



THE LEARNING CENTER
FOR THE DEAF



Marie Philip School Early Childhood Center Handbook
2021 – 2022

The mission of The Learning Center for the Deaf is to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing children and adults thrive by having the knowledge, opportunity and power to design the future of their choice.

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General School Information

Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf

848 Central Street
Framingham, MA 01701
<http://www.tlcdeaf.org>
(508) 879-5110 V
(774) 999-0941 VP

General MPS School Hours: 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM Daily, September - July

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten:

8:00 AM to 2:30 PM Monday-Thursday; 8:30 AM to 12 PM Friday

Kindergarten:

8:00 AM - 2:30 PM Monday-Friday

School calendars can be found here: <https://www.tlcdeaf.org/family-resources>

Quarterly Progress Reporting Periods:

1st Quarter: 9/1/2021 - 11/12/2021

2nd Quarter: 11/15/2021 - 1/28/2022

3rd Quarter: 1/31/2022 - 4/29/2022

4th Quarter: 5/2/2022 - 7/28/2022

Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf is a non-profit, non-sectarian day and residential school organized under section 501 (c) of The Internal Revenue Code. It is a 766-approved Special Education School reviewed regularly by The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Education.

Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf admits students of any race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

Entrance Requirements

Children are admitted to the preschool on or after their third birthday with an agreed-upon start date. Referrals are received from local communities and a time is arranged for interested families to visit our program. Upon completion of the intake process, acceptance of a child, and receipt of a signed Individual Education Plan (IEP) and placement page from the child's school district, the child's placement may begin. Immunization certificates, personal data forms, and

emergency authorization forms will be sent to parents/guardians and must be submitted and approved before the child can officially join the program.

Change of Address / Contact Information

To ensure the safety and well being of your child, families should notify the school of any change of address, phone number, VP number, email or other important information as soon as possible.

Home/School Communication

Effective home/school partnerships benefit everyone, especially your child. For this reason, the Marie Philip School strives to establish and maintain open communication with families.

Families are provided with the opportunity to volunteer in the classrooms. Families often help with special art or cooking projects, accompany classes on field trips, or assist teachers with classroom preparations and materials. Families are invited to various school meetings, and events (e.g., monthly ASL Storytelling). We are very appreciative of the involvement of our families and enjoy the feeling of community that is created when families visit.

Teachers communicate with families on a regular basis. This can be done through the use of a home/school notebook, via email and through the use of classroom apps. Parents/guardians and teachers determine a mutually agreed upon communication method. As classroom teachers have limited time during the school day, families are encouraged to contact teachers after school (2:45 - 4:00 pm).

Preschool teachers also make home visits. These visits are scheduled with families to help foster a strong home-school connection and to give our staff the opportunity to observe the child in his/her own environment.

In addition, any questions or concerns should be brought to the attention of your child's teacher or the principal.

Teachers, as well as the Director of Early Childhood Center, will periodically send home memos and notices regarding classroom activities and field trips.

Families will also periodically receive mail or email announcing school information. Fliers announcing events in the Deaf community or sign language access to local resources are also sent home frequently to better enable families to plan activities that are accessible to their Deaf child.

TLC's Language/Communication Policy

Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf is a bilingual school. American Sign Language (ASL) and English are the primary languages of instruction in the classrooms. In the majority of circumstances, teachers utilize ASL for communicating academic concepts and for teaching English as a second language. Reading and written English are at the core of all coursework and classroom activities. Literacy in both languages is a principle goal of instruction. Spoken English instruction is also provided for students who have the ability to access speech. How and when a student receives spoken English instruction is determined by the students' current abilities and is agreed upon by the school and family. To allow for equal accessibility to all students, areas are provided within each department for instruction through spoken English.

Complete language accessibility at all times is of paramount importance for students' cognitive, academic, social and emotional growth. Incidental learning plays an important role in the overall education and language development of children. Since most Deaf people access information visually, American Sign Language is the only fully accessible language for all students and other Deaf TLC community members. Therefore, ASL is utilized in the majority of campus communication contacts. Students should be able to "eyedrop" on conversations and be comfortable in all staff interactions. TLC staff members continually strive

to develop fluent ASL and English writing skills. If families or visitors would prefer to communicate in spoken English, arrangements can be made to provide English to ASL interpretation through The Learning Center's Interpreting Department.

