

Mountain Village School

Family Handbook

2026-2027

PO Box 1432 Stowe, Vermont
802.253.7585

mountainvillageschool.com/ info@mountainvillageschool.com

Philosophy

Mountain Village School is a place for growing, learning, and exploration. We encourage a supportive relationship between parents and teachers. This handbook is a guide providing information to familiarize you with our center. We have included information about our philosophy, policies and procedures, and our practices to make you feel at home.

Mountain Village School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or disabilities. We accept each child where he/she stands in social, physical, emotional and intellectual development.

We believe that nature, community, harmony, and discovery are the most important attributes of early childhood. We also believe early childhood is a crucial aspect of an individual's development. Children deserve high-quality care and attention during this period in their lives. We also believe that each child has their own unique style of development and it is our responsibility to observe and recognize their individuality.

It is the overall objective of our school to provide an environment and experiences that foster all areas of development in order to:

- Build healthy and positive self-concepts and to be a self-advocate
- Enhance social skills and emotional regulation
- Maintain a sense of curiosity and a growth mindset toward learning
- Continuously think, reason, question, and experiment
- Be respectful, aware, and embrace diversity
- Develop initiative and decision-making skills
- Be independent, competent, and self-sufficient
- Make healthy choices regarding nutrition and physical activity

Please take time to read the entire handbook. It covers all aspects of our program during this time and you are responsible for all written policies included in this document.

General Program Information

Ratios of Children to Teachers
Infants, 6 weeks through 23 months: 4:1
Toddlers, 24-35 months: 5:1
Young Preschoolers, 30-26 months 6:1
Preschoolers, 3-6 years: 10:1
School Age, 1st-3rd Grade: 13:1

Communication with Families
Building strong partnerships with families through on-going communication is very important to us. Please make contact with at least one teacher when you drop off and pick up your child – either a quick check-in conversation or just a wave works well. For more extended conversations and questions, we offer Family Teacher Conferences twice per year and can also schedule meetings or phone calls with teachers if any immediate issues arise. Lastly, you can always reach us via phone or email during the school day.

All teachers use the Procare app to share learning activities, a daily note, and routine care information with families. In addition, there is a messaging function that allows you to communicate directly with your child's teachers. Please see our Procare Use policy below. Teachers in the preschool classrooms also use Teaching Strategies GOLD to document children's development and communicate with families as needed.

If you have any issue or concern that you feel you cannot discuss with your child's teacher and would like to meet with our Executive Director, Sarah, please feel free to email or call to set up a meeting.

Procare
All families have an account established on Procare upon enrollment. Families will receive an email invitation from Procare in order to establish their account. We utilize a desktop version of Procare where we are able to enter all emergency contacts and approved pickups for each child. If you ever would like to amend either the emergency contacts or approved pick up list, please email Sarah, Megan, or Ali to have your account updated.

Teachers utilize Procare throughout the day for updates regarding meals, naps, and daily activity. Teachers also have access to messages directly from families. Teachers may not respond immediately to messages so if you have any issues that need to be addressed immediately, please call school. We do our best to maintain updates as quickly and accurately as possible but this is secondary to our work with children. Please understand that there may be a delay in information getting to you due to our attention being focused on the children.

Directory

Nick Crandall: Finance Director nick@mountainvillageschool.com. Please contact Nick with any tuition related questions, after school or summer camp scheduling, or other business related issues.
Ali Gardner: Administrative Assistant annex@mountainvillageschool.com. Please contact Ali with any questions regarding summer camp, child files, and documentation updates.
Megan Stapleton: Assistant Director megan@mountainvillageschool.com. Please contact Megan with any enrollment questions, infant or toddler classroom questions, newsletter ideas or topics, or Parent Collaboration Committee questions.
Laura Jackson: Curriculum & Pedagogy Lead laura@mountainvillageschool.com. Please contact Laura with questions about curriculum, paperwork, and everyday needs. She spends half her time in the classroom and the other half in the office.
Jill Mazzone: Office & Bookkeeping Assistant office@mountainvillageschool.com. Please reach out to Jill regarding child absences, billing and tuition questions, and navigating daily needs.
Sarah Tousignant: Executive Director sarah@mountainvillageschool.com. Please contact Sarah with any school event questions, scheduling needs, enrollment updates, or any concerns at all.

Cell Phone Use

Mountain Village School is a **CELL PHONE FREE ZONE**. We ask that you do not use your phone while at the center. Please step outside if you do need to use your phone.

