

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
CHARTER SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE**
285 Dorset Street
Springfield, MA 01108-2821
(413) 214-7806
info@mlkcs.org



Family/Student Handbook 2011-2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	3
II. About Our School	5
Mission Statement	5
Background	5
Educational Philosophy	5
Working Towards Excellence	6
Dr. King Curriculum	6
III. Family and Community Involvement	7
Partnership Agreement	7
Homework	7
Daily Reading Log	8
Communications	8
Community and Service Learning	9
Visiting the School	9
Volunteering	9
IV. Code of Conduct	10
Non-Violence Policy	10
Non-Discrimination Policy	10
Complaints of Discrimination or Harassment Behavior	10
Creating a Just and Peaceful Beloved Community	11
Student Support Team	12
Child Study Team	12
Consequences	12
Suspension and Expulsion	13
Discipline of Students with Special Needs	13
V. Policies and Procedures	14
Attendance Procedure	14
Arrival Procedure	15
Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals	15
Dismissal Procedures	15
Bus Information	16
After School Program Transportation	16
Notifying the School of Changes in Dismissal Arrangements	16
Late Pick-Ups	16
Cancellations and Delays	16
Uniform Policy	17
Breakfast and Lunch Programs	18
Health Information	18
Healthy Snack Policy	19
Retention Policy	19
Student Computer Use Policy	20
Student Cell Phone/Hand Held Game Policy	21
Complaint Procedure	22
Enrollment Policy and Procedures	22
Sibling Preference Provision	22
Enrollment Requirements	22
VI. Appendices	23
Partnership Agreement	23
School Chant	25
School Song	25
Staff Directory	26

I. INTRODUCTION

Letter from the Executive Director

Welcome to Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence's sixth year, the first year of our second five-year charter.

You, the parents and guardians of MLK Charter School students, join the board of trustees and staff to accomplish our mission: academic excellence, character development, and building beloved community. We are all justifiably proud of MLK Charter School's loving and supportive culture, academic rigor, commitment to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s values, and dedication to the success of each child.

MLK Charter School will accomplish its mission because of the partnership between adults and children. Each year, every parent/guardian, student and staff member signs the School-Student-Parent/Guardian Partnership Agreement. This agreement is a promise that we make to one another about what each of us will do to ensure that every student at MLK Charter School succeeds. We encourage you, parents and guardians, to refer frequently to the Partnership Agreement to remind yourselves of the promises we all make to help your child succeed at MLK Charter School, as well as beyond their experience at MLK.

The beautiful facility at 285 Dorset Street plus the introduction school-wide of the MLK Way last school year enhanced our school climate of peaceful focus on learning. We enter 2011-2012 with curriculum mapped to the new Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum Frameworks, new writing and math programs, and a new lesson planning format to strengthen learning. Furthermore, our new instructional leader, Melissa Earls, is working diligently to help us progress on our path to academic excellence.

We hope that families find this handbook helpful. Feel free to suggest other information that the handbook should include. And, please always remember that my door is open to hear all of your concerns, comments, and questions about MLK Charter School and the beloved community that we are building. Working together we can achieve Dr. King's dream for our students.

Lan Katz
Executive Director

We encourage you to speak to your child's teacher. You may also contact Lan Katz-Executive Director, Melissa Earls-Instructional Leader, Natalie Bys-Student Services Supervisor. School Office Staff can assist with questions regarding transportation, school lunch, dismissal routines and changes.

Letter from the Instructional Leader

Greetings:

At Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence, we subscribe to Dr. King's belief that intelligence plus character . that is the goal of true education.+ We hold our students and our teachers to rigorous standards for performance and achievement, with attention to individual goals and community ideals. Our curricular programs and assessment tools have been chosen with attention to national and state standards, challenging and fair content, and the culture and climate of our school. Our teachers receive high quality professional development and training in all programs and tools, as well as in a variety of instructional techniques. Our newest curricular programs and assessment tools include the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System for Reading, the Lucy Calkins Writing Program, Leveled Literacy Intervention and the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Math Expressions Program for grades 3 . 5. These programs supplement an already rich curriculum and assessment menu that includes TERC Investigations Math for grades K . 2, Houghton Mifflin Reading, Carolina Science Kits, Social Studies Alive!, Achievement Network formative assessments, and, of course, the MCAS.

Our teachers create standards-based, diverse unit lesson plans with attention to individual and whole class learning goals, based on assessment data from a variety of sources. Classroom instructors benefit from the experience and expertise of math and literacy specialists, teaching partners, special educators, and the student support team. The administrators are always available for additional guidance. Together, a team of dedicated and talented educators ensure that every child at MLK has the opportunity to achieve success.

I welcome your questions and encourage you to become a full participant in the education of your child. You are your child's first teacher. Your involvement in your child's learning is a critical component of his or her success as an elementary student, and beyond the walls of MLK. We encourage you to read with your child daily, motivate your child to complete homework assignments and projects, and expect your child to live and learn according to the MLK Way. You can assist us by making sure your child arrives to school on time, wearing the appropriate uniform, and is ready to learn.

We believe you have made an excellent choice in sending your child to us! Thank you!

Warm regards,

Melissa Earls
Instructional Leader

II. ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Mission Statement

Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence prepares kindergarten-through-5th grade students of Springfield for academic success and engaged citizenship through insistence on rigorous, challenging work. The school incorporates Dr. King's commitment to the highest standards in scholarship, civic participation and the ideal of the beloved community.

Background

In February 2005, the Massachusetts Board of Education granted a charter to the Board of Trustees of Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence to operate an independent, public charter school in Springfield. MLK Charter School opened at its State Street location in September 2006 with 180 children in kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades. Adding one grade of 60 students each year, MLK Charter School has reached full enrollment, educating 380 children in grades K-5 this year. During the summer of 2010, the school moved to its permanent location at 285 Dorset Street.

