



Handbook 2023-2024
90 Lewis Street
Geneva NY, 14456
Pre-Primary - 6th Grade

Table of Contents

<u>WELCOME</u>	4
Contact Information.....	4
Our History.....	4
Educational Philosophy.....	5
Teaching Philosophy.....	5
Child to Teacher Ratio.....	6
Our Curriculum.....	6
Diversity Statement.....	7
<u>DAILY PROCEDURES</u>	7
First Day.....	7
Arrival and Dismissal.....	7
Late Arrival.....	8
Early Departure.....	8
Extended Day/Aftercare.....	8
Release of Children to Persons Other Than Parents.....	8
Clothing.....	8
Lunches and Snack.....	9
Bringing Items to School.....	10
Attendance.....	10
<u>COMMUNICATION</u>	11
Civility Policy for Adult Communication.....	11
Basic Principles.....	11
Guidelines.....	11
Communicating with School Staff.....	12
Communication from the School.....	12
Significant Information from Home.....	12
Custody Information.....	13
Conferences/Contact.....	13
Supporting Student Needs.....	13
Parent Participation.....	13
<u>HEALTH AND SAFETY</u>	14
Illness/Injury/Transmittable Conditions.....	14
Food Allergies.....	14
Everyday Safety.....	15
Building Safety Procedures.....	15
Personal Safety Policy.....	15
Students' Safety During Emergencies.....	16
<u>CODE OF CONDUCT</u>	17
Discipline Policy.....	17
Positive Discipline.....	18
Five Criteria for Positive Discipline.....	18
Independence and Responsibility in the Classroom.....	19
Procedures for Addressing Behavior Incidents.....	20
Unacceptable Behaviors.....	20
Peer Conflict and Bullying.....	20

Action Taken.....	21
<u>SCHOOL INFORMATION</u>	22
Outdoor Environment/Adventure Playground.....	22
Conservation Commitment.....	22
Celebration of Student Birthdays.....	23
Professional Development Days.....	23
Fundraising.....	23
Tuition Payments and Payment Guidelines.....	23
<u>PRE-PRIMARY, K AND LOWER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM</u>	24
Play Centered.....	24
Fine and Gross Motor Skills.....	24
Technology Policy.....	24
Multi-Age Classrooms.....	25
Individually-Placed Learning.....	25
Intrinsic Motivation.....	25
Curriculum.....	26
Language Arts.....	26
Math.....	26
Daily Routines.....	26
Homework.....	27
Community Oriented.....	27
The Classroom Environment.....	27
Reverence.....	28
<u>UPPER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM</u>	28
Fine and Gross Motor Skills.....	28
Technology Policy.....	29
Technology Use.....	29
Multi-Age Classrooms.....	29
Individually-Paced Learning.....	30
Intrinsic Motivation.....	30
Curriculum.....	30
Language Arts.....	30
Social Studies.....	31
Science.....	31
Math.....	32
A Typical Day.....	32
Assessment.....	33
<u>COMMUNITY</u>	33
Community Oriented.....	33
A Strong Foundation.....	34
The Classroom Environment.....	34

Welcome to Moodie's School

Our parent manual is an important document for you to read thoroughly. In these pages, you will find answers to many commonly asked questions about our community. Over the years we have developed procedures that allow us to work together as a team that supports the development of each child as well as the community as a whole. We value feedback from our families. If you find discrepancies with what is indicated in this handbook, please let us know.

Contact Information

moodieschildrenshoursschool@gmail.com

Lauren Glick: Director

Laurenglick123@gmail.com

(315) 521-8117

Our History

What is Moodie's School? Who is Dr. Moodie?

Moodie's School is a private school, it is a not-for-profit education corporation, chartered with the New York State Board of Regents. Originally the school went by the name Moodie's Children's Hours School. The school was established in 1976 by Dr. Meredith Jane Aldrich Moodie, lifelong educator and also principal of the Pelham School in western Massachusetts. Dr. Moodie attended Walnut Hill School and Sweet Briar College, graduating at the top of her class at both institutions. She obtained Woodrow Wilson and National Defense Education Act fellowships to study at Harvard University, where she earned a master's degree in romance languages and literatures.

At Harvard Meredith met her future husband, Dunbar Moodie, and eventually settled with him in South Africa. The couple lived in Durban and Johannesburg, where Ms. Aldrich taught at the elementary school, high school and university level. In Durban, she set up her own Montessori, pre-primary school. During this period, she also gave birth to three children and enrolled for a master's degree in educational psychology, which she obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand.

In 1976, the family moved to Geneva, N.Y., where her husband was appointed professor of sociology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Within a year, she had realized her vision of a school for small children based on the educational principles of Maria Montessori, supplemented and enriched with programs in the fine and performing arts. Moodie's Children's Hours was born. Meredith received New York state teacher certification through the department of education at Hobart and William Smith and enrolled for a PhD in developmental psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1990, she obtained a certificate in advanced study (with principal certification) from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Over the years a group of amazing women joined Meredith; they played a large role in shaping the school's philosophy, curriculum and unique spirit. Frances Temple, was a teacher, a writer of award-winning children's stories and young adult novels and

illustrator. Her works have dealt with poverty and oppression in contemporary El Salvador, two novels cover strife in contemporary Haiti, one is a retelling of a folk tale from Jamaica and two novels — part of a projected trilogy — are set in the Middle Ages, in Spain and Morocco. You will find Frances Temple's books are a staple in all our classroom libraries.

Tracy Spates, beloved art teacher.

COMMENCEMENT 2007 William Smith Student Speaker, Allison Toepp '07

“It was with an attentive and genuine nature that Tracy induced conversation everywhere, this conversation would then lead to thought and appreciation for one's surroundings, and when engaging on such a level, people become unified.” Tracy Spates joined the Children's Hours team in the 80's. She was also an author and traveled around the world to bring inspiration to her students and the school. Her art book, *Picture the World*, is a wonderful journey around the world of children's art, all made by children of various ages from different countries.

At one point Children's Hours School, now Moodie's School, had 120 students. The school, which was taken over by a teachers' cooperative in 1986, continues to evolve and thrive.

Educational Philosophy

Our goal is to inspire students and elicit academic excellence. Within our supportive, nurturing atmosphere, children grow in competence and confidence. We are committed to supporting all of our students in their intellectual, physical and emotional development. We recognize and welcome the unique gifts brought by each child. We pride ourselves in creating individualized education plans for students so that we may assist each child in reaching their full potential. We provide an engaging curriculum through meaningful, creative and hands-on experiences. We foster the child's highest capacities of thinking and innovative problem-solving skills. We teach our students to have a reverence for life, to cultivate peace and to serve as engaged members of the greater community in hopes that they will someday become a powerful force for good in this world.

Teaching Philosophy

The foundation of the CHS academic program is the outstanding faculty, teachers who are highly qualified and experienced to implement instructional approaches that identify student potential, inspire students to meet high standards and engage children at all levels of learning. In our unique school the function of a teacher differs significantly from that of a traditional teacher. Classroom teachers facilitate a child's ability to direct his or her own work by providing individualized guidance that honors the abilities and developmental stage of each child. In this way we are able to prepare our students with a full range of skills and capacities needed to realize their full potential. There is a structure to the materials offered and the continuum of these choices. This allows the

teachers to simplify or escalate the subject matter for the child. Each activity is analyzed for clarification of concepts and success. Our curriculum and teaching philosophies were developed to support each stage of the child's development, recognizing that no two children develop at the same rate. Teachers are encouraged to differentiate their instruction and develop multiple avenues for helping students meet the standards of the academic program in the manner best suited to their learning style. We seek to instill basic, universal values within the core of the child's personality. These values include self-respect, acceptance, kindness, peacefulness, compassion, empathy, individual responsibility and the courage to speak from our hearts.

Child to Teacher Ratio

Our Primary (Elementary) program will run a ratio of 1:5, 1:1 or a 1:10 depending on the time of day and current activity. There are two main teachers in our multi-age elementary classrooms as well as an aid. This allows for dual instruction to be going on in the classroom throughout the day. One teacher is typically pulling students to work 1:1, while another teacher is engaging other students in small group instruction, or assisting learners in projects or centers that they may be working on. The classroom consists of multi age students; this creates a "family" like group of learners where older children model and assist the younger students. Younger children look up to and learn from the older students. No child feels left behind and everyone learns at their own pace.

