



MAGC
Garden School
Parent Handbook
2017-2018

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

MAGC Garden School Staff

Directors - Susan Hunt and MM Tornga

Teachers - Liz Amini and Elizabeth Melone



MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Contents

Part I – General Information	5
Welcome.....	5
Purpose of this Handbook.....	5
Non-Discrimination Policy.....	5
Admission/Registration	5
Payment Policy.....	6
Termination/Modified Schedule.....	7
Toilet Training Policy.....	7
Withdrawal Procedure.....	8
Part 2 – The Program	9
Mission Statement.....	9
Philosophy.....	9
Goals.....	10
Curriculum.....	11
Program Description	11
Methods.....	12
Field Trips.....	13
School Rules	13
School Hours/Calendar	14
Daily Schedule	14
Daily Program Routine and Schedules	15
Daily Schedule Summary.....	16
Part 3 – The Children	17
Behavior Management	17
Discipline Strategies.....	18
Conflict Resolution.....	18
How to help your child prepare for school	18
Separation.....	18
Arrival and Departure from the Classroom	19

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Sign in/out and Late Fees	20
Food Preparation.....	21
Clothing.....	21
Children’s Personal Belongings.....	21
Attendance and Illness.....	22
Lice Policy.....	23
Prevention of Illness	23
Medication Dispensation	23
Part 4 – The Family	24
Family Involvement and Communication.....	24
Child Abuse Reporting	24
Grievance Procedure.....	25
Parents' Rights.....	25
Children's Personal Rights	26
Rights of the Licensing Agency	26
Part 5 – Safety / Emergencies.....	28
Emergency Policy/Procedure	28
Allergies/Allergic Reactions Policy.....	28
Disaster Plan	29
Part 6 – Additional Information.....	31
Birthdays and Special Events	31
Birthday Parties.....	31
Thank You	31

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Part I – General Information

Welcome

We welcome you to The MAGC Garden School. We provide quality early childhood education to many families within the Ross Valley. We hope you enjoy your time with us, and look forward to working with you and your child. We are excited to watch your child grow!

Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of the MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook is to answer most questions parents will have regarding our preschool. It is an important resource that should be kept in a place for ready reference. Please review the handbook to familiarize yourself with your child's care and MAGC Garden School's procedures and policies that help our program function effectively and with quality. ***It is your responsibility to read and follow the policies and procedures included in this handbook, or ask for help or explanation if needed.***

Non-Discrimination Policy

The MAGC Garden School Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, or sexual preference.

Admission/Registration

1. Information regarding enrollment can be obtained from the MAGC Office at 415-455-5260.
2. All new applicants whose application form and fee have been received will be given consideration in filling our class. Due to the size of the preschool, we cannot guarantee admission to any child. Preferential consideration is based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:
 - Director recommendation and approval
 - Children who are re-registering/returning
 - Class availability
 - Currently enrolled families enrolling a sibling
 - Age of child
 - Alumni families
 - Gender balancing of classes

To maintain our program integrity, we strive to create classes that are age and gender balanced to provide your child with the most enriching experience possible.

If a family does not accept the spot offered, their child will forfeit their position on the wait list.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

In order to secure a spot for your child, the Admission Agreement, Parent's Rights and MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook Acknowledgement forms must be completed and returned to MAGC along with a non-refundable check for \$800.00 (\$500.00 of that amount will be credited toward the annual tuition).

3. Prior to school admittance, the following forms must be current and on file with the office:
 - Admission Agreement
 - LIC 995 - Parents' Rights form
 - LIC 613A - Personal Rights form
 - LIC 627: Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
 - LIC 700: Emergency Information
 - LIC 701: Physician's Report
 - LIC 702: Parent's Report
 - MAGC Garden School Authorizations & Acknowledgments (2 pages)
 - Emergency Form (front & back)
 - MAGC Garden School /Pixie Parents Liability Waiver
 - MAGC Garden School Child Developmental History (3 pages)
 - California Immunization Card and Health Report

4. California Department of Public Health regulations require that all children attending preschool receive the following immunizations prior to attending school:
 - Polio - OPV or IPV
 - Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis - DTaP
 - Measles, mumps and rubella – MMR
 - Haemophilus influenza type B – Hib (only for children younger than 4 years, 6 months)
 - Hepatitis B – Hep B
 - Varicella – Chickenpox VAR or VZV

5. Parents must submit their child's immunization record as proof. No child will be admitted to school without this written proof. Any exemption requires a physician's written statement of a medical exemption for missing shot(s) and immunization records with dates for all required shots not exempted.

6. **Parents are responsible for informing the office and the teachers of the MAGC Garden School program as to changes of address, telephone, identification, and emergency information, and/or other pertinent facts.**

Payment Policy

1. Tuition is due by August 1, 2017; we offer a discount if payment is made in full at this time. If you elect to make two payments, the second payment is due by January 1, 2018. Your child will not be able to attend class until payment is received.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

2. Your non-refundable \$800 deposit guarantees that a spot will be held for your child. \$500 of the deposit will be applied toward your tuition if you complete the enrollment process. If you need to withdraw your child from the MAGC Garden School for any reason, written notification must be provided to the MAGC Garden School at least thirty days in advance. You are responsible for the full amount of the annual tuition unless the vacancy created by your withdrawal can be filled. If we are able to fill the vacancy created by your child's departure, the annual tuition will be refunded except for the \$800 non-refundable deposit.
3. Rates are determined annually. New rates are in effect at the beginning of the school year and remain so for the duration of the year. Should an unforeseen rate change be necessary, 30 days' notice shall be given.
4. Parents are responsible for paying fees on checks returned for insufficient funds.