In 2002, the board of directors and executive director of MLK Community Center started the process of applying for a charter for a school that would follow Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of academic excellence and character development for all children including those growing up in poverty. The founding group grew into a broadly representative collaboration among diverse people committed to Springfield and its children. The board of trustees is an outgrowth of the founding group. Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services, Inc., (formerly MLK Community Center) in Springfield, continues to be a partner of the independent, public charter school.

The board of trustees remains focused on the vision of our students becoming young people we are all proud of. The parents and guardians strongly support the school and our mission. The diverse and talented staff loves the children and challenges them to reach their full potential. At MLK Charter School, the children feel secure, supported, and called upon to meet our academic and behavior expectations. Together we are building our beloved community.

Educational Philosophy

MLK Charter School students will achieve academic excellence, be prepared for engaged citizenship, and strive to create beloved community. The life and values of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are fundamental to the school's culture. Our Dr. King Curriculum: Building a Beloved Community is the core of the school's culture. We address such concepts as individual responsibility, respect for human dignity, and equal opportunity. From kindergarten through 5th grade, the children will develop their character through our pervasive school culture including the literature-based Dr. King curriculum, its community-service-learning component, the monthly Dr. King values, and our frequently articulated goal of building a beloved community. MLK Charter School responds to the many needs of the children with an individualized, rigorous program of academic and social-emotional learning. As Dr. King wrote, *Intelligence plus character . that is the goal of true education.*

MLK Charter School will achieve its academic learning goal of excellence in scholarship through a schedule that includes lengthy daily periods of both English language arts (reading, writing, and oral)

and mathematics, and a school-wide early afternoon reading period. The curriculum also includes social studies and a hands-on science program. Music, art, computer skills, instruction for English Language Learners, and fitness instruction flows from our desire to motivate all students and provide a well-rounded education. Students will devote the last part of the afternoon to special studies consolidating learning in English language arts and mathematics and building competence through artistic and other endeavors.

Working Towards Excellence

The overall purpose of the *Working Towards Excellence* initiative is to convey the importance of education to the students at MLKCSE. We strive to develop motivated learners who hold the assumption that they will succeed and who take responsibility for their learning. Through an integrated program, students examine their interests, skills and talents and begin to think about how these may apply to their future goals and ambitions, as well as what steps they need to take in order to make these a reality. The school purposes to schedule trips to local colleges.

Dr. King Curriculum

Supplementing and enriching our academic curriculum, students study our Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Curriculum: Building a Beloved Community. This character development curriculum is inspired by Dr. King's life and values. We believe that character development is an integral part of achieving academic excellence.

Each month the school focuses on one of the Dr. King values. All classes discuss and draw meaning from the values in a variety of creative ways.

All MLK staff will use this common language as a basis for discussion and teaching of the values:

Respect (September)

- Take care of yourself, others and your environment.
- Believe in yourself.
- Use kind words and actions.
- Treat others how you want to be treated.
- Defer to the adults who care for you.

Cooperation (October)

- Work respectfully and responsibly with other people.
- Share with other people.
- Do something for the good of the group.

Responsibility (November)

- Make good choices.
- Do what you are supposed to do.
- Meet expectations.

Learning (December)

- Discover or understand something new.
- Be a good listener, share ideas and ask questions.
- Seek knowledge and build on what you already know.
- Develop a skill.

Social Justice (January)

- SOCIAL = people, community
- JUSTICE = equal rights and fairness
- Social Justice = treating all people in a community fairly

Service (February)

- Help others.

Perseverance (March)

- Work hard.
- Try your best.
- Do not give up when something is difficult.
- *“If at first you don’t succeed...try, try again!”*

Honesty (April)

- Tell the truth (even if it does not benefit you).
- ~~%~~Keep it real+.
- Be sincere and do not mislead.

Beloved Community (May and June)

- A group of people who care for one another.
- A group of people who see the good in one another.
- A group of people who all contribute something to the community.
- A group of people who respect one another.

Drawing on multicultural literature of a variety of genres, community service-learning, and Dr. King’s life and writings, students will deepen their understanding of the Dr. King values through discussion, projects, and presentations.

Live by the Dr. King Values to create our beloved community...

III. FAMILY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Parents should be involved in schools to a much greater extent, breaking down the barriers between professionals and the community that they serve.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The ideal of community - including elimination of the barriers between school, parents, and community - is at the heart of MLK Charter School. Research shows that when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and enjoy school more.

Partnership Agreement

Central to this ideal of creating a beloved community is the *School-Student-Parent/Guardian Partnership Agreement* that families and staff are required to re-sign each year. Consistent with our belief that education is a cooperative process, we encourage families and staff to support each other and the mission of the school by upholding the agreement.

The complete document can be found in the *APPENDICES* section of this handbook.

Homework

The purpose of homework is to reinforce and extend skills and concepts taught in school. Homework also aids in the development of students’ abilities to learn independently, while promoting individual responsibility and initiative. Homework assignments teach students to follow directions, manage time

and develop good study habits. Family support is crucial in helping children develop positive attitudes toward homework and learning. We expect families and caregivers to show an interest in their child's homework, as well as guide and encourage him/her in completing assignments.

Daily Reading Log

As stated in the *Partnership Agreement*, families are expected to read with their child(ren) for at least 15 minutes and initial the Daily Reading Log every day of the school year for the school's and the student's records.

Communications

School Contact Information:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence

285 Dorset Street; Springfield, MA 01108-2821

TELEPHONE: 413.214.7806 / FAX: 413.214.7838 / EMAIL: info@mlkcs.org

School Office:

When school is in session, the main office is open 7:30am . 4:30pm daily. Families may call or stop by the school office any time during the day with questions, or to leave a message for a teacher or other staff member. Instruction will not be interrupted during classroom activities to deliver non-emergency messages.

