

Email: [mountainsproutslearning@gmail.com](mailto:mountainsproutslearning@gmail.com)

[www.mountainsproutslearning.com](http://www.mountainsproutslearning.com)

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# Mountain Sprouts Learning (MSL)

## Parent Handbook 2026-2027

**Mountain  
Sprouts  
Learning**



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# Contact Information

Email: [mountainsproutslearning@gmail.com](mailto:mountainsproutslearning@gmail.com)

Samantha Wayland - Executive Director & Lead Teacher

Email : [sam.wayland@mountainsproutslearning.com](mailto:sam.wayland@mountainsproutslearning.com)

Tiffany Smith - Program Director & Lead Teacher

Email: [tiffany.smith@mountainsproutslearning.com](mailto:tiffany.smith@mountainsproutslearning.com)

# Mission & Curriculum

Mountain Sprouts Learning is recognized by the IRS as a certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Our mission is to create a learning environment that allows students to establish a deep-rooted connection with the natural world, their community, and themselves by engaging in self-directed, purposeful, outdoor play.

Our curriculum is inspired by Montessori theory, Reggio Emilia, and the natural environment. We guide students through planned activities that reflect their current interests and community interests, all inspired by nature. Students will learn social skills through peer interactions and adult intervention in moments of conflict. Our goal is to meet students' diverse needs and create an optimal learning environment.

# Discipline Policy

Our discipline model is based on theories of Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey. This evidence-based behavior management strategy teaches social and emotional learning through adult-led self-regulation.

The foundation of the Conscious Discipline model is based on the belief that consciousness is a better teacher than consequence. Through conscious awareness of ourselves and those we communicate with we can choose the consequence of our life's actions.

Conscious Discipline teaches that all behaviors are a form of communication. Recognition of how our behaviors are dictated by emotions is a core principle of this behavioral management strategy. When conflict arises, so does the opportunity to

problem-solve and learn new skills.

More info on Conscious Discipline here: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/methodology/>

## Aggressive/Unsafe Behavior

If MSL notices routine problematic behaviors we will document them and share information with families to create a plan of action. Behavior non-negotiables are bolting (running away) and persistent aggression towards students or staff. MSL reserves the right to remove a student from the program if unsafe behavior persists.

## Confidentiality & Disclosure

Mountain Sprouts Learning treats confidentiality seriously and respectfully. All information concerning children, parents, staff or volunteers shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed with anyone other than those authorized to receive such information.

If an incident needs to be discussed outside school (such as seeking information or opinions on a particular child's needs from other professionals e.g. speech therapists, occupational therapists, Child Psychologists, Department of Child Services), then this will be done in a professional way keeping details of unrelated children/ families/ staff/ incidents out of the discussion and no personal value judgments will be made during the discussion. If you have a need or concern to disclose please contact Samantha Wayland or Tiffany Smith.

## Preferred Communication

Preferred communication about urgent matters during program hours is concise text messages sent to your child's teacher.

Please use email to communicate less urgent needs or to schedule a meeting or a phone call.

Please communicate any changes at home or within the family, as these changes often will affect your child's demeanor and presence. MSL will not disclose personal or confidential information to any unauthorized persons.

## Notice of Absence

If your child is going to be out of school please inform your child's teacher through email or text message as soon as possible.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

Mountain Sprouts Learning is a nonsectarian early education program. MSL admits students of any race, color, religion, and national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities and does not discriminate in administration of its educational and admission policies.

## Enrollment Age Requirements

Students aged 3-5 years old will be considered for enrollment.

Students of school age may not enroll at Mountain Sprouts Learning. In South Carolina, a child must turn 5 years old by September 1st of that year to enroll in kindergarten. Students under 3 years of age will be considered for enrollment on a case-by-case basis.

## Trial Period

Students younger than 3 years may be considered for admission *on a case-by-case basis*. Parents of younger children must consider the development of their child to determine if they are ready to enroll in MSL's program.

A trial period may be required for young students before they are accepted for enrollment. During the trial, if we feel as though your child is not ready for enrollment, MSL Directors will share that information with you to make a plan together for moving forward. The tuition rate for a trial period is \$35 per day.

## Enrollment Procedure & Deposit

A one-time deposit of \$100/student is required upon enrollment.

The following forms must be on file before your child can attend:

1. Tuition & Handbook Agreement
2. Enrollment Packet (containing family information, student health information, photo release, & about your child)

Our [website](#) has our Parent Handbook, School Calendar, and Tuition & Handbook Agreement. Enrollment forms can be printed or emailed to you upon request.

# Unenrollment Policy

We ask for parents to notify us two weeks prior to changes in enrollment. Payments are nonrefundable. We understand that there are extenuating circumstances and will use our discretion on a case-by-case basis.

We care about the wellbeing of your child. MSL reserves the right to unenroll students if it becomes apparent that our program is not suitable for your child.

# Tuition Rates & Fees

Days per Week	Semester Payment Rate	Monthly Payment Rate
4	\$1,500/semester	\$375/month
3	\$1,220/semester	\$305/month
2	\$900/semester	\$225/month
1	\$480/semester	\$120/month
\$35/day drop-in offered for currently enrolled students		

### Semester Payment Due Dates

Fall 2026 .....  
 September 4th, 2026  
 Spring 2027\* .....  
 February 5th, 2027

### Monthly Payment Plan Due Dates

Fall 2026 ..... September 4th, October 2nd, November 6th,  
 December 4th  
 Spring 2027\* ..... February 5th, March 5th, April 2nd,  
 May 7th

Late payments are subject to a fee of \$25.  
 Returned checks are subject to a fee of \$40.  
 Late pick-ups are subject to a fee of \$1/minute. We will use our discretion to apply this fee in the event of chronic lateness.