Our Curriculum

Our program provides a solid academic foundation that is so much more than rote memorization of facts; rather, we infuse those concepts with meaning through first-hand experience. In the early grades, the curriculum challenges children's emerging intellectual capabilities while continuing to spark the imagination. Literacy and numeracy are introduced creatively through stories, music, poetry and movement. Fables and stories from classic literature captivate young imaginations. As students move into upper grades, each student continues to develop their abilities in writing, reading, research, problem solving and critical thinking skills. The lessons also emphasize character building such as inclusion of others, respect for all life, self-sufficiency, cooperation and the ability to take appropriate risks with courage. Life skills that students need are also integrated into lessons seamlessly, demonstrating the practical application for concepts they are learning in the classroom on a daily basis.

The school days are balanced and harmonious, with time for quiet reflection and active learning. Students explore the development of cultures, from ancient civilizations in early grades to the modern world. Our curriculum includes a rich and engaging study of people and cultures by exploring geographic regions, history, music, artifacts, food, ritual and celebrations. Outdoor education enhances our science curriculum and gives students reverence and respect for the natural world. They are taught to carefully observe scientific phenomena. Academics and the arts are always integrated: drawing, painting, music, handwork and modeling help students connect with their sense of beauty and feeling about the world. There is always learning through movement, games and drama. Special classes sprinkle the schedule such as: foreign language, art and music, taekwondo, meditation, library, yoga, Health and Wellness /Basic First Aid: taught by Dr. Scott Glick. Anatomy and Physiology: taught by Dr. Scott Glick, Sewing and Handwork classes and theater.

Diversity Statement

Moodie's School seeks to achieve peace and equity through education. In accordance with this goal, our school provides a safe and respectful environment where we learn together, honoring and embracing our individual and collective humanity. As students learn through interactions in their environment, we strive to maintain supportive and developmentally appropriate spaces that are open and welcoming to conversations that aid in understanding the world in which we live. We understand diversity to be valuable and nurture awareness by welcoming people of differing races, ethnicities, cultures, nationalities, abilities, personalities, languages, socio-economic backgrounds, sexualities, gender identities and expressions, political beliefs, religions, and family structures.

DAILY PROCEDURES

First Day

Mountain and Island Room students will begin school at 8:30 AM and end at 2:20 PM
Forest and River Room students will begin school at 8:30 AM and end at 2:00 PM

Here are things that your family can do to ease your transition:

- **Come by the school with you**
- **In August and read your Parent Handbook carefully.** These things will familiarize you with the routine and personnel of your child's new environment. Call with any questions or concerns before the first day of school.
- **Find out what the first day's schedule will be** so that you can talk to your child about what he should expect.
- **Be prepared.** Make sure you have provided any items your child's teacher requested. A Snack, water bottle and indoor shoes are always needed.

Arrival & Dismissal

The driveway is a congested area during arrival and dismissal. Please help us facilitate safety by following the driveway procedures:

- Pick up and drop off of all students will take place outside.
- Parents/guardians will not enter the school building during these times.
- Island and Mountain Room drop off and pick up will take place in the front yard on Lewis Street closer to the parking lot.
- Forest and River Room drop off and pick up will take place near the fenced in school yard on Genesee Street.

Notes for encouraging a brief and positive drop-off experience:

- Tell your child when you will return for them in a way that is relatable to their day: "I'll be back after lunch."
- Crying and expressing emotions are normal and typically end shortly after the arrival transition. Calmly express understanding of their emotions and display confidence in them.

Late arrival:

When possible, notify your teacher in advance of your child's late arrival. When you arrive on campus, ring the doorbell and a teacher will let your child in.

Early Departure:

When possible, notify your child's teacher in advance of your child's early departure. When you arrive on campus, please ring the doorbell or come in or a teacher will escort your child to your vehicle if arrangements are made ahead of time.

Extended Day/After Care

Extended Day is available until 3:20 PM. For a small fee.

Please ensure that every individual who will drop off or pick up your child is familiar with these procedures. For safety reasons, always let a staff member know you are leaving with your child before leaving campus.

Release of Children to Persons Other Than Parents

Written instructions from a parent must be left with the teacher or a call made on the day that your child is to be picked up by someone who is **not** included on the child's **Identification and Emergency Information Form**. You will be asked to give the individual's name and the time your child will be picked up. Please inform the individual picking up your child that they may be asked for personal identification.

Clothing

Encourage your child to choose practical clothing that allows for comfort in our environment. For young children, until they are able to manage such items on their own, avoid overalls, pants with heavy snaps and belts, leotards or any other clothing that is difficult to unfasten, remove, or put back on. A child's dress is a powerful instrument in developing independence, image, and self-respect.

Children should wear comfortable, clean and tidy clothing that allows them to be active. The reason we need to emphasize when or where certain clothing is appropriate is, firstly, so that their clothing does not compromise pupils' health or safety. Therefore, clothing must be appropriate for schoolwork and activities.

Clothing should not bear inappropriate slogans or pictures (they may be asked to remove such items). Pupils should wear sensible shoes appropriate for the season, weather and the activities of the day, **all shoes must be closed toed** (sneakers, rain boots, snow boots, etc.). They should keep at school a pair of indoor shoes, suitable for running and jumping. Pupils with long hair must tie it back for certain activities.

We have various mediums in our outside environment (sand, dirt, mulch, mud, etc...) and encourage your children to experience the offerings of the environment to the fullest extent. We ask that you work with your child to wear clothing that both you and they are comfortable getting wet and dirty. Soiling favorite clothing or clothing that they have been told should not get dirty can be a source of distress.

We go outside in all kinds of weather, often multiple times a day, and expect students to have appropriate outerwear as well as changes of clothes so that they are able to be dry and comfortable when indoors. Please work with your child to ensure they have what they need to be comfortable outdoors and dry inside.

- Wet Weather: Rain jacket and rain boots.
- Cold Weather: Warm jacket. We highly encourage gloves, hats, scarves and snow pants.
- Changes of Clothes: Each student should have a change of clothes at school.

Our outdoor shoes are not worn in the classroom. All children need to wear indoor shoes at school.

Label ALL ITEMS that come to school with your child's name, especially garments that are frequently removed (e.g., sweaters, jackets, raincoats, hats, gloves, socks, etc.).

Lunches and Snack

All children should bring a morning snack, water bottle and lunch each day. In an effort to reduce waste please pack silverware if needed. **Please avoid all nuts as we have a few severe allergies to them.** If your child has an allergy to other foods, please let us know. We will be eating outside as often as possible. Please do not pack meals that need to be heated up if you can help it.

At Moodie's School we respect each family's approach to food and nutrition and embrace the social and cultural eating practices of our students. We encourage all children to eat foods that are healthy. We ask that you provide a healthy breakfast each school day and send nutritious lunches. Be creative!

We encourage you to talk to your child about the health benefits of the foods you include in their lunches and have your child actively participate in the preparation and packing of meals. Books on healthy food choices are available in our library for families to borrow. We find that desserts (chocolate, candy, cakes, etc.) and soda are quite distracting to children eating in a school group environment. While we do not label these foods as 'bad,' we do ask that these foods stay at home. Please reach out to us if you have questions about any particular food item.

- We allow children to consume as much or as little of their packed meals and snacks as their appetite dictates. We encourage exposing them to a wide variety of foods, both for physical growth and self-awareness of their tastes, preferences, and hunger cues.

- In accordance with our commitment to environment and sustainable practices, we ask that you send foods in reusable containers if possible. Please provide containers that your child can open and close independently. Staff and older students are available to help when needed.
- To show you the things that your child is and is not eating at school, we will ask your child to take home food that is not consumed at the beginning of the school year. As the year progresses, we will encourage them to compost appropriate food scraps.
- All students are offered an opportunity for snack during their morning work period. Teachers will share specific plans and procedures for your child's classroom prior to the start of the school.

