is made. We can assist the parents/guardians with the referral process and partner with them throughout the process.

MPA is an equal opportunity provider. For more details, please see the full Civil Rights Statement in MPA's PreK Policies and Procedures, available to parents/guardians upon request.

## PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PREK

It's normal for children—and their adults—to feel a little anxious about starting PreK. Our faculty are here to ensure this is a positive, joyful experience for all students and their families. Here are a few things parents/guardians can do to help their child before the school year begins.

- Become familiar with MPA: If you haven't already done so, please have your child visit the campus and meet the teachers. Also, prepare your child for a school experience by reading books and discussing what it means to go to school.
- Basic self-care tasks: Each student entering MPA PreK should be fully potty trained (see the Toileting section). Please ensure the students can also maneuver the clothing they will wear

as uniforms. Additional skills to practice include putting shoes on and taking them off, putting on their coat, and managing their belongings.

• Separation: Have your child spend some time in the care of other adults so they can practice saying goodbye to you and taking directions from others. Reassure your child that you will always return to them.

# Section III: What to Know About the School Day

#### **ARRIVING FOR THE SCHOOL DAY**

PreK students may arrive in the classroom beginning at 7:30 AM. Please bring your child directly into the classroom. Upon arrival, students should hang their backpacks and outdoor items in their cubby and wash their hands. The class begins at 8 AM. Teachers will take attendance as students arrive. If your child arrives late, please check in at the Lower School office.

#### SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

7:30-8 AM	PreK Panther Club
8-8:15 AM	Morning Table Activities
8:15-8:35 AM	Circle Time
8:35-8:55	Table Activities and Bathroom Break
9-9:40 AM	Phy Ed or Library
9:40-10:20 AM	Music or Large Group Learning
10:20-10:50 AM	Snack
10:50-11:40 AM	Small Group Learning
11:40-12:20 AM	Choice Time
12:20-12:55 PM	Lunch
12:55-1:30 PM	Recess
1:30-2:30 PM	Rest and Quiet Time*
2:45-3 PM	Closing Circle and Show and Tell
3-5:30 PM	PreK Panther Club

\*In later parts of the school year during the nap and quiet time, older children will rest and then work on kindergarten readiness skills in small groups.

#### **SNACKS AND LUNCH**

MPA provides a morning snack for our PreK students. It is most often a fruit and multi-grain item with 1% milk or water. SAGE Dining Services is MPA's food service provider. Lunch menus are published monthly on the Mounds Park Academy website. Children eat lunch in the cafeteria at 12:10 PM. We offer our children all the components and encourage them to try new things, but do not force them to eat. Each day's offerings include whole grain items, fruits and vegetables, meat-based and non-meat protein, dairy items, 1% milk, and water. Please notify teachers of dietary

needs, allergies, or restrictions. There is no additional charge for hot lunch and snacks; they are included in your PreK tuition.

Lunch and snack times offer a rich opportunity for relationship-building as well as conversational skill development. As the year progresses, children develop a remarkable ability to engage in socially appropriate conversation with both peers and adults. Teachers eat lunch with our children and enjoy the daily interaction.

MPA **prohibits foods with peanut and tree nuts** (walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, cashews, pistachios, Brazil nuts, pine nuts, lychee, tamarind, and macadamias) listed as ingredients throughout the school and at all school events. Items that are "manufactured in a facility" or "processed on the same equipment" as food containing nuts are prohibited in Lower School.

These allergens most often linked to anaphylaxis, a life-threatening reaction that can include difficulty breathing, vomiting, and in extreme cases, death. Please abide by the guidelines provided and read food labels carefully. In the MPA spirit of compassion, respect, and inclusiveness, thank you for your support.

## WATER BOTTLES

Each student should bring a reusable water bottle to school each day. Please label the water bottle with the student's first and last name. To prevent spills, the bottle must have a secure cap with either a push-button or an automatic seal spout and no straws unless they can be closed. The water bottle may be used only for water. Each day the water bottle will go home with the student to be washed and refilled. During the school day, the water bottles will be kept in the students' cubbies.

## **OUTDOOR RECESS**

At MPA, we believe that regular outdoor activity has many important benefits for children. Weather permitting, 30 minutes of daily outdoor play will be provided. If it is raining, dangerously cold (wind chill of -10 or colder), or the air quality is poor, we will have indoor recess.