Closures

MVS will close for, but not limited to, the following reasons:
State of Emergency: If we are advised or mandated to do so by the State or Federal authorities.
Utility malfunctions: We will not operate if we do not have heat, electricity, or water.
Staff shortages: In the event that enough staff members are absent or fall ill during the day that the center is unable to maintain legal child to teacher ratios.
Weather: MVS strives to remain open during all regularly scheduled times despite inclement weather. We typically follow the decision of Lamoille South regarding weather closures. We notify VPR and local TV stations of all weather-related closures and delays which you can check on their websites, and we also notify all families via email. Inclement weather includes: snow, ice, heat, air quality, or any other unsafe weather conditions.
Holidays: Scheduled holiday related closures can be found on our school calendar.
Professional Development/In-Service: Scheduled professional development, in-service, and staff meeting full day or early closures can be found on our school calendar.
Extended closures: MVS closes for the full week between Christmas and New Year's Day, as well the week of LSUU's spring break in April and a full week in August for classroom transitions.

If MVS is required to close for any of the conditions above or any other unforeseeable reasons, we will notify families by phone and/or email immediately. Children may remain at school only so long as it is needed for arrangements for pick up to be made.

Arrival and Pick Up

Mountain Village School at Thomas Lane is open from 7:30 am until 5:00 pm. The Annex is open 7:30 am until 5:30 pm. In support of consistency in classroom routines, please plan to drop your child off before 9:00. Exceptions can be made as needed, please let your child's teacher know in advance if they will be late. Pick up is between 3:00 and 5:00 at Thomas Lane and between 3:00 and 5:30 pm at the Annex. Please remember to give yourself adequate time to pick up your child and collect their belongings before closing.

For morning drop off please develop a consistent, predictable, and quick routine. Prolonging drop off makes it confusing for children and difficult for the classroom. When your child knows what to expect, they are better able to manage their feelings. If you ever have questions about drop off, please feel free to ask us for help or advice.

If you need to leave a car seat, you may leave it in the small closet in the downstairs hallway.

Tuition

Tuition is due regardless of absences, closures, sickness, or vacation. If you have any questions regarding your payments, please contact Nick. **There will be a $25.00 fee per week for any returned payment.** When a balance becomes past due, a late fee will be assessed. Any unpaid balance beyond the billing period (i.e. 7 days for weekly billing schedules, 30 days for monthly billing schedules) a 5% fee will be assessed per billing cycle beginning with the first missed payment. **A minimum of forty-five days notice is required prior to termination of enrollment or to change your schedule.**

Due to the changes in Act 76, we are limited in our ability to adjust and change our tuition rates. With this requirement, we must set our tuition rates at a higher than usual amount. To manage this requirement, we then give each family a scholarship based on your child's age.

The annual tuition for all enrolled children is $52,000, regardless of age. If your child attends on a part time basis your annual tuition will be based upon the part time tuition chart below.

With the scholarship program, the amount that you will be billed is listed below in the tuition scholarship chart. Presently, all families are eligible to receive the scholarship rates; there are no restrictions or eligibility requirements.

Please refer to the MVS Tuition Policy Agreement effective 8/24/2026 for more details about specific tuition policies.

	8/24/2026 through 8/23/2027		
	Full time (weekly)		
	Tuition	**Scholarship**	**Due**
Infants 0-24 months	$1,115.13	$585.13	$530.00
Toddlers 24-26 months	$1,115.13	$605.13	$510.00
Preschool 3-6 years	$1,115.13	$615.13	$500.00
	Part time (daily)		
	Tuition	**Scholarship**	**Due**
All Ages: infant, toddler & preschool	$244.53	$134.53	$110.00

For any families receiving subsidy from the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, if your subsidy voucher does not cover the full amount due in the tuition chart, you are responsible for paying the difference. Please also be aware that there may be time delays of weeks or months as we work with CCFAP to reconcile subsidy vouchers and tuition payments.

Absences

For any planned or day of absences, please make sure to call, email, or send a message through Procare to let us know. If you will be going on vacation please let us know at least one week in advance.

Babysitting

We ask that families do not ask teachers or staff members of MVS to babysit. We recognize that it does take a village to help raise children, however our abilities are limited to teaching and caring for children here at school. If you have additional needs for babysitting please reach out to your child's room parent for suggestions. You can also reach local services for babysitting as well.

Daily Routines and Practices

Field Trips

We take children ages 3 years and older on field trips using the MVS school buses. Families will be notified prior to any field trips. Children are required to stay in their seats and seat belts are used at all times. We take field trips to local nature areas, Echo Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, Cochran's for

our ski program, as well as other popular places regionally and throughout the state.