Notifying the School of Changes to Contact Information: In order for the school to contact you quickly and effectively, it is very important that we have the correct contact information. Please be sure to contact the main office immediately if there are any changes to your address, telephone numbers, or emergency contact information.

Connect Ed:

Families will periodically receive pre-recorded messages from the school office with important information and reminders. We ask that you listen to the full message before hanging up.

King Chronicle:

The *King Chronicle* is our school newsletter which is student developed and released quarterly. It provides families with grade-level updates, special events notices and reminders.

Student Progress:

Progress reports are issued 2 times per year (October and May) and report cards are issued 3 times per year (December, March and July). Parent/guardians are also expected to attend the two conferences scheduled in November and March to discuss their child's progress and receive his/her report card or progress report.

If a parent/guardian would like to meet with the teacher regarding student progress outside of scheduled conference time, he/she may make an appointment for a mutually convenient time that does not interrupt classroom activities.

Communicating with Teachers:

As we believe that families and school must partner with one another to provide children with the best education possible, teachers often contact parents/guardians to share information, or to gain their perspectives on issues. Should a parent/guardian need to contact the teacher, he/she may send a

note with the student or call the main office to leave a message for the teacher. Teachers may not be interrupted during instructional time to take phone calls.

Community Involvement and Service-Learning

Education without social action is a one-sided value because it has no true power potential.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

MLK Charter School students benefit from partnerships with, and resources from, academic institutions such as American International College, Smith College, Springfield College, Mount Holyoke College, Western New England College, Westfield State College, and Elms College. All students also participate in service-learning projects throughout the year. Service learning is a method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of communities; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students; and provides structured time for students to reflect on the service experience (according to the National and Community Service Trust Act, 1993). Past service projects include assisting in distributing food at the MLK Community Center's food pantry; organizing a recycling program in school; school-wide coin-drive for Haiti's hurricane relief effort; and writing letters to a local nursing home.

Visiting the School

We welcome families and community members to visit our school at any time. We especially welcome visitors to attend our school-wide community assemblies that are held in the All-Purpose room. (Please check school calendars sent home with your student every month to find out when the assemblies are scheduled.)

If you wish to observe your child's classroom, you may do so at any time; however, we ask that you refrain from conducting individual conversations with teachers during instructional time.

All visitors, including parents/guardians, must report to the school office upon entering the building. All visitors must sign in and visitor badges should be worn at all times. School tours should be arranged in advance, by contacting the school office.

While visiting the school, members of our community are invited to review the school's annual report, located in the school office.

Volunteering

Volunteers play an integral part of our beloved community. We encourage families, community members and other supporters of our school to share skills and contribute to our learning environment. Volunteers can take on a number of roles, including tutors, classroom assistants and chaperones. Classroom teachers will notify families when volunteers are needed for particular activities or events. If you are interested in volunteering on a regular basis, please contact the school office for more information.

IV. CODE OF CONDUCT

The way of non-violence leads to redemption and the creation of the beloved community.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Development of exemplary character and learning to live effectively with other people is an important goal of an MLK Charter School of Excellence education. In order to help our students develop into young adults we are all proud of, our staff will take a personal approach with the children. We are confident that the children will thrive in our atmosphere of love, commitment, and respect.

Our children can develop intelligence and character only in a school which is safe, orderly, and dedicated to academic achievement. Our behavior code exists to create this environment. School and home must cooperate fully so that MLK Charter School remains a place where children develop the habits of hard work and learning.

Non-violence Policy

All children are entitled to learn in a nonviolent environment. The children's day should be free from acts of violence, threats, teasing, roughhousing, and exposure to violent games, literature, or objects considered violent in nature. The school staff will model and teach nonviolent behavior and peaceful conflict resolution.

Non-discrimination Policy

No person shall be discriminated against or harassed on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Complaints of Discrimination or Harassment

Complaints may be filed with the Student Services Supervisor (who supervises the Student Support Team), the Instructional Leader, the Executive Director, or the school office. Upon receipt of a complaint, a prompt investigation of the allegation will be conducted. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. The person alleged to have committed discrimination or harassment will also be interviewed. When the investigation has been completed, the results of the investigation will be reported to the accused and the accuser. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, MLK Charter School will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct and where it is appropriate we will also impose disciplinary action.

Behavior

We encourage students to model the Dr. King values on a daily basis by adhering to our school culture guidelines. See [Our School Culture](#) below for more information.

Our School Culture

Our School Culture is how we work peacefully together to create our beloved community. We expect 100% compliance with following school-wide procedures. MLK Role Models live by our school culture throughout every day.

How a Role Model Walks in the Hall

Eyes forward
 Zero voices
 Hands at side
 Personal space

How a Role Model Learns

Sit up in a learning position
 Track the speaker
 Ask and answer questions
 Raise a quiet hand to speak

How a Role Model Dresses

Wear the school uniform
 Tuck long shirts in
 Be neat
 Be clean

How a Role Model Treats Others

Treat others how you want to be treated
 Use kind words and actions
 Take responsibility / Use "I" statements
 Let the adults be in charge

How a Role Model Eats in the Cafeteria

Bottom on chair
 Feet on floor
 Friendly voices
 Raise a quiet hand to ask for help

How a Role Model Dismisses Safely

Walk in an MLK line
 Stay seated in assigned area
 Listen to the adults in charge
 Fasten seat belts

Live by these actions to create our beloved community.

Creating a Just and Peaceful Beloved Community

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. defined beloved community as a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the beloved community, poverty, hunger, and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. At Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence, we aspire to create a just and peaceful beloved community. To accomplish this aspiration, we provide a multi-faceted education program to develop the character of each child and teach appropriate conflict-resolution skills.

