

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CHARTER SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE



Family/Student
Handbook
2008-2009

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I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence's third year. This year our new kindergarten students and our first class of 4th graders will be based at the 650 State Street facility across State Street from Alden Baptist Church.

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, each parent/guardian, student and staff member signs the Parent/Guardian-Student-School 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. This year the school will focus more on these promises that each of us makes when we sign the Partnership Agreement. All MLK Charter School faculty, student support team, administration, and staff members will do our best to uphold our part of the Partnership Agreement. We will encourage the children to act according to their promises, and we ask that you also remind the children to keep their promises. We encourage you, parents and guardians, to refer frequently to the Partnership Agreement to remind yourselves how you can help your child succeed at MLK Charter School.

MLK Charter School's program development coordinator, Sulaiha Schwartz, has compiled this first edition of the MLK Charter School Family/Student Handbook. 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

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 in September, 2006 with 180 children in kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades. Adding one grade, 60 students, each year, MLK Charter School now educates 300 children in grades K-4. In September, 2009, the school reaches full enrollment under its charter serving 360 K-5 children.

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 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. MLK Community Center

continues to be a partner of the independent, public charter school.

MLK Charter School enters its third year confident in our achievements as a community. 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, Spanish 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.

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:

September – Respect
October – Cooperation
November – Responsibility
December – Learning
January – Social Justice
February – Service
March – Perseverance
April – Honesty
May – Beloved Community
June – Beloved Community

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.

Working towards Excellence

The overall purpose of the Working towards Excellence initiative is to convey the importance of education to the students at MLK Charter School. 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 will 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. Throughout the year, students will also be exposed to a variety of options including higher education and career opportunities, as a way to broaden their views and assumptions about their futures.

The initiative will be incorporated into aspects of the existing curriculum, school-wide assemblies, and our overall school culture. Many of the activities will vary by grade-level and class; however, all teachers and staff are encouraged to use consistent language and follow the sequence of focus questions as presented here.

Monthly Focus Questions:

September – Who am I?

October – Who am I?

November – Where am I going?

December – How will I get where I want to go?

January – Why do I want to make smart choices?

February – When is the best time to make smart choices?

March – What do I choose to do?

April – What do I choose to do?

May – Who am I? (Have students' ideas changed since the beginning of the year?)

June – revisit all focus questions/reflect

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 like 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) at least 15 minutes each day and initial the Daily Reading Log for the school's records.

Communications

School Contact Information:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence
649 State Street; Springfield, MA 01109
Telephone: 413.214.7806
Fax: 413.214.7838
Email: info@mlkcs.org

School Office: The main office is open between 7:30am – 5pm daily. Families may call, or stop by the office any time during the day with questions, or to leave a message for a teacher or other staff member. Teachers will not be interrupted during classroom activities. Please do not call to relay a message to a child or teacher, unless it is an emergency.

Orientation: Parents/guardians are required to attend the orientation in August. The purpose of the orientation is for families to meet teachers and staff, as well as be informed about school programs, curriculum and expectations.

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 (school newsletter) provides families with grade-level updates, special events notices and reminders on a monthly basis.

Student Progress: Progress reports are issued 3 times per year (October, November and April) and report cards are issued 4 times per year (November, February, April and June). Parent/guardians are also expected to attend the two conferences scheduled in November and April to discuss their child's progress and receive his/her report card. 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.

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.

Community Involvement and Service-Learning

“Education without social action is a one-sided value because it has no true power potential.” –Martin Luther King, Jr.

MLK Charter School students benefit from partnerships with, and resources from, academic institutions such as American International College, Springfield College, Mount Holyoke 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; and organizing a recycling program in school.

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 every other Friday afternoon in the cafetorium. 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. The office staff will provide you with an observation form.

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.

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, 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.

Behavior

We encourage students to model the Dr. King values on a daily basis by adhering to our school culture guidelines.

Our School Culture

Our school culture guidelines explain how we do things to create our beloved community. The guidelines include: how we walk in the halls, how we eat in the cafeteria, how we dress, how we treat each other, how we learn, how we dismiss safely, and how we work peacefully together.

How we walk in the hall

Eyes forward
Zero voices
Hands at side
Personal space

How we eat in the cafeteria

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

How we dress

Wear the school uniform
Tuck shirts in
Be neat
Be clean

How we treat each other

Use kind words and actions
Treat others how you want to be treated
Take care of yourself
Let the adults be in charge

How we learn

Listen
Raise hand to speak
Follow directions the first time
Ask questions

How We Dismiss Safely

Walk in an MLK line
Stay seated in assigned area – gym: on the floor; café: bottom on chair, feet on floor
Listen
Fasten seat belt (cars & vans)

Live by these actions to create our beloved community.