Nap Time

Every classroom has rest time each day. For our infants and toddlers this is a set time where cots are set out and they are given adequate time and support to fall asleep. For preschoolers and school aged children, a rest time is offered. The option for sleep is available but for those who are not interested in sleeping, quiet, independent activities are provided. Families are responsible for providing bedding (typically a cot sheet and blanket) which will be sent home every Friday or on your child's last school day of the week. For the youngest infant classroom, MVS will provide crib sheets and families may provide a sleep sack which will be washed at school weekly.

Outdoor Play

Children are outdoors every day, during this time we will be spending even more time outside than usual. **Reminder, we do get dirty!** Clothing that is durable, washable, and comfortable is a must. Make sure to send your child dressed appropriately for the weather each day. We go out in the rain, mud, snow, and cold. We also have several blog posts regarding recommended outdoor clothing as well as our Gear List that is part of our enrollment packet. For meals outdoors the same table cleaning and hand washing procedures will be followed.

Cubbies and Extra Clothing

Each child has their own cubby. It is labeled with their name and a photograph. **Please label all items to discourage loss.** Personalized name stickers are fantastic to keep your child's items labeled. Your child will need a minimum of two changes of clothing, including socks.

Personal Items

We ask that children leave toys and other items from home at home. Personal toys often cause problems when they get lost or when children do not want to share. We have plenty of things to play with here at school. Security items are often needed for children during transitions when starting school or life changes, i.e. a new sibling. We support security items being brought to school but they will be kept in children's cubbies unless needed for emotional support or at naptime. We encourage children to bring items to share with their class such as collections, items they have found, or pictures of places they have traveled to. Please check in with your child's teacher if you are interested in bringing things in to share and they will let you know when a good time to bring things in is.

Parking and Building Access

Make sure to always hold your child's hand in the parking lot. All internal entrances are locked with the key code. The code for all the doors is the same and may be changed at any time. If the code is changed you will be notified via email. If you are ever unable to open the doors due to a malfunction of the locking system, call the main school number (802.253.7585 Thomas Lane, 802.253.3080 Annex) and someone will be there to assist you as soon as they are able.

Food Program

We prepare all snacks and lunches in our kitchen here at MVS. The food that we prepare is as organic, vegetarian, and local as possible. We follow the guidelines established by the Harvard School of Public Health. To learn more about their research and see the guidelines, please visit: hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/.

We offer water and/or tea at every meal. For lunch we always offer raw vegetables, whole grains, and protein. We are constantly seeking new ingredients to make our meals as healthy as possible. We use meals with the children as an opportunity for socialization as well as talking about the importance of eating healthy and nutritious foods.

All children are offered our school meals unless there are specific dietary restrictions and an alternate meal is provided by the family. We are willing to make adjustments to our menu to accommodate any allergies or dietary needs. We ask that all families complete the informational form regarding your child prior to enrollment. If your child develops an allergy or food sensitivity or intolerance while they are enrolled at MVS, please contact our director. Together we will gather the necessary information to ensure that all teachers and kitchen staff know what your child can and cannot eat.

Hydration

Please provide a water bottle for outdoor use daily. Water bottles will be stored outside and must be taken home on a weekly basis for cleaning. Water bottles are not used in the classroom, we use open cups for all children during meals.

Pacifiers

If your child is able to go without their pacifier, please leave it at home. Pacifiers will only be given to children during nap time. Once children enter the two year old classroom we ask that pacifiers stay at home. If you need support in transitioning away from a pacifier please feel free to ask your child's teacher for suggestions and support.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. MVS takes confidentiality very seriously and makes every effort to protect each family's privacy. Communications among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. MVS recommends that conversations about a child, behavior, or incident should be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the MVS community. Discussions in the hallways should be kept to a minimum. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest that this parent first contact the teacher or director to arrange a time to discuss. Staff members are also required to keep information about children confidential. We cannot share information such as children's health or

behaviors. We will only share that information with the direct family. At no point will any child's or family's health condition be shared or made public.
We often receive requests from parents for other parents' contact information for birthday party invitations and other social events. Parents' email addresses will be shared via each classroom's room parent. If you do not want your email address to be shared with other parents, please tell Sarah and Megan in writing and we will keep it confidential.

Health and Safety Policies

Immunizations & Documentation
Our expectations for health and safety include updated records of immunizations, annual documentation of a physical exam, and any updates regarding specific health conditions. We are required to have documentation that all children enrolled in our center have received full and appropriate immunizations for their age. If the immunizations are not completed we need the appropriate documentation from the child's health care provider.