Program Descriptions:

Early Childhood Center

Children Learn Through Play

Play is how children acquire new information and skills. At the Marie Philip School's Early Childhood Center we strive to create a rich environment that allows children to explore, create, problem-solve, interact, develop curiosity and critical thinking skills. Our goal is to help each child become a competent communicator while developing cognitive, social, and gross and fine motor skills.

"Play is the activity by which the infant or young child learns about himself/herself/themselves and about the world. Because both the self and the world are so new, a child is constantly learning, and thus continuously playing. For the infant and young children, play is not a frivolous activity, but rather the most adaptive practice a child can engage in."

David Elkind, Ph.D.
Professor of Child Study, Tufts University
Author of MISEDUCATION: Preschoolers at Risk

The Power of Play

Play is social and fun.

Our children play for the sake of playing – because they enjoy it. They are not consciously trying to improve their motor skills, practice new linguistic skills, or make connections with others – yet these are important benefits that happen through play. When our children are having a good time playing with us, they learn in a natural way.

Play encourages turn-taking.

If our children are going to learn to communicate, they must get involved in two-way interactions. Taking turns with actions or words is the essential part of shared play and conversation. “I take a turn; then you take a turn”, and so on!

Play is easy to respond to, even without words.

One of the benefits of play is that children will respond to it, even if they have a limited ability or desire to communicate. The active side of play – like building and knocking down a tower of blocks, or imitating motor movements in “Simon Says” – gives children who have trouble taking turns an opportunity to participate. Through play, we can engage with children who have limited communication skills. In addition, play helps children connect physical actions with the language that describes those actions - the best way to reinforce understanding and learning.

Play involves repetition.

It is possible to repeat words and actions more often in a play activity than it is during our daily activities. We cannot pour David’s milk ten times at breakfast, but we can spend hours pouring water in the bathtub, or having a pretend tea party.

Play integrates many of the senses.

Our children are more likely to learn and remember what we are communicating about when they see, feel, smell and taste it. Learning is strengthened when several senses send the same message to the brain.

Play is one of the best ways for our children to learn how to communicate and get along with others.

Adapted from: “It Takes Two to Talk: A Parent’s Guide to Helping Children Communicate”, Ayala Manolson.

Exploration Centers

Our early childhood environments offer children the opportunities to explore, share, experiment and create. Many important developmental skills are encouraged in all of our play areas. This listing highlights some of the many tasks children are challenged through play.

Blocks

- working together
- development of language
- eye-hand coordination
- communication with others
- planning
- working with another person

- imagination
- a common idea or purpose
- shapes, sizes, lengths
- development of imagination
- weights
- balance
- texture (smooth/rough)
- prepares a child for new experience
- lengthen concentration span
- social skills
- basic math (geometry and fractions)
- develop self-understanding

Artwork Sand and Water Play

- valuing themselves
- relaxation of tension
- enhance creativity
- a sense of well-being
- an awareness of color, shapes, lines
- eye-hand coordination
- organization of space
- absorption, spilling over
- expression of feelings, moods
- volume, conservation, measuring
- express individuality
- skills of scientific inquiry
- eye-hand coordination
- understanding cause and effect
- planning, organizing tasks
- teamwork

Preschool

Our full day preschool program is designed specifically for children ages three and four and is based on the belief that children through their own actions and experiences actively construct knowledge. Consequently, children are encouraged to explore materials in areas such as art, math, science, blocks, language arts, and drama. In each area, opportunities exist for experiences that promote cognitive, linguistic and social development. Teachers become the children's play and conversational partners, extending the child's experience by commenting, questioning, setting up problems to be solved, and providing new materials and activities. Child to child interaction and communication is highly valued, encouraged and fostered.

Our younger preschoolers participate in a weekly gross motor group, led by staff physical therapists. Our older preschoolers have a more formal gym class, taught by the physical education department. Preschoolers also attend storytime in the school library on a weekly basis. The ECC ASL specialist also provides classes for all children in preschool and kindergarten. Preschool teachers make regularly scheduled home visits to observe the child in his/her natural environment and to facilitate the home/school connection.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Five to six-year-old children participate in a full-day kindergarten program. The curriculum focuses on learning experiences in reading, math, science, language arts, social studies, art and drama. Experiential, hands-on-learning is still encouraged while accessing the curriculum. The kindergarten students attend gym twice weekly. They participate in a storytime in the library weekly.

