

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



L  TTLE OAK
NURSERY SCHOOL

THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK DOES NOT CREATE A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

This handbook does not constitute an employment contract in whole or in part, and the center/school reserves the right to add, amend or delete a policy or procedure stated herein at any time.

Table of Contents

- Table of Contents.....2**
- WELCOME!.....4**
 - GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE..... 5
 - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION.....5
 - PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT..... 5
 - PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY.....6
 - OUR GOALS FOR CHILDREN..... 6
- EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.....7**
 - POSITION CLASSIFICATIONS/AT-WILL-EMPLOYMENT..... 7
 - AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT..... 8
 - HIRING PRACTICES:.....8
 - COMPENSATION:..... 9
 - BENEFITS:..... 9
 - SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE POLICY:..... 9
 - TAKING LEAVE:..... 9
 - PERSONNEL RECORDS:..... 10
 - INJURY AND ILLNESS AT WORK (WORKERS COMPENSATION POLICY:..... 10
- PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS..... 11**
 - CELL PHONE USE..... 11
 - CONFIDENTIALITY..... 11
 - DRESS CODE..... 11
 - MEETINGS/TRAININGS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....11
 - CONTINUING EDUCATION:..... 12
 - PUNCTUALITY..... 12
 - SOCIAL MEDIA..... 12
 - STANDARDS OF WORK:..... 13
 - EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS:..... 14
 - WORK SCHEDULES:..... 14
- CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS..... 15**
 - CLASSROOM PLANNING:..... 15
 - POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL PRACTICES:..... 15
 - MULTICULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND AWARENESS:..... 16
 - INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:..... 16
- SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, POSITION DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES..... 16**
 - DIRECTOR:..... 16

LEAD TEACHERS:.....	17
TEACHING SPECIALISTS (Art, Music, Physical Education, Outdoor Curriculum):.....	18
ASSISTANT TEACHERS:.....	18
OFFICE MANAGER:.....	19
SUPPORT STAFF (Office Support, ECC):.....	19
ALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:.....	20
STAFF POLICIES.....	20
COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS:.....	20
PROFESSIONALISM:.....	21
GENERAL POLICY:.....	21
INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:.....	21
DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY:.....	21
LITTLE OAK NURSERY SCHOOL CIVILITY POLICY:.....	22
EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINARY POLICY.....	22
TERMINATION AND SEVERANCE:.....	22
EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES:.....	22
RISK MANAGEMENT:.....	23
OFFICE OF CHILD CARE MANUAL:.....	23
REPORTING MISCONDUCT:.....	23
ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY:.....	23
SEXUAL HARASSMENT:.....	24
OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT:.....	25
INDIVIDUALS AND CONDUCT COVERED:.....	25
REPORTING PROCEDURES:.....	26

WELCOME

Dear Little Oak Nursery School Staff,

The Little Oak Nursery School (LONS) Board of Directors is thrilled to open our doors for the inaugural 2025-2026 school year! We are so excited to serve the children and families of Howard County and the surrounding area, and we can't wait to build a vibrant community that will make a lasting impression on generations to come. Your contribution to that mission is invaluable, and we are excited to see your dedication and passion in action as we embark on this new journey.

As part of getting started, we're sharing our Employee Handbook with you. It's meant to be a helpful guide to how we work together—what you can expect from us, what we ask of one another, and all the practical details that help things run smoothly. You'll find information about our values, daily routines, communication, safety, and more. Please take some time to read through it, and if anything is unclear or you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to support you, and we're always open to your thoughts and feedback as we grow.

Thank you for sharing so generously of your talents and for your tireless efforts to preserve what we have and vision for what we can be!

"Trust the magic of new beginnings." - Meister Eckhart. We look forward to celebrating the magic of our new venture together!

Warmly,

Melanie Facchiano, President
Melissa Oak, Vice President
Christie Hunter, Treasurer
Jenny Gillis, Secretary
Amy Crouch, Education Program Chair
Craig Calton, Fundraising & Development Chair
Kim Wood, PR/Marketing Chair

Little Oak Nursery School Staff,

As the old proverb says, "Mighty oaks from little acorns grow." What an important and exciting adventure we're all embarking on and we could not do it without each of you. The 2025-2026 school year for Little Oak Nursery School represents the coming together of so many hearts, minds and hands. I am delighted to welcome you as an integral part of our dedicated and passionate team of early childhood educators. Each of you will imprint our organization and make your everlasting mark on our community. This handbook is designed to provide clear guidance, expectations, and support as you navigate your role in shaping the foundational years of children's learning and development. Our mission is to create a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where every child can thrive—and that starts with a strong, united staff. Whether you are new to our school family or have been a part of our team over the years, we hope this handbook serves as a helpful resource and a reflection of the values we uphold together.

Here's to a memorable and successful inaugural year and the foundation of something magical, that we all had a hand in building, for decades to come.

Warmly,

Amy C. Schroeder
Director



EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

LONS seeks to employ and promote the most qualified individuals and does not discriminate in employment decisions on the basis of race, traits historically associated with race, color, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, veteran status, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, or any other basis protected by federal or state law (all as defined by applicable law).