Termination/Modified Schedule

If at any time a child is unable or not ready to adapt to the expectations of the school, a modified schedule may be put in place at the Director's discretion while the child transitions to the full day. Parents will be expected to pick up their child at the agreed-upon time.

If we determine that our program is not appropriate for your child, or that you or your child constitutes a safety or legal hazard, we reserve the right to withdraw services temporarily or permanently. Reasons include but are not limited to health, disruptive behavior, lack of adjustment to the school program, or non-payment of any tuition, payment or fee. For more information, see Part 3 - Behavior Management.

Toilet Training Policy

We realize that toilet training takes several months to master. Please make sure your child has the self-help skills needed to toilet him/herself. At The Garden School, we consider children toilet trained when children are able to urinate and have a bowel movement consistently on the toilet.

We do not do toilet training at the school. All children, regardless of their age, are expected to be fully toilet trained upon their start date. If repeated accidents occur, children will be asked to stay at home for at least two weeks, or until the situation is resolved.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Withdrawal Procedure

1. If you need to withdraw your child from the MAGC Garden School for any reason, written notification must be provided to the MAGC Garden School at least thirty days in advance. You are responsible for the full amount of the annual tuition unless the vacancy created by your withdrawal can be filled. If we are able to fill the vacancy created by your child's departure, the annual tuition will be refunded except for the \$750 non-refundable deposit.
2. Once a child has been withdrawn, should the parents wish him/her to re-enter, the child will be placed on the waiting list and must wait his/her turn.
3. Every effort will be made to give adequate professional education to every child. However, the welfare and safety of all children in the school receive first priority. If, in the opinion of the Director, a child can be better provided for in another setting, or his safety or the safety of others is questionable, every effort will be made to help the family find help in another service. The MAGC Garden School will reserve the right to ask a family to withdraw a child if the Director deems this truly necessary. If exclusion of a child becomes necessary, two week's written notice will be given to the parents.
4. If the Director requests withdrawal of any parent and child for failure to adhere to school rules, two weeks written notice will be given.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Part 2 – The Program

The MAGC Garden School is a developmental, play-based preschool for children ages 3 to 5.9 years old, operated by the non-profit Marin Art & Garden Center. We focus on developing each child's self-confidence, providing opportunities for socialization, and preparing children for kindergarten. Our school offers a safe, welcoming environment with individual attention to each student, made possible by our small class size and a low student-to-teacher ratio.

Mission Statement

The mission of the MAGC Garden School is to promote the development of the child through exploration of the arts and the environment while fostering learning and appreciation for our natural world.

Philosophy

The MAGC Garden School is a rich environment that promotes active exploration in all areas of a child's development: emotional, social, intellectual and physical.

Childhood is a magical time of growth and curiosity. Children should be provided a safe and nurturing environment in which all feel respected, appreciated and cherished. It is important for children to have a positive and stimulating introduction to school, as this is the foundation for their future. In a supportive environment, children develop a positive self-esteem, learn self-control and gain independence and confidence. They experience pride and accomplishment, successes and failures, and learn to master their feelings.

Children learn through play. In a play-based program, children are given an opportunity to develop their problem solving, negotiating and communicating skills at their own pace. They experience friendships, learn techniques for getting along with others and play cooperatively. A child's natural curiosity to learn about the world around them is promoted through playful expression and freedom of activity. Teachers facilitate learning by giving children opportunities to make choices about which activities and materials they will use and explore. Opportunities are provided for the children's imaginations to expand.

Children should be engaged in the learning process. It is an interactive relationship between the teachers and the students. Teachers stimulate and extend knowledge by asking questions and making suggestions. Children are invited to observe, discover, organize, inquire, and anticipate results. Learning activities are interesting, concrete, real and relevant. Emphasis is placed on working independently, following directions, learning to participate cooperatively in a small group and acquiring readiness skills. Extensive materials support our multi-faceted curriculum, and our teachers work together to plan monthly calendars full of innovative projects.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

With the understanding that young children are energetic and ever-moving, a child's physical development is supported through many ways. A wide variety of equipment and activities promote the development of motor skills in and out of the classroom.

Teachers set an example by modeling positive and respectful relationships with each other, the children, the parents and the community. Similar goals and expectations are shared among the staff. On-going collaboration and communication promote a positive, successful relationship.

School is a warm extension of the home. The role of parents as primary caregivers is valued and respected. An environment of open communication is fostered and ample opportunities are given for parents to voice their expectations and set goals for their child's school experience. We are a team deeply involved and committed to the children.

Goals

Our goals are to help facilitate the development of creative thinkers, problem solvers, self-confident and independent beings who will grow up to be caring, happy and productive adults. Our program is characterized by the following aspirations:

- Provide a fun place where children can develop and learn at their own pace.
- Expand the emotional, intellectual, and physical abilities of children through play-based exploration and experimentation.
- Help children build confidence in their own ability to make choices and set sensible limits for themselves.
- Guide children from dependence on adult input toward confidence in their own abilities.
- Maintain a safe environment where the emotional and physical well-being of each child is paramount.
- Develop mutual respect and cooperation among children, participating parents, and teachers.
- Maintain a high regard for the creative thinking process of each child.
- Respect the cultural richness of the school and encourage parents and children to share their own special family traditions.
- Integrate literacy and early math activities throughout the curriculum.
- Promote friendship, fantasy, laughter, and encourage creativity in their play.