Students should have weather-appropriate gear for outdoor play. This will include jackets (required if colder than 50° F), hats, mittens or gloves, snow pants, and boots in the winter. In the summer, students should wear a hat for sun protection. Please label all items that come to school.

## **REST AND QUIET TIME**

MPA PreK students will have one rest/quiet time after recess in the afternoon. MPA provides individually assigned cots for students to rest, but parents/guardians are asked to send a pillow, blanket, or soft item to have on their cot. During this time, teachers dim the lights and put on soft music. Some students will fall asleep, while others will not. Cots are placed so there is unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side and are not stacked when in use.

After 30 minutes, students who have completed a nap or rested quietly will be allowed to get up and find books to read. After quiet book time, students will be allowed to play quietly for the remainder of the nap and rest period.

#### DISMISSAL

At 3 PM, teachers will help any students not staying for PreK Panther Care to gather their belongings, including their backpacks, outdoor gear, folders, and items from their cubby. Students will remain in the classroom until a parent/guardian or authorized person comes to the door. Students who stay for Panther Care will remain in the classroom. Please come into the classroom to pick up students after 3 PM. On the last day of attendance for the week, any pillows, blankets, or other items from rest time will be sent home with students to be washed.

#### BIRTHDAYS

Students may have a non-uniform day and/or bring a treat to share with classmates on her/his birthday following MPA's Food Allergy Guidelines and Protocol (see above). Following Health Department guidelines, the treats should be bought and not homemade. We also suggest that it be something individually wrapped.

We will celebrate your child's birthday in class by giving them a birthday hat and sticker and giving them a gift item, such as a pencil, to take home.

Parties for groups of children outside of school should be planned to avoid hurting the feelings of uninvited students. Invitations should be distributed in school only if all students in a classroom are included. Please do not have your child bring gifts to school for parties.

#### PARENT PARTICIPATION

There are many opportunities for parent involvement at Mounds Park Academy. We have an active Parents Association, of which every MPA parent/guardian is a member. Not only do they organize volunteer opportunities such as the Book Festival, but the Office of Community Engagement provides opportunities to volunteer on campus in a myriad of ways. In addition, the Lower School office will survey parents annually to see if they are interested in helping with a variety of tasks. Some parents are interested and able to join us in the classroom occasionally. Please let your child's teachers know if you would like to participate in the classroom. Parents of enrolled children may visit the classroom any time during our hours of operation per Minnesota Statutes, 245A.14, subdivision 15.

#### UNIFORMS

Just like all MPA Lower School students, PreK students wear uniforms. You can find the guidelines on the <u>MPA website</u>. Please have your child wear comfortable shoes appropriate for large motor play each day (sneakers are required for phy ed) and bring appropriate clothing for outdoor activities.

## PETS

Out of concern and courtesy for those who suffer from allergies, we do not allow pets as part of our PreK program, though pets may be present in other classrooms on MPA's campus. No dogs are allowed inside the school's facility unless admitted as a guide or therapy dog. At MPA, we guarantee a differently abled person the legal right to be accompanied by a service animal on our school grounds and inside our facility.

## SHOW AND TELL

Several times throughout the year, your child will have a turn for show and tell. When it is their turn, the student will be given a show and tell bag to bring home. Parents/guardians should help their child select an item they would like to share with the class.

#### Please do not send anything alive, any food, any glass, or any violent/scary toys.

The selected item must fit inside the bag. Please help your child understand our procedure:

- The show and tell item will come to school in the bag.
- The bag will be given to a teacher, who will set it aside to keep it safe until show and tell time.
- The item will not be taken out to play with.
- The item will go home with the child and their adult at dismissal. If the student stays for Panther, it will be given to them and their adult when they are picked up.
- The item will not be taken out at Panther Club.

If you would like to share something that does not fit in the bag, please reach out to the teachers to coordinate. Due to allergy and safety concerns, we cannot allow animals for show and tell. If you prefer that your child does not participate in show and tell, please communicate with the teachers, and we will remove them from our schedule.