The recruitment and selection process will be based on job-related, objective qualifications, in accordance with the job requirements of the position being filled. All employees must be able to perform the essential functions of their jobs as set forth in the employee's individual position description. Reasonable accommodations will be made, in accordance with applicable state and federal law, to assist employees with disabilities in performing the essential functions of their jobs.

Employees who believe they have been unlawfully discriminated against should report it immediately to the director or to the LONS Board of Directors.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The governance of Little Oak Nursery School, Inc. shall be vested in a Board of Directors, with advisory input from a Board of Advisors. The Board of Directors shall hire a Director to conduct the daily business of the school. The Board of Directors may be referred to as "the Board" "the Nursery School Board" or "the Board of Directors."

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Little Oak Nursery School (LONS) is a private, non-sectarian, not for profit school for two, three, four and five-year-old children in Howard County, Maryland. Classes are from 9:00am-11:30am for two year olds, and 9:00am-1:00pm for transitional twos/threes, three and four- year olds, with the option to add our Enrichment Program to some class offerings.

Normal teacher/child ratios average: (6) two-year-old children with one teacher, (14-16) three-year-old children with a teacher and assistant teacher and (18-20) four-year-old children with a teacher and assistant teacher.

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

Little Oak Nursery School is committed to nurturing a supportive environment where children grow into compassionate, lifelong learners with curious, imaginative minds ready to explore the world.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Little Oak Nursery School (LONS) is dedicated to fostering the development of the whole child. We address each child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs within a group environment. Recognizing the vital role that parents and caregivers play, we strive to create a nurturing space where children, families, and staff learn and grow together. This partnership is key to the success of our program.

At LONS, we see each child as an individual with unique strengths, interests, and needs. Our mission is to support each child in reaching their full potential by offering a safe, positive learning environment and employing developmentally appropriate practices. Through exploration, communication, problem-solving, and fostering independence, we help children thrive. We honor the diversity of all families and children, and we welcome individuals of all abilities. We understand that children grow and learn in different ways and at different rates, and we tailor our approach to support their individual journey.

As part of a global community, we value and celebrate diversity. We are committed to hiring professionals of varied abilities and cultural backgrounds to reflect the richness of our student body. LONS supports staff both personally and professionally through a range of best practices. We foster a collaborative, nurturing workplace where team members work together to deliver high-quality, developmentally appropriate programming.

Some of our staff also serve as Early Childhood Consultants (ECCs), providing support and guidance on best practices. We recognize and utilize each staff member's talents and encourage participation in school wide committees. Collaboration continues through monthly meetings, where ideas and strategies are shared. Staff development is an ongoing process, supported by the MSDE Credentialing Program, and continued education is built into each employee's annual plan. To support well-being and team cohesion, we offer activities that promote social-emotional growth and team building. Our open-door policy ensures that staff feel supported and heard, whether needing a quick check-in or a more in-depth conversation.

OUR GOALS FOR CHILDREN

At Little Oak Nursery School, our objectives are to support children in:

- Building foundational readiness skills
- Developing an interest in words and early literacy
- Strengthening communication abilities
- Gaining an understanding of basic math concepts
- Exploring the world around them through their five senses
- Cultivating a positive self-image and self-awareness
- Fostering independence through self-help skills
- Appreciating and accepting others, including family, friends, and the broader community
- Learning to share and cooperate with peers
- Expressing emotions in healthy, constructive ways

- Engaging in creative expression through various materials and techniques
- Understanding their physical abilities
- Strengthening both gross and fine motor skills
- Practicing healthy habits and safety routines

We believe these goals are best achieved within a warm, collaborative, and supportive environment. Our curriculum includes a rich blend of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health and safety, dramatic play, music, physical education, art, and other creative experiences. These are all facilitated by our dedicated classroom teachers.

Additionally, we employ specialized instructors for art, music, and physical education. We are also grateful for the support of our parent group, especially the cultural arts committee. This group partners with teachers to bring in guest performers and organize field trips that align with classroom themes, enriching the children’s learning experiences.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

POSITION CLASSIFICATIONS/AT-WILL-EMPLOYMENT

Employees of Little Oak Nursery School are classified as either full-time or part-time employees, either exempt or non-exempt. All employees have at-will contracts which are renewable in the time frame specified within the contract. The following definitions have been established to standardize terminology and provide common understanding in our references to employees:

Employee - A person who receives wages or salary from LONS and whose work this organization controls and directs.

Full-time Employees - Those employees who (regularly) work 40 hours or more weekly and who maintain continuous regular employment status.

Part-time Employees - Those employees who (regularly) work less than 40 hours weekly and who maintain continuous regular part-time employee status.

Regular Employees - Those employees whose services are intended to be for an indefinite period and work regularly scheduled hours on an ongoing basis in either a full-time or part-time capacity.