Benefits for the Children:

- Make friends.
- Grow more independent and capable.
- Explore and satisfy natural curiosity.
- Experience learning as a joyful process.
- Develop physical skills with a wide variety of toys and equipment.
- Learn to share and take turns.
- Build self-esteem.
- Develop respect for the school environment.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Benefits for the Parents:

- Gain confidence in the parent-teacher role (as a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher).
- Look at role of “parent as teacher” as positive opportunities for self-growth.
- See your child as a unique and capable individual.
- Be a part of a supportive and caring parent community.

We reach our goals by:

- Providing a program that is developmentally appropriate, where children are encouraged to learn according to their individual needs and interests.
- Providing many experiences, materials, opportunities and time for children to develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.
- Providing a safe and nurturing environment where children explore, experiment, manipulate and use their natural curiosity to solve problems and learn about the world around them.
- Providing experiences and activities that foster a child’s self-esteem, self-trust and positive feelings toward learning.
- Providing a learning experience that meets the needs of both the children and their parents.
- Providing opportunities for children to develop independence and a desire to be self-motivated, responsible learners.
- Providing opportunities for children to develop their skills in problem solving, negotiations, social interaction and independence.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to address the developmental needs of children aged 3-5 years. Children are engaged in reading readiness and language development (e.g., letters of the week, phonics), gross motor skills (e.g., exercise and playground time), fine motor activities (e.g., arts and crafts), social skills (e.g., circle time and “sharing” time to encourage children to speak in front of peers), beginning math skills (e.g., sorting, shapes and games), music, dramatic play, cooking, science and nature, seasonal and holiday activities and field trips. Our classroom environment is rich in materials to support this multi-faceted curriculum, and our teachers work together to plan monthly calendars full of innovative projects.

Program Description

The program is designed to allow children to learn through exploring and experiencing the world around them. Children are exposed to many activities that encourage them to use their developing language skills as well as their curiosity and imaginations. Activities are introduced that teach important socialization skills such as sharing, following directions and self-control.

Since play is a child’s work, our class is structured to let children truly enjoy learning wide variety of activities and encourage them to develop self-confidence, self-direction and a positive feeling toward learning.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Exciting opportunities and challenges will be offered to meet the needs of children who will be entering kindergarten. They will continue to build on their socialization skills and the teachers will help students develop confidence in the areas of reading and math readiness, as well as language development.

Methods

The MAGC Garden School's curriculum is based upon the belief that young children learn best in a safe, nurturing environment that provides opportunities for children to learn and develop through activities that are age and individually appropriate. The program provides a rich environment that promotes children's active exploration in all areas of development: physical, emotional, linguistic, aesthetic, and cognitive. The curriculum is integrated into the classroom through a thematic approach whereby learning activities are concrete, real, and relevant.

Learning is an interactive process between the teachers and the children. Teachers prepare the environment and plan activities that are appropriate for the age span of the children within the group and consider the different needs, interests, and developmental levels of individual children. Teachers facilitate learning by giving children opportunities to make choices about which activities and materials they will use. Teachers stimulate and extend knowledge by asking questions and making suggestions. Language development and communication are emphasized.

Children have opportunities to play and work with other children, make choices and encounter consequences, and negotiate social conflicts using appropriate language. Teachers respond quickly to each child's needs. Teachers model respect, acceptance and empathy. Teachers support each child's accomplishments by providing positive verbal encouragement.

Nature

Butterflies
Ladybugs
Caterpillars
Bees
Ants
Owls
Squirrels
Animals – Farm, Forest, Desert, Ocean
Trees
Apples
Pumpkins
Carrots
Beans
Planting/Gardening
Respect for Nature

Science

Seasons
Water
Moon/Sun/Planets
Plants
Temperature
Environment
Water conservation
Recycling
Composting
Health/Nutrition
Taking Care of our Bodies
Teeth
Eating Healthy Foods

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Cooking

Cooking through the Alphabet

Art

Projects every day using multi-media
Handprint Art

Music

Local musicians play music for us

Field Trips

Apple Orchard
Fire Station
Police Station
Ross School for performances

Dentist

Citizenship

Sharing
Respect
Cooperation
Taking Turns
Compassion
Understanding
Kindness
Manners
Generosity
Stewardship
Conservation

Field Trips

Children are provided the opportunity for walking field trips primarily on the Marin Art & Garden Center grounds or other proximate locations. Written authorization from parents is obtained in advance of field trips.

School Rules

Teachers provide children with opportunities to develop the classroom community through participation in decision making about classroom rules, plans and activities.

Examples include:

- We must wash our hands many times at school, especially after using the toilet and before eating
- To be safe, all four legs of the chair must be on the floor
- We use inside voices inside school
- We use kind words in school
- We sit on our bottoms on the floor and on our chairs
- We walk in school
- We use our words- no pushing or hitting
- Children eat their own lunches- no sharing of food

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

School Hours/Calendar

1. The MAGC Garden School opens at 8:30 a.m. and ends promptly at 1:00 p.m.
2. We use the Ross School District calendar as a guideline for all public holidays and regular vacations. A copy of the current school year calendar is posted on the MAGC website at www.magc.org under programs, MAGC Garden School.