Bringing Items to School

Toys, Electronics and Belonging from Home: Please refrain from bringing personal belongings, toys (ie: pokemon cards) and electronic devices such as: smartwatches and cell phones. Just a reminder, we are a low tech school and these things go against the culture and the philosophy of the school. These objects tend to cause distractions. Special items can be brought in during show and tell. Toys and any items from home that could be distracting during the school day are not allowed at school. Please work with your child to ensure that these items do not come to school.

Natural and cultural items of special interest such as flowers, seeds, books, pictures, insect exoskeletons, rocks, shells, souvenirs from other places, etc., are always welcome, especially for show and tell and should be identified with your child's name. Please check with the teacher before sending these items.

Attendance

Your child's regular attendance is imperative to their growth and development. As such, all absences should be excused. Arriving on time is essential for all communities. Students who arrive late will miss the transition time which allows for a smooth entry into the class. Please notify BOTH the director and classroom Lead teacher of any planned or unexpected absences or late arrivals.

If a child has excessive absences or is consistently late for school, we will request a conference to seek solutions. This may result in the school requiring a note from the physician, dentist, or other provider to verify the reason for missing school.

COMMUNICATION

We cannot emphasize too strongly the need for parents to inform the school immediately of any change of contact information during the year. We must be able to contact at least one parent at all times in case of emergency.

Civility Policy for Adult Communication

Moodie's School is committed to positive adult communication that models a civil society for our students. All school community communications should be based on mutual respect and foster dialogue in a climate in which different perspectives are heard and valued. While it is natural for concerns to arise within any community, we ask that such concerns be communicated in a productive and constructive manner. In addressing concerns, an important starting point is the recognition that the best interest of all the students is the first priority. Moodie's School is committed to an atmosphere of respect and reverence. All interactions, large and small, should build a healthy environment for student learning and serve as role models of appropriate, constructive and collegial, adult behavior.

Basic Principles:

- Demonstrate respect, in both what is said and how it is said
- Treat teachers and staff with courtesy and respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement
- Focus on issues, not individuals
- Keep an open mind. Be positive and flexible. Ask questions first.

Guidelines

Communicating with School Staff

- All Faculty are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. Parents/Guardians should therefore ensure that their interactions with staff do not create unnecessary disharmony, stress or anxiety.
- Use good judgment about the amount of contact that is appropriate and the time of day that it is done. Be mindful of the amount of time discussions about an individual concern may take.
- Demonstrate public support for one another. Convey the message that parents, teachers and staff are on the same team.
- Schedule appointments if a discussion is needed, instead of making unplanned "drop-ins" or raising concerns in public settings, which is not appropriate. (such as on the sidewalk area during drop-off).
- Keep in mind that voicemail and email are public documents and that confidentiality cannot always be assumed. One rule of thumb to keep in mind is that you should not say or write anything in an email that you wouldn't want printed in the newspaper. Please also strive to keep email communication to simple logistical matters, rather than conversation. We discourage the use of email communication for raising or trying to address serious concerns or difficulties. Meeting in person or speaking directly on the telephone generally leads to better outcomes for everyone.
- The priority for the Faculty is the welfare and education of all children in the school. School staff are therefore not required to respond to letters, emails and telephone calls instantaneously and agree to respond to written or electronic correspondence within two working days. Faculty will check their telephone messages daily and respond back on the next working day if needed.
- Understand that conversations may be documented and a third person may be present.

- Verbal, physical or sexual harassment or other aggressive behaviors go against the core philosophies of our institution; they will not be condoned or tolerated.
- Just a reminder that what happens outside of school hours, and off school property, is not the responsibility or concern of the school.

Egregious or repeated violations of the school's civility policy may result in one of the following:

- Meeting with school leadership
- An individual's limitation of access to the school campus, to faculty or staff members, to school events, or volunteer opportunities
- Dismissal

Communication from the School

We want to keep you informed of your child's experience at school and of important events and information.

The school sends a regular 'News You Need' email with updates, monthly, with important information about events and school happenings. Please read this each time it comes out. Notify someone immediately if you are not getting these emails. We also maintain a website and Facebook and Instagram pages.

Significant Information from Home

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing your child's teacher and Director. All information will be regarded as confidential. Common causes of distress include: either one or both parents being away from home for an extended time; new persons living in the home; illness of either parent; illness of a sibling; any hospitalization, divorce, accident or death in the family; moving; and death of a pet. We honor your judgment as to the kinds of changes that may affect your child's behavior, security, and general well being. We will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment that may affect your child.

Custody Information

Under situations where the responsibility and custody for children is shared between separated parent households or other guardianship arrangements involving relatives or non-family members, the school requires that a copy of the arrangement is provided to the director Lauren Glick.

Conferences/Contact

Parent-guide conferences will be scheduled during the year. We suggest you take full advantage of these conferences. Frequent parent contact is an important goal of all the staff. If you feel you would like more communication concerning your child, please ask! The Director is available to join a conference upon request.

Supporting Student Needs

Moodie's School is committed to inclusivity and to offering the benefits of a holistic education to all students. Teachers in each class have extensive experience with the developmental stage of the children in their community. They are able to observe differentiation in children's social, emotional, intellectual, educational, behavioral, and physical development and adapt to the needs of each child. Our teachers incorporate many learning modalities in our teaching and embrace various learning styles. The majority of our teachers have special education certification, and we make modifications to our lessons to accommodate our students. We have an in-house reading specialist to work with students and offer 1:1 assistance and develop a unique, individualized plan for all our students. We do not, however, have an in-house psychologist. The school does not have formal special education services, specially trained personnel for all special needs, or access to funding for additional services for students with special needs, that may be available in public schools. We provide reasonable accommodations to all students, but additional services such as speech and occupational therapy or other services are not provided by our school. Observed behaviors in school can be indicators that a child's development in any of the areas above is outside the expectations for their developmental range. If this is the case, the Director, the family, and teachers will meet to discuss observations and strategies for supporting the child, as a team. The family may be asked to seek outside screening and/or evaluations as well as ongoing interventions indicated by this process. The results of a professional evaluation help us understand the child's individual needs and put appropriate supports in place to help them meet their potential and support the investment you have made in their education. These records will be kept confidential and utilized only in the best interest of supporting the student's individual needs.

Parent Participation

The spirit of our school emphasizes the importance of family participation in the education of their child. The school grows not only by the quality and longevity of the staff, but by the individual efforts of the parents who provide valuable services and contributions to the school.

Families will be asked to fill out a Parent Participation Form when you first register your child. Please let us know at any time of special services you would be willing to offer the staff or children of the school. We have a variety of volunteer and participation opportunities available and appreciate each family's contribution.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Illness/Injury/Transmittable Conditions

Sick children should not be at school, both for their own welfare and for the health of the other children. Children must remain at home. This includes fever, vomiting, diarrhea, pinkeye, head lice or nits, ear infection, rash, coughing and cold, and symptoms of any contagious disease. (Please see separate COVID policies)

- If your child has been diagnosed with a transmissible illness, please let us know. know as soon as possible.
- If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately and requested to come and pick them up.

Minor incidents with injury occurring during the school day receive prompt and careful attention by staff members. A “Report of Accident or Injury form” is filled out immediately after the incident is given to the family and filed in the student’s file. In the event of serious illness or injury, the family is notified at once and arrangements are made for the child to be transported home or to a medical facility.

Food Allergies

We are a nut-free school. We recognize that a food allergy is one of many differences that a student can exhibit at our school. Each year approximately 16% of our population is allergic to something known. Approximately one-half of those are allergies to a food substance.

The school is responsible for an overall policy about safety for all children and specifically the child who has an allergy.

The school will adhere to the following procedures:

- We will provide a questionnaire to all parents of children with allergies to define how severe it is (airborne, contact, or ingestion) and what form the reaction takes.
- All staff will be aware of the allergies of each child enrolled. Staff will be aware of how to help the child should they come in contact with the allergen.
- Children with life threatening allergies will have an epi pen in their classroom.
- Staff will help to educate the children about the importance of taking care of each other and honoring the differences of every child.

Everyday Safety

Your child(ren)’s safety is always on the mind of every staff member. The following are everyday procedures at Moodie’s that limit the access of our campus to unknown persons or alert us to the presence of unknown persons.