Temporary Appointments - Employees who work either full time or part time in positions that are limited by:

- definite start and end dates (seasonal employees or emergency substitute)
- a salary dollar cap (i.e., the appointment terminates when the funds budgeted for that position are exhausted for example, a grant)

Exempt Employees - Employees, typically salaried employees (e.g., executive, administrative, or/and professional employees) who are not required by the Fair Labor Standards Act and Maryland law to receive overtime pay.

Non-exempt Employees - Employees, typically hourly employees, who are entitled to overtime pay (consistent with the provisions of this Handbook) for any hours worked over 40 hours per week. All overtime work must be pre authorized by your supervisor.

AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Employment with LONS is at-will, which means that it can be terminated at any time, for any reason or no reason (unless prohibited by applicable law), by either the employee or LONS. The language used in this Handbook (including without limitation language related to termination, discipline, or length of contracts) is not intended to create an employment contract of any kind between the employee and LONS. No one other than the Board of Directors of LONS has the authority to enter into such a contract or agreement on behalf of LONS. All terms and conditions of employment, employee benefits and other provisions of this Handbook are subject to modification or elimination, with or without notice, at any time at the sole discretion of LONS.

Nursery School Director – full-time, exempt (9 month)

Nursery School Teachers and Assistant Teachers – part-time (9 month), exempt

Nursery School Teaching Specialists and Support Staff – part-time (9 month), exempt

Nursery School Office Manager – part-time (9 month), exempt

HIRING PRACTICES:

1. All hiring criteria are in accordance with the Office of Child Care of the Maryland State Department of Education for all avenues of employment.
2. The hiring of teachers, assistant teachers, and office staff will be the sole duty of the Director using procedures developed in conjunction with the LONS Board of Directors.
3. The term of agreement is for nine months (one academic year).
4. New employees will receive orientation training prior to working within the classroom. This orientation training shall consist of discussing and reviewing all the items on the New Employee Checklist.

5. New employee will complete the following forms before working with children:

- Individual Personnel Information
- Release of Information
- Medical Report for Child Care
- Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification
- Form W-4
- Criminal Background Check
- First Aid & CPR Training
- ADA Training (within 6 months of hire)
- Basic Health & Safety Training (within of 90 days of hire)

COMPENSATION:

Pay days are monthly and occur on the last day of the month. LONS directly deposits employees' paychecks into their designated personal accounts. Pay raises will be attempted yearly but depend upon the current enrollment and the projected financial status of the preschool and will be given at the discretion of the Director. This adjustment will take place at the beginning of the school year. Employees will be paid on a 9-month scale. All deductions required by law, which are mandatory, will be made from the paycheck prior to issuance (i.e., state and federal taxes, Medicare and Social Security). LONS will provide, by January 31 of each year, a W2 statement showing the total amount of your taxable earnings in addition to all deductions taken from your pay during the previous calendar year.

BENEFITS:

No medical benefits are offered. Staff members are extended sick leave (1-10 days) based on sessions worked. Staff members are extended personal days (1-2 annually) based on sessions worked. School operates loosely around HCPSS calendar and additional professional days, and holiday/vacation days are provided therein.

SICK AND PERSONAL LEAVE POLICY:

Your employment contract outlines your allotted sick and personal leave days. Once these are exhausted, you will be docked a full day's pay for any additional days of absence. In the event of long-term illness exceeding 8 weeks, the nursery school reserves the right to terminate the contract and fill the vacancy. If using personal leave time, the Director must be notified at least 2 school days in advance, so that a substitute teacher can be scheduled.

TAKING LEAVE:

Employees must complete a digital leave form (see below and on Staff Hub.) Please complete in advance of taking leave and indicate the substitute who has been secured. (Staff will be

provided with an approved list of substitutes.) An exception to this would be for sick leave. If taking sick leave for a scheduled appointment or in advance for a sick child, please complete the form and secure the substitute. If an unexpected illness occurs, and you are able, please try to secure your own substitute. If unable to do so, call the Director and she will arrange one for you.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScmMZNqKqsoUWe1ShGPZgQLq8UdeKe8Z-zlmg7NvEazaEkYWA/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=103659926227716657432>

PERSONNEL RECORDS:

Important events in each employee's history with LONS will be recorded and kept in the employee's personnel file. Regular performance appraisals, change in status, commendations, corrective actions, warnings and educational attainment records are examples of records maintained. Your personnel file is available to you for inspection in the preschool office and with the Director present. Staff records are only open to the Director, the LONS Board of Directors, the licensing agency and the staff member.

INJURY AND ILLNESS AT WORK (WORKERS COMPENSATION POLICY:

Maintaining a safe work environment requires the continuous cooperation of all employees. LONS strongly encourages employees to communicate with fellow employees and LONS management regarding safety issues.

LONS carries workers' compensation insurance on all employees for on-the-job accidents and/or injuries. LONS will comply with applicable workers' compensation laws and regulations and will provide information to the workers' compensation carrier, who will make benefit payments to eligible employees as provided by applicable workers' compensation laws.

If a work-related injury or illness appears life threatening, the 911 emergency number should be called immediately, and directions should be followed. As soon as possible, this employee should notify the Director. The Director will fill out an Incident Report Form, which must be done in a timely manner so that a timely claim may be submitted to LONS's worker's compensation carrier.