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.

All incidents are recorded using an incident report form. Incidents are coded as follows:

Verbal Incidents

- Level One – Non-compliance, oppositional
- Level Two – Inappropriate language
- Level Three – Threat of physical harm

Physical Incidents

- Level One – One push, shove or slap, knocking over one object, inappropriate gesture
- Level Two – Repeated pushing, shoving or slapping, throwing one object, running out of the classroom one time, knocking over more than one object, if an adult is hit when deescalating a child
- Level Three – Pinching, biting, spitting, any physical harm from an object, running out of the classroom more than one time, throwing more than one object, kicking, punching, being hit above shoulders, being hit in privates, inappropriate touching, sexualized behavior, any hitting of adults (an object or physical)

All level three incidents are immediately referred to the Director of Education. In the event of dangerous or persistently disruptive behavior, the Character Development Specialist may refer the

behavior to the Director of Education to consider imposing a consequence.

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
- Racial or sexual harassment
- 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

Attendance Policy

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.

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

When a student suffers from a chronic illness and presents a medical note documenting each absence, 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 absences.

Arrival Procedure

Doors open at 7:30am. All students should enter the Stebbins Street door at the Alden Baptist Church site and report to the cafeteria for breakfast. Please do not drop off students and leave them unsupervised prior to 7:30am.

Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals

We strongly discourage tardiness and early dismissals as it interrupts both the child and the class's 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 between 8am and 8:30am, he/she must report to the main office at 649 State Street to sign in. Kindergarten and Grade 4 students who arrive after 8:30am and have already eaten breakfast may sign in with the receptionist at 650 State Street. Late arrivals are recorded and tallied which may increase your child's absences.

Individuals picking up students in grades 1, 2 and 3 prior to the 3:45pm dismissal time must sign the student out at the main office. Kindergarten students being picked up prior to 2:30pm should be picked up at 650 State Street reception office. Grade 4 students being picked up prior to 3:30pm should be picked up at 650 State Street reception 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 be in a specials class and could be in either building.

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

Dismissal Procedures

All students dismiss from 649 State Street (Alden Baptist Church).

- Kindergarten is dismissed at 2:45pm.
- Grades 1 through 4 are dismissed at 3:45pm.

Students will only be released to individuals on the authorized pick up list who show a picture I.D. Pedestrians must wait at the gate located in the parking lot near the gym exit to check in with a staff member before entering the building. We ask that all cars enter Stebbins Street from Union Street and avoid entering from State Street. All cars should enter the school parking lot driveway farthest from the building and drive in a U pattern. Individuals in cars must remain in the car and continue to move up as other cars exit. A staff member will approach you, take the name of your child and check your I.D. Your child will be brought to your car. An MLK staff member will direct exiting traffic using a hand held stop sign. Also, please remember not to pass a bus with its stop light on and stop sign extended. For the safety of our students, please respect the traffic pattern (see diagram in appendices section).

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 main office. If a student moves, the parent/guardian must submit a new transportation request form with proof of residency in order 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 4:15 p.m. are admitted to the after-school program operated on-site by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center. The after-school program charges a fee based on the pick-up time. As a courtesy to families, the school office staff attempt 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 www.wtic.com; www.wggb.com; www.965tic.com; www.wrch.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 by how they look or what they wear. The school has a uniform policy that requires students to come to school in a 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. It helps to eliminate peer pressure. Uniforms are also 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 J. C. Penney, Target, Sears, WalMart, Kohl's and Burlington Coat Factory.

BOYS		GIRLS	
Shirts ¹	Light Blue	Shirts ¹	Light Blue
No T-shirts	Button Polo or	No T-shirts	Button Polo or

	Button Dress Shirt Short or Long Sleeve		Button Dress Shirt Short or Long Sleeve
Tie	Optional Not required	Tie	Not applicable
Pants ² Non-Jean Material Shorts allowed	Navy Blue Solid Color	Pants ² Non-Jean Material No Shorts	Navy Blue Solid Color
Belt	Optional	Belt	Optional
Sweater	Navy Blue V-Neck Pullover or Front Button Down or Vest	Sweater	Navy Blue V-Neck Pullover or Front Button Down or Vest