Bullying:

When a person, or group of people, purposefully harms someone's body, feelings, or belongings. Bullying is a repeated and intentional act that can occur either in person or through technology and/or electronic communication.

Bullying Prevention Plan:

All students at Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence will learn the necessary skills for bullying prevention:

- *Second Step* is taught in grades K-5
- Six consecutive lessons on bullying from the Safe & Caring School series are taught to children in grades K-3
- Students in grades 3-5 receive small group instruction for eight weeks on conflict resolution, peer relations, and bullying prevention

These programs intensively reinforce the principles of our Dr. King Values and our School Culture Initiative regarding how we treat each other on a daily basis.

Bullying Intervention Plan:

If a student or a parent/guardian of a student feels the student is being bullied, the child and parent/guardian will first inform their classroom staff. Then, if the student and parent/guardian are not

satisfied with a resolution, they should bring their concern to the MLK Charter School administration, including the Executive Director. All complaints of bullying will be investigated. Confirmed incidents of bullying will be reported to parents and guardians of all children involved in the incidents and law enforcement as necessary. The nature of the incidents will determine the course of action. We try our best to prevent bullying and successfully address complaints of bullying.

Suspected bullying can be reported by: speaking with any MLKCSE staff member, obtaining from the receptionist and completing a bullying report form or by calling the school's main number 413-214-7806 and leaving a voice mail in the bullying voice mailbox or by emailing bullyingreport@mlkcs.org.

Student Support Team

MLK's Student Support Team is available as needed to support all MLK students, including those who may be having difficulty with personal issues or with other students. Under the supervision of the Student Services Supervisor, the Team consists of our Student Services Associate, Character Development Specialist, and school Social Worker. Together, their objectives are to (1) help take care of students emotional needs, (2) help children focus on learning throughout the school day, and (3) help students take accountability for their actions.

Child Study Team

MLK's Child Study Team (CST) allows teachers to bring forward concerns that they have about a student in the academic, social, emotional and/or behavioral areas. The team consists of the school social worker, teachers, special educators and teaching partners who meet weekly to evaluate a student's eligibility for special education services. Recommendations are agreed upon based on a simple observation by an educational specialist within the building to diagnostic teaching. If your child has been discussed at a CST meeting, you will receive a notice which will be sent home with your child. The law requires school districts to make every effort to support a child's needs in the regular education classroom.

Consequences

Faculty will respond promptly, fairly, and consistently to all inappropriate behavior. This will maintain a safe, friendly, focused learning environment. Faculty will notify parents/guardians about any ongoing inappropriate behavior.

Faculty will deal with a specific incident by informing the student as to what is acceptable and what is not. The faculty may temporarily remove the child from the situation depending on the nature of the behavior/incident.

The Student Support Team is available to support the classroom faculty and work with disruptive behaviors. The Student Support Team provides social work and character development services. All adults work to help the children maintain focus in class.

The school will impose consequences that will maintain the learning environment for all students while correcting the misbehaving student's behavior and at the same time minimizing the disruption of that student's education. Consequences may include in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or in an extreme case, expulsion.

Suspension and Expulsion

In the event of a serious incident, the school may impose consequences including expulsion or lengthy suspension, even without prior warning.

Serious incidents include, but are not limited to:

- Possession or use of a weapon
- Possession, use, sale or transfer of drugs or alcohol
- Intentional injury to another person
- Fighting or an act of violence
- Assault or attempted assault on a person
- Defiance of a faculty or staff member
- Theft
- Harassment or discrimination on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation
- Cheating or plagiarism
- Destruction of property
- Taunting, bullying or emotional abuse
- Setting false alarms
- Any incident that threatens harm to a person or disruption of the learning environment

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §37H and M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2, the executive director is vested with the authority to suspend or expel:

- Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife;
- Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a controlled substance as defined in chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin;
- Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games;
- A student charged with or convicted of a felony.

When a student is expelled under the provisions of M.G.L. c.71, §37H or M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2, no school or school district within the Commonwealth shall be required to admit the student or to provide educational services to the student. If the student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from MLK Charter School a written statement of the reasons for the expulsion.

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

Federal and state law provide certain procedural rights and protections relating to discipline of students who have been identified under such laws as having special needs based upon a disability. A copy of these rights may be obtained from the special education coordinator, and/or from the executive director.

V. POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Doors open at 7:30a.m. for breakfast.

Grades 1-5 8:00 . 3:45

Grade K 8:00 . 3:00

Grade K students with older siblings enrolled at MLK, and K students who ride the school bus may be dismissed at 3:45. All other K students must be picked up at 3:00 p.m.

Attendance Policy 2011-2012

Attendance is an integral part of success of students at MLK Charter School. Regular attendance is essential to the learning process. Regular attendance establishes good work habits. Students are expected to be in attendance every day of the school year. Parents/guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is in attendance every day school is in session.

In determining whether a student will be promoted to the next grade, the administration of MLK Charter School will consider whether the student had excessive absence or unexcused absences.

New for 2011-2012→MLK Charter School defines an excessive absence to mean that the total number of absences is greater than the number of months school has been in session. Absences are excluded from this definition when documented by a secondary source, such as a doctor's office, court, obituary, or verification of religious affiliation.

Excused absences may include only the following:

- Student illness or disability
- Death in the immediate family
- Student's court appearance
- Observance of religious holy day
- Personal or family crisis
- School-related function approved in advance
- Medical, dental and psychological appointments
- Other extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the administration

New for 2011-2012→When a child is absent for more than 2 consecutive days MLK Charter School requires secondary documentation, such as a doctor's note, a copy of the obituary or verification of religious affiliation.

New for 2011-2012→If the school receives no timely communication from a parent/guardian regarding the nature of the absence(s), the absence(s) will be marked as unexcused.