First aid supplies are available in the office and in all classrooms.

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

CELL PHONE USE

When with children, employees should not receive personal telephone calls, texts, read emails or use their cell phones unless it is an emergency. Please make sure family members and other important people (school nurse, etc....) have the LONS Office number.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The protection of confidential school information is vital to the interests and success of our operation. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to children's school records, parent/caregiver/guardian's information and personnel records (including payroll). An employee who discloses confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action even if he/she does not benefit from the disclosed information. All staff must sign a Confidentiality Agreement (included on employee contract) on a yearly basis.

DRESS CODE

All staff are expected to dress neatly and professionally. Casual attire can be appropriate when working with young children. Employees should balance the demands of a job that requires staff to sit on the floor, work with messy supplies and work with small children, with the need to appear presentable and professional for our children, parents and prospective parents.

MEETINGS/TRAININGS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All employees are required to attend monthly staff meetings on days when they are scheduled to work and are not obligated to be with students. Monthly team meetings are also required of staff members if appropriate. All employees are required to attend staff wide training/professional development opportunities unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.

Each employee is required to obtain the specified amount of training for their position as required by the Office of Child Care of the Maryland State Board of Education, **as a minimum.**

- Director and Lead Teachers – 12 clock hours of continued training.
- Assistant Teachers – 6 clock hours of continued training.

All teaching staff and Director must participate in the MSDE Credentialing Program.

- Director must obtain and maintain a Level 4 Administrative Credential
- Lead Teachers must obtain and maintain a Level 6 Teaching Credential

- Assistant Teachers must obtain and maintain a Level 2 (or higher) Teaching Credential

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

All employees are encouraged to improve their training in early childhood education. Reimbursement may be available for courses and workshops related to early childhood education benefiting job related activities. Paid leave may also be available when attending. In order to obtain reimbursement and/or paid leave for such courses and workshops, the staff member must make an advanced written request to and receive the advance written approval of the Director. Funds are limited and the Director shall, in their sole discretion, determine whether and to what extent reimbursement and paid leave shall be made available for the course, workshop or other training. Provided the Director has approved the staff member's request and agreed to reimburse the cost, such reimbursement shall only be paid upon submission of original receipts for cost and proof of satisfactory completion. Employees may be required to take courses, such as but not limited to, CPR, First Aid, and other CEU credits to benefit the program or individual.

The Nursery School subscribes to NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). Periodicals, magazines and books related to ECE (Early Childhood Education) topics are located in the Director's office and may be borrowed at any time to further staff understanding and knowledge

PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is vital to the effective operation of the preschool to foster a sense of security and consistency for the children. Employees must arrive 30 minutes prior to the beginning of class and depart no sooner than 30 minutes following the conclusion of class, unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.

SOCIAL MEDIA

LONS recognizes the importance and power of Internet sites and services including, but not limited to, social media (including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), Web Logs (Blogs), Web Forums, Wikis, and PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants, including but not limited to, cell phone services such as iPhones and other Smart Phones (collectively referred to herein as "Social Media"). Social Media provides valuable opportunities for LONS staff to connect directly with colleagues, school families and the community. LONS supports the use of social media for these purposes. Furthermore, LONS respects the rights of employees to use social media during their

personal time. To guide employees when they choose to use social media, LONS has adopted the following policy:

- Be Polite, Professional and Avoid Offensive Comments: If an employee chooses to identify himself or herself as an employee of LONS in any manner or choose to post any content using Social Media, he or she must adhere to LONS policies, including those contained in this Handbook regarding Confidentiality, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Child Protection, Code of Conduct, and proper use of LONS's network and equipment.
- Be Concise, Accurate, and Edit your comments: Be aware that when you are using Social Media, your presence and your actions are captured via images, profiles, posts or comments, and reflects on LONS.
- Protect the Safety of our Children/Youth: The use of images taken at LONS is strictly forbidden except on our official websites where parents/families have provided written approval.
- Remember the Long-Term Nature of Social Media Communications: You should have no expectation of privacy when using Social Media.
- Respect Intellectual Property: You must at all times comply with the law in regard to copyright and plagiarism. Posting of someone else's work without permission is not allowed.
- The logo(s) for LONS, may not be used without written consent.
- Do Not Provide Advice or Promote Products and Services: No references or recommendations of current or former employees may be made through Social Media. Do not provide advice or opinions on other schools or competitors.
- Do not reference or cite any past or present co-worker or third-party working with LONS in the past or present.
- Maintain the Confidentiality of LONS Information: Do not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to LONS or to any third-party that has disclosed information to LONS. Proprietary information includes, but is not limited to, policies, strategies, business contracts, student information, financial information, financial situation, marketing strategies and any other information that has not been made public and is valuable to LONS or third-parties as defined above.
- LONS strongly discourages employees from disclosing any work-related matters, whether confidential or not, outside of LONS authorized communications. Work-related matters include, but are not limited to, projects, assignments, workloads, travel plans and relationships with co-workers.