Building Safety Procedures

All outside doors will be locked at 9:00 AM. If you need to enter the building for late drop off or early pick up for appointments, please let your classroom teacher know and ring the doorbell on the door on the side of the building. Scheduled visitors are announced in advance to the entire staff. Visitors are escorted to their destination or the classroom is notified to expect them.

We have extensive visual access to the approach ways in our school. Every room has large windows. There are four classrooms with a total of 6 main staff members that have window views of driveways.

An important component in prevention is a strong social/emotional educational curriculum, which is inherent to our culture. Our location with limited attention as a school is also a preventative advantage.

The school has a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan that includes protocols for intruders. The initial version of the plan was developed under the guidance of a security consultant and the police department.. Each year, we assess the protocols and adapt given current research. We do have protocols for practicing intruder protocols with staff. We also incorporate developmentally appropriate ways of practicing with students to prepare them for unexpected situations without causing unnecessary alarm and discomfort for students.

Personal Safety Policy

Children are taught that they have a right to an undisturbed working space. They learn to prepare a space on which they place the work they have chosen. They practice how to walk around others' work areas so that they do not violate the space of another student. They are taught what it means to respect another's chosen work. They learn to wait patiently instead of interrupting another child who is working.

Children learn to negotiate when in conflict. They learn to use words instead of physicality to express themselves. They learn to tell how they feel when another person acts in a way that shows disrespect or emotionally or physically hurts them. Adults model these negotiating skills when dealing with the behavioral differences of all children.

Children are taught to use words to protect themselves or their space. They are taught to be assertive with their words so that their message has only one meaning. Phrases that are commonly modeled are: move away, stop, you may not touch me like that, etc.

Adults in the environment ask permission before they look at a child's work, touch or move their work or possessions, or touch their bodies. Examples: May I sit in the chair next to you? May I give you a hug? May I help you move your work to a more private place? By extending the child this courtesy, the child learns to extend it to others.

Our experience is that these daily procedures help support the growth of strong children who know when and how to protect themselves and feel the right to do so.

Students' Safety during Emergencies

We are required by law and have in place a thorough emergency/disaster preparedness plan covering most natural disasters and other emergencies that is reviewed with staff twice a year.

As parents/guardians, you play an essential role in keeping students safe during the unlikely event of an emergency. Please consider the following guidelines that are of particular importance to parents in emergencies so that you may help our staff respond effectively to an emergency.

1. **Be prepared for early dismissals.** In some emergencies, such as in a snowstorm, the director may deem it prudent to send students home early. We will contact you by telephone.
2. **If we have not alerted you of an early dismissal, do not pick up children if there is an area emergency.** If you do not learn about an early dismissal from the school but learn of a school or area emergency, please do not rush to school to pick up your child. Traffic will block any needed emergency vehicles, and your presence in the school building during, say, an evacuation, may delay the process. Keep in mind that police will bar parents from school grounds in some emergencies. The safety of our students is paramount to us, and we have a plan that will reunite students with their caregiver as soon as possible.
3. **Get information from local media in an emergency.** In an emergency, stay tuned to local radio and television for current information, as well as our parent page.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Students at Moodie's School have the following rights:

- To be treated with respect
- To have personal property treated with respect
- To have a safe, supportive learning environment
- To ensure those rights, students are expected to abide by the following code of conduct:
- To treat others with respect in word and deed
- To treat personal and school property with respect

Parents and or guardians will receive a written report each semester on their child's progress in these areas in relation to our code of conduct and our five pillars of character development.

Discipline Philosophy

Our goal as the faculty and staff is to help each child attain his or her greatest potential. While social skills come easier for some children, developing a higher level of social behavior is a lifelong process. Recognizing this, we will do our best to model respectful, loving authority and will create a rhythmic, nurturing, healthy, structured, safe environment for students. In the forefront of our approach is the recognition of negative behaviors, such as bullying and related behaviors, which will not be tolerated and dealt with earnestly within our philosophy. Our primary goal is to see the best in a child come forth freely, without demands or forceful consequences.

The following is a guide to our general discipline philosophy:

- Prevention through preparedness to include: Teachers will provide a healthy classroom rhythm, set clear expectations and create a respectful and safe environment.
- Redirection and kind reminders are used to guide children toward appropriate choices.
- Active listening and discussion between conflicting students, to identify the feelings and needs of those involved.
- Appropriate and consistent consequences are delegated by the teacher depending on each individual circumstance. It may include a period of time in the peace circle, away from the group, to reflect on behavior in PrePrimary and lower elementary classes. In Upper elementary it may be a writing assignment from the book of consequences and an apology letter. If these measures do not produce the desired results, or they become recurring, a conversation with parents will begin, to see how we can work together to help the child progress.

If an individual is not able to resolve the situation through the above approaches a Student Success Plan may be formed.

Incident Reports are filed whenever an unusual incident occurs at school or on field trips. Examples of unusual incidents include: medical emergencies, physical injury of a child, threatening language to self or others, threatening actions to self or others. Parents are notified of the incident and a written description of the incident is drafted by

the director and staff that are involved. Parents of children involved in the incident are required to sign an acknowledgement of the incident on the form. After a review, parents will be offered a copy of the completed form. Additionally, a copy of the report will be placed in the student's file.

Positive Discipline

Because children need to learn to conduct themselves appropriately, discipline is part of everyday school life. Children learn to behave properly under their teachers' guidance and through reinforcement, reminders, and redirection. Positive Discipline is used by all staff at Moodie's. Its criteria, concepts, and tools complement the holistic philosophy we value and provide our school community with a consistent approach to all children. Positive Discipline is based upon mutual respect between adult and child. We encourage all parents to learn about and use Positive Discipline.

Five Criteria for Positive Discipline

1. Is **Kind and Firm** at the same time (Respectful and encouraging; neither punitive nor permissive)
2. Helps children feel a sense of **Belonging and Significance** (Connection)
3. Is **Effective Long-Term** (Punishment works short term, but has negative long-term results)
4. Teaches valuable **Social and Life Skills** for good character (Respect, concern for others, problem-solving, accountability, contribution, cooperation)
5. Invites children to discover how **capable** they are and to use their personal power in constructive ways

Independence and Responsibility in the Classroom

Students May...	Students are Responsible for...
Work with any material they have been shown how to use.	Using the materials respectfully.
Choose to work at a table or work mat, whichever is suitable to the work chosen.	Keeping their work in their designated work space.
Use the room as their needs dictate.	Restoring their work and the environment so that it is ready for others. Doing so encourages respect, thoughtfulness, and taking responsibility for actions. This fosters respect for materials and tools, as well as pride in careful work. Restoration tasks also develop essential fine motor, gross motor and coordination skills.
Initiate and complete work without a break in concentration.	Not interrupting students who are engaged in a lesson.
Choose to work alone or with others.	Asking permission to observe or join another's work.
Choose to observe for a period of time.. During these moments, children are learning through investigation, thinking and resting.	Balancing restful time and observation with active, purposeful work.

Procedures for Addressing Behavior Incidents

The focus of our problem-solving process is to help all people who enter this school feel a sense of respect for themselves and every other person within our school community. Students, staff, parents and visitors are all important participants in the educational mission. Our problem-solving process is built upon the following core expectation, which is fundamental to our core philosophies.

I will show respect for myself, others, and my environment.

Expected behaviors are continuously reviewed with students in each community. Staff and students collaborate at the beginning of the year to develop age appropriate guidelines for their communities. All staff consistently model and teach respect through character education lessons as well as a monthly character development focus. Our goal is to foster our core expectation in each child and mitigate behaviors that negatively affect them, their peers, and the school environment.

We believe that:

- The learning environment should be protected.
- A misbehaving child is a discouraged child who is communicating a need through their behavior. At times, a student may need a break from their immediate surroundings in order to return to a social/emotional state that is conducive to learning and interacting positively with others.
- There should be a consistent process that we utilize when responding to behavior that does not uphold our core expectation.
- Parents should have the opportunity to collaborate with the school when their child is engaging in behaviors that do not support the school's core expectation.

Inappropriate behavior will be addressed in a respectful manner focusing on teaching the skills needed for every student to be a part of the school community in socially effective ways. Teachers make decisions all day about whether and how to respond to behaviors.