# Section IV: Toileting Policy

PreK students will be offered frequent opportunities to use the bathroom throughout the day. Students should be fully potty trained before entering PreK, meaning they have:

- the ability to identify and verbalize the need to use the restroom in a timely manner;
- the ability to manage all self-help/toileting skills independently, including wiping, managing their clothing, and washing their hands; and
- the ability to manage their school day, including rest time without diapers or pull-ups.

We understand that accidents do sometimes occur and are a normal part of PreK life. If a child has an accident while at school, they will be brought to the restroom to complete their toileting. Please keep at least one change of uniform clothing, including underpants, socks, and shoes in your child's cubby at school. A teacher will supervise and give any verbal instructions required for the child to clean up and change clothes. A parent/guardian may be contacted to assist the child if they require

additional help. Due to licensing restrictions, teachers are unable to change students or provide extended assistance in the bathroom.

Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and will be sent home at the end of the day. While occasional accidents are developmentally appropriate, frequent accidents at school may require additional discussion about the child's readiness for PreK.

# Section V: Health Concerns and Sick Children

If your child is sick, please notify MPA of your child's absence by contacting the Lower School office at 651-748-5562.

A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors is a sick child and must stay home from school. Please keep your child home from school if they have:

- A temperature of 100 degrees F or higher.
- Diarrhea or vomiting.
- An undiagnosed rash or draining sores.
- A stomachache or headache that lasts or returns.
- An earache, or discharge from the ear.
- Redness, swelling, or drainage of eye (possible pink eye).
- Untreated head lice.
- Visible signs of a cold.
- Sore throat with coughing.
- Strep throat or impetigo with less than 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

If a child shows any of the above symptoms at school, the teachers will isolate the student from the other children but will supervise them at all times. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick the child up, and the emergency contacts will be called if parents/guardians cannot be reached.

Our policy is that the child must be symptom-free for 24 hours to return to school. This includes a temperature below 100 degrees without fever-reducing medication. Also, they must feel physically well enough to resume all normal daily activities, including outdoor recess. We wish to avoid reinfections and high absentee counts in our classrooms. Children should remain home if they are not able to participate in PreK program activities with reasonable comfort or if they require more care than the teachers can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in our care. If in doubt, please keep them home that extra day.

#### **CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES**

Parents/guardians are asked to notify MPA within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays when a child is diagnosed by their source of medical or dental care as having a contagious illness. These may include, but are not limited to, influenza, measles, meningitis, and pertussis. Contagious illnesses will be reported to all parents/guardians the same day the information is received.

The staff will share the information with families through Schoology, stating the illness, incubation period, early signs to watch for, and exclusion recommendations. These postings will be updated with each new case of the illness. Names of students or identifying information are never shared.

Children should be excluded from the school setting until symptoms improve, or a healthcare provider has determined that the child can return, or children can participate in routine activities with normal staff supervision.

## ADMINISTERING MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

Whenever possible, parents/guardians should make arrangements to administer medications at home. Medication will be kept in the Health Office and administered by MPA's staff nurse (or teacher if nurse is unavailable). Emergency medications, such as Epi-Pens, will be kept in the class backpack that travels with the students.

If your child will need to take medication during the school year or have an emergency medication at school, a medication authorization form must be completed and signed by both the parent and physician and returned to MPA prior to the medication being used.

# Section VI: Accidents and Emergencies

MPA teachers and staff work proactively to prevent accidents and emergencies. Should an incident happen at school, the following policy will ensure students are cared for quickly and thoroughly. All MPA PreK staff are trained in these emergency plans as well as Pediatric CPR and First Aid. All students must have a Health Care Summary and emergency contact information on file before starting school.

For a <u>minor accident</u>, first aid would be administered, and the parents/guardians would be notified. For a <u>major accident</u> requiring immediate medical attention, first aid would be administered, and 911 would be called. After calling 911, the parents/guardians would be contacted immediately. The child may be taken to the nearest hospital for emergency service. An administrator or teacher will accompany the child to the hospital and stay until the parent/guardian arrives if ambulance transportation is required. If a parent/guardian is unavailable, we will continue to call the child's emergency contacts until an authorized person is reached.

In the event of a school-wide emergency, parents/guardians will be notified through notifications via text, phone, and email. A test will be conducted early in the year to ensure all parents/guardians are receiving these notifications. Please ensure your contact details are updated via the Lower School office if changes are made.