Daily Schedule

Daily activities are designed to provide age-appropriate experiences in the following early childhood developmental areas:

Social/Emotional

- Getting along in groups
- Learning responsible behavior (e.g., sharing, cooperation)
- Respecting ethnic, cultural and age differences
- Expressing feelings appropriately
- Gaining positive self-image
- Developing independence, initiative and trust

Cognitive /Language /Pre-Literacy

- Acquiring early language and literacy skills, including pre-reading and early writing skills for older children, and fine tuning these skills in school age children
- Learning numeracy (pre-math) and science concepts
- Increasing curiosity about the world through observation, exploration and experimentation
- Enhancing language skills and self-expression through music, movement and interactive dialogue between peers and adults
- Promoting experimentation, inquiry, observation and exploration through play

Health

- Modeling good eating habits and nutrition
- Practicing good hygiene habits (including hand washing and toileting)
- Learning to balance adequate rest periods with activity times
- Sharing healthy, nutritious food throughout the day

Physical Development

- Developing large and small muscle skills
- Improving eye-hand coordination and perceptual skills
- Increasing body awareness
- Exploring and participating in rhythm and movement activities

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Daily Program Routine and Schedules

Children thrive in a program environment that offers a variety of activities in a rich, well-equipped classroom with a consistent but flexible daily schedule. They depend on predictable routines and look forward to different parts of the day. Learning opportunities are available to them in unstructured and structured formats including “free play/choice” times, small or large group activities, and routines such as eating, dressing and toileting/washing. Throughout all types of activities, the interactions between teachers and children are critical to children’s learning, social, self-image and communication skills. Teachers strive to get to know each child’s unique strengths and needs so they can provide individualized learning opportunities and guidance in a caring, supportive atmosphere.

During free choice periods, children may select one or more activities in the many learning centers prepared for them, such as block building, dramatic play, arts, music, books, manipulatives (puzzles, building sets), science and nature study, outdoor activities and much more. They may play/work alone, with a friend or in a small group, and with a teacher’s guidance or independently. As they finish, they may choose another activity after putting away their materials or toys.

“Circle time” is conducted by the teacher with the whole class and may consist of planning or discussing the day’s activities or special events in school or the community, sharing experiences and belongings from home, singing songs and sharing an interactive story. Children have opportunities to get to know all their classmates as they learn new concepts and practice communication and social skills, such as taking turns. Music and movement activities may also be conducted during circle time.

Small group learning activities are planned and directed by teachers related to curriculum topics in the areas of language arts (e.g., letter recognition and sounds), mathematics (e.g., counting and sorting objects, measuring liquids), science (e.g., properties of magnets), art projects, cooking projects and sensory exploration for younger children.

Outdoor play is an essential part of children’s day too, when children can get exercise and gain physical strength, coordination and skill through running, climbing, ball play and cooperative games. For younger children this would include walks, exploring the environment and taking activities outside.

Routine activities such as snack, toileting, and hand washing are important opportunities for children to learn self-care skills, good health habits and independence.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Daily Schedule Summary

8:30	Arrival/Free Choice
9:15	Clean-up/bathroom and hand washing
9:30	Circle time
9:45	Group Rotation
11:00	Snack and Story
11:30	Pixie Park
12:20	Bathroom and hand washing
12:30	Lunch
12:50	Mystery Reader
1:00	Dismissal

Music class is offered twice each week.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Part 3 – The Children

Behavior Management

An important aspect of learning in early childhood is how to interact appropriately with others, control one's own behavior and understand social rules. As children learn about the world and acquire social interaction skills (such as how to approach others and join play), they may exhibit "mistaken behavior"—trying a strategy that's not suitable; they may not be intending to "misbehave." At other times, children may act inappropriately to gain attention or for other reasons. In any case, we will not allow a child's behavior to continue if it appears that a child will hurt him/herself or someone else, or that property will be damaged. We believe that children learn acceptable behaviors by modeling the actions of those around them, including parents, teachers and other children.

We expect our teachers to implement this policy with techniques that help children learn positive strategies for interaction and problem-solving, understand the perspectives of others and why their behavior is not acceptable, and to gain self-control. Discipline used by the MAGC Garden School teachers includes a variety of constructive techniques such as redirecting children to other activities, counseling the child in a calm but firm voice about the situation, offering positive alternatives for behavior, or gently separating the child from the group for a brief period of time. Physical punishment and humiliation are never permitted at our school, by staff, children or parents.

Children with significant behavior challenges, such as repeated hitting or biting other children or staff, will be observed and their behavior documented by staff. We will do our best to work with you and your child to improve inappropriate behavior. Usually, a conference will be requested with parents to discuss possible methods of dealing with problem behaviors once the staff has made several observations. Working with a child's behavior consistently at home and school is essential for improvement. Parents and staff must have shared understanding of the reasons for the behavior and strategies for managing it.

Referral to support services may be made by the Directors if unacceptable behaviors continue to occur. Parents may be asked to seek counseling or attend parenting class as a condition for their child to continue at the MAGC Garden School. However, we do consider it in everyone's best interest to exclude a child or parent who exhibits a continuing problem that threatens the safety of other children, staff or the child. Classroom settings and group activities are not appropriate for all children.