Some preschool, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten students benefit from a more structured approach to language learning and the acquisition of cognitive, motor and social skills. Whether a child's challenges are physical, cognitive, or social/emotional, each student is given the opportunity to access the curriculum to the best of his/her/their ability with the support of a multidisciplinary team including a behavior specialist where appropriate. Reduced student: teacher ratios allow for individual attention to each learner's needs.

Classrooms and Staffing

Each classroom is staffed with licensed teachers, often with the support of one or more classroom assistants, depending on the needs of the students. Whenever possible, the classroom is staffed with Deaf and hearing team members, providing role models from each culture.

Following Teachers

All students have a "Following Teacher." The following teacher is typically the student's primary classroom teacher.

The responsibility of the following teacher is to keep in contact with his/her/their following students throughout the day. The Following Teacher is able to develop a relationship with the student and is available to discuss experiences and interactions and provide support if any problems or concerns arise. Also, other TLC staff will bring any issues concerning a particular student to his/her/their following teacher. The following teacher is also responsible for writing quarterly reports, the annual IEP, and maintaining regular contact with a student's family.

If families have any questions or concerns regarding his/her child, he/she/they should contact either the following teacher or the school principal.

Attendance/Tardiness Policy

Regular attendance and prompt arrival are essential for a child to make progress in school. Students are expected to attend school every day unless they are ill or have been excused for a medical appointment. If a student misses an excessive number of school days, the IEP team will need to reconvene to address this issue. Missing an excessive number of school days may also impact a student's ability to be promoted to the next grade.

The school administration discourages students from taking vacations other than those that are regularly scheduled. If a student is going to be out of school for any reason other than sickness, his/her family should communicate with the classroom teacher.

If a child will not be coming to school or will be very late, it is the family's responsibility to **call the school before 8:10 AM** to inform the school secretary. The school answering machine is

always available if you prefer to call very early in the morning. If we do not receive a call from you, we will call your home or place of employment to ensure that you are aware that your child is not in school.

Chronic tardiness is a very serious problem. The student who is often tardy is missing a very important part of the school day. If tardiness is due to a transportation issue, the principal will work cooperatively with the family and the transportation company to resolve the issue. If the student continues to arrive late for school, the referring school system will be asked to intervene on the student's behalf.

Please note that the Massachusetts Department of Health regulations require that a student who has recently recovered from a contagious disease (e.g., influenza) not be readmitted to the school without a certificate from their family doctor. If you have any questions about your child returning to school, you should contact the nursing department.

Snow Days

New England winters are often unpredictable. If the weather is severe and causes traveling to be unsafe, a snow day may be called. If it is icy or snowing heavily, please watch your television (Channel 4, 5, or 7), check the internet (e.g., Boston Channel.com) or listen to the radio for an announcement that Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf in Framingham has closed for the day.

If the Framingham Public Schools are closed due to bad weather, the Marie Philip School is **often** closed as well. However, specific closing information regarding TLC will always be released to the TV/radio stations. Infrequently, Marie Philip School considers an early release if an incoming snowstorm may reach the area in the afternoon or evening.

Early Release

You will notice on your school calendar that early release days occur each month. These "half days" are used for state-mandated professional staff development and training or before vacation/holiday breaks. On these days, students are released from school at 12:00 noon.

Family Pick-up for Early Dismissal

You must notify the school (preferably in writing) if you plan to pick up your child early, or if you have made arrangements to have the cab arrive early for your child. It is also important that you inform us in writing, of who will pick up your child, and at what time you request early dismissal. This allows the teacher to plan class activities that will not interfere with your child's departure and allows your son/daughter to be ready for you on time. Please stop in at the main office and sign in when you arrive.

Transportation

Most students travel to school daily in cabs or vans provided by their towns/cities. Some students are transported to school by their families. All vehicles must plan to arrive by 8:00 AM. Students are able to enter the Early Childhood Center at 7:45 AM.

A note to the following teacher is always appreciated, when a child is going home in a manner other than their regular transportation (e.g., a child is being picked up by a family member rather than taking his/her cab home). **Requests for dismissal by individuals other than families, where there is no written request on file, will not be allowed until a family member can be contacted and can verify the request.**

During drop off and pick up parking is limited and parking spaces are assigned to contracted vehicles. We ask that families who are picking up their children park in the parking lot at the front of the Early Childhood Center building.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner on the vans and cabs. Dangerous or distracting behaviors will not be allowed. If a child's behavior on the bus or cab is determined to be dangerous to him/herself/themselves or others, a TEAM meeting will be called to discuss alternatives. This meeting may include the transportation company representative and the referring school district. For your child's safety, please discuss proper bus conduct with your child.