Shoes/Sneakers No open toe or open back	Dark solid color	Shoes/Sneakers No open toe or open back	Dark solid color
Socks	Dark solid color	Socks/Tights	Navy Blue Solid color
		Jumpers ³	Navy Blue
		Skirt ³ Flat front or pleated	Navy Blue
		Skort ³	Navy Blue

1. All shirts must have a collar and be a solid color with no logos or printing. Shirts must be tucked in.
 2. Pants must fit appropriately. Pants should not be baggy and pant legs should not drag on the floor.
 3. Jumper, skirt and skort length must be no higher than 3" above the knee.
- * Clothing must cover a student's midriff.
 - * Any article of clothing worn as an undergarment (i.e. colored, lettered, striped, or tank top tee-shirts) that is not a part of the school uniform cannot be visible.
 - * Students should not wear jewelry to school. Stud earrings for pierced ears are acceptable.
 - * Students should not wear make up to school.

Uniform Closet

The school has a limited supply of donated uniforms. We accept donations of clean uniforms that are in good condition. (We will not accept clothing that does not fit our dress code.) If your child is in need of a uniform item, you may contact the school office to find out what items are available. Uniforms will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

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.

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 lunch application. Sodexo determines each family's eligibility for free, or reduced priced meals. The full meal price is \$1.50. Reduced price meals are \$0.40. 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.

Healthy Snack Policy

Children require a snack to help sustain the necessary energy needed to learn at school. In order to provide this energy for learning, it is essential that your child's snack be a healthy one. Healthy snacks include, but are not limited to: fruits, vegetables, goldfish crackers, graham crackers, animal crackers, pretzels, cheese, cereal bars, applesauce, yogurt, granola bars, and dry cereal. The school provides healthy snacks for all students; however, if you wish to send a snack with your child, 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 school snack. Also, if you choose to send a snack with your child, please remember that we are a peanut-free school and only choose snacks that do not contain peanuts.

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 Director of Education 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.

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 the grades served by the school. The school opened in the fall of 2006 with kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade. The school will continue to add one grade each subsequent year until it serves kindergarten through 5th grade. Every year, the school will add 60 new students, for a total of 360 students. Complete information regarding the application process and eligibility requirements can be obtained from the school office upon request.

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.

Complaint Procedure

Any person who wishes to complain about any situation, policy or decision of Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence may complain directly to the responsible staff member, the Director of Education 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.

VI. APPENDICES

Partnership Agreement

Dismissal Traffic Pattern

School Chant

School Song

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence

School-Student-Parent/Guardian Partnership Agreement

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School we believe that education works best as a cooperative process among teachers and staff, students, parents and the community at large. This partnership agreement is a way of clearly stating our common commitment to creating a learning community that supports all of its members.

The administration and staff of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School agree to:

- provide a safe, cooperative and respectful environment for learning.
- believe that all students can succeed and learn.
- communicate and work with your family to support your child's learning.
- have challenging expectations for students and staff.
- seek out and value parent participation in all areas of the school community.
- respect and honor the cultural differences of students and their families.
- seek to improve instruction through an ongoing cycle of planning, evaluation, and refinement.

We pledge the school administration and staff's commitment to the above stated responsibilities and ideals.

_____, Teacher Date: _____

_____, Teacher Date: _____

_____, Administrator(s) Date: _____

The Student agrees to:

- do my best to learn while in classes and when doing my homework
- show respect, through my words and actions, for myself, my school, my teachers, other people, and materials.
- be thoughtful of others and solve problems in a positive, non-violent manner.
- take responsibility for my actions and my safety.
- believe in myself and my ability to learn in many different ways.

I, _____,
Student, will do my best to keep this agreement. Date: _____

School-Student-Parent/Guardian Partnership Agreement

The parent/guardian agrees to:

- expect my child to be a dedicated, high achieving student and develop outstanding character at MLK Charter School. I will: encourage my child with frequent praise, help my child to see mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow, and actively support the curriculum by modeling the Dr. King values whenever possible.
- support the school's code of conduct and disciplinary actions taken by the school.
- make sure my child arrives at school on time (8:00am).
- make sure my child attends school every day unless the child's absence is excused under the school's attendance policy.
- make sure that my child arrives at school prepared to work, ready to learn, and dressed appropriately under the school's dress code.
- monitor my child's homework every night, Monday through Thursday, to ensure that it is completed thoughtfully, carefully, and on time.
- read with my child at least 15 minutes daily and initial the reading log.
- have my child in bed by an appropriate time, Sunday through Thursday nights. The school recommends a bedtime for kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades no later than 8:00 p.m.
- limit my child's television viewing. The school suggests no more than 1 hour daily, Monday through Thursday.
- participate in school activities and in my child's education.
- attend the required orientation and all parent-teacher conferences, and communicate respectfully and regularly with my child's teachers.
- support MLK Charter School's educational philosophy and culture, and share responsibility for making the school a success.