When a student suffers from a chronic illness and presents a doctor's note the administration will treat the student's absences on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever possible, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will notify MLK Charter School when their child is going to be absent. Pre-arranged absence does not imply approval of the reason for the absence.

Out-of-school suspensions are counted as excused absences.

Arrival Procedure

Doors open at 7:30a.m. All students should enter through the student entrance, and report to the cafeteria for breakfast. Please do not drop off students and leave them unsupervised prior to 7:30a.m.

Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals

We strongly discourage tardiness and early dismissals as it interrupts both the child and the classroom learning. We expect parents/guardians to partner with us in making every effort to ensure that students arrive to school on time.

In the event that a student arrives after 8:00a.m., he/she must report to the school office to sign in. Late arrivals and early dismissals are tallied.

Kindergarten students picked up *prior to 3:00 p.m.* should be picked up from the school office.

Kindergarten dismissal is at 3:00 p.m. When picking up kindergarten students at the regular dismissal time, parents are to park in a designated parking spot, and enter through the student entrance.

Kindergarten students who have an enrolled sibling at MLKCSE or who take the school bus home may remain at school until 3:45p.m.

Individuals picking up students in grades 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 prior to the 3:45pm dismissal time must sign the student out at the school office.

If it is a planned early dismissal, please send in a note or call the school office in the morning to minimize the time you are waiting for your child. Parents/guardians should always call the school office when picking up a child early because students may not be in their regular classroom (cafeteria, art room, etc).

Parents/guardians of students who are repeatedly late, or continuously dismissed early, will be contacted to meet with an administrator to remedy the situation.

Dismissal Procedures

All students dismiss through student entrance doors at 285 Dorset Street.

- Kindergarten is dismissed at 3:00 pm.
 - Grades 1 through 5 begin dismissal at 3:30pm.
 - Students who take the bus home will begin to dismiss at 3:30pm
 - Students who are picked up will begin to dismiss at 3:45pm
- *A staggered dismissal is in place in order to limit the traffic in the MLK parking lot.*

Authorized Pick Up:

The school offers the option to parents to request an authorized pick up list for their child. Parents who choose to limit who is authorized should complete the appropriate form listing individuals authorized to pick-up the child from school. Any student whose parent has completed the form will

ONLY be released to individuals who are on the list AND who show picture I.D. All other students will be released to any adult who states that they are picking the students up.

Bus Information

Buses to and from MLK Charter School are offered through the Springfield school department transportation company. The school advocates for families as much as possible; however, the transportation department ultimately decides a child's eligibility for transportation. Students who live one and a half miles or more from the school are eligible to ride the bus. All others are not eligible to receive transportation services through the Springfield school department transportation company. You can obtain a transportation request form from the school office. If a student moves, the parent/guardian must submit a new transportation request form with proof of residency in order for the school to request a new bus assignment.

After-School Program Transportation

If a child receives transportation services through an after-school program, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to arrange the schedule and notify the school of the child's dismissal arrangements.

Notifying the School of Changes in Dismissal Arrangements

Dismissal arrangements will not be made on the word of the child. A parent/guardian must send a note or call the school office to make any changes to their child's normal dismissal routine. Parents/guardians should notify the school office at least 1 hour prior to dismissal (no later than 2:30pm) if a change is needed to be made to the child's regular dismissal routine.

Late Pick-ups

Students who have not been picked up by 4:00 p.m. are admitted to the after-school program operated on-site by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services. The after-school program charges a fee based on the pick-up time. As a courtesy to families, the school office staff attempts to contact by phone the parents/guardians of students who have not been picked up by 4:05 p.m. We are aware that sometimes there can be miscommunication or unexpected changes in plans and our calls are an effort to ensure that you are aware that your child has not yet been picked up. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that we have updated home, cell, work and emergency telephone numbers. At 5:00 p.m., a telephone call will be made to the Department of Social Services to report any student who has not yet been picked up.

Cancellations and Delays

When extreme weather conditions may require us to cancel school, delay opening or dismiss early, MLK Charter School will follow the decision(s) made by the Springfield Public Schools. The primary reason for this is our families' reliance on school buses to transport their children to and from school. Information regarding school cancellations or delays will be broadcast on:

TV Stations - WWLP 22; ABC 40 and CBS 3

Radio Stations - WTIC FM (96.5 TIC FM); WRCH FM (Lite 100.5); WZMX FM (Hot 93.7); WTIC AM (NewsTalk 1080); WHYN 93.1 FM; WNNZ 640 AM; WPKX 97.9 FM; WRNX 100.9 FM; WAQY 102.1 FM

Families can also check the Springfield Public Schools website: www.sps.springfield.ma.us
 Or other sites: www.wwlp.com, www.cbs3springfield.com, www.wggb.com

In addition, MLK Charter School plans to use the Connect Ed telephone system to notify parents of these situations. You should expect to receive a call at approximately 6:30 a.m. depending on what time we receive relevant information from the Springfield Public Schools.

Uniform Policy

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence values each student for who they are, not for how they look or what they wear. The school has a uniform policy that requires students to come to school in uniform at all times, except on scheduled non-uniform days or when special permission is granted by the administration. Uniforms instill pride in the school and give each child a feeling of being part of the school community. They also help eliminate peer pressure. Furthermore, uniforms are more cost efficient in the long run. All students are expected to wear uniforms all year long including the first day of school. School uniform items can be purchased at local stores such as Old Navy, Target, Sears, J. C. Penney, Wal-Mart, Kohl's and Burlington Coat Factory.