# Section VII: Family/School Communication

We value parents as partners in their child's education, and we truly believe that consistent, honest communication is the key to success. There are several ways that parents/guardians will receive

communication from MPA. Each Thursday, MPA sends a school-wide newsletter, Panther Post. This will contain important information about things that affect our school community.

Parents/guardians will receive the annual school calendar at the beginning of the school year and a PreK calendar each month throughout the year. Each week, PreK teachers will provide a Week at a Glance, which provides a look at our plans for the upcoming week.

MPA uses Schoology to send group updates and information about our class. Parents can also communicate with teachers through this platform. Parents can expect Schoology posts multiple times per week to keep parents informed of upcoming class activities and provide fun pictures from our class days. Each child will have a daily folder for both teachers and families to use for various written communications. Email communication is always welcome, as are in-person conversations. Please do not hesitate to contact the teachers with questions or concerns—we value and appreciate your communication!

# Section VIII: Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will take place twice per year—once in the fall and once in the spring. Prior to conferences, teachers will observe and document each student's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional progress. Teachers will share their evaluation at the conference, then will include the report in the child's file, as well as provide a copy to the parent(s). During these conversations, we also seek feedback from parents about ways that we can work together to support their child's learning. The information gathered from our assessments and parent feedback will help to inform our teaching and improve our program.

If a child has a birthday in August or September, teachers and parents should discuss the student's readiness for kindergarten. Having these discussions early at fall conferences will ensure that parents and teachers are in agreement about the child's next year at school. If a family wishes to send their child to kindergarten and that child will not be five years old on September 1 of that school year, they must complete the Early Entrance to Kindergarten process through the Office of Admission.

# Section IX: Behavior Guidance Policy

A key goal in our PreK program is to provide a classroom environment where each child is valued and where warm, nurturing relationships are evident. Our behavioral guidance plan is tailored to the developmental needs of our students, and we hold the physical and emotional safety and security of our students and staff as our highest priority. Rules in the early childhood classroom should be simple and functional. Most revolve around being safe and keeping the classroom productive and conducive to learning.

We believe that:

1. Children learn from the adults around them, and it is our responsibility to present them with positive models of acceptable behavior.

- 2. Each child is an individual and responds uniquely to guidance and discipline.
- 3. Proactive room arrangements and routines can solve most behavioral issues in the classroom.
- 4. An important step is to redirect the child away from the activity with an invitation to try it again later.
- 5. We teach children to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior, such as conversation and problem-solving techniques, in order to reduce conflict.
- 6. We provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior. Natural consequences often provide a learning experience for children.
- 7. The goal is to help children self-regulate their behavior versus relying on external control from adults.

We promote positive behavior in the following ways:

- 1. The classrooms are designed to be developmentally appropriate.
- 2. There are sufficient toys and activities to stimulate children of all age groups we serve.
- 3. The staff model, encourage and praise positive behaviors by using clear and positive statements of behavior expectations.
- 4. The curriculum is designed to be stimulating and age-appropriate for the children.
- 5. The staff appropriately supervises and interacts with the children.

#### PERSISTENT UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

There are certain behaviors that are unacceptable within our program. These behaviors include persistent biting, cursing, pinching, kicking, hitting, choking, or other actions that pose a threat to another child or adult. Such behaviors will be immediately stopped. If our attempts to correct the behavior are not successful, the child may be separated from the group until they are ready to return to the group. Such a separation is communicated to parents in writing and will be documented on the separation log. Teachers may observe and record consistent behaviors to develop a plan.

If positive guidance techniques are not effective, we may involve parents/guardians with the following progressive guidance techniques:

- 1. We will inform parents/guardians verbally and in writing what behaviors have been observed and what the teachers have done to try to modify the behavior.
- 2. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the Lower School director and lead teacher will meet with parents/guardians to develop a written action plan to correct the behavior. We will seek their input and agree on steps to attempt to modify the behavior. We may suggest involving outside resources to assist with the situation.
- 3. If the inappropriate behavior persists, the child may need to take a brief behavioral leave of absence. (Standard tuition rates apply during behavioral leaves).
- 4. After returning to school, if the child continues to act inappropriately, we may disenroll the child. We reserve the right to use these progressive guidance techniques at our discretion. It is our goal to work together for a positive outcome of behavior change. Circumstances may

arise when we may <u>immediately</u> disenroll a child if his or her behavior creates a health or safety risk to themselves, other children, or the staff.