Some interventions include:

- Connect with the student before correcting behavior – acknowledge feelings or intent of student before attempting to correct behavior – look for mutually agreeable solutions
- Use class meeting agenda, ask other teachers/staff members for advice, seek assistance from directors
- Make accommodations to meet individual needs
- Offer a break from the situation
- Ignore behavior – it is isolated and/or intervention may exacerbate the behavior
- Utilize the peace circle for students to reflect upon behavior and to take some appropriate space from a stressful situation.
- Notify and collaborate with parents

Although most students will, over time, respond positively to the clear and consistent use of these and other strategies, it is recognized that a break from the

immediate environment or intervention from another staff member may be necessary for some students.

When students engage in behavior that is outside of expectations, staff will complete a communication form, objectively describing the situation. The information will be shared with the director and the student's lead teachers and utilized to try and understand the root of the discouragement and work with the student to engage in socially effective ways to meet their needs.

If discouraged behavior continues, the teacher will schedule a conference with parents to collaborate in supporting the student and finding effective solutions for changing the behavior.

In certain circumstances/or extreme situations, a student may be sent home if their behavior significantly disrupts the learning environment, or poses a danger to themselves, others, or the environment. It also may be decided that a student may need to be removed from a classroom and placed in an alternative learning environment or another classroom for the year. If necessary, an agreement for future behavior may be required before the student is able to return to campus or the original classroom. If the agreement is not met, and extreme behavior continues, putting students and staff in an unsafe learning environment, expulsion may be considered.

Unacceptable Behaviors

Experimental behavior often communicates a need and is found in every age of development in children. We work to offer students grace as they formulate self-awareness through identifying individual needs. However, because the community lies at the center of our approach to learning, any individual action that disrupts the safety or well-being of the community is considered unacceptable.

As a result, we will not tolerate the following:

- Language or behaviors that express disrespect for another person based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion etc., or that is dehumanizing in nature.
- Verbal, or written gestures that express aggression or attack a person's character.
- Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, unwanted comments about their body.
- Violent behavior such as punching, kicking, or throwing harmful objects at others.
- Vandalism of school property or the property of others
- Violent role-playing that is one-sided, including pretend gunplay or stabbing
- Possession of weapons, (not including tools we use in school or at peeps) or illegal substance
- Bullying: threatening, harassing or intimidating other members of the school community.

Peer Conflict and Bullying

As children learn about cooperation and social interaction, conflict naturally occurs. Developmentally, children in their early years are focused on themselves. They are learning self-control and developing a sense of personal space. They are learning how to communicate respectfully with others and identify emotions they are feeling. It is common for young children to respond to frustration physically and/or with strong emotions.

- In the early elementary years, children become focused on social interactions. They actively explore ways to navigate friendship, group dynamics, and assert their agency.
- Aggression and hurtful remarks are part of conflict at all ages. With the use of Positive Discipline we work as a staff to ensure that conflict resolution skills are taught and practiced, giving children the necessary tools to deal with normal peer conflict.
- **Bullying** is a series of repeated, intentionally cruel incidents, or threats of harm, that involve the same children, in the same bully and victim roles. It involves an **imbalance of power**, either real or perceived. It can be physical and/or verbal and may include racial, religious, and sexual harassment. Additionally, it can include offensive gestures, inappropriate touching, intimidation, extortion, and social exclusion. The behavior is designed to intentionally hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or discomfort the other person.

Based on our pedagogy, our emphasis is on **preventative measures** for such behaviors, by teaching children how to:

- Be caring and courteous
- Cooperate with others
- Deal with negative feelings (anger, jealousy, etc.)
- Stand up for themselves without being aggressive
- Engage in discussions to resolve differences, express feelings, and show empathy
- Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person

We closely monitor and observe the behaviors of students and staff to prevent bullying and we take swift action should an incident occur. The resolution of bullying at any one developmental stage will vary but will involve practices based on the most current information. In all cases the families will be notified and consulted as a bullying incident is debriefed and resolved in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Action Taken

The Classroom teacher, Guardian and Director will:

- Work with the pupils involved to provide an opportunity to discuss the situation further.
- Talk to anyone who witnessed any bullying behavior to establish a full picture of the series of events that have been taking place.
- Share information with each other that will provide support to a pupil involved or affected by bullying and/or harassment.
- Extended awareness throughout the school
- ensure any written reports are kept in the relevant pupil file/s.

- It may be appropriate to talk about the incident, the problems behind it and possible solutions with all students involved, together along with parents and teachers. This will give the children the perception that we are approaching this as a team.
- A behavior contract may be constructed if necessary. The teacher, and/or the Student Support Group may also recommend involving mental health counselors. Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or law enforcement may also be involved at any part of this process as needed.

If the preventative measures and peer support strategies do not succeed, serious bullying is dealt with under the school's Discipline Policy. The bully may:

- be removed from the group
- lose any break or lunchtime privileges
- be put in detention
- be banned from a school trip or events
- be excluded or suspended for a fixed period.

As a part of this process, students may be given a probationary period to effect positive change. In the most serious cases, if improvements are not realized during the time set, it may be determined that the student is not being best served in this educational setting and the suspension or dismissal policy may implement when:

- behavior involves serious actual or threatened violence against another pupil
- the behavior contract is not upheld and amounts to persistent and defiant misbehavior

Monitoring and Review

This policy is regularly monitored by the School Leadership Team to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Outdoor Environment/Adventure Playground

At Moodie's we have an magical, outdoor play space at Geneva Peeps, which is a space entirely dependent on the desires, interests, and abilities of playmates (children). Loose parts are available to provide opportunities for a deep quality of play. Playworkers (outdoor guides) observe carefully in order to prepare a rich, ever-changing environment, protect the needs of each age and stage as it relates to free play, and assess risk.

We have three guiding principles that all playmates and play-workers adhere to:

- Respect your playmates and playworkers
- Respect your surroundings, living and nonliving

- Respect the desires, interests, enthusiasms, and abilities of all

We consider our outdoor space as a learning environment in the same way we would a classroom. As such, the classroom expectations (see above) remain the same on the playground.

Conservation Commitment

Moodie's is committed to the environment and conservation and do the following:

- Recycle all paper, glass, cardboard, aluminum, plastics, and tin cans
- Compost at least 90% of our food waste and yard waste. Appropriate food waste is fed to our chickens.
- Maintain a nature preserve, herb garden, chicken coop, organic gardens.
- Plant trees..
- Reuse paper and instructional material.
- Use reusable cloths and table crumbers for clean-up instead of paper towels when we can.
- Use washable utensils, and cups.
- Study conservation and promote a curriculum that attracts wildlife and enhances various animal habitats by providing water at ground level.

We encourage you to recycle, reuse, and reduce in your own home to reinforce what your student does at school and to conserve valuable resources. We can all be proud of the work we do towards building a sustainable future.

Celebration of Student Birthdays

In lower elementary classes, Birthdays are a special time of sharing for the children. We enjoy celebrating your child's birthday with an optional **'Walk Around the Sun'** ceremony to symbolize the Earth's yearly orbit.

The Celebration begins with the birthday child walking 'around the sun' (a yellow circle representing the sun). Each complete trip around the symbolic sun represents one year of the child's life. As the child walks around the circle, a statement is read about the birthday child's history for that year and the child may share pictures. This continues until the child has circled the sun the number of times equal to the birthday being celebrated.

Many things are gained through this ceremony. The children gain awareness of the time sequence of life and the special events that they may have experienced in that sequence. They enjoy sharing their lives with their classmates. They build confidence through increased knowledge of themselves. They expand their appreciation for the

unique life journey their classmates are experiencing. The ceremony also reinforces the knowledge that they travel around the sun once each year.

If you plan a birthday party outside of school, **send invitations by mail**, or email if you are not inviting your child's whole class. We want to create an environment of inclusion not exclusion. We do realize that financially it may not be possible to invite everyone. We just ask that invites are sent outside of school if that's the case.

Professional Development Days

During the school year, professional development days have been set aside for our staff. These will be utilized for visitation to other schools, collaboration, planning, educational seminars, and/or material preparation. These are important days for guides to plan ahead, refresh various skills, collaborate, or add to the materials in their classrooms.