Please refer to the chart for appropriate uniform attire for boys and girls:

	Boys	Girls
Shirts	*Light blue *Must have collar *Long shirts must be tucked in Button polo, Button dress shirt, Short- or long-sleeved No logos or printing No T-shirts	*Light blue *Must have collar *Long shirts must be tucked in Button polo, Button dress shirt, Short- or long-sleeved No logos or printing No T-shirts No tank tops
Tie	Optional, not required	Not applicable
Pants, Shorts, Skirts, Skorts, Jumpers	*Non-jean material *Navy blue, solid color *Must fit properly (not baggy and not dragging on floor) Pants and shorts allowed	*Non-jean material *Navy blue, solid color *Must fit properly (not too tight, not too baggy, and not dragging on floor) Pants, shorts, skirts, skorts and jumpers allowed *Shorts, skirts (flat-front or pleated), skorts and jumpers must be <i>at least</i> knee-length
Belt	Optional	Optional
Sweater	*Navy blue	*Navy blue

	V-neck pullover, Front button-down, Vest	V-neck pullover, Front button-down, Vest
Shoes/ Sneakers	*Dark, solid color No open-toe or open-back	*Dark, solid color No open-toe or open-back
Socks, Tights	*Dark, solid color	*Dark, solid color
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothing must cover a student's midriff. • Any article of clothing that is not part of the uniform (i.e.: colored, lettered, striped, tank tops, or t-shirts) must not be visible. • Students should not wear jewelry to school. Stud earrings for pierced ears are acceptable. • Students should not wear make-up to school. 		

Breakfast and Lunch Programs

Sodexo, Inc. provides the food for all breakfast and lunch served at the school, as well as manages the menus and fees. Breakfast is provided for all students free of charge, regardless of the child's lunch status. Breakfast service begins at 7:30am when the school opens.

All families must fill out a Free and Reduced Lunch application. Sodexo determines each family's eligibility for free, or reduced priced meals based on federal guidelines. The full meal price is \$1.60. Reduced price meals are \$0.40. Milk is \$.50 per day. Free meals are also provided for those eligible.

Please note that Sodexo does not serve any pork products. Items such as ham and bacon are made of turkey products instead of pork. If a change occurs, Sodexo will notify families.

Health Information

All medications must be brought to the school by an adult. Students may not carry medicine of any kind (prescription and non-prescription) at school. Medicine should be given to the school nurse in the original packaging with complete dosage instructions. At the end of the school year, all medications must be picked up by an adult. Any medications left with the nurse during the summer will be discarded.

The school nurse does not keep a supply of over the counter medications for students. If you wish to keep a particular medication on hand at school for your child, you must contact the school nurse.

All allergies must be documented. Please notify the school nurse of any allergies that your child has. A doctor's note explaining the severity of the allergy and any other instructions regarding medications must be given to the school nurse.

Due to the many students with peanut allergies, we are a peanut-free school. Please do not send any lunch or snack item containing peanuts to school with your child.

Healthy Snack Policy

Children require a snack to help sustain the energy necessary to learn at school. In order to provide this energy for learning, it is essential that your child's snack be a healthy one. Please do not send in chips, cookies or other sugary foods; these types of snacks will be returned home with the child and s/he will be given a healthy school snack. Also, please remember that we are a peanut-free school; therefore, please do not send any snacks that contain peanut butter, peanuts, or any other kind of nuts. We encourage you to send a healthy snack with your child each school day, such as one from the table below.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Fruits</u></p> <p>apples . slices, applesauce bananas blueberries cantaloupe cubes cherries clementines fruit salad . fresh or canned grapes kiwis nectarines oranges peaches . fresh or canned pomegranate seeds strawberries raspberries watermelon cubes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Vegetables</u></p> <p>baby carrots cucumber slices/sticks grape tomatoes bell peppers . sliced sugar snap peas edamame guacamole hummus baba ganoush white bean dip salsa</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Grains</u></p> <p>animal crackers whole grain crackers tortillas corn chips low-fat, low-salt popcorn cereal bars pretzels snap-pea crisps granola bars rice cakes crisp flat breads dry cereal whole wheat goldfish english muffins pitas</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Dried Fruits</u></p> <p>apples apricots bananas Craisins cranberries mangos raisins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Low-fat Dairy</u></p> <p>yogurt cottage cheese cheese pudding Greek yogurt</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Power Combos</u></p> <p>yogurt with fruit tortilla roll ups (fill with either eggs/cheese/turkey) cucumber with Greek yogurt salsa & corn chips carrots & hummus peppers & white bean dip baba ganoush & cucumber sprouted grain bread with sliced avocado</p>

Retention Policy

MLK, Jr. Charter School will aggressively support struggling students to avoid retention, as the research regarding this practice suggests more detrimental than positive effects on children. Our teachers and the Instructional Leader will continually assess each student, review the assessments, and implement new strategies to help students understand and learn.

The following criteria will be considered in determining whether a student should repeat a grade:

- Failure to make significant progress toward standards as evaluated by the indicators on the report card. Those standards are based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the scopes and learning objectives of our instructional programs.
- Whether the child has acquired the skills necessary for the next grade level
- MCAS readiness (2nd grade and above)
- Level of social maturity to achieve academic excellence at the next grade level
- Age
- Attendance
- Recommendation of the classroom teacher

Weighing these factors, and after discussion with the parent/guardian, the school administration will make all final decisions on retention. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of the administration's decision to retain their child before the school year ends.

Student Computer Use Policy¹

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence provides computers, networks and Internet access to students to support the educational mission of the school and to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for students. The resources available from the school's software library and through the Internet are of significant value in the learning process and in preparing students for future success. In order to make these resources available to everyone, those who use the school's available technology must do so in a way that is consistent with our educational mission.

This policy is intended to provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited computer and Internet uses, but it does not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by users. Failure to comply with this policy and these rules may result in loss of computer and Internet privileges, and/or disciplinary or legal action.