Tuition is due regardless of attendance. Students may not attend until payment is received.

## Daily Drop-in

Drop-ins are only available to currently enrolled students for \$35/session. To schedule a drop-in, notify us by no later than noon the day before. Confirmation is required. Payment is due at the time of drop-off.

## Clothing & Attire

Your child should be dressed for active outdoor play in consideration of the weather and wearing clothes they can manage independently. We suggest sturdy, protective, close-toed shoes. Rain jackets, pants, and waterproof boots are recommended on rainy or muddy days.

In colder months, dress your child in warm layers, allowing them to remove some as the day warms. In warmer months, we suggest long pant/long sleeve options for sun and bug protection.

If your child comes home wearing clothing labeled “MSL”, we request that you wash and return them as soon as possible.

## School Clothes Bin

Each student will need 2 pairs of weather appropriate clothes, and a pair of shoes to leave at school. This may include rain gear or other layers you wish to leave at school.

If your child is using diapers, please send a package of diapers and pack of wipes to be stored in this bin. We will notify you when we need more.

## Backpack

Equip your child with a backpack clearly marked with their name containing a snack, water bottle, and **only true necessities**. We recommend a backpack that is easy for your child to manage independently.

If you provide any of the following, please give them directly to a teacher rather than in your child’s backpack: diaper cream, sunscreen, insect repellent, or medication of any kind.

*Please check their backpacks each day* to look for completed crafts, dirty clothes, leftover food, etc.

## Food & Beverages

Please provide a daily snack that will fuel their morning. Pack food containers that your student can independently open. We will assist if necessary, but will encourage students to build their independence in managing their food.

### Snack Routine/Expectations:

Children may eat their snack any time, and as many times, as they wish for the duration of our program. Our goal is to let them listen to their bodies and eat when they feel hungry. With this freedom, we also want students to work towards independently managing their snack.

Our snack rules:

1. Wash hands before eating.
2. Eat at the table (sitting or standing), with calm bodies.
3. No sharing of food or drink.
4. Clean up and put the snack away when finished eating.

## Bathroom/Diapering

Students will have privacy from other students and staff members while using the bathroom. If a student needs assistance in the bathroom they will be guided by a staff member from outside of the bathroom area if possible. If they need hands-on assistance from staff members, the curtain to the bathroom will remain open.

Diapers are changed on a waterproof pad on the ground. This is done in the school yard, out of the way of other students, but with minimal privacy.

## Allergen Information

Inform us ASAP about any known or suspected allergies your child may have. **Our allergen information is subject to change.**

## Arrival and Drop-Off

The drop-off window is **8:15 - 8:30am**. Parking is located in the gravel lot in front of The Gauge Coffee House.

Prepare your child for the day. If possible, give students medication they need prior to arrival, as well as a chance to use the bathroom. Please say goodbye at the gate. Teachers will help your child hang their bag and start their day. The quicker the goodbye, the easier it is for children to start their day with us.

Please familiarize anyone dropping-off/picking-up of these procedures.

## Dismissal and Pick-Up

Pick-up is **11:45am - 12:00pm**. Parking is located in the gravel lot in front of The Gauge Coffee House.

Students will be released as parents arrive. Please wait outside of the fence.

Late pick-ups are subject to a fee of \$1/minute.

## Authorized Pick-Up

If your child will be picked up by someone other than an authorized person listed in the Family Information form, parents/guardians must provide a written note, email or text prior to pick-up. Identity will be verified upon pick-up.

MSL may refuse to release the student if staff has reason to believe the adult is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or is physically impaired in any way and may endanger the student. If so, MSL will request that another adult be called to pick up the student or call the numbers listed on the Family Information form.

## Early Pick-Up

Notify your child's teacher at drop-off if you will be picking up your child before 11:45am.

## Visitors

Current and prospective parents are able to come for brief visits during the school day. Visits must be scheduled with a MSL director. If parents or other family members/friends wish to volunteer in our classroom, they must consent to a background check (forms will be sent out by request).

## Illnesses

If your child is not well enough to participate in all aspects of our programs, please keep your child at home. If any of the following symptoms are present, please keep your child at home and contact MSL.

- temperature higher than 99.5°F
- nausea or vomiting
- red, pink, or crusted eyes
- diarrhea
- rash/infections
- sore throat
- change in regular behavior

## Severe Weather Policy

MSL is an all-weather program, but exceptions may be made in the event of extreme weather days. Severe storms and heavy rain accompanied by cold temperatures will be reason to consider canceling for the day. We will communicate this information with families by no later than 7:30am on the day in question.

## Emergency Response Plan

Our first priority is the safety and well-being of our students. MSL staff has emergency preparedness through low teacher/student ratio, CPR and First Aid Training, and action plans.

### Action Plan: Dangerous Weather

If unexpected weather arises during program hours we will relocate to the basement of the Whitewater Shop for immediate shelter. MSL staff will contact parents/guardians as soon as possible to share information. If parents cannot be reached, we will contact those listed on the Emergency Contacts form in the order they are listed. 911 will be contacted, if necessary.

### Action Plan: Security

If an intruder poses a safety hazard, MSL staff and students will seek immediate shelter in Humble Pie or The Gauge Coffee House, or evacuate to neighboring property. We will reach out to Life in Long Creek staff for assistance if necessary. 911 will be contacted immediately. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible. If parents cannot be reached, we will contact those listed on the Emergency Contacts form in the order they are listed.

*[MSL Parent Handbook is an evolving document, you will be notified of significant changes.]*