## **PROHIBITED STAFF ACTIONS**

At Mounds Park Academy, we believe that positive reinforcement is the best approach to discipline. The following actions are prohibited by or at the direction of any teacher or staff person:

- 1. The subjection of a child to corporal punishment, which includes but is not limited to rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, and spanking.
- 2. The subjection of a child to emotional stress, which includes but is not limited to namecalling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
- 3. The separation of a child from the group except within rule requirements.
- 4. Punishments for lapses in toileting.
- 5. Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.
- 6. The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- 7. The use of prone or any contraindicated restraint will not be allowed under any circumstances.
  - a. The program must not use a prone restraint on any student in the program, except in the stance of if a person rolls into a prone position during the use of a restraint, the student must be restored to a non-prone position as quickly as possible.
  - b. The program must not implement a restraint on a student in the program in a way that is contraindicated for any of the person's known medical or psychological conditions. Prior to using restraint on a person, the program must assess and document on the child's ICCPP a determination of any medical or psychological conditions that restraints are contraindicated for and the type of restraints that will not be used on the person based on this determination.
- 8. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying.

#### All staff will be trained on all current prohibited actions.

# Section X: Mandated Reporting Policy

All MPA teachers and staff are mandated reporters and are legally required to report maltreatment. All PreK teachers and substitutes receive annual training on their reporting responsibilities; this training is documented in each person's personnel file. A copy of the Maltreatment for Minors Mandated Reporting Policy is provided to each teacher and substitute. Phone numbers for the Licensing Division's Central Intake line, County Social Services, and the local police department are posted in the PreK classroom and the Lower School office. MPA follows the Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy from the Department of Human Services, which can be found on the following pages.

## DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL - LICENSING DIVISION

# **Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting**

This form may be used by any provider licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, except family child care and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF). The form for family child care providers is <u>DHS-7634C-</u> <u>ENG</u>. Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of a child in a PRTF should be made to the Minnesota Department of Health.

## What to report

 Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions refer to <u>Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03</u>, and pages 3-6 of this document. Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.

#### Who must report

- If you work in a licensed facility, you are a "mandated reporter" and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility.
- In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment.

#### Where to report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, should be made to the Licensing Division's Central Intake line at 651-431-6600.
- Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, or in a child foster care home, should be reported to the local county social services agency at 651-266-4500 or local law enforcement at 651-777-8191
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of a child in a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) should be made to the Minnesota Department of Health.

#### When to report

• Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours).

#### Information to report

• A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

#### **Failure to report**

• A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.

In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a
position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations,
and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human
Services as listed in <u>Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03</u>.

## **Retaliation prohibited**

- An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at):
  - an employee for making a report in good faith; or
  - a child who is the subject of the report.
- If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

#### **Staff training**

The license holder must train all mandated reporters on their reporting responsibilities, according to the training requirements in the statutes and rules governing the licensed program. The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under <u>Minnesota Statutes</u>, <u>section 245A.04</u>, <u>subdivision 14</u>.

#### **Provide policy to parents**

For licensed child care centers, the mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment and must be available upon request. The definitions section (p. 3-6) is optional to provide to parents.

The following sections only apply to license holders that serve children. This does not include family child foster care per <u>Minnesota Statutes 245A.66, subd. 1</u>.

#### **Internal review**

- When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care.
- The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:
  - · related policies and procedures were followed;
  - the policies and procedures were adequate;
  - there is a need for additional staff training;
  - the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
  - there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

#### Primary and secondary person or position to ensure reviews completed

The internal review will be completed by The Lower School Director alleged or suspected maltreatment, The Head of School will be responsible for completing

the internal review.

#### **Documentation of internal review**

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

#### Corrective action plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder.

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## Definitions

Found in Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03

#### Egregious harm (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 5)

"Egregious harm" means harm under section 260C.007, subdivision 14, or a similar law of another jurisdiction.