Illness
Please always consider your child's health prior to sending them to school. If you feel that your child is not healthy enough to participate in normal daily activities please keep them home and monitor their symptoms. Remember that children at school are in classrooms based on child ratios ranging from 1:4 (infants) to 1:10 (preschool). We aim to meet everyone's needs as much as possible but please consider those ratios and the amount of individualized care your child needs when making decisions about whether they are healthy enough to attend school.

Please reach out via email or phone if you are unsure whether your child is well enough to attend school. We are always happy to offer advice on a case-by-case basis. Thank you for considering the health of our community in your decisions.

Our exclusion policies include the following:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; serious sustained cough
- Green, yellow, or brown discharge from the nose or eyes
- Diarrhea or loose stools (more than 1 episode in a day)
- Fever of 100.4 F or higher
- Stiff neck with headache or fever
- Muscle pain or weakness
- Heightened levels of fatigue
- Sore throat
- Rash with or without a fever
- Vomiting
- Symptoms or complaints that prevent the child from participating in normal school activities

- If a child requires more care than we are safely able to provide

There are similarities between symptoms of the common cold and COVID-19. We are primarily concerned with cold symptoms when they are new, such as the first day of a green runny nose or a new sustained cough. Regardless of whether it is a cold or COVID-19, it is a good idea to allow your child to rest at home at the beginning of such an illness so that they have a better chance of recovering more quickly. It is also in the best interest of our health as a community for children to stay home in the early stages of illness while they are most contagious. If we notice new illness symptoms at school, we may ask that you pick up your child early, depending on the severity of their symptoms. Children who have a fever over 100.4 F should stay home for a minimum of 24 hours after they are fever-free without the aid of fever reducers such as Tylenol.

Teachers are also exposed to illnesses while at school and cannot come to work while sick. Occasionally we may need to close a classroom early, for the day, or make other adjustments to ensure that we are adequately staffed. On those occasions we will give families as much advance notice as possible. However, please be understanding that we may not be able to give much notice. Our main concern is maintaining a safe environment for everyone. **If we are unable to maintain child to teacher ratios, we are required by the Child Development Division to close the classroom.**

<u>Hand Washing</u>
All children, staff, contracted service providers, and parents or guardians should engage in hand hygiene at the follow times:

- Arrival at school
- After staff breaks
- Before and after preparing food or drinks
- Before and after eating, handling food, or feeding children
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- Before and after diapering
- After using the bathroom
- Before and after helping a child in the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After handling animals or cleaning animal waste
- After playing outside
- After play with sand or engaging in sensory play
- After handling garbage
- After cleaning

As much as possible we have plenty of hand lotion to support healthy skin for children and staff. Please feel free to leave a labeled container of hand lotion with your child's teacher to use after hand washing.

Hand Washing Procedure

Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Follow these steps for hand washing or hand sanitizing every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap with a towel and apply soap.
2. Lather hands by vigorously rubbing together with soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub hands for a minimum of 20 seconds
4. Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel.
6. Turn off the tap with the towel and discard.

Children under the age of 3 must be monitored while using hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion. All children will be monitored during hand washing. There are posters with pictures and descriptions at all hand washing sinks.

Medication Policies

If you are leaving medication (either prescription or over the counter) for us to administer to your child, you must fill out and sign a medication permission form stating the reason, correct dosage, and the time it should be administered. We cannot give any medicine without the form being completely filled out and signed. For any prescription medication we need the label and prescription from the pharmacy with physician's contact information listed. All medications must go home at the end of each day. **A child may not receive the first dose of any medication at school.** Please make sure that you administer the first dose and allow for sufficient time to observe any reactions prior to sending the child and the medication to school. We will not administer any cough drops, lozenges, or similar medications because of the potential choking hazard. All medications are kept in a locked cabinet out of reach of children.

If your child is taking antibiotics during this time, we will ask that you keep your child out of care until they are completely finished with the medication.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency and Medical Information

Copley Hospital is the closest hospital located in Morrisville and is the primary site for emergency care for all children and staff. In the event of an emergency, 911/emergency services will be called. Parents are required to provide relevant health insurance information for emergency medical or dental treatment, however, treatment will not be denied if emergency services do not have access to this information. All staff have current certifications in first aid and CPR training, which includes rescue breathing, management of a blocked airway, and any special procedures that physicians of enrolled children have

documented for the child. Emergency care plans for children with known medical issues that might require special care are kept on file. Staff members who administer care to children requiring special medical procedures are competent in the procedure and guided in writing by the prescribing health care provider.

Emergencies

Emergency evacuation procedures are posted next to each classroom door leading to the outside. Staff utilize facility radios, the Procare app, email, and phones to communicate.