STANDARDS OF WORK:

All employees are expected to meet the preschool's standards for work, performance, punctuality, attendance and personal conduct. When an employee fails to conform to proper standards, that employee will receive notification from the Director citing the improper conduct and be allowed an opportunity to correct the deficiency.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS:

The Directors shall provide guidance, direction, and assistance to staff members as she determines is necessary. Evaluation of the staff by the Director will occur in any of the following ways but at minimum once/year:

1. Feedback about programs and activities during staff meetings.
2. Incidental meeting one on one with each staff member to discuss questions, suggestions, etc.
3. Incidental observation of staff at all times.
4. Formal observations, at Director's discretion, may occur; report written by Director, conference held with staff member to discuss report. Report to be signed and filed by both parties.

WORK SCHEDULES:

Employees are expected to work one week prior to the preschool opening and one week after the preschool year has ended. Actual hours expected during those times will be specified and all staff will be notified in a timely manner.

Staffing charts reflect time staff is scheduled to be with children (see classrooms for details).

1. All staff persons are part time, working either one or two sessions a day.
2. Sessions are half day (2.5 hours) or extended day (4 hours). Staff are paid a salary and contracted for nine full months (one academic year).
3. Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Office Support Staff are required to be here 30 minutes before and after session begins for requisite planning.
4. Those staff members participating in extended day programs are given the opportunity to take a brief break, if needed, when additional staff are in the classroom.
5. Opportunities for personal breaks are also available when children leave the classroom for 20 minutes to attend special classes throughout the week such as Music, Art and Physical Education.
6. Children in each classroom are always expected to be supervised by two licensed staff members.
7. In the event of an employee emergency, staff support personnel are available to enter the classroom and assist.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

CLASSROOM PLANNING:

Classroom time should be spent on activities that directly relate to teaching children. Planning, preparation, or follow-up work should be done before children arrive or after they leave. Classroom planning shall occur 30 minutes before the start of class and continue for 30 minutes after the end of class, unless other arrangements have been made with the Director. Teachers are responsible for creating daily lesson plans and complete the appropriate forms as outlined by our MSDE approved curriculum. These plans must be made at least a week ahead and the Assistant Teachers should have access to these plans in case of emergencies. Plan books should be up to date and available for review at any time as per MSDE.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL PRACTICES:

We at Little Oak Nursery School use positive approaches as we guide the children in developing interpersonal skills and self-regulation skills. At the beginning of the year, the class and teacher work together to develop rules for the classroom. They are posted, reviewed and referred to, as needed, throughout the days and weeks of the school year. Children are encouraged to use appropriate language, “using their words,” to express their feelings and communicate with their friends with support from the staff. As students need additional support from the staff to maintain appropriate behavior, they are offered choices which allow the student to participate in the decision-making process as well as be redirected to a more productive activity. When a situation arises, staff discuss with the student what happened and, with the student, decide on a more appropriate choice, allowing the student to reflect on the situation, assess their choices, and develop problem solving skills. As students are able, they work with the teacher, or individually using the *Problem-Solving Box*, to guide their decision-making process and help them become more independent in making appropriate choices. Should a student need time to step away, take a break, and/or further reflect on the situation, he/she may spend a brief time with the Director allowing reconsideration of the choices made and planning for rejoining the class. As our students grow and learn, they develop self confidence in handling situations in the classroom and become more skilled at working with their friends to problem solve and make appropriate choices all the while developing interpersonal skills and strengthening friendships.

MULTICULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND AWARENESS:

Cultural sensitivity is the awareness and sensitivity of other practices and cultures. Cultural sensitivity skills can include assessing different cultures, how they should be properly approached and how to communicate accordingly. LONS staff will value these important skills and be respectful and courteous to all children and families we serve regardless of cultural differences.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

LONS will try to make special accommodations for children who require such adaptations, provided it is within our power and authority to do so. Accommodation can be specific treatment prescribed by a professional or a parent, or a modification of equipment, or removal of physical barriers. The accommodation shall be recorded in the child's file.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, POSITION DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DIRECTOR:

The Director reports to the LONS Board of Directors. Director's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Continued development of philosophy (to be supported by staff) that will promote meaningful and appropriate early childhood expectations.
2. Responsible for the well being of all children attending.
3. Responsible for oversight of all personnel related matters relating to the nursery school including but not exclusive to hiring, training, staff development and supervision.
4. Meet with staff for evaluations and to assess professional growth.
5. Ultimately responsible for communicating and expressing nursery school expectations to parents (to be supported by staff).
6. Adhering to policies and procedures set forth in the LONS lease agreement.
7. Advocate and liaison to LONS Board of Directors in all matters concerning the operation of the nursery school.
8. Set up and maintain annually a fiscally sound operating budget within the parameters set forth by the LONS Board of Directors.
9. Assist parents in necessary matters regarding the nursery school.
10. Responsible for all administrative duties regarding nursery school.
11. Responsible for overall purchase of materials for nursery school.
12. Responsible for distributing all information regarding nursery school and communicating directly with parents and community.