From section 260C.007, subdivision 14:

"Egregious harm" means the infliction of bodily harm to a child or neglect of a child which demonstrates a grossly inadequate ability to provide minimally adequate parental care. The egregious harm need not have occurred in the state or in the county where a termination of parental rights action has proper venue. Egregious harm includes, but is not limited to:

- 1. conduct toward a child that constitutes a violation of sections <u>609.185</u> to <u>609.2114</u>, <u>609.222</u>, <u>subdivision 2</u>, <u>609.223</u>, or any other similar law of any other state;
- 2. the infliction of "substantial bodily harm" to a child, as defined in section 609.02, subdivision 7a;
- 3. conduct toward a child that constitutes felony malicious punishment of a child under section 609.377;
- conduct toward a child that constitutes felony unreasonable restraint of a child under <u>section 609.255</u>, <u>subdivision 3</u>;
- 5. conduct toward a child that constitutes felony neglect or endangerment of a child under section 609.378;
- 6. conduct toward a child that constitutes assault under section <u>609.221</u>, <u>609.222</u>, or <u>609.223</u>;
- 7. conduct toward a child that constitutes sex trafficking, solicitation, inducement, promotion of, or receiving profit derived from prostitution under <u>section 609.322</u>;
- 8. conduct toward a child that constitutes murder or voluntary manslaughter as defined by United States Code, title 18, section 1111(a) or 1112(a);
- 9. conduct toward a child that constitutes aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring, or soliciting to commit a murder or voluntary manslaughter that constitutes a violation of United States Code, title 18, section 1111(a) or 1112(a); or
- 10. conduct toward a child that constitutes criminal sexual conduct under <u>sections 609.342</u> to <u>609.345</u> or sexual extortion under <u>section 609.3458</u>.

#### Maltreatment (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 12)

"Maltreatment" means any of the following acts or omissions:

- 1. egregious harm under subdivision 5;
- 2. neglect under subdivision 15;
- 3. physical abuse under subdivision 18;
- 4. sexual abuse under subdivision 20;
- 5. substantial child endangerment under subdivision 22;
- 6. threatened injury under subdivision 23;
- 7. mental injury under subdivision 13; and
- 8. maltreatment of a child in a facility.

#### Mental injury (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 13)

"Mental injury" means an injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child as evidenced by an observable or substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard to the child's culture.

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#### Neglect (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 15)

- A. "Neglect" means the commission or omission of any of the acts specified under clauses (1) to (8), other than by accidental means:
  - 1. failure by a person responsible for a child's care to supply a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, health, medical, or other care required for the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so;
  - 2. failure to protect a child from conditions or actions that seriously endanger the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as a failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect;
  - failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangements appropriate for a child after considering factors as the child's age, mental ability, physical condition, length of absence, or environment, when the child is unable to care for the child's own basic needs or safety, or the basic needs or safety of another child in their care;
  - 4. failure to ensure that the child is educated as defined in sections <u>120A.22</u> and <u>260C.163</u>, <u>subdivision 11</u>, which does not include a parent's refusal to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications, consistent with section <u>125A.091</u>, <u>subdivision 5</u>;
  - 5. prenatal exposure to a controlled substance, as defined in section <u>253B.02</u>, <u>subdivision 2</u>, used by the mother for a nonmedical purpose, as evidenced by withdrawal symptoms in the child at birth, results of a toxicology test performed on the mother at delivery or the child at birth, medical effects or developmental delays during the child's first year of life that medically indicate prenatal exposure to a controlled substance, or the presence of a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder;
  - 6. medical neglect, as defined in section 260C.007, subdivision 6, clause (5);
  - 7. chronic and severe use of alcohol or a controlled substance by a person responsible for the child's care that adversely affects the child's basic needs and safety; or
  - 8. emotional harm from a pattern of behavior that contributes to impaired emotional functioning of the child which may be demonstrated by a substantial and observable effect in the child's behavior, emotional response, or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child's age and stage of development, with due regard to the child's culture.
- B. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to mean that a child is neglected solely because the child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care in good faith selects and depends upon spiritual means or prayer for treatment or care of disease or remedial care of the child in lieu of medical care.
- C. This chapter does not impose upon persons not otherwise legally responsible for providing a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, education, or medical care a duty to provide that care.