Fundraising

Moodie's School engages in a variety of fundraising activities. The resulting proceeds are allocated in ways that benefit the school community as a whole. Monies raised go into either a general fund or are allocated for specific projects. The general fund may be utilized for a variety of purposes, such as, but not limited to: tuition assistance fund, outdoor projects, and school improvements. Campaigns for specific projects, such as the outdoor play structure may also be instituted.

Tuition Payments & Payment Guidelines

Tuition is due on the first of each month. Please indicate on all checks to the school what the amount should be credited to (i.e., tuition, \$535.00; deposit \$35.00, Extended Day \$18.00). If you are making a payment in cash, put it in a labeled envelope.

- Please review your **enrollment contract and tuition agreement**.

Please reach out to Ms. Lauren if you would like a copy of the tuition prices and financial agreement that was sent out last spring during re-enrollment. Tuition is an annual fee. Insurance/Supply fees have been included in tuition and will no longer be separate. Tuition can be paid in full or in 10 monthly installments. Tuition payments are due on the 1st of each month. **If a payment is late, a \$5 fee will be added weekly.** Checks payable to "Moodie's Children's Hours School" and may be left with your child's teacher.

PRE-PRIMARY, KINDERGARTEN AND LOWER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Play-Centered

Research confirms play is the young child's work, supporting them in exercising their creativity and imagination and laying the groundwork for a life-long love of learning. Through play, young children gain a sense of the world and themselves. The simple, natural toys found in our classrooms provide endless possibilities. A rock from the basket of river rocks is handed to a shopkeeper as payment, boards and wooden boxes are transformed into airplanes, doctors cure baby dolls and forts are built. In our outdoor play spaces, especially Geneva Peeps, the children enjoy climbing trees, building teepees and playing house in the homes they built, being gnomes by crushing rocks, or building a fairy home in one of our garden spaces.

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

The kindergarten and lower elementary classes take daily nature walks to support motor development. At Geneva Peeps a log becomes a balancing beam and a tree limb becomes the perfect place for students to climb and reach new heights, developing skill and balance that are so important for their growing bodies to acquire. Music and circle time provide opportunities for healthy movement, running, crawling, rolling and crossing midlines while playing games and singing songs. Outside, on the playground the children are encouraged to try the monkey bars, jump rope and practice other milestones. Fine motor skills are acquired through the practical arts of sewing, finger-knitting, cooking as well as through artistic endeavors such as clay modeling and watercolor painting. The children also participate in meaningful, physical work: chopping vegetables, raking leaves, planting and picking vegetables and feeding the chickens. With each task work becomes joyful. Such activities develop responsibility and foster a sense of self-confidence and achievement. The children are capable and proud when they know they can do real work and serve others.

Technology Policy

Why do we identify as a low-tech school? During tours many schools eagerly show parents the smartboards, and provide iPads and Chromebooks as evidence of cutting-edge, "individualized learning." This is not our definition of individualized learning. An impressive amount of money is spent on their effort, but in our opinion does not enrich the learning environment. Teaching with tech has yielded disappointing results.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, released a comprehensive study in 2015, *Students, Computers and Learning*. Finding that, "most countries that invested heavily in education-related IT equipment did not witness an appreciable improvement in student achievement over the past 10 years."

Unlike flashy tech, art, music, movement, and note-taking by hand, are all scientifically proven to support brain development when integrated into the curriculum. The lure of electronics impacts the emotional and physical development of children at many levels and detract from their ability to create meaningful connections with others and the world around them. Brain research tells us that media exposure can result in changes in the actual nerve network in the brain. This can affect such things as eye tracking (a necessary skill for successful reading), neurotransmitter levels, and how readily students receive the imaginative pictures that are foundational for learning. Media exposure can also negatively affect the health of children's peer interaction and

play. CHS educators strongly believe it is far more important for students to interact with one another and their teachers, and work with real materials than to interface with electronic media or technology. By exploring the world of ideas, participating in the arts, music, movement and practical activities, children develop healthy, robust bodies, balanced and well-integrated brains, confidence in their real-world practical skills and strong executive-function capabilities.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Classes are grouped in two to three-year age spans. This model allows for individual students to observe a variety of learning styles. Students stay with their teachers for multiple years. This concept is sometimes called looping and has been adopted by many schools nationwide. Curriculum is implemented in a 2-3 year cycle so students are not repeating material, this also ensures that there are no gaps in learning. Staying with one teacher for 2-3 years gives the teacher the gift of growing with the student. It also eases transitions into new academic years for students who return to a familiar, trusted environment and gives the student and teacher more time to focus on learning.

Individually-Paced Learning

Because classrooms are multi-age, they are able to support a broader spectrum of learning levels. Lessons are carefully presented and thoughtfully supported with classroom materials. Students may then absorb the subject matter on a number of planes and are encouraged to apply their learning across multiple disciplines. Students go beyond memorization and repetition to true understanding and application of knowledge, skills and concepts. Supporting students in this way allows the individual student to progress, without self-consciousness, at his or her own rate, either moving ahead without having to wait for the rest of the group, or taking the time he or she needs to internalize the material.

Intrinsic Motivation

We operate from the understanding that intelligence, creativity and imagination can be found in every child. The true challenge of education is to keep the spark of human intelligence and curiosity alive. The teachers create captivating lessons and fascinating materials so that learning does not need to be forced. We help children to choose work wisely, to focus their attention, and to come into a setting ready to learn. Students are given the time to reflect and play with ideas until they figure out how things fit together. They practice new skills until they are mastered. They are encouraged to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and come to their own conclusions. As individuals move up into high grades, classes are instructed on how to present information during Socratic seminars and begin to actively put together their portfolios. This emphasis on inspiration and intrinsic motivation instills much greater self-discipline and a love of learning.

Curriculum

Our curriculum combines academic and artistic experiences that engage a child's head, heart and hands. As each grade advances, a special curriculum is designed to deliver a developmentally appropriate and academically challenging material, which is

carefully integrated with work in the arts, science, geography and culture, music and extensive time spent in nature. Our hope is to provide a curriculum that will educate children in a supportive, creative manner and send them forth as compassionate, emotionally healthy, and confident individuals. Applied learning and projects extend beyond the classroom. The elementary program teaches history through hands-on experiences: students may build shelters, cook over a wood fire, churn butter, hike, work with a map and compass, go on a boat ride, or take an archery class. Science often takes place outdoors. Classes grow flowers and vegetables and study the effects of various conditions on their growth. Students take part in planning and organizing field trips which extend and enrich the curriculum.

Language Arts

The children experience the richness of language through the art of storytelling. During the kindergarten and first grade years there is a focus on multicultural fairy tales and fables. There is magic in these stories; teachers make the words come alive. The children are presented with the archetypes of the human being through fairy tales. The characters in each story represent positive attributes, such as courage, honesty and goodness that can influence the young child's emotional intelligence and social development.

Math

Mathematical abstraction is mastered by manipulating the concrete. The learning process moves from simple to complex and concrete to abstract. Materials relate to pattern recognition, sorting, sequencing, and matching. The concepts build on one another to inspire confidence.

Daily Routine

During the morning work period, children make out their own work plans, with assistance, and are able to decide what learning activities they would like to do. This is why students become completely immersed in their learning. Students are very intrinsically motivated. They do not want to stop and be pulled away from their important work. In our classroom children get to ask the question, What if,,, and get to go on an adventure to find that answer, every day. If a student wants to count to 1,000 using Legos, they can do that! If they want to draw and label every different kind of tree or dinosaur, they can! As students are working on their work plans, main teachers work with students 1:1 in reading and math.

In addition, children receive a variety of enriching specials: outdoor Ed program, music, library, foreign language, taekwondo, physical education, sewing and handwork, yoga, meditation and art. Frequent field trips and hands-on learning experiences make concepts come alive for the students on a daily basis. Parents are often amazed at the deep concentration and focus the students have. Whole-class instruction is minimal with lessons being given to individuals or in small groups. Independent learning and responsibility for one work are easily mastered in a classroom environment that is inspirational and skillfully organized. Students use daily and/or weekly work plans to keep track of assignments and work accomplished. They work closely with their teachers to set goals. The student's involvement in determining their learning objectives

leads to ownership and self-motivation. Teachers use their knowledge of each child's interest and abilities to guide them into new areas and areas of increasing challenge as they master skills and show signs of readiness to move on.