In some cases, a child may be consistently unable to adapt to the expectations and length of the school day. A modified schedule may be put in place until the child is able to transition to the full day. Parents will be expected to pick up their child at the requested time.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Discipline Strategies

- Maintain realistic expectations of children.
- Provide clear and simple limits.
- Plan an environment that facilitates a caring atmosphere.
- Keep children busy to prevent problems from occurring in the first place.
- Model appropriate behaviors.
- Redirect inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes.
- Give children choices between two appropriate alternatives.
- Encourage children to work together to solve problems.
- Encourage children to use their words to solve problems or to elicit peer cooperation.
- Provide logical and natural consequences for children's actions.
- Remove children from the situation until they are able to discuss the problem and calm down.
- Utilize conflict resolution methods for older preschoolers.

Conflict Resolution

Learning to manage conflict is an important part of preschool. All children need to understand how to resolve conflicts appropriately on their own, and ask for help when they need it. As we guide children toward their independence, we keep in mind that children need to learn to repair their broken relationships on their own without forcing them to be insincere.

- We help children verbalize their feelings and desires, and to listen to one another.
- We give children the opportunity to suggest their own solutions to the conflict.
- We assist children in finding an appropriate solution if needed.
- We help children to recognize and take responsibility for their own behavior.

How to help your child prepare for school

- Talk about school with your child. Discuss positive experiences that are waiting for him or her.
- Listen to your child. Discuss concerns that he or she is expressing. Encourage your child and be reassuring.
- Establish good routines for eating and sleeping.
- Establish a good communication link with your child's teacher so that you are informed about your child's progress.

Separation

Children handle separation in many ways. The key to your child's adjustment will be a cooperative effort between the parents and the staff. Children need time to adjust to their "new" routine. As a result of this, while your child is adjusting you may see tears and hear "please, I want to go home." This is simply your child's way of handling a new routine.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

During this adjustment period, it is very common for the tears to stop within minutes of the parent's departure. For the benefit of your child, please follow through on your departure after saying good-bye. When a parent says good-bye and does not leave, it creates a sense of fear in the child (i.e., Maybe mommy's not leaving because something is wrong).

As your child masters this new routine, the tears will cease. This is all part of the process of growing up, while at the same time helping to build a confident, self-assured child.

Arrival and Departure from the Classroom

Arrival:

1. The MAGC Garden School opens at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 1:00 p.m.
2. Children must not arrive before 8:30 a.m., as the time prior to your child's arrival is spent in classroom preparation.
3. Children must always be brought into the classroom by a parent or other authorized adult and signed in. Sign-in sheets are located near the door. You must record the correct time and **legibly sign your full name (no initials, please)** when you bring your child in and at the end of the day. Any special circumstances or changes in transportation **MUST** be written in the message section of the attendance sheet. Failure to sign in or out will result in a fine (see Sign in/out and Late Fees below).
4. We encourage you to spend a few minutes in the classroom with your child before you leave for the day. Never leave your child unattended. Parents are to remain with and be responsible for siblings while in the classroom. Please inform the Director of any medication or special circumstances that may affect your child during the day (i.e., poor night's sleep, upsetting event at home, parent travel plans). A child who appears to the staff to show signs of illness may be excluded from class and will have to be taken home. Please note that SMOKING and pets (other than show and tell and guide dogs) are never allowed on the premises.
5. It is in your child's best interest to arrive no later than 9:00 a.m. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and can be uncomfortable for your child. Punctuality helps set the tone of the day and reduces confusion in the classroom. Thank you for your support in this.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Departure:

1. Please be respectful of the teachers' time. School ends promptly at 1:00 p.m. If a child is left longer than the designated school hours, a late pick-up fee will be charged (see Sign in/out and Late Fees below).
2. Your child is not permitted to exit the classroom to meet you. Please inform your child that you will come in the classroom to pick him/her up.
3. At dismissal, the Director will be at the front door. We ask that parents please wait in the Cubby Room for your child to be brought to you. At the end of the day, the children are listening to a story and we have found it disruptive to have parents and siblings entering and leaving the classroom.
4. SAFETY IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY! Sign out your child at the end of the day **-your full name, legibly written (no initials, please)**. Take a few minutes to look over your child's work and talk with the teacher about your child's day. Anyone who is not known by the staff will be asked to show a valid Driver's License or other photo identification.
5. Persons not authorized by you on your child's emergency card will NOT be permitted to take your child from The MAGC Garden School without written notification. Phone calls are not acceptable notification. Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18, or to anyone who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or who may be considered a danger to the child. Those parents who may have custody issues should consult an attorney regarding legal protection for their children. Parents must provide us with any court orders so that we can call the police to enforce their legal rights should the need arise.

Sign in/out and Late Fees

1. There is a \$15.00 fee for the first 15 minutes and \$10.00 for additional 5-minute periods. Parents are responsible for notifying the Director if they are not able to pick up their children at the allotted time. Please notify the school immediately if you are going to be detained so we can reassure your child. Continual lateness will result in loss of childcare services.
2. A fee of \$10.00 will be assessed if a child is dropped off without being signed in or out. State Licensing will fine the MAGC Garden School without these signatures. The parent is responsible for these fines.
3. Bills for sign in / out and late fees will be sent home the following day and are payable to the Marin Art & Garden Center.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Food Preparation

Please pack a healthy snack and lunch for your child. No hard candy, gum or nuts **of any kind** can be included. Please check the labels when packing your child's lunch. The MAGC Garden School is a NUT FREE classroom. We have students who are severely allergic to nuts. Please do not send nuts of any kind (almonds, cashews, pecans, etc.) to school.