LEAD TEACHERS:

Teachers report to the Director. Each teacher's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Plan and conduct the daily program for a class of children, which is age appropriate and compatible with the philosophy and goals of the school.
2. Supervise all classroom activities to ensure physical and emotional well-being of each child in the group.
3. Work together with assistant teachers to prepare materials, set up classrooms and implement plans.
4. Plan a program to assess and develop the specific needs, as well as the group needs, of the children in the class.
5. Direct assistant teachers or volunteers assigned to assist with activities as needed.
6. Supervise and work with assistant teachers in providing a safe, healthy, interesting learning environment for the children.
7. Be responsible for communicating with parents regarding child's progress
 - 7.1. written evaluations
 - 7.2. student portfolios
 - 7.3. bi-annual scheduled conferences with parents
 - 7.4. developmental screening
 - 7.5. unscheduled conferences during specials
 - 7.6. phone communications when child is absent
8. Attend and participate in scheduled staff meetings.
9. Attend all scheduled nursery school functions appropriate to the children in your class (i.e., Orientation Night, Me & My Guy, Sing-a-Longs, Spring Fair, etc).
10. Keep the Director informed of any concerns regarding the children, the classroom, or the staff, that might impact the reputation of the school. Other than personal thank you notes, written communications should be approved by the Director.
11. Maintain safety of children at all times to include: daily classroom and playground safety checks, consistently assessing classroom environment, supervising children at all times and enforcing required dismissal procedures.
12. Must have a bachelor's degree in early childhood or Elementary Education. Teachers with bachelor's Degrees in other majors must have an additional 90 hours Early Childhood Certification.
13. Purchase of materials for implementation of individual classroom needs. (Reimbursement up to discretion of the Director)
14. Set yearly goals through self-evaluations and meet with the Director to review self- evaluation and assess professional development. Lead Teachers must have

achieved or be working toward a Level 6 MSDE credential. Required credential level must be earned within one year of hire and maintained throughout employment.

TEACHING SPECIALISTS (*Art, Music, Physical Education, Outdoor Curriculum*):

Teaching Specialists report to the Director. Each Teaching Specialist's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Prepare 20-minute weekly programs for classes of children in specialty areas.
2. Execute lesson plans.
3. Work with teachers to produce structure throughout the program.
4. Support school wide curriculum through their individual programs.
5. Teaching Specialists will be assigned as Lunch Support in addition to their specialty area responsibilities.
6. On field trip days, Teaching Specialists will work a normal day in either office or staff support capacities. TBD on a case-by-case basis.

ASSISTANT TEACHERS:

Assistant Teachers report to the Director. Each Assistant Teacher's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Assist the teacher in conducting the daily program for a class of children, which is compatible with the philosophy and goals of the school.
2. Work with teachers to prepare materials, set up classrooms and implement programs.
3. Share significant observable behavior and growth patterns of individual children understanding the need to work with teachers to provide a support system.
4. Assist teachers in creating smooth transitions for children.
5. Perform monthly assigned duties of organizing closets, preparing snacks and maintaining school and classroom supplies.
6. Confer with the teacher regarding concerns about children's developmental progress or behavior. Only the teacher should communicate such concerns to the guardian/caregiver.
7. Provide childcare on scheduled conference days.
8. Attend and participate in scheduled staff meetings.
9. Attend all nursery school functions appropriate to the children in your class (i.e. Orientation Night, Dessert for Dads, Sing-a-Longs, Spring Fair, etc.).

10. Keep the teacher and/or the Director informed of any concerns regarding the children, the classroom, or the staff which might affect the school professionally.
11. Other than personal thank you notes, written communications should be approved by the Director.
12. Work with the teacher to meet the individual needs of each child.
13. Must have 90 hours of Early Childhood Certification. Assistant teachers with master's degrees are additionally compensated.
14. Must have earned (or be working toward) Level 2 MSDE credential. Required credential level must be earned within one year of hire and maintained throughout employment.

OFFICE MANAGER:

The Office Manager reports to the Director. Office Manager's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Responsible for facility management. Organizing common areas (kitchen, closets, etc...) and ordering janitorial supplies.
2. Assist with staff support in a variety of ways including, but not limited to: answering phones, making copies, technology support, and providing breaks.
3. Manage and maintain the LONS student database.
4. Maintain current and up-to-date student files.
5. Maintain LONS school/parent calendars.
6. Manage all monthly tuition payments. Assess late fees and run monthly reports keeping the Director informed of status each month.
7. Process monthly nursery school bills.
8. Process all field trip payments.
9. Produce the monthly newsletter on a timely basis.
10. Assist the Director in managing the on-line registration process.
11. Assist the Director in monitoring all MSDE Licensing regulations and requirements.
12. Monitor and help conduct monthly emergency drills.
13. Assist the Director with maintaining the security system.

SUPPORT STAFF (Office Support, ECC):

Support Staff report to the Director. Each Staff Support's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Participate with children and staff in the classroom (could include but not limited to: reading stories, supervise activities, reinforce objectives, assess, and provide feedback regarding children).
2. Support administration and program.