A. Computer Use is a Privilege, Not a Right

Student use of school computers and Internet services is a privilege, not a right. Students are required to comply with this policy. Students who violate the policy may have their computer privileges revoked and may also be subject to further disciplinary and/or legal action.

B. Acceptable Use

Student use of the school's computers, networks and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the school's educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals.

The same rules and expectations govern student use of computers as they apply to other student conduct and communications. Students are further expected to comply with these rules and all specific instructions from the teacher or other adults present in the lab when accessing the school's computers, networks and Internet services.

C. Prohibited Use

The user is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving school computers, networks and Internet services, and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. Examples of unacceptable uses that are expressly prohibited include, but are not limited to, the following:

¹ Amended November 21, 2011.

1. **Accessing Inappropriate Materials** . Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning, or displaying materials that are defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, and/or illegal;
2. **Illegal Activities** . Using the school's computers and Internet services for any illegal activity or activity that violates other school policies, procedures and/or school rules;
3. **Violating Copyrights** . Copying or downloading copyrighted materials without the owner's permission;
4. **Plagiarism** . Representing as one's own work any materials obtained on the Internet. When Internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher, and Web site must be identified;
5. **Copying Software** . Copying or downloading software without the express authorization of the system administrator;
6. **Non-School-Related Uses** . Using the school's computers or Internet services for non-school-related purposes;
7. **Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access** . Sharing passwords, using other users' passwords without permission, and/or accessing other users' accounts;
8. **Malicious Use/Vandalism** . Any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school's computers, networks, and Internet services, including but not limited to hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses;
9. **Unauthorized Access to Chat Rooms/News Groups** . Accessing chat rooms or news groups without specific authorization from the supervising teacher.
10. **Bullying** . Purposefully harming someone's body, feelings, or belongings is expressly prohibited, including use of technology or electronic messages to repeatedly and intentionally intimidate or bully others.

D. No Expectation of Privacy

All MLKCSE computers remain under the control, custody, and supervision of the school. The school reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by students. Students have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers.

E. Indemnity, Student Security and System Security

While MLKCSE uses filtering technology and reasonable precautions to supervise student use of the Internet, MLKCSE cannot prevent all inappropriate uses, including access to objectionable materials and communication with persons outside of the school in violation of this policy and school rules. The school is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information that students obtain through the Internet.

A student shall not reveal his/her full name, address or telephone number on the Internet without prior permission from a supervising teacher. Students should never meet people they have contacted through the Internet without parental permission. Students should inform their supervising teacher if

they access information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate, or make them uncomfortable in any way.

The security of the school's computers, networks, and Internet services is a high priority. Any user who identifies a security problem must notify the system administrator. The user shall not demonstrate the problem to others. Any user who attempts or causes a breach of system security shall have his/her privileges revoked and may be subject to additional disciplinary and/or legal action.

F. Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages

The student and/or the student's parent/guardian shall be responsible for compensating the school for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the school related to violations of this policy, including investigation of violations.

G. School Assumes No Responsibility for Unauthorized Charges, Costs, or Illegal Use

MLKCSE assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by students, or for any illegal use of its computers such as copyright violations.

[Much of this policy was borrowed from Lewiston Public School Department's policy IJNDB and Brooksville Elementary School 6305.]

%Student Computer Use Policy+amended November 21, 2011.

Student Cell Phone / Hand-Held Game Policy

For students at Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence (MLKCSE), cell phones and hand-held games must be turned off, kept out of view, and may not be used during the school day and on the school premises. This policy applies to all students from the time they arrive at school until the time they leave. Any cell phone or hand-held game that is in the possession of a student may be confiscated by any member of the staff at MLKCSE, to be returned to the student or his/her parent/guardian at the end of the day. MLKCSE and its staff are not responsible for cell phones or hand-held games that are lost, stolen, or damaged at school.

While we recognize that parents may give phones to their children to communicate with the students, any information that is necessary for students to receive during the school day can be passed on through the school office, at (413) 214-7806.

Complaint Procedure

Any person who wishes to complain about any situation, policy or decision of Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence may directly address the responsible staff member, the Instructional Leader or the Executive Director. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence will attempt to address the concern quickly. Any person, who is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, may appeal to the Executive Director.

Any complainant may submit a complaint to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will conduct an investigation to ensure that the school is in compliance with charter school law and regulations and will respond in writing no later than 30 days from the receipt of a complaint.

If the Board of Trustees fails to address the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may submit the complaint to the Commissioner of Education.

If the complaint involves an alleged violation of federal or state law or regulation other than charter school law and regulation, the complainant may file a complaint directly with the Office of Program Quality Assurance at the Department of Education.

Enrollment Policy and Procedures

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence welcomes applications from all students who are residents of Massachusetts and who expect to enter kindergarten through grade 5. Complete information regarding the application process and eligibility requirements can be obtained from the school office upon request. According to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5 No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.+

Sibling Preference Provision

The charter school law, M.G.L. c.71, s. 89, has a sibling preference provision that gives siblings of currently attending students preference over non-siblings in enrollment. Therefore, if the sibling of a student already enrolled in the school applies to the school during the application period, then that student has enrollment preference over existing waiting list candidates.

Enrollment Requirements

All children who are accepted for enrollment either directly through the lottery or off the waiting list must complete a questionnaire that provides the school with pertinent contact information, school background information, and other data. All students will be required to provide evidence in the form of permanent transcripts that they will complete their current grade by August (before the beginning of the school year). In addition, parents/guardians must submit proof of residency, a permanent record release form, required medical forms, sign the parent/guardian partnership agreement, and attend the required orientation session.