Fire Safety: Our center is fully equipped with a fire alarm and CO2 detection system. This system is connected directly to our local emergency services in the event the system is triggered. We follow all State and Child Care Licensing requirements regarding fire safety including fire extinguisher placement and maintenance, fire doors, and exit signs. Emergency evacuation procedures and drills are reviewed and practiced monthly with children and staff, along with one drill per year, occurring during children's scheduled nap time.

Shelter in Place/Off-Site Evacuation:

In the event of a danger presented outside the facility, students and teachers follow our shelter in place safety procedures, moving to designated safety zones throughout the building and locking all interior and exterior doors that can safely be reached. Local police will be notified followed by families. In the event we need to shelter away from the facility, Stowe Elementary School is our designated safe relocation facility. Staff follow accountability procedures throughout the transition to the relocation facility and students and staff will remain at this location until the danger has passed or families have been able to pick up their children.

Lost or Missing Child

Children are always grouped and counted whenever they move from one environment to another, and continuously throughout durations spent outside the classroom. In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated, the Director will be notified immediately and all available staff will be assigned to search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Serious Injury and Emergency Transportation

If a child is seriously injured, First Aid & CPR trained staff will assess the injury, provide initial care, and remain with the child while emergency services are contacted and have arrived. At the earliest point, every effort will be made to contact the child's parent/guardian or additional emergency contacts. In the event the child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. Every effort will be made to provide a staff member the child knows and is comfortable with to accompany and remain with the child until a family

member or emergency contact arrives.

Weather and Disease Protection

To protect against cold, heat, sun, injury, and insect-borne illness families are expected to provide weather appropriate clothing and outdoor gear. Clothing and gear recommendations can be found in our outdoor clothing guide provided in family registration packets. In partnership with families, we ensure that:

- Children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather
- Children always have the opportunity to play in the shade. When in the sun, they wear sun-protective clothing, applied skin protection, or both. Applied skin protection (provided by each family) will be either sunscreen or sunblock with both UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher and is applied to all exposed skin (each child must have written permission for sunscreen or sunblock). Sunscreen or sunblock will be applied 20 minutes prior to outdoor play and every hour thereafter.
- It is recommended parents provide skin protection for cold weather as well. Dermatone, Aquafor, or coconut oil are good options for children's skin during winter to protect against frostbite.
- When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to high risk of insect-borne disease, we will apply insect repellent that is provided by each family. There is a very low risk in Vermont of this occurring but if we were required, repellent would be applied no more than once per day and only with written permission.

Protection from Hazards

MVS is a smoke free facility, both indoors and out. No smoking is ever permitted in the presence of children. Program staff protect children and adults from high levels of air pollution from smog or heavy traffic by limiting outdoor and physical activity as a precaution during smog or other air pollution alerts from the Vermont Department of Health. We also ask that families do not leave their cars running while dropping off or picking up children. Vermont has a statewide idling law for motor vehicles on school grounds. Help us to preserve our environment, protect small developing lungs, and individuals suffering from asthma. For more information on this law visit: www.idlefreevt.org

First Aid Kits

Fully equipped first-aid kits are readily available and maintained for each group of children. There is a kit in each classroom that is labeled and is accessible by adults. First aid kits travel with each group of children for outdoor play and any field trips or outings.

Parental Custody

For each child with a custody agreement, we require that a copy remain within the child's file. It is the responsibility of parents to update it as needed. Children are only released to parents who have legal custody and those people listed on the approved pick up list. It is the policy of Mountain Village School to release a child to either parent unless otherwise stipulated in a court agreement. It is our policy not to

provide information on a voluntary basis to any party involved in a custody dispute unless it is related to the child's safety. Our ultimate goal is for staff to sustain and develop positive relationships with both parents of the child.

Transportation Safety

Your child's safety is a primary concern to us. This concern extends through the release of the child to her/his parent or guardian at the end of each day. Children must be placed in an appropriate car restraint system in the vehicle in which they leave. In the event that a person comes to pick up a child and is visibly impaired (having difficulty walking and/or slurred or incoherent speech), staff will encourage that person to refrain from driving and suggest that a relative, friend or taxi be called for transportation. If the parent insists on driving, staff may call the Stowe Police Department with the name of the driver, passenger(s), vehicle description, and license plate number. Parents are responsible for notifying anyone designated to pick up their child of these policies.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All MVS staff are mandated reporters and are required by the State of Vermont to report to the Department of Children and Families any suspected case of child abuse or neglect within 24 hours - this policy complies with federal, state, and local laws.

For any additional forms, please visit this link: MVS Forms that will bring you to our MVS website.