Eating at the MAGC Garden School should be an enjoyable and social experience for the children. Children should not be forced to eat foods they don't like, nor should food be used as a reward or punishment. The teachers sit with and talk to the students during snack and lunch, while assisting them in eating and enjoying their meal. The children are encouraged to eat their "healthy" or "growing" foods first.

Clothing

Provide tennis shoes or other closed shoes so that your child may climb and run safely. Please be sure your child's shoes and clothing fit well, as poorly-fitted shoes and clothes can cause accidents. For safety reasons, open-toed, plastic jellies, backless shoes, slippery soles, clogs and thongs/flip flops and party shoes are not allowed.

Mark the inside of your child's clothing with permanent ink or name labels (especially jackets, sweaters, gloves and hats). We encourage children to care for their clothing, but we do not take responsibility for clothing that is lost at the Center. Occasionally, your child may wear another child's clothing or shoes home by mistake. If this should happen, please return the clothing the next day.

Dress your child for comfort and active play. It is likely your child will come home with dirty clothes at times. Children's freedom to play and learn is more important to us than clean, neat and tidy clothes at the end of the day. Please send a warm jacket or sweater with your child. In the fall, our rooms take a while to heat, and a sweater or jacket is often necessary for outdoor play.

Accidents happen, so please bring a change of clothes for your child.

Children's Personal Belongings

Your child may bring special items – toy, stuffed animal, photograph, etc., to share on "share day." Talk with the teacher about the appropriateness of an item if you're not sure. Shared items will be stored in the Share Basket.

Candy, gum, money, balloons, and violent toys (such as guns) must be left at home. We will not be held responsible for lost jewelry, toys or other personal items.

Children often take small things home with them to remind them of their school. If you find any

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

small toys, Legos, puzzle pieces or other items that belong to the school, please help your child return them to his/her classroom.

Attendance and Illness

1. State Health Regulations require a daily health inspection by a teacher upon each child's arrival before admittance. The person bringing the child must wait until the child has been accepted before leaving the premises.
2. Your child may be sent home if any symptoms of illness appear during the day. In such cases, your child will immediately be isolated from the others and you will be contacted. A teacher will remain with or nearby your child as needed to provide comfort and reassurance until you arrive to take him or her home.
3. If your child has a specific condition or diagnosis, it is up to the parent to provide the Director with medical information.
4. **Please notify the teachers immediately of any contagious disease or serious illness in the family** (such as lice, strep throat, pink eye, pinworms, whooping cough, etc.).
5. If you have a sibling who is ill, please leave him/her at home. If this is not possible, you must keep your sick child close to you while you settle your student as quickly as possible.
6. Parents will be notified if a child has been exposed to a communicable disease.
7. Notify the teachers if your child is absent.
8. If your child has allergies and chronic runny nose, obtain a doctor's note to keep on file at school.
9. To attend school your child must be well enough to participate in all aspects of the program (i.e., inside as well as outside play). Your child needs to stay home for the following reasons:
 - Chills
 - Communicable disease
 - Coughing
 - Diarrhea
 - Earache
 - Eyes, inflamed or swollen
 - Face flushed or unusual pallor
 - Fever: 99.2°F and over or has one over previous 24 hours

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

- Headache, severe
- Joints, red or swollen
- Nausea or vomiting
- Skin rash or sores
- Sore throat
- Is cranky, fussy and generally out of sorts
- Is just tired. Rest at such times may prevent the development of serious illness

Lice Policy

Please inform the school immediately if your child is infected with lice. In an effort to control its spread in the classroom, your child will need a note from a school nurse, pediatrician or a lice treatment company before he/she can return to school.

Prevention of Illness

Young children in group settings tend to be exposed to colds and other contagious illnesses since they haven't developed immunities yet and are still learning good health habits. Most illnesses are spread by hand contact, not from cold weather. Hand washing has been shown to be the most effective means of keeping children and adults healthy. We help children to practice good habits of hand washing, using and disposing properly of tissues, covering the mouth when sneezing, etc. Families can assist by doing the same at home as well as by keeping the child home if showing symptoms of illness.

Medication Dispensation

Medication will be administered by the teaching staff only in an emergency situation. A written directive from the parent (or guardian) and the physician must be on file prior to the emergency. The instructions for prescribed medication shall contain all of the following information:

- Medication must be in its original package with a physician's prescription label attached.
- Potential side effects and expected response as well as actions to be taken in the event of side effects
- Dose-form and amount to be administered pursuant to the physician's prescription
- Instructions for proper storage of the medication
- Telephone number and address of the child's physician

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Part 4 – The Family

Family Involvement and Communication

Open Door Policy

Parents are always welcome. We encourage you to visit at any time. Open communication between the parents and staff is important, and so is your input. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have, regarding the preschool, with the Directors at any time. If one of the Directors is not available immediately, you may set up an appointment to schedule a meeting.

Parent Communication

You will receive a monthly newsletter containing information on activities, and special events. Additional memos will be distributed as needed. Please note that it is your responsibility to read them carefully. The information they contain will be of great importance to you and your child.