#### Physical abuse (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 18)

- A. "Physical abuse" means any physical injury, mental injury under subdivision 13, or threatened injury under subdivision 23, inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care on a child other than by accidental means, or any physical or mental injury that cannot reasonably be explained by the child's history of injuries, or any aversive or deprivation procedures, or regulated interventions, that have not been authorized under section <u>125A.0942</u> or <u>245.825</u>.
- B. Abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child administered by a parent or legal guardian that does not result in an injury. Abuse does not include the use of reasonable force by a teacher, principal, or school employee as allowed by section <u>121A.582</u>.
- C. For the purposes of this subdivision, actions that are not reasonable and moderate include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
  - 1. throwing, kicking, burning, biting, or cutting a child;
  - 2. striking a child with a closed fist;
  - 3. shaking a child under age three;

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- 4. striking or other actions that result in any nonaccidental injury to a child under 18 months of age;
- 5. unreasonable interference with a child's breathing;
- 6. threatening a child with a weapon, as defined in section 609.02, subdivision 6;
- 7. striking a child under age one on the face or head;
- 8. striking a child who is at least age one but under age four on the face or head, which results in an injury;
- 9. purposely giving a child:
  - i. poison, alcohol, or dangerous, harmful, or controlled substances that were not prescribed for the child by a practitioner in order to control or punish the child; or
  - ii. other substances that substantially affect the child's behavior, motor coordination, or judgment; that result in sickness or internal injury; or that subject the child to medical procedures that would be unnecessary if the child were not exposed to the substances;
- 10. unreasonable physical confinement or restraint not permitted under <u>section 609.379</u>, including but not limited to tying, caging, or chaining; or
- 11. in a school facility or school zone, an act by a person responsible for the child's care that is a violation under section <u>121A.58</u>.

#### Sexual abuse (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 20)

"Sexual abuse" means the subjection of a child by a person responsible for the child's care, by a person who has a significant relationship to the child, or by a person in a current or recent position of authority, to any act that constitutes a violation of section <u>609.342</u> (criminal sexual conduct in the first degree), <u>609.343</u> (criminal sexual conduct in the second degree), <u>609.344</u> (criminal sexual conduct in the third degree), <u>609.345</u> (criminal sexual conduct in the fifth degree), <u>609.345</u> (criminal sexual conduct in the fifth degree), <u>609.345</u> (criminal sexual conduct in the fifth degree), <u>609.345</u> (sexual extortion), or <u>609.352</u> (solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct; communication of sexually explicit materials to children).

Sexual abuse also includes any act involving a child that constitutes a violation of prostitution offenses under sections 609.321 to 609.324 or 617.246. Sexual abuse includes all reports of known or suspected child sex trafficking involving a child who is identified as a victim of sex trafficking. Sexual abuse includes child sex trafficking as defined in section 609.321, subdivisions 7a and 7b.

Sexual abuse includes threatened sexual abuse, which includes the status of a parent or household member who has committed a violation that requires registration as an offender under section 243.166, subdivision 1b, paragraph (a) or (b), or required registration under section 243.166, subdivision 1b, paragraph (a) or (b).

#### Substantial child endangerment (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 22)

"Substantial child endangerment" means that a person responsible for a child's care, by act or omission, commits or attempts to commit an act against a child in the person's care that constitutes any of the following:

- 1. egregious harm under subdivision 5;
- 2. abandonment under section 260C.301, subdivision 2;
- 3. neglect under subdivision 15, paragraph (a), clause (2), that substantially endangers the child's physical or mental health, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect;
- 4. murder in the first, second, or third degree under section 609.185, 609.19, or 609.195;
- 5. manslaughter in the first or second degree under section 609.20 or 609.205;
- 6. assault in the first, second, or third degree under section <u>609.221</u>, <u>609.222</u>, or <u>609.223</u>;
- 7. sex trafficking, solicitation, inducement, or promotion of prostitution under section 609.322;
- 8. criminal sexual conduct under sections <u>609.342</u> to <u>609.3451;</u>
- 9. sexual extortion under section 609.3458;
- 10. solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct under section 609.352;
- 11. malicious punishment or neglect or endangerment of a child under section 609.377 or 609.378;

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- 12. use of a minor in sexual performance under section 617.246; or
- 13. parental behavior, status, or condition that mandates that the county attorney file a termination of parental rights petition under section <u>260C.503</u>, <u>subdivision 2</u>.