Any changes to the regular cab schedule are the responsibility of the cab company, not Marie Philip School. (For example: if you will be personally picking up your child at school, you must notify the cab company that you will not need their services on that particular day). If your child will be absent, you must notify the cab company. It has been our experience that the transportation companies we deal with are very conscientious and diligent about accommodating your child's needs.

MPS Breakfast and Lunch

The Marie Philip School at the Learning Center for the Deaf provides breakfast and lunches for students. Families are eligible to apply for free or reduced priced meals. are posted on TLC's Website on the family resource page. Breakfast costs \$ 2.25 and lunch \$3.25. Families can pre-pay for their child's meals using the parent portal on the Skyward SIS.

Library Use

All students visit the school library on a weekly basis. Early Childhood Center students are permitted to borrow a book for a week at a time. Typically students are not permitted to borrow books if they have not returned overdue books. If a student has lost a library book, it is the responsibility of the family to pay for or replace this book.

Physical Education

Pre-Kindergarten and all Kindergarten students attend physical education twice a week unless the family/doctor provides a written note requesting no participation, or an alternative schedule is agreed upon at a child's IEP meeting. Sneakers are required for children to participate in gym.

Family Sign Language Classes

ASL classes are offered during the evening on the Framingham campus. These classes are available to family members free of charge. Other interested people in the community may attend classes for a fee. In addition, The Learning Center also has a beginning sign language class for families, which is offered with options of time during the school day.

Support Services:

American Sign Language

All Students participate in ASL classes on a weekly basis. Students receive individual ASL tutoring based on their need, which is determined by the student's IEP.

Occupational (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT)

TLC employs both occupational and physical therapists. The students who receive these services as part of their IEP. Each therapy session is typically thirty minutes. How often a student attends therapy is determined by his/her IEP.

In order to receive therapy, some of the students leave the classroom and are seen within the OT/PT therapy area. This is particularly the case when the students would benefit from the use of special equipment, or a large therapy area. At times, the therapist will come to the classroom because it is advantageous for a child to be seen within the classroom setting working among his/her/their peers.

Speech and Language

Spoken English and Communication Strategies programming is available to all students in the Early Childhood Department. Students receive instruction in spoken English and/or communication strategies based on their need, which is determined by the student's IEP.

Counseling

Counselors are available to support students and their families as needed. The counselor collaborates with faculty regarding a student's emotional or social needs during school hours. Students receive regular individual or group counseling based on their need, which is determined by the student's IEP. In addition, counselors work closely with staff in supporting students when a need arises (e.g., an upset at school).

Audiology

A full-service audiology department serves both outpatients and students at MPS. The educational audiologist provides regular hearing tests, monitors middle ear function, checks and repairs existing hearing aids and cochlear implants, and is always available to parents for consultation. New earmold and hearing aid fittings as well as cochlear implant mapping are available as an outpatient service. The outpatient clinic accepts most private and public health insurances and can check benefit eligibility as needed.

School Health Service

The Nursing Department is available during school hours and after school programs and provides basic, preventive and emergency services to students. Regulatory agencies are: The Department of Public Health School Health Unit, The Department of Public Health at the state and local level, The Board of Nursing, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and The Department of Early Education and Care.

The school nurses can be reached at:

Ph: (508) 879-5110 x225 for ECC Nursing Department

After 4 PM and on weekends: 508-879-5423

Dedicated Fax: (508) 872-7191

ECC Fax: (508) 308-8014

Email: nurses@tlcdeaf.org

Please contact the nurses any time you have concerns and specifically for the following reasons:

- A new medical diagnosis or change in your child's health status
- A newly prescribed medication
- A change in current medication
- A serious illness, injury or hospitalization
- A contagious disease such as chicken pox, flu, strep throat, whooping cough, ringworm, scabies, impetigo, conjunctivitis or MRSA infection
- If your child is absent for an extended period of time

To allow your child sufficient time to recover from an illness or injury, and to minimize the spread of an infectious illness, your child should be kept home from school if he/she has:

- A communicable disease that may include an upper respiratory illness with significant coughing and/or nasal discharge, or a sore throat, cough and chest congestion with a fever;
- A fever greater than 100 degrees - your child should not return to school until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, and until he/she is feeling well and able to participate in the classroom;
- Vomiting and or diarrhea in the last 24 hours

Physical Examination and Required Immunizations:

Your child is required to have on file an annual physical exam and updated immunizations that have been reviewed by the nurse.