Conferences

Parent teacher conferences will be held twice per year. However, parents wishing to discuss problems and progress are welcome to make an appointment with the Directors at any time during the year.

Back To School Night

We have a lot of important/valuable information we want to share at the beginning of school. This is the only mandatory event of the year. Curriculum, teaching methods, assessment format, schedules and discipline techniques will be discussed at Back to School Night at the beginning of the year. This is an evening for you to get to know your child's teacher.

School Recommendations and Kindergarten Readiness Forms

All forms will be sent directly to the school by the Director.

Child Abuse Reporting

Teachers are required to report any unusual marks or injuries on a child, and statements made by, or behavior of a child that may indicate "reasonable suspicion" of abuse or neglect. Please note, this is not an opinion of our staff, it is our obligation as mandated reporters (per California Penal Code Section 11166) to fulfill this requirement. The law states "reasonable suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. "Reasonable suspicion" does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect; any "reasonable suspicion" is sufficient.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Grievance Procedure

Parents or other concerned adults who have a complaint or concern regarding the MAGC Garden School should follow the following procedure:

- Meet with one of the Directors initially to resolve any classroom specific conflict.
- If you are uncomfortable or unable to resolve the issue with the Director, contact Antonia Adezio, MAGC Executive Director.

Parents' Rights

You have the right to review your child's file and/or request a conference with the Director regarding any action that is taken by the center in regard to your child's services or to discuss any concern you have with your child's teacher by asking for a parent/teacher conference (in addition to those regularly scheduled to review children's progress). Other rights of parents are specified in state law. As a Parent/Authorized Representative, you have the right to:

- Enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are in care.
- File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee's public file kept by the licensing office.
- Review, at the child care center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
- Complain to the licensing office and inspect the child care center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
- Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the child care center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.
- Receive from the licensee the name, address and telephone number of the local licensing office.
- Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to the child care center for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may also be obtained by contacting the local licensing office.
- Receive, from the licensee, the Caregiver Background Check Process form.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

NOTE: CALIFORNIA STATE LAW PROVIDES THAT THE LICENSEE MAY DENY ACCESS TO THE CHILD CARE CENTER TO A PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE IF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE POSES A RISK TO CHILDREN IN CARE.

Children's Personal Rights

Each child receiving services shall have rights that include, but are not limited to, the following under the law. "The right:

- To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationship with staff and other persons.
- To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.
- To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction or pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to : interference with the daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
- To be informed and to have the authorized representative informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited to the address and telephone number of the licensing agency's complaint receiving unit, and of information regarding confidentiality.
- To be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of his/her choice.
- To leave or depart the facility at any time, with a parent or guardian, except for house rules for the protection of clients or for minors and others from whom legal authority has been established.
- Not to be locked up in any room.
- Not to be placed in restraining devices without advance approval by the licensing agency and the parent. (Sections 80072 and 101223, Title 22, California Administrative Code)

Rights of the Licensing Agency

Our centers adhere to rules and regulations that are set by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing. We operate under a separate license for each center. The local licensing agency may be contacted at the following address:

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Department of Social Services / Community Care Licensing
Child Care Office
851 Traeger Avenue, #360
San Bruno, CA 94066
(650) 266-8800

Child Day Care General Licensing Requirements (Section 101195) state that:

(b) The Department of Social Services shall have the authority to interview children and staff, and to inspect and audit child or center records without prior consent.

(c) The Department of Social Services shall have the authority to observe the physical condition of the children, including condition which could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the children.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

Part 5 – Safety / Emergencies

Emergency Policy/Procedure

1. If your child is injured while in class, The MAGC Garden School first makes an attempt to contact a parent. If not available, we then call the next designated person on the Emergency Form. An ambulance or paramedic will be called if necessary. Any costs incurred are the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.
2. In the event the school cannot reach anyone from the Emergency Form and your child requires immediate medical attention, he/she will be taken to the hospital indicated on the card, unless a nearer hospital is necessary.
3. The Director will be in charge and make all decisions about the care of your child until the arrival of a parent, the physician, an ambulance, paramedics, or designated person.
4. **It is essential that all information on your child's emergency card be kept up to date at all times.**

Allergies/Allergic Reactions Policy

1. The management of student allergies is a coordinated approach between parents and guardians, the student and the school. If your child has a specific allergy to food or other item, it is your responsibility to inform the Director about the nature and severity of your child's condition. It is also your responsibility to notify the Director of any specific needs involving allergies, including but not limited to medication and separate food items or activities necessary to avoid exposure to the specific food allergen. It is also your responsibility to maintain current medications at the school as needed.
2. The MAGC Garden School makes every effort to avoid exposure to known allergens and to maintain a safe environment for all students; however, the school does not guarantee that children will not be exposed to an allergen and cannot guarantee the safety of children in the event of exposure. The School will make accommodations as necessary to reasonably ensure students' safety, but not to the extent of ensuring total protection and isolation from the real world – total protection is neither achievable nor in the best interests of a child's normal development.
3. An individualized action plan will be developed for any child with an allergy severe enough to represent a threat to the child's health and safety while at school. School staff will work with parents to develop such plans, which may include such items as alternate food and snacks, and additional hand-washing schedules. The parents of any such child with a severe allergy must provide the School with a written directive and a

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

physician's statement, as well as any prescribed medication to be administered. Only oral medication may be administered by staff at school, except in the case of signs of allergic shock (anaphylaxis) when staff may administer an Epi-pen or Epi-pen Jr., if so directed by the parent and physician.