3. Office support.

ALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Maintain an orderly physical environment including arrangement of classroom and upkeep of toys.
2. Respect all children.
3. Make all centers (i.e., art, easel, blocks, manipulative materials, computers, book corners housekeeping) in the classroom available for the children. Strive to make them invitations for play and engagement.
4. Provide a nurturing atmosphere that is conducive to each child's development.
5. Classrooms are to be completely set up prior to the children's arrival. This includes physical settings and educational materials required to implement the daily activity plan.
6. Assist children who have had toileting problems according to set policy on using the bathroom. (Children are expected to be able to use the bathroom independently; however, there are times when some assistance is necessary.) Staff members are required to wear latex gloves when assisting children in the bathroom. No staff member should close the door to the bathroom when assisting a child.
7. Arrive 30 minutes before scheduled class time and depart 30 minutes after class has finished. Specialists are expected to arrive 15 minutes before their classes are scheduled to begin. Unless other arrangements have been made.
8. Maintain a professional attitude while working or conversing about the school.
9. Work with the staff and Director in sharing concerns and creating positive solutions.
10. Set yearly goals through self-evaluations.
11. Maintain required state credentials on a yearly basis.

STAFF POLICIES

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS:

Other than personal thank you notes, all written communication to the child's family must be reviewed in advance by the Director. Communication should focus on the child's development and needs. It is inappropriate to criticize the school or other staff members when communicating with a child's parent(s). Staff member concerns about the school or other staff members should be discussed with the Director. The Director

shall be the primary interface with the parents in dealing with matters of school policy and personal complaints. Every effort should be made to find creative solutions so that the children, parents, staff and school all benefit.

PROFESSIONALISM:

1. Children and parents should be related to in a respectful manner at all times.
2. Conversations about children should be held in a confidential setting. Children's behavior and personal family issues should be discussed in private. Drop-off and pick-up times are not appropriate times for these conversations. Confidentiality statements shall be signed on a yearly basis.
3. Any concerns about the school should be shared with the Director. Staff is encouraged to listen to any concerns raised by parents and to suggest parents share those concerns with the Director.
4. It is extremely important to always keep a positive attitude regarding children, staff and program.

GENERAL POLICY:

1. Any workplace injury or accident, no matter how minor, must be reported to the Director or Lead Teacher on duty and a written report must be made.
2. Any injury to or accident involving a child must be reported to the Director or Lead Teacher on duty and the written report must be made.
3. Unauthorized use or possession of school property, equipment, materials, documents, records or funds is prohibited. It is the responsibility of each staff member to inform the Director if they have reason to believe another staff member is using school property inappropriately.
4. The use, possession, sale, transfer, or purchase of illegal drugs at any time is prohibited. Tobacco use is not permitted in the school or church buildings. The consumption of alcohol on school grounds or during school hours is prohibited.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:

The Inclement Weather Policy will be distributed at the beginning of each school year. Please make sure you read and understand this policy. The Director in conjunction with the LONS Board of Directors shall determine, in their sole discretion, when it might be necessary to make up days affected by inclement weather. It is not currently our policy to do so.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY:

LONS values all employees' contributions and wishes to create an environment where employees experiencing disabilities can readily and efficiently request and receive

reasonable accommodations to help them succeed in our organization. A reasonable accommodation's primary function is to empower those who are experiencing disabilities with the tools that make performing the essential functions of their job possible, providing equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees.

The following policy complies with applicable federal, state, and local disability related regulations.

LONS will work with an employee to provide a reasonable accommodation to the known physical and mental impairments of an otherwise qualified employee with a disability, if necessary to assist such person in performing a particular job, unless LONS can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on LONS. LONS is committed to process requests for reasonable accommodations in a prompt and efficient manner. Individuals who feel they need an accommodation should contact their director.

LITTLE OAK NURSERY SCHOOL CIVILITY POLICY:

Little Oak Nursery School values civil behavior that supports a safe, engaging, and supportive environment on school property and at school events. Little Oak Nursery School recognizes the importance of diversity and is committed to a culture that fosters free and open communication. Little Oak Nursery School believes that an environment of mutual respect and civil conduct between and among students, school employees, parents, volunteers, and the general public is critical to the achievement of students and staff.

EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINARY POLICY

TERMINATION AND SEVERANCE:

Employment is at the discretion of the Director. Employment may be terminated by the Director with or without cause. Upon termination, the employee shall be paid through the last day the employee worked.

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES:

In the event an employee is dissatisfied, they will have the opportunity for prompt discussion with her/his director. The aim of this policy is to settle the grievance fairly and as near as possible to the point of origin. It is intended to be simple and rapid in operation.

1. As childcare professionals, all staff members are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts directly with the individual(s) concerned. If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should then seek assistance from the Director in resolving the conflict.
2. It would be our hope, if it is necessary to bring this conflict to the attention of the Director, that together they will determine the next steps for resolving the conflict.
3. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to disciplinary actions themselves.
4. If the conflict cannot be resolved, the staff member can escalate the conflict to the LONS Board of Directors.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

Little Oak Nursery School has a Risk Management Plan which includes the Emergency Preparedness Plan. Employees will be trained throughout the year to become familiar with these policies. A copy of the Risk Management Plan is in the Nursery School Office and in each classroom.