Medical immunization exemptions require a certificate from your child's physician.

Religious immunization exemptions require a statement by the families or legal guardian that gives the reason for the exemption and a note from the physician stating that the individual is in good health and able to attend school.

Medication Policy

The following statements highlight the main points of the medication policy, in compliance with state guidelines:

- We encourage families to administer medication before or after school hours, when possible.
- All prescription and over the counter medications require a written physician's order and a completed family consent form. Medications will not be administered without this documentation.
- Medications must be in a correctly labeled pharmacy container that is delivered to the nurse by a family member or responsible adult. Students are not permitted to carry medication to or in school.
- All medication orders expire at the end of the school year. New medication orders, family consent forms, and correctly labeled pharmacy containers are required at the beginning of the school year and whenever a medication order changes.
- On a field trip, prescribed medication may be administered by a trained teacher or assistant with family's written permission.

Guidelines for Management of Life-Threatening Allergies in School

Families should notify the Nurses Office, the classroom teacher, and Director of Early Childhood Center of their child's allergy and schedule a phone or on site visit with the nurse to

discuss the specifics of the allergy and develop an allergy action plan.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, 911 and the nurse will be called and families will be notified at the time of the emergency. Your child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest emergency room at the MetroWest Medical Center, Lincoln Street, Framingham, MA, (508) 383-1100, and will be accompanied by a teacher or teacher's assistant. During an offsite emergency, such as a field trip, 911 will be called and your child will be transported to the nearest hospital and will be accompanied by a teacher or assistant.

Required Screenings

Hearing, vision, BMI and postural (scoliosis) screenings are provided annually to students depending on age/grade.

A Health Emergency packet is completed by families yearly and returned by the date provided to ensure that your child's safety, health and well-being are met and that sufficient time is provided to properly review and administratively handle the forms. Forms, consents and medical documents that arrive past the due date may prevent your child from attending activities such as field trips, until the late arriving forms have been reviewed and processed.

Visitor Policy

To ensure minimal classroom disruption, communication accessibility, and ongoing protection of our student's privacy and safety, the following guidelines will help to make your visit more successful:

All visitors, families, and volunteers must check in at the main office ("The White House") upon arrival. Please do not go directly to the classrooms! All visitors will be asked to sign into the Visitor's Log and receive a Visitor Badge.

Tours may be arranged by calling or emailing the school to set up an appointment. Subject to availability, interpreters will be provided when needed.

Families are always welcome to arrange for an observation or a visit to their child's classroom. These arrangements can be made with the classroom teacher or school principal. Please call or email ahead to arrange for the best time and/or interpreters if necessary.

Often, family members have skills and talents that can be shared in the classroom. This may be a one-time offering or a regularly scheduled routine. Family members who are interested in sharing their time/skills as a classroom volunteer can arrange a schedule with their child's teacher or principal.

To protect our students, any person who volunteers with children must submit a Criminal Records Check (CORI) application. When this background check has been completed, the volunteer schedule will begin.

Please bear in mind that the Marie Philip School at The Learning Center recognizes that incidental learning plays a critical role in the overall education and language development of all children. Hearing children learn a great deal from what they hear around them (e.g., incidental adult conversations, radio and television). Deaf children should also have an opportunity to learn from all conversations around them. For this reason, all communication in open areas of our school should be accessible to students through American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is therefore an essential while you are in any of our classrooms. If a family member is not yet comfortable signing for him/herself, interpreting services will be provided, subject to availability.

When families are visiting the school during non-school hours (e.g., before 8:00 AM and after 2:30 PM), unless otherwise arranged, they are responsible for supervising their children.

Appropriate School Attire

All students are expected to come to school dressed in a manner that demonstrates respect for him/herself and the educational environment. Students are expected to be appropriately covered. Inappropriate attire might include: t-shirts with inappropriate language and/or pictures, or revealing clothing (e.g., short shorts/dresses, strapless tops). Hats are not to be worn inside of school buildings. For communication purposes, we ask students' faces to be clearly visible (e.g. hoodies are allowed, but the hood may not cover the head or face). Students are encouraged to wear footwear that is safe for running and climbing on playground equipment (e.g., sneakers) every day. Flip-flops, beach sandals and Crocs are not recommended.