VI. APPENDICES

- Partnership Agreement
- School Chant
- School Song
- Staff Directory

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence

School-Student-Parent/Guardian Partnership Agreement

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence we work cooperatively with families to prepare students for academic excellence and engaged citizenship through insistence on rigorous, challenging work. We follow the M.L.K. Way+to ensure that all students are focused, learning and modeling the school culture by being +role models+. We believe that when students are +role models+, they will achieve success. We expect families to support the school's mission, educational

philosophy, code of conduct and disciplinary system while praising and supporting their children as they aim to achieve excellence.



The school will:

- Provide a safe, cooperative and respectful environment for learning.
- Communicate and collaborate with your family to support your child's learning.
- Have challenging expectations for students and staff and believe that all students can succeed.
- Seek to improve instruction through the use of data and planning, evaluation, and refinement.

I, _____ pledge the school's commitment to the above stated responsibilities and ideals.

Date: _____

The Student agrees to be a ~~Role Model~~ Role Model+by

- Arriving to school on time in school uniform.
- Walking in an MLK line and respecting personal space.
- Completing reading logs, class work and homework.
- Dismissing safely.
- Participating and cooperating respectfully all day, everywhere.

I, _____ will do my best to meet these expectations.

Date: _____

In our shared mission to educate students as scholars and citizens who pursue the ideal of the beloved community, it is important that the school and the parents/guardians support each other. In support of you and your students, we at MLKCSE commit to the responsibilities and ideals listed in this agreement, and we ask that you, the parents/guardians, commit to supporting the school and your student. Please agree to support our mission and educational philosophy, in addition to our disciplinary system that will ensure academic excellence. Please help your child model the Dr. King values and school culture, and commit to praising and encouraging your child frequently.

Parents/Guardians will help their child (ren) to be ~~Role Models~~ Role Models+by

- Bringing your child to school on time daily- doors open at 7:30 and class begins at 8:00a.m.
- Reading with your child for 15 minutes every night.
- Signing and returning reading logs and other important notices.
- Checking your child's homework every night, Monday through Thursday, making sure that it is completed thoughtfully, carefully, and on time.
- Attending each parent-teacher conference this school year.

I (we), _____ Parent(s)/legal guardian(s), agree to do my (our) best to follow through with the responsibilities listed above.

Date: _____

* * * *

Please list the following information for yourself and at least one other adult that plays a significant role in your child's life and education whom we have your permission to contact.

Name	Relationship to Student	Phone number
------	-------------------------	--------------

MLK School Chant

Who are we and what's the rule?
 M-L-K Charter School;
 Excellence and Character,
 That is what we're striving for;
 Martin Luther King Junior,
 Is who our school is named after;
 So believe in you, I believe in me,
 Be-loved Community;
 With Honesty,
 Learning,
 Re-spect,
 and Service;
 Honesty-Learning-Respect-
 and Service!

MLK School Song

Dr. King's dream lives on in me
 Together united we hold the key
 In what we say, think, and do

We bring to life our school values.

With friendly words we persevere
Our school grows stronger year to year
We work hard to achieve our goal
Through honesty and self control.

Hearts and minds in unity
Build beloved community

2011/2012 School Year

Executive Director, Alan M. Katz
Executive Assistant, Matt Atwood

Instructional Leader, Melissa Earls Academic Coordinator, Lakia Stanton		Student Services Supervisor	Business Manager, Laura Gaston Facility Coordinator, Kenny Little
CLASSROOM TEACHERS	CLASSROOM TEACHING PARTNERS	STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF	BUSINESS ASSISTANT
KINDERGARTEN		SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER/ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR	Rosa Davila
Shire Brown	Ali Williams	Wendy Barbour	CUSTODIAL STAFF
Lauren Madison	Migyon Forbes	STUDENT SUPPORT ASSOCIATE	Daniel Lantigua
Kat Wasiuk		Gloria Plummer	
Vivia Scott		CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST	
GRADE 1		Darryl Thomas	
Giselle Gonzalez	Lori Ford	SCHOOL NURSE	
Mihyum Kim		Pat Hoffman	
Kate Thurston		SCHOOL OFFICE STAFF	
GRADE 2		Joli Marquez	
Tina Gomes		Alena Mudry	
Jessica Martyn		Amanda Rodriguez	
Emma Pascarella		CLERICAL SUPPORT STAFF	
GRADE 3		Ileana Garcia	
Debra Hartman	Lita Crawford	BREAKFAST MONITOR	
Kristin McCue		Edna Burrowes	
Sherika Thompson		Krystall Velez	
GRADE 4		LUNCH MONITORS	
Kelly Fay		Gene Anderson	
Chelsea Gilmore		Edna Burrowes	
Judy Pamphile		Luz Gerena	
Sharon Sarrasin		Krystall Velez	
GRADE 5		RECESS MONITORS	
Garth Bariffe	Doris Lane	Jay Weber- Leader	
Scott Greene		April Moss	
Mike Thomas		Sol Rodriguez	
April Robinson		Carmen Velez	
IN-SCHOOL SUBSTITUTES	MATH DEPARTMENT	BUS MONITORS	
Phil Cote- Teacher	Susan Smith	Gene Anderson	
Leigh Pratt- Teaching Partner	Sasha Aldridge	Brian Arroyo	
Isaac Williams- Teaching Partner	Anne Norton	Toya Moore	
SPECIALS TEACHERS	LITERACY DEPARTMENT	Krystall Velez	
Carlton Martin- Music	Lisa Robbins	Carmen Velez	
Marcia Wolff- Art	Patty Casavant		
Bryce Jones- P.E.	Lexxi DeMars		
Jason Weber, P.E. (Teaching Partner)	Maria Kerr		
Silvia Scott- Technology	Molly Rivera		
ELL	SPECIAL EDUCATION CO-TEACHERS		
Elbert Mercado	Melanie Bova		
Laura Gaston	Mary Fernandez Sierra		
	Aisha Brandford		
	Brenda Flores		
	Sheila Wallin		