#### Threatened injury (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 23)

- A. "Threatened injury" means a statement, overt act, condition, or status that represents a substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse or mental injury.
- B. Threatened injury includes, but is not limited to, exposing a child to a person responsible for the child's care, as defined in subdivision 17, who has:
  - 1. subjected a child to, or failed to protect a child from, an overt act or condition that constitutes egregious harm under subdivision 5 or a similar law of another jurisdiction;
  - 2. been found to be palpably unfit under section <u>260C.301</u>, <u>subdivision 1</u>, paragraph (b), clause (4), or a similar law of another jurisdiction;
  - 3. committed an act that resulted in an involuntary termination of parental rights under section <u>260C.301</u>, or a similar law of another jurisdiction; or
  - 4. committed an act that resulted in the involuntary transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a child to a relative or parent under section <u>260C.515</u>, <u>subdivision 4</u>, or a similar law of another jurisdiction.
- C. A child is the subject of a report of threatened injury when the local welfare agency receives birth match data under section <u>260E.14</u>, <u>subdivision 4</u>, from the Department of Human Services.

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# Section XI: Grievance Procedures

MPA values open discourse and honest, respectful communication. It is our goal to communicate early and regularly so that issues are easily managed. Parents/guardians who have a grievance are encouraged to address it directly with their child's teachers or the Lower School Director.

If there is a grievance over the PreK program or procedure, direct contact with the lead teacher or Lower School director should be made. Contact can be made either verbally or in writing.

If the individual making the complaint feels that it is of a serious nature, the complaint should be made to the Lower School director. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the director will either handle it personally or refer it to the Head of School if warranted. The individual has the right to contact the Department of Human Services Licensing Division at 651-431-6500.

There may arise a situation where a parent/guardian has a personal grievance against a teacher or staff member. Due to the personal nature of such a grievance, the Lower School director will gather information from the parent/guardian, then approach the staff member and give them a chance to explain their actions. If an unsatisfactory resolution of the problem occurs, then the director should involve Human Resources, who will work in conjunction with the director for the next steps.

- 1. The director will provide in writing how the problem will be resolved.
- 2. If the complaint is about the Lower School director and cannot be resolved internally, the Head of School will be notified.

# Section XII: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA or the Buckley Amendment protects the privacy of students and their parents by restricting access to school records in which individual student information is kept. Only "school officials with legitimate education interest" can directly access a student's records. The school must define "legitimate education interest" and specify the criteria for deciding who has this interest. FERPA provides parents with access to their child's school records, including health records, and stipulates that these records may not be released outside the school without specific parental consent except in a few circumstances.

FERPA requires our school to inform parents in writing every year of the school's policies and administrative procedures regarding student records. Parents also should receive information on the additional protections afforded student health information, the types of school-based or school-linked health services available to students, and the names and phone numbers of the school's health professionals. In addition, the parental notice should explain in clear, easily understood language the rights of parents and students, the limits of confidentiality, and relevant concepts such as "informed consent."

# Section XIII: Resources for Families

MPA is committed to the health and well-being of each family in our community. Listed below are a few resources that may be helpful for your child's development, as well as local sources for recreation and supplemental learning.

#### **Help Me Grow**

This organization helps parents/guardians understand developmental milestones and connects them to resources if there are concerns.

www.helpmegrowmn.org 866-693-GROW (4769)

#### **Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties**

This non-profit organization helps families connect with resources for food, energy, housing, jobs, transportation, childcare, and more.

<u>www.caprw.org</u> 651-645-6445

#### YMCA

This organization has many locations throughout the Twin Cities offering summer programs for students.

www.ymcanorth.org 612-230-9622

#### Soccer Shots

This program is designed as an introduction to soccer for young children. <u>www.soccershots.com/twincities/</u> 651-331-0134

#### **MacPhail Center for Music**

This organization provides music instruction for people of all ages. <u>Macphail.org</u> 612-321-0100

The policies for parents in this document represent a small portion of the policies MPA is required to maintain for licensing compliance. The entire catalog of policies is available to parents upon request.