Except in cases of extreme weather conditions, students play outside every day. In the winter months, students are expected to bring a winter coat, snow pants, gloves, boots, and a hat.

In the summer months, the early childhood building is always air-conditioned. Some students and staff have found they are more comfortable wearing a sweater or light jacket indoors.

Most early childhood students have physical education classes twice a week. The students are expected to bring or wear sneakers on P.E. days.

Personal Belongings

On occasion, students have also asked to bring cell phones to school. While this is discouraged, as many students are not mature enough to handle such valuable equipment, we will respect a family's decision to equip their child with such a device. Students will not be permitted to use cell phones during the school day. They must also keep these devices in their backpack or locked in a classroom cabinet.

Because cherished possessions sometimes become lost or broken, if possible students are requested to leave expensive or cherished possessions at home. TLC staff cannot be responsible for students' personal possessions.

School Celebrations

As we continue to incorporate the principles of respecting and embracing differences in an anti-bias educational environment, celebrations will take on a less traditional, all-inclusive meaning. Although we no longer celebrate with goodies and parties on birthdays or other traditional holidays, we encourage each student to share pictures and stories of personal experiences and/or celebrations outside of school. (Note: In order to be respectful of all students in the classroom and avoid hurt feelings **we ask that students not pass out invitations in school**). Since it is our goal to educate students, we welcome assistance from families to strengthen and expand their understanding of the world around them. Please consider coming in and sharing something about yourself and/or your family (e.g., a particular skill, a recent trip, a favorite recipe, or a special tradition).

Reporting Pupil Progress (Quarterly Reports)

According to the regulations provided under Chapter 766 of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Special Education Law, formal reports of a child's progress in school are made to families and sponsoring communities. Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf prepares these progress reports quarterly. For this year's specific quarterly dates, please refer to the page entitled General School Information in the front section of your handbook.

Families may request a private conference with a teacher at any time throughout the school year. Please allow some lead time, if possible, so that necessary arrangements can be made.

Behavior Expectations and Consequences

The Learning Center emphasizes a positive approach to instruction, modeling, and reinforcement of appropriate behavior.

Children want to feel safe, and we believe they will welcome fair boundaries that help ensure their safety. Staff members strive to create a secure and comfortable learning environment that promotes a caring classroom.

Although our goal is to reduce incidents of anger and stress in the classroom, we cannot protect students from all conflict, nor is that a healthy goal. Conflict is an inevitable part of life, and a better goal is to learn to deal effectively with conflict. This is done through helping students learn to negotiate, compromise, learn how to state his/her feelings without forcing them on others. These are all important and necessary life skills.

Changing unacceptable behavior requires patience, time, and opportunities for practice. The first approach to intervention will always be through discussion with the child at a location and time which safeguards privacy and dignity. Expectations for acceptable behavior will be clearly delineated and explained.

The Elementary Department has adopted the Responsive Classroom social skills curriculum. Through this curriculum, we strive to teach a set of social skills that children need to learn and practice in order to be successful academically and socially. These social skills include: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control – C.A.R.E.S.

Through the Responsive Classroom program, classroom rules and responsibilities are discussed and reviewed throughout the school year. Every effort is made to focus on positive behaviors, which are consistently modeled and practiced. When inappropriate behaviors are repeated, staff will determine and implement “logical” (i.e., natural) consequences.

To ensure that the school climate remains positive and supportive, teaching staff maintain internal documentation of potentially repetitive unsafe or disrespectful conduct. This allows the teaching staff and administrators to address such concerns before escalation.

For detailed information regarding behavior support for children when positive reinforcement techniques are ineffective and when safety is a critical issue, please refer to Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf’s *Behavior Support Policies (including our policy on restraint)* on file in the main office or contact GMatthews@tlcdeaf.org for a copy.

Discipline situations sometimes arise which require action to be taken to remove a student from regular school activities for a period of time.

Negative classroom behavior, fighting, malicious damage to property and harassing/bullying behaviors may necessitate the removal of a student from the classroom or activity. Under these circumstances, the student may be placed in the principal’s office for a period of time. A meeting with the student will occur to thoroughly discuss the negative behavior or incident before reentry to the classroom can occur. Families are notified of these serious removals. For more serious or chronic disruptions, an “in-house” suspension for part of the day or for a whole day may be necessary. This always involves giving the student meaningful school work to be completed. At no time is the student deprived of regular snack or lunch. A meeting with the student always occurs to discuss the issue and any possible consequences. Families are notified of all suspensions.