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

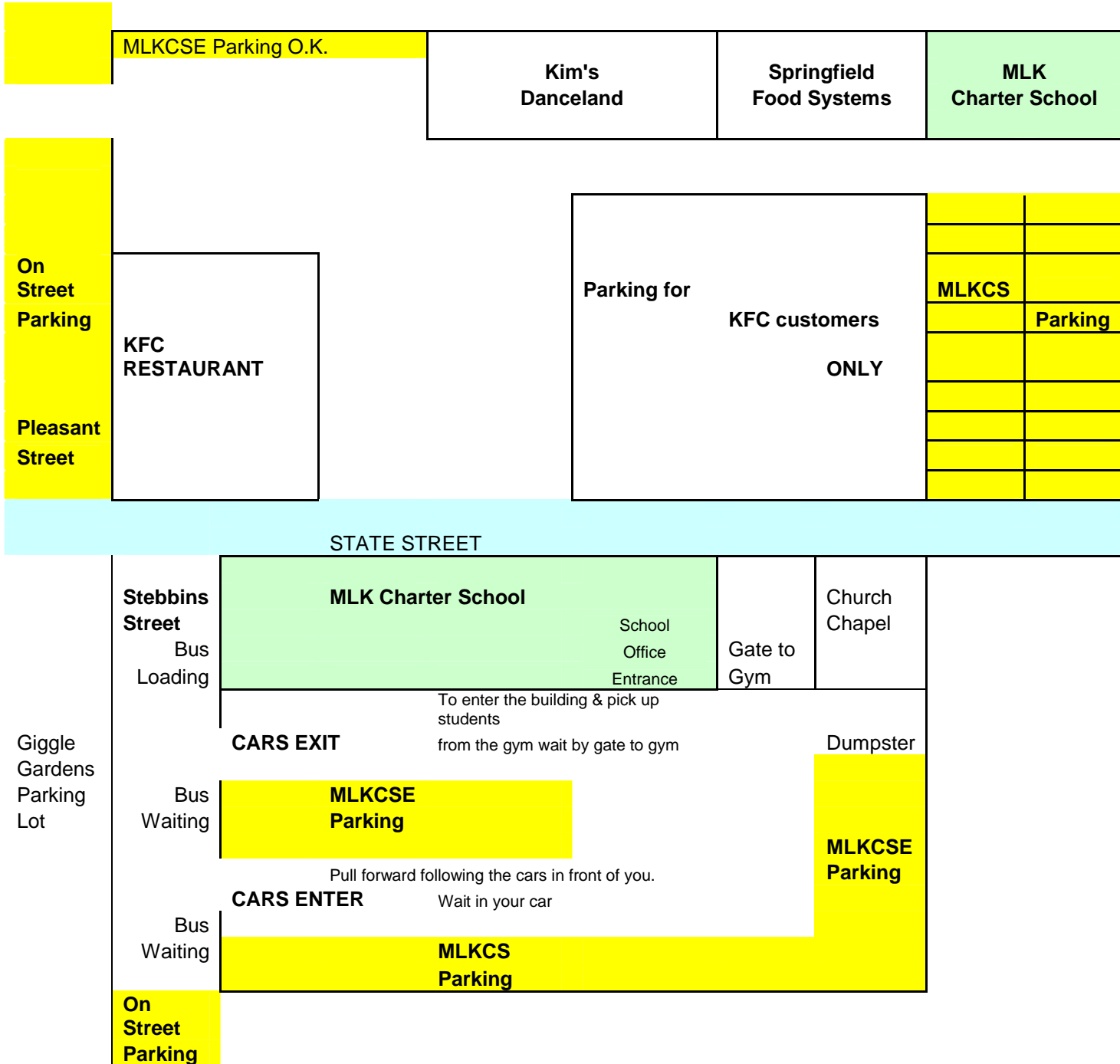
Date: _____

* * * *

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 may contact if necessary.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship to Student</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
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Dismissal Traffic Pattern



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
T ogether united we hold the key
In what we say, think, and do
We bring to life our school values

With friendly words we persevere
O ur school grows stronger year to year
We work hard to achieve our goal
T hrough honesty and self control

Hearts and minds in unity...
Build beloved community