Homework

On any given day, your child has the opportunity to select their work. Children are presented lessons and then given the opportunity to practice it themselves until they master it. The teacher records their progress as they practice and learn a lesson. Children develop concentration through practice and repetition. This can last a short period or span a few days or weeks, depending on its complexity. Your child is constantly working, observing, and learning in the room. It just may not be physical work that goes home frequently. A progress report will be sent home three times a year.

Community Oriented

There is always an occasion to express gratitude and to come together. We have many festivals and celebrations together that unite us as a learning community. There seems to always be something to look forward to and prepare for. Parents form close bonds through field trips or time spent after school together while the children play.

The Classroom Environment

Our classrooms are filled with extraordinarily well-organized materials. You will see resources that are not typical in other schools, like antiques, artifacts, sewing needles and classic paintings on the walls. Classroom shelves contain objects from nature, follow-up exercises, materials and original source materials which all complement the themes being studied. Much of the work of our teachers occurs in the preparation and organization of materials and the careful follow-through of a lesson or concept. This allows the student to unlock the door to learning through his or her own exploration of the supporting materials. The teacher spends considerable time gathering, creating and changing these supporting materials, and in general, keeping the classroom environment inviting for discovery.

Reverence

The classrooms are warm, colorful, cared for and filled with nature's beauty—a place where kids let their imaginations soar while feeling nurtured and secure. Our toys and classroom materials are natural and mostly wood, glass, silk and wool. These materials provide the children with a real sensory experience and provide a greater appreciation for the natural world around them. We show our gratitude in the way we care for our resources and the environment, taking care to roll up silks and tuck in our baby dolls. We believe in honoring the natural world. At Geneva Peeps we treat the chickens and the plants with great care. We strive for the children to live with a sense of wonder and to be filled with awe and joy in the beauty found in the world.

UPPER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Moodie's Elementary offers an education of rigorous academic instruction with a focus on creative and critical thinking that prepares each student for the future. It is the

goal of each teacher to bring the curriculum to their class in ways that will excite and enthuse, leading each student to question, learn, dream and explore.

By focusing on head, heart and hands, we lay the groundwork for deeper learning in middle school, high school and beyond. Our classrooms are filled with art, music, beauty, drama, problem-solving, wonder and play, which bring English, math, science and history to life. Hands-on learning deepens concentration and awakens the intellect. New thinking brings a growing sense of belonging in society. Working on group projects and the use of community resources (such as libraries and museums, nature centers and local wetlands) and an expansion in field study become important elements in the curriculum. The class sizes are small, and have multiple teachers, which allows for personalized instruction. Project-and inquiry-based learning, that is driven by questions and discussion, pushes students to challenge themselves and each other in new ways everyday.

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

The classes take daily nature walks to support motor development. At Geneva Peeps a log becomes a balancing beam and a tree limb becomes the perfect place to climb and reach new heights, developing skill and balance. Outside the children are encouraged to take appropriate, healthy risks and gain confidence in their physical abilities. Activities that involve climbing, building and hiking are built into the curriculum. Fine motor skills are acquired through the practical arts of sewing, finger-knitting, cooking as well as through artistic endeavors such as clay modeling and watercolor painting on a daily basis. The children also participate in meaningful, physical work: building structures, chopping vegetables, raking leaves, planting and picking produce and feeding the chickens. With each task work becomes joyful. Such activities develop responsibility and foster a sense of self-confidence and achievement. The children are capable and proud when they know they can do real work and serve others.

Technology Policy

Why do we identify as a low-tech school? Our “unplugged” approach is backed not only by current research, but by the hundreds of thoughtful, creative, successful students who have graduated from MCHS over the years. During tours many schools eagerly show parents smartboards, iPads and Chromebooks as evidence of cutting-edge, “individualized learning.” This is not our definition of individualized learning. An impressive amount of money is spent on their effort, but in our opinion does not enrich the learning environment. Teaching with tech has yielded disappointing results.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, released a comprehensive study in 2015, *Students, Computers and Learning*. Finding that, “most countries that invested heavily in education-related IT equipment did not witness an appreciable improvement in student achievement over the past 10 years.” Unlike flashy tech, art, music, movement, and note-taking by hand, are all scientifically proven to support brain development when integrated into the curriculum. The lure of electronics impacts the emotional and physical development of children at many levels and detract

from their ability to create meaningful connections with others and the world around them. Brain research tells us that media exposure can result in changes in the actual nerve network in the brain. This can affect such things as eye tracking (a necessary skill for successful reading), neurotransmitter levels, and how readily students receive the imaginative pictures that are foundational for learning. Media exposure can also negatively affect the health of children's peer interaction. CHS educators strongly believe it is far more important for students to interact with one another and their teachers, and work with real materials than to interface with electronic media or technology. By exploring the world of ideas, participating in the arts, music, movement and practical activities, children develop healthy, robust bodies, balanced and well-integrated brains, confidence in their real-world practical skills and strong executive-function capabilities.

Technology Use

In upper elementary classrooms, teachers embrace technology in ways that enhance the learning process, by using it as a tool, rather than replacing the role of the teacher. Students at Moodie's use technology when conducting research for projects with teacher assistance. Individuals are introduced to digital literacy, exploring resources in a responsible way.

Upper elementary students learn the basics of coding that foster sequential thinking, logical reasoning and problem solving without a computer. Teaching coding through hands-on activities makes the subject more interactive for students. Hands-on coding activities can teach students how to collaborate, be persistent and think critically and creatively.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Classes are grouped in two to three-year age spans. Typically two grades learn together in an environment that encourages cooperation and mentoring while allowing other students enough time to master the material and skills. Students often stay with their teachers for multiple years. This concept is sometimes called looping and has been adopted by many schools nationwide. Curriculum is implemented in a 2-3 year cycle so students are not repeating material, this also ensures that there are no gaps in learning. Staying with one teacher for 2-3 years gives the teacher the gift of growing with the student. It also eases transitions into new academic years for students who return to a familiar, trusted environment and gives the student and teacher more time to focus on learning.

Individually-Paced Learning

Because classrooms are multi-age, they are able to support a broader spectrum of learning levels. Lessons are carefully presented and thoughtfully supported with classroom materials. Students may then absorb the subject matter on a number of planes and are encouraged to apply their learning across multiple disciplines. Students go beyond memorization and repetition to true understanding and application of knowledge and skills. Supporting students in this way allows the individual student to progress, without self-consciousness, at their own pace, either moving ahead without having to wait for the rest of the group, or taking a little more time.

Intrinsic Motivation

We operate from the understanding that intelligence, creativity and imagination can be found in every child. The true challenge of education is to keep the spark of human intelligence and curiosity alive. The teachers create captivating lessons and fascinating materials so that learning does not need to be forced. We help children to choose work wisely, to focus their attention, and to come into a setting ready to learn. Students are given the time to reflect and play with ideas until they figure out how things fit together. They practice new skills until they are mastered. They are encouraged to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and come to their own conclusions. As individuals move up into higher grades, classes are instructed on how to present information during Socratic seminars and begin to actively put together their portfolios. This emphasis on inspiration and intrinsic motivation instills much greater self-discipline and a love of learning.

Curriculum

Upper elementary (3rd through 6th grade curriculum) includes language arts, math, science and history objectives. Physical education, Italian, Spanish, art, music, hand work and business classes are also incorporated for all students. Upper Elementary students attend art classes a few times a week and continue to develop a deep understanding of materials and processes in order to independently pursue projects of their own design, as well as achieve competency while working on class projects. Awareness of art history and art as an expression of culture continues to be important at this level.

Language Arts

The upper elementary Language Arts curriculum fosters the growth and development of receptive and expressive language. Students continue to develop skills in essay writing, stylistic writing, research and report writing, creative writing, and analytical and critical thinking. Sentence analysis and diagramming using manipulative grammar materials continues through the language curriculum. Choices of literature complement other areas of the Upper Elementary curriculum including history, cultural studies, and social skills. Comprehension, reading aloud, and group discussion skills, like participating in Socratic Seminars, are reinforced, and techniques for literary criticism are introduced. Each student completes an in-depth research project on a topic of personal interest that culminates in a written report and presentation to the community.