“Out-of-School” suspension is used for extremely serious offenses or repeated uncontrollable misbehavior. This type of suspension would be used to ensure the safety of the student and others. Decisions to utilize suspension may be necessary for, though not limited to, the following reasons:

- possession of a weapon (e.g., a knife, gun, or other harmful instrument)
- possession of fireworks

- possession of illegal drugs or alcohol
- possession of prescription drugs and/or over-the-counter drugs
- malicious destruction or theft of property
- assault
- obvious forms of harassment/bullying

Families, the Massachusetts Department of Education, and the student's sponsoring town are immediately notified of any student's suspension from school. No suspension at Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf will last longer than three days without a TEAM meeting. The purpose of the TEAM meeting is to discuss the incident, reevaluate the student's needs, appropriateness of placement, and consider any necessary revisions to the IEP. This plan of action will be developed to encourage mutual respect and teamwork for the benefit of the student in question.

Harassment/Bullying

It is the policy of Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf to promote and maintain a working environment and educational atmosphere for students, which is safe and free from harassment and bullying. The Learning Center takes allegations of such harassment/bullying very seriously and will respond promptly to investigate in a fair and judicious manner.

Faculty/staff members are required to report any instance of bullying or retaliation that they become aware of or witnesses to the school principal. Reports made by students, families, or others who are not staff members, may be made anonymously. Reports may be signed, oral or written. Oral reports or reports made in ASL must be recorded in writing.

The Early Childhood Department has adopted a program - **Anti-Bias Education**. The program provides elements of our school-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that has been submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This plan includes curriculum for students, ongoing staff development, and a bullying reporting system. This plan in its entirety can be found on the TLC's website. In addition, our bullying report forms are also attached to this handbook.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive and succeed in their school. The Marie Philip School prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation and ensures that all students have equal rights and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, and privileges.

Public schools in Massachusetts are required to amend their nondiscrimination statute to include gender identity in its policy. As a progressive and an inclusive school, we want to demonstrate our steadfast belief in the above statement.

Bus/Van Conduct

All school-wide expectations for good behavior apply on the bus. The following also apply to ensure a safe trip to and from school and on educational field trips:

- remain seated
- talk quietly
- keep head and arms inside the bus
- do not litter the bus or throw anything out of the window
- no eating, drinking, or gum-chewing at any time
- wear seat belts at all times in school vans
- use a booster seat until they are 57 inches tall and/or eight years old

The Learning Center adheres to the Massachusetts Child Passenger Restraint Law, which states that children must ride in a booster seat until they are 57 inches tall or are eight years old.

This handbook was prepared to provide day-to-day information and guidance for all families who attend the Early Childhood Program at the Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf.

The Learning Center for the Deaf Bullying Prevention and Intervention Report Form

Name of Reporter _____

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

Check if you are: a target of the behavior the reporter (not the target)

Check if you are a : student staff member parent administrator other

How do you prefer we contact you? _____

Information about the Incident:

Name of Target[s] (Person who is the subject of the behavior):

Check One: Elementary Secondary WS

Name of the Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior):

Check One: Elementary Secondary WS

When did the incident(s) occur?

Before School Morning Lunch After School Evening Other

Location of Incident(s): _____

Hallway Restroom Classroom Cafeteria/Gym
 Outdoors Residence Other

Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or who have information about it):

Name: _____

Student Staff Other _____

Name: _____

___ Student ___ Staff ___ Other _____

Name: _____

___ Student ___ Staff ___ Other _____

Describe the details of the incident (Be specific and continue on back of form to fully explain what each person did or said.)

The Learning Center for the Deaf
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Report Form (page 2)

Signature of Reporter or Person filling out this form: _____

Date: _____

Form Given To: _____

Position _____ Date: _____

ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Investigation Assigned to: _____

Date: _____ Title: _____

Early Childhood Center Handbook Consent

2021 - 2022

I have received and read Marie Philip School at The Learning Center for the Deaf's Early Childhood Center Student/Families Handbook.

I have discussed the contents of the handbook with my child.

Student Name: _____

My child's teacher: _____

Families'/Guardian signature

Date

Please return this form by November 30th, 2021 or complete the online Consent Form Agreement: <https://tlcdeaf.jotform.com/212773534150956>