4. A list of children with food allergies is posted each year at the school in order to notify staff of the need to monitor food intake.
5. The School reserves the right to enforce restrictions or an outright ban on certain foods or similar items for all students when a child has a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to the food or item in question and the restriction or ban is a reasonable approach to minimizing the potential for exposure to the allergen.
6. Peanuts and tree nuts and products that contain them are not allowed at school since it is the most common serious food allergy. They will not be served by teachers or used in cooking projects. If your child's lunch is found to contain nuts, those items will be put aside to eat at home and a reminder will be given to the parents at pick-up. If there continues to be a concern about restricted food items in your child's lunch, you may be required to meet with the Director.

Disaster Plan

1. In the event of any emergency, every effort will be made to have the children remain at school, where advance provisions have been made. For emergency information and instructions, tune to Emergency Broadcast Station (KSFO AM 560 or KCBS AM 740).
2. The MAGC Garden School will maintain responsibility of all children on premises until they are released to a parent or other designated person, or until they have been transported to an official evacuation center, in which case selected staff will remain with the children until all have been reunited with their families.
3. All teachers will remain on the premises as service workers, as designated by law. Teachers will be subject to whatever tasks are assigned by the Director or persons in charge at the Evacuation Center and may not leave the premises until the same person or persons give them official permission to do so.
4. Parents should not telephone the school. They should listen to the radio for progress reports on whatever disaster is taking place. Follow official instructions as relayed by officials via the radio. If parents are able to reach the school without danger to themselves or without interference with disaster workers, they should come to pick up their children. Children will be released only to parents, guardians, or other designated persons on the Disaster Pick- up sheet.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

5. Parents need to be familiar with the following:

- Do not call the school.
- Do not come to school, unless you are close and radio reports indicate there is no danger in traveling city streets. Children will be released only to authorized family members or their representatives.
- Community disasters will be reported on the radio. Be sure that your family has a transistor radio. Tune to an Emergency Broadcast Station (KSFO AM 560 or KCBS AM 740). Listen to it for directions.
- Be assured that the teachers are giving your child any emergency care that may be needed as well as physical and emotional support and comfort. They, too, are listening to the radio and will be hearing the same instructions as you are hearing.
- The safest place in case of a disaster is off the city streets, out of the way of emergency and rescue equipment.
- Every effort will be made to have the children remain at the MAGC GARDEN SCHOOL. If evacuation becomes necessary, the children and teachers will proceed to the Livermore Room at the Marin Art & Garden Center.
- Please make certain your child has an extra set of clothing available at school as well as other emergency supplies. If your child requires special medication, an extra day's supply should be placed in our disaster kit with instructions.

Unexpected School Closure

If an emergency occurs and the school needs to be closed for a day or two due to safety concerns, such as an extended power outage, flooding, a gas leak, wiring issues, burst pipe, etc., there will be no reimbursement of tuition. In the event that the school needs to be closed for a long period of time because the environment is unstable (i.e. fire or earthquake), The Marin Art & Garden Center will do our best to find an alternate location. Tuition reimbursement will be at the discretion of MAGC.

Part 6 – Additional Information

Birthdays and Special Events

Birthdays and holidays are special times for children and for our program. We encourage you to take part in the celebrations if you wish by bringing a treat (food item) for all of the children in the classroom. Please talk with your child's teacher in advance to find out what is appropriate to bring. Let the teachers know if it is your wish for your child not to celebrate events due to religious, cultural or other reasons. If you prefer that your child not participate in a planned activity (such as Halloween, birthdays or Valentine's Day), you should make other arrangements for the care of your child on those days. Our teachers respect individual diversity, and will do their best to make your child feel comfortable regardless of their participation in celebrations.

Birthday Parties

If your child is having a birthday party, please be sensitive to scheduling a birthday party right after school unless everyone is invited. Invitations should always be mailed from home. Discussions of birthday parties, playdates, and passing out invitations at school may cause hurt feelings for those children not included.

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. We look forward to a great school year and are most happy that you have entrusted your child to the MAGC Garden School.

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

IF I HAD MY CHILD TO RAISE OVER AGAIN

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd finger paint more, and paint the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off the watch, and watch with my eyes.

I would care to know less and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.
I'd mode less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.

By Diane Loomans

MAGC Garden School Parent Handbook

WHOSE CHILD IS THIS?

“Whose child is this?” I asked one day
Seeing a little one out at play
“Mine” said the parent with a tender smile
“Mine to keep for a little while;
To bathe his hands and comb his hair
To tell her what to wear;
To prepare for him his daily food,
To teach her that she may always be good.”

“Whose child is this?” I asked again.
As the door opened and someone came in.
“Mine” said the teacher with the same tender smile;
“Mine to keep for a little while.
To teach him how to be gentle and kind,
To guide and direct her little mind,
To help her live by every rule.
And get the best she can from school.”

“Whose child is this?” I asked once more
Just as the little one entered the door.
“Ours,” said the parent and teacher as they smiled
And each took a hand of the dear little child.
“Ours to love and guide together.
Ours, this blessed task forever.”

Author Unknown