Upper elementary curriculum includes a spring drama unit, in which students perform a fully staged play. The curriculum combines acting training, improvisational theater exercises, and opportunities to gain experience in theater tech areas like props, scenery and costuming. Selections range from historical classics like Shakespeare and Mark Twain, to modern 21st-century repertoire. Drama students also stage Reader's Theater performances based on well-known picture books for the school's younger grades.

Social Studies

History comes to life in our classrooms. Students go on fossil digs, study lifestyles of ancient peoples in cultural anthropology experiences and tour early American historical sites. In the course of a 3-year cycle, students explore topics from the beginning of recorded history to the present-day. Early civilizations, including the Fertile Crescent and Ancient Greece, are studied, as well as Medieval and Renaissance Europe, among others. Classes also dive into United States history, covering early colonization up to the 20th century. They study a variety of cultures and how the geography of the regions impacted the culture.

Students use primary source data from the time periods whenever possible, as well as timelines, resource books and literature. Supplementary text like historical fiction is used in Language Arts and often corresponds with the time period that is currently being studied. Students complete projects of their own choosing, both independently and in small groups.

Science

Children in the Island classroom cover two main branches of science –life science, such as biology, botany and environmental science, and physical science, such as physics, chemistry and earth science. There are both independent and group projects throughout the year, culminating in a major research project in the spring on the topic of their choice, which they then present to the class. We have many speakers coming into the classroom, professors, doctors and scientists who come in frequently to lecture and provide hands-on experiences for our students.

Children learn the scientific method, conduct experiments and record data in their science labs. They learn to hypothesize and adjust their thinking according to how their experiment plays out. They also learn to work and negotiate in small groups and listen to others' opinions and ideas. Some typical projects/experiments/demonstrations include building the Bohr model of an atom, river erosion, dissection of a pig heart and an epidemiology project called Outbreak, where students must research and trace how a specific disease behaves.

Nature-based learning is incorporated into the Upper Elementary Science/STEM curriculum. Students participate in monthly adventures, in all kinds of weather, exploring local conservation land, focusing on forest and vernal pool ecology, animal tracking and foraging. Nature-based learning experiences allow students to understand and appreciate the outdoors and to develop a sense of place within the natural environment.

To begin “bridging” to Middle School, older students participate in science, engineering and math (STEM) labs, math classes and environmental science classes. This experience further develops each student’s skills through active engagement in inquiry-based activities using the scientific method.

Math

The math curriculum in the upper elementary program includes arithmetic, geometry, and pre-algebra and algebra. Upper Elementary teachers initially observe and assess each student’s skill level to determine student placement in the curriculum. Students learn basic operations, math facts, fractions, decimals, word problems,

measurement, ratio and proportion, percents, graphing tables and charts, rounding and averaging, as well as geometry and pre-algebra. Students improve upon their problem-solving skills by working collaboratively. The Upper Elementary math curriculum is built to ensure that all students are challenged appropriately, while progressing toward higher mathematical thinking.

In addition to their regular curriculum in mathematics and geometry, older students participate in a weekly algebra seminar. Over the course of the year, they are exposed to concepts that are typically covered in seventh and ninth grade algebra. Using hands-on materials, students learn to factor polynomials, multiply the factors to produce the polynomial or quadratic equation, and divide one factor into a polynomial to produce the other factor. The students work individually or in small groups, often coaching one another.

A Typical Day

Students attend main, group lesson blocks in the morning, following a morning work period. During the morning work period, children make out their own work plans, with assistance, and are able to decide what learning activities they would like to do based on their target learning goals for the week. This is why students become completely immersed in their learning. Students are very intrinsically motivated. As students are working on their work plans, main teachers work with students 1:1 or in small groups. In addition, children receive a variety of enriching specials: music, library, foreign language, violin, taekwondo, sewing and handwork, yoga, meditation, business ventures class and art. Frequent field trips and hands-on learning experiences make concepts come alive for the students on a daily basis. Parents are often amazed at the deep concentration and focus of the students. Whole-class instruction is minimal with lessons being given to individuals or in small groups.

Independent learning and responsibility for one's work are easily mastered in a classroom environment that is inspirational and skillfully organized. Students use daily and/or weekly work plans to keep track of assignments and work accomplished. They work closely with their teachers to set goals. The student's involvement in determining their learning objectives leads to ownership and self-motivation. Teachers use their knowledge of individual interest and abilities to guide students into new areas of study, increasing the challenge as they master skills and show signs of readiness to move on.

Assessment

Various tools contribute to the assessment of student progress in our classrooms:

Observation: Each child is observed in his or her work environment on a regular basis. The teacher takes notes on the students work habits, peer interactions, and ability to process the task at hand. Observation helps the teacher assess whether a child is ready to advance through different aspects of the academic curriculum, how well he or she is able to handle certain social dynamics, and allows teachers and students to have a reference point during student/teacher conferencing. Through this in-depth observation, teachers are able to quickly identify academic challenges the child may be facing and develop an individual plan to assist.

Written Work: Daily and weekly written work is reviewed by a teacher to evaluate progress and ability. By reviewing everyday work, we are able to see natural strengths,

as well as areas that are in need of improvement. With this knowledge, we can help find the comfortable and natural way to help everyone advance.

Portfolio: An ongoing portfolio with student work samples are kept to track the success and progress of each student. Both teacher and student choose a variety of work to put in the portfolio.

Classroom presentations: Each child has several opportunities through the school year to gather information and present a well-planned presentation of his or her work to peers, teachers, and parents. This process of research, writing, refining, and public speaking preparation is a wonderful tool to assess the advances a child makes through the year.

Check point evaluation tools to assess proficiency: Through teacher-made benchmark tools and frequent aptitude assessments, students can advance at their own pace without the use of high-stakes testing.

Personal Reflection: Students have personal reflection time several times throughout the month. In early adolescents, individuals have a quest for self-knowledge, which in turn helps adolescents develop their identity. In today's world, students often have not learned to spend time reflecting upon goals, reducing stress, or creating a personal vision. During Personal Reflection, students will work by themselves on guided self-knowledge activities that are recorded in a journal.

COMMUNITY

Community Oriented

Moodie's School is a family. We learn and grow together. Close family bonds are made at this school that last a lifetime.

There seems to always be an occasion to express gratitude and to come together. We have many cultural and seasonal festivals and celebrations that unite us as a learning community. There seems to always be something to look forward to and prepare for.

Service to the community as a practical life concept takes on an increasingly important role in Upper Elementary. As lessons in grace and courtesy continue, so does an emphasis on community service. Upper Elementary students develop a deep commitment to their community. They take on active roles in caring for their environments, setting community expectations, and supporting their larger communities within the building and outside of Moodie's Elementary School.

Upper Elementary students continually take care of their learning environments through daily chores and responsibilities.

A Strong Foundation

The teacher/student relationship is unparalleled. Each class gets a team of educators who teach the children for multiple years. Teachers are more connected to the students, students are more connected to each other and most importantly, students learn to be connected to themselves. Our classrooms are truly rooted in relationships.

The Classroom Environment

Our classrooms are filled with extraordinarily well-organized materials. You will see resources that are not typical in other schools, like antiques, high-powered microscopes, hammers, artifacts, sewing machines, glue guns and classic paintings on the walls. Classroom shelves contain objects from nature, follow-up exercises, original source materials which all complement the themes being studied. Much of the work of our teachers occurs in the preparation and organization of materials and the careful follow-through of a lesson or concept. This allows the student to unlock the door to learning through their own exploration. The teacher spends considerable time gathering, creating and changing these supporting materials, and in general, keeping the classroom environment inviting for discovery. These materials provide the children with a real sensory experience. We show our gratitude and our sense of responsibility in the way we care for our environment. Tools are cleaned and put back. At Geneva Peeps we treat the chickens and the plants with great care. We strive for all children to live with a sense of wonder and to be filled with awe and joy in the beauty found in the world.