OFFICE OF CHILD CARE MANUAL:

Little Oak Nursery School is a fully licensed child care center within the Office of Child Care and the Maryland State Department of Education and adheres to all of its policies and regulations. A copy of the licensing manual is located in the preschool office.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE/MISCONDUCT:

As a mandatory reporter, any employee or volunteer working at LONS who has reason to suspect that a child is abused, neglected, or a victim of sexual misconduct shall immediately notify the Director and complete the State of Maryland's reporting process. If the Director is the subject of such an incident, the witness or victim must contact the LONS Board President. Those persons involved in the report or investigation should hold information received in strict confidence.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY:

LONS desire to provide an environment for work that is free from hostility, intimidation, or harassment of any sort. LONS does not tolerate and will not condone or tolerate

unlawful discrimination or harassment at LONS by any employee or any third parties over which it has control. Accordingly, LONS is committed to providing a work environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment (as defined by applicable law). All employees must avoid harassing, offensive, and/or inappropriate behavior when carrying out their responsibilities. All employees are responsible for working to ensure that the work environment is free from such behavior.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

LONS does not tolerate unlawful sexually harassing or offensive sexually oriented conduct by its employees or those under its control. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS may include, but are not limited to:

- unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors;
- sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- sex-oriented verbal "kidding," or "teasing,";
- commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies;
- foul or obscene language or gestures; display of foul or obscene printed or visual material;
- physical contact such as patting, pinching, or brushing against another's body;
- leering, catcalls or touching, insulting or obscene comments or gestures;
- display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through e-mail or social media);
- viewing or displaying sexually oriented images via computer, smart phone, or any other device or media;
- and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome, unsolicited conduct that is regarded as both undesirable and offensive to the person being harassed. The mere fact that a person

harassed accepts the conduct does not mean that he or she legally has invited it, finds it unoffensive, or welcomes it.

Sexually harassing behavior need not be directed at another employee for the conduct to violate this policy. The behavior need only occur in front of another individual who is reasonably offended by the behavior. Sexual harassment is not limited to conduct between persons of the opposite sex.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature or consensual personal and social relationships without a discriminatory employment effect. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and that is personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

Anyone who engages in sexual harassment will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT:

Unlawful harassment on the basis of any other legally applicable protected characteristic is also prohibited. Such unlawful conduct includes harassment or other verbal or physical conduct that shows hostility toward or denigrates an individual because of a characteristic protected by applicable law such as an individual's race, disability, age, national origin, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law or that of the individual's relatives, friends or associates, where such conduct (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities. Such harassing conduct that is PROHIBITED includes, but is not limited to, epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts, denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group (including through email or text). Anyone who engages in such harassment will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

INDIVIDUALS AND CONDUCT COVERED:

These policies apply to all applicants and employees of LONS and prohibit harassment, discrimination and retaliation whether engaged in by fellow employees, by a manager or by someone not directly connected to LONS (e.g., an outside vendor). Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the normal physical workplace.

- Harassing behavior on social media sites is expressly prohibited.
- Retaliation Is Prohibited
- LONS prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports harassment or discrimination or participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of such a report is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

REPORTING PROCEDURES:

- Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation-

It is the responsibility of all employees to work to create an environment free of harassment, retaliation, or other unlawful discrimination. Accordingly, all employees are required to immediately report any information that could be harassment, discrimination, or retaliation (regardless of the offender's identity or position) to the Director. However, in the case of alleged misconduct by the Director, the report should be made to the LONS Board President. This includes any employee who has personally experienced such conduct, witnessed it happening to another individual at LONS, or who has heard a report of it happening to another individual.

This reporting procedure also includes individuals who believe they are being subjected to harassing conduct after advising the offender that their behavior is unwelcome and requesting that it be discontinued. While an employee may choose to speak directly to such an offender, it is not necessary or required for any employee to speak directly to an offender, especially if the employee feels uncomfortable doing so or believes that negative employment consequences may result.

All reports of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation should be made in good faith. Bad faith reports may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action. On the other hand, an employee will not be disciplined where there is insufficient evidence to substantiate a report made in good faith.

- Investigation of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation-

LONS is committed to appropriately investigating all reports of harassment, discrimination or retaliation and will seek to do so in a way that is prompt, professional, and discreet. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties

involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge. In determining whether a report is substantiated, LONS will apply the “more likely than not” standard.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout this process whenever possible to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. LONS has a strong desire to protect the integrity of the investigation and any witnesses from harassment, intimidation, and retaliation and to preserve all evidence in its original form. LONS may decide in some circumstances that in order to achieve these objectives, employees must maintain the investigation and their role in it in strict confidence. If LONS reasonably imposes such a requirement and employees do not maintain such confidentiality, employees may be subject to corrective action.

Individuals whom LONS determines have engaged in unlawful harassment, retaliation, or other inappropriate behavior prohibited by this policy are subject to appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination.