

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

EARLY LEARNING



AppleTree

**Family Guide and Handbook
School Year 2019-2020**

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Welcome Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

On behalf of our school staff, myself, and the Board of Directors, I extend the warmest welcome to you and your child/children, our students, to AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School (AppleTree). We are delighted and honored to be your school of choice and we are committed to providing our students with outstanding, enriching learning experiences.

AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School (AppleTree) is a public charter school authorized by the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board open to all three- and four-year olds in the District of Columbia. AppleTree's mission is to provide young children with the social, emotional, and cognitive foundations that will enable them to succeed in school.

AppleTree implements an award-winning, research-based instructional program, *Every Child Ready*, that supports the development of young children's language, literacy, and behavioral skills as well as their understanding of the world around them. The school's comprehensive, integrated curriculum is designed to engage young children in playful activities and to build on their natural eagerness to learn. Teachers are supported through ongoing principal and coach mentoring to differentiate instructional activities to ensure that students' individual needs are met and that all students are provided with the supports that they need to flourish.

A strong school community involves active collaboration between teachers, families, and students. We look forward to getting to know your student and family in the coming year, and partnering to help accomplish our mission. I am honored to lead a talented and committed staff at AppleTree, who is committed to making a difference in children's lives.

Thank you for choosing AppleTree and enjoy the start of the school year!

Sincerely,

Jamie B. Miles

Chief of Schools

A Note About the Language Used in this Handbook

This handbook uses the term “parents” to refer to people who have legal custody and who provide primary care for the young children who attend our schools. AppleTree recognizes the diversity and complexity of families who love, care and provide for children. Many are not biological parents, but grandparents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. The term “parents” is used for its simplicity.

AppleTree honors all who have undertaken the role of primary caretaker and nurturer of a child, regardless of the technical relationship.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This document contains important information. If you need assistance with translating the document or have any questions about this notice, please call [1-866-874-3972](tel:1-866-874-3972); the client ID is 511388 to access translation services. Tell the customer service representative the language you speak so you can be provided with an interpreter at no cost to you.

AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School Mission Statement, Philosophy, Goals

Mission Statement

The mission of AppleTree is to provide young children with the social, emotional, and cognitive foundations that will enable them to succeed in school.

School Philosophy

AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School provides an engaging and rigorous preschool for DC three-and four-year-olds that gets children ready for Kindergarten and future school success.

School Goals

The goals set forth by the Board of Directors of AppleTree for our school community are as follows:

1. Students will enter kindergarten with the language and early literacy skills necessary to learn to read.
2. Students will enter kindergarten with basic numeracy and early mathematics skills.
3. Students will be socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten.
4. AppleTree classrooms achieve standards of excellence in classroom and instructional quality.

We are a data driven organization and these goals are at the core of everything we do. Progress towards them is continually monitored through progress monitoring using normed assessments. Our progress towards these goals is made available to the public through our annual report.

Diversity

We believe that AppleTree must prepare all students to live, study and work in a diverse world. To that end, our school will provide students with opportunities that promote respect for self and others and a curriculum that values the many varieties of human expression.

AppleTree recognizes and values the interconnectedness of humanity and looks to the staff to lead this initiative. It is our vision that all people will be treated with equality, dignity, and respect; that all students will be educated to understand, accept and value all members of the world community; and that the community at large will join with us in support of this mission.

Admissions and Enrollment

Admissions

AppleTree offers educational programming for three- and four-year old children who reside in the District of Columbia. Students must turn three or four by September 30th of the year they will begin school. Children who are five years of age by September 30th are kindergarten-age and therefore not eligible for admission to AppleTree. No child will be discriminated against based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, ability, disability or any other bias prohibited by law. Non-residents of the District of Columbia who wish to attend AppleTree will be required to pay tuition at the rate established by The Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Non-residents must also follow the same enrollment process as residents and complete additional documentation as required by The Office of the State Superintendent of Education, District of Columbia government and The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

Parents and guardians of accepted applicants will be required to complete an Enrollment Packet that includes a contact information sheet, developmental and medical history, a recent physical exam, a dental exam, updated immunization record and a medical release. **If these documents are not provided by the first day of school (unless cleared by school administration) then the child will not be permitted to attend AppleTree.**

Enrollment

AppleTree participates in the *My School DC* common lottery process. Please see www.myschooldc.org for up to date information about application deadlines and processes.

Residency Fraud Penalties

DC Charter schools are free for all residents of the District of Columbia. The current Residency Verification Guidelines governing the process of residency verification are designed to ensure that only those students who are District residents receive a free public education in the District of Columbia. As such, all parents or caregivers of public school students in the District are required to provide proof of their residency in the District as part of the enrollment process or pay tuition.

Any person, including any District of Columbia public charter school official, who knowingly supplies false information to a public official in connection with student residency verification shall be subject to charges of tuition retroactively, and payment of a fine of not more than \$2,000 or imprisonment for not more than 90 days, but not both fine and imprisonment, pursuant to the District of Columbia Nonresident Tuition Act as amended by the District of Columbia Public Schools and Public Charter School Student Residency Fraud Prevention Amendment Act of

2012. All residency verification and fraud questions should be directed to the Admissions and Transition Manager.

Attendance

School Hours of Operation

AppleTree offers a full-day program for enrolled students. The school building is open daily Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Children may arrive to school no earlier than 8:00 a.m. unless enrolled in Before Care. The curriculum hours of instruction are from 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. It is important that children be brought to school on time so that they can participate in a full day of instruction.

Early dismissal is strongly discouraged. We request that families schedule medical, dental and other appointments outside of school hours or during school breaks whenever possible. Teachers plan instruction until 3:15 p.m. and it is important that students do not miss out on valuable instructional time. After 2:45 p.m. daily, students will not be dismissed until 3:15 p.m.

Extended Day

Families may elect to enroll their child in the Extended Day Program. Participation in extended day is on a month-to-month basis only. Payment for the entire month is due at the time of signing up, there is no daily rate of payment. Program hours are from 3:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Extended Day Team is led by AppleTree Teaching Assistants in order to create a seamless transition between the regular school day and extended day. Regular components of the program include outdoor play, story time, and center time activities. In addition, there are two short small group activities planned daily to reinforce literacy, math and social-emotional skills being taught during the school week. An agreement form will be distributed at the beginning of the school year to confirm your participation. Overdue payments jeopardize your child's ability to participate in Extended Day.

Before care is offered from 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. Families may enroll in the program through the Operations Coordinator. As with the after school program, there is an additional fee associated with Before Care based on National School Lunch Program status. **Only those children who are enrolled in Before Care may enter school before 8:00 a.m.**

AppleTree Early Learning PCS participates in the child subsidy/voucher program through the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). If you have a voucher for your child's participation in AppleTree's extended day program, please note that your child is not permitted to miss more than four days of Extended Day each

month, per CFSA's regulations. If the voucher is voided due to more than 5 absences, CFSA will terminate your child's voucher immediately and you must re-apply for a new voucher. Parents/caregivers are responsible for paying the full price of the extended day program (as determined by the NSLP application) until a new voucher is granted by CFSA. If parents/caregivers have any questions about the voucher program, please see the school operations manager or administrative assistant at the campus.

Attendance Goals

Good attendance is crucial to your child's learning. AppleTree's goal is to have each enrolled student attend 95% or more of the time for the school year. This is equivalent to missing one day per month. Our data shows that children who are consistently absent from school demonstrate less growth than children with strong attendance.

AppleTree considers unexcused absences from school to be a serious matter. Not only does it impede the progress of your child, it also wastes valuable resources allocated for your child's education.

- Excused absences include illness, medical and dental appointments, family emergencies, school visits, and religious reasons. In order for an absence to be excused, families must provide a doctor's note or other appropriate documentation. If your child will be absent or tardy on a given day, please notify AppleTree prior to the start of school on that day. Please inform the school and your child's teachers of any extended absences as soon as you are aware of them.
- Examples of unexcused absences include parent's choice not to send their child.

Families of students whose absences exceed more than five days will meet with the Principal Instructional Leader and problem solve how to improve student attendance.

If your child has missed more than 10 consecutive absences and you have not had any contact with the school, AppleTree will automatically conduct a home visit by the site social worker. At the home visit, a meeting will be scheduled to address attendance. Home visits can be conducted at the discretion of the school when a situation warrants it. Our goal is to assist you in helping your child to be successful as a student by maintaining good attendance. Please feel free to reach out to the Principal or social worker if you're having problems with your child attending school so we can work together on solutions.

Note: If a student with an Individualized Education Plan is absent, services are rescheduled and delivered upon the student's return. Missed sessions are rescheduled and completed within two weeks of the initially scheduled appointment.

Arrival and Departure Policies

Children must be escorted into their classroom by a family member or other responsible adult at the time of arrival. For safety reasons, children should never be left unattended at the front door, in the hallway, stairwell, parking lot, or street. It is imperative that classroom staff is made aware of a child's arrival prior to the adult leaving the school. The adult who drops off or picks up must sign their child into school every morning and out at the end of the school day, indicating arrival and departure times.

The school day ends at 3:15 p.m.; please do not pick your child up before this time unless approved by administration. Families must pick up their child through the front of the building. Children may be released only to those individuals authorized by parents in writing. All authorized individuals must be 14 years of age or older. Please inform all individuals authorized to pick up your child that they must present photo identification upon request. If a parent listed on the birth certificate is removed from the pick up list this must be accompanied by legal documentation including custody status.

Tardiness

AppleTree Early Learning PCS wants your child to have the full benefit of our educational program. Daily, on time school attendance is crucial for student success. Instruction begins promptly at 8:45 a.m. and we want all students to be present and ready to participate in the day from the start. Arriving by 8:45 a.m. ensures that students can participate in Morning Meeting; the first component of AppleTree's instructional program and an important time for students to start their day with their peers.

Any child arriving after 8:45 a.m. is considered tardy. Tardies are considered excused for illness, medical appointments, school visits, religious observances, or death in the family, and must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. If you arrive after 9:00 a.m., you will be asked to sign in at the office and will receive a pass to take your student to the classroom. A parent meeting with the school principal will be required for students who repeatedly arrive to school late.

As a reference point to the importance of arriving at school on time, consider the following table. The school day starts at 8:45 a.m. if you consistently arrive at the following times, a tremendous amount of instruction is missed:

Arrival Time	Minutes Late	Hours of Instruction Missed over the year	Days of instruction missed
9:00	15	46.5	7.75

Coming in just 15 minutes late every day is the equivalent of missing a week and a half of instruction. It is crucial that children arrive at school on time every day.

Late Pick Up Fees

The academic day for students ends at 3:15 p.m. Students not attending the Extended Day Program must be picked up by 3:30 p.m. At 4:00 p.m. if there has been no contact with the school, school staff will call Child Protective Services.

A late fee will be enforced for all pick-ups after 3:30 p.m. For every 10-minute block, \$10 will be charged (for instance, pickup between 3:31 p.m. and 3:40 p.m. will cost \$10, 3:41 p.m. and 3:50 p.m. will cost \$20).

The Extended Day Program ends at 6:00 p.m. A late fee will be enforced for all late pick-ups. Anytime between 6:01 p.m. and 6:10 p.m. will cost \$10, and every 10-minute block after this will cost an additional \$10. At 6:30 p.m. if there has been no contact with the school, school staff will call Child Protective Services. Students will not be permitted to participate in Extended Day until all late fees are paid, and must be picked up by 3:15 p.m.

More than three documented late pick-ups will result in an additional \$25 fee. Families will receive an invoice from the school for all late fees. Fees need to be paid one day after receiving the invoice. If a child is picked up late from Extended Day three times, the parents of the child must have a conference with the principal regarding continued participation in the program and a contract will be developed. After the contract is in place, any violation of the contract will result in a four-week suspension from the extended day program. If there is a late pickup after this four-week suspension, the child will be terminated from the extended day program.

Student Services and Parent Billing

AppleTree Early Learning PCS is pleased to offer several services to our families. While the cost for each service is dependent on the parent/caregivers' income, the Parent Billing Policy applies to all families who receive a service from AppleTree.

Billable Services:

- School Lunch*
- Extended Day Before-School**
- Extended Day After-School**
- Other Services***

Invoicing - Parents/caregivers will receive monthly invoices one week before the service(s) each month via email and the school's front office. Parents/caregivers have until the first of the month to remit payment after an invoice has been provided. Payments may be made via debit/credit card online. If the parent/caregiver does not have access to completing the payment transaction online, AppleTree will process the payment through the school's front office (cash and check not accepted). If for any reason an invoice is not provided to the parent/caregiver, it is the responsibility of the caregiver to inquire about the status of the invoice. AppleTree may also contact parents/caregivers via phone in order to collect an outstanding debt.

Sibling Discount - Parents/caregivers with more than one student enrolled in an AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School are eligible for a 50% discount on pricing for each additional student enrolled. In order to qualify for this discount, each sibling must be enrolled during the same academic year. The sibling discount does not apply to students enrolled in an AppleTree@ location (i.e., Rocketship, Achievement Prep, Perry Street Prep, and Democracy Prep).

Cancellation Policy - Parents/caregivers who sign up for a service or program will be charged for a full month of that service/program. Parents/Caregivers are permitted to cancel the service/program at anytime, however, the full monthly service charge will be applied if the cancellation is not made prior to the month of service.

* AppleTree PCS will not charge lunch services to parents/caregivers who qualify for free/reduced meals through the National School Lunch Program

** AppleTree PCS may assess additional charges for any late pick-up

*** AppleTree PCS reserves the right to charge parents/caregivers for other services that may not be included in this parent handbook after notifying the parent of the new service charge

Payment Penalties and Consequences

Fees - AppleTree reserves the right to assess late fees for any invoice not paid in full within seven days. Additionally, students will not be able to participate in Extended Day if the invoice is unpaid. AppleTree will assess a \$35 fee for any checks returned by the bank.

AppleTree requires that parent/caregiver complete the National School Lunch Program's Free and Reduced Meals Application if the parent/caregiver demonstrates an inability to pay outstanding invoices.

Meals

AppleTree admits children for the school day beginning at 8:00 a.m. Breakfast is served from 8:00 a.m. - 8:35 a.m. Breakfast will not be provided for students who

arrive after 8:35 a.m. If you choose to bring your own breakfast to school, please include only healthy breakfast foods. Please do not send your children to school with doughnuts, chips, cookies, candy, etc. If this food is sent in, teachers may ask students to save it until after school. AppleTree is a NUT FREE school, so please do not bring in any products containing peanuts or other tree nuts.

AppleTree students receive breakfast, a morning snack, and an afternoon snack free of charge. The cost of lunch meals is approximately \$60/month for families that do not qualify for free or reduced meals. AppleTree will inform parents of their payment status as determined by the National School Lunch Program Application. If you choose not to participate in the National School Lunch Program, you must bring breakfast, lunch, and a snack everyday. Parents who opt out of school lunch must be mindful of the time it takes staff to serve a meal, so lunches sent from home should not require any heating or preparation.

Students will be asked to try new foods and encouraged to eat at every meal. Parents should see the Principal or the School Operations Coordinator if their child has any dietary restrictions due to allergies or religious affiliation. All dietary restrictions should be provided in writing.

Instructional Program

AppleTree's goal is to ensure that all children attain the foundational language, early reading, mathematics and social-emotional skills predictive of later academic success. To achieve these goals, AppleTree has adopted a comprehensive, standards-based instructional program grounded in the results of years of research on preschool and academic achievement. Students' growth against these standards will be shown on progress reports four times per school year.

AppleTree has adopted a Response-to-Intervention (RTI) instructional model to maximize learning for all children by providing a continuum of supports. More information on the RTI framework at AppleTree is provided in the Student Support Services section of this document.

Assessments and Progress Reports

In order to maximize student potential, AppleTree assesses each child's development throughout the course of the year. AppleTree uses both observational and direct assessments to establish what students know when the school year begins and to monitor their progress. Direct assessment measures are selected based on their appropriateness for young children and their psychometric properties. Our assessment program provides teachers as well as support staff (e.g. social workers, coaches and consultants) with the information necessary to design and implement an instructional and/or behavioral program that meets the needs of

the individual child. The students who show the most growth are those who have consistent attendance throughout the year.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of our instruction for students, AppleTree also assesses each classroom's teaching practices and classroom environment through observational assessments and teachers' report on their own classroom practices and school environment. Observational and teacher-report assessments provide the school team and our partners with valuable information used to support high quality, effective classroom instruction for each of our students.

Progress reports will be given to each family/ guardian at the end of each assessment period during family-teacher conferences. Families are required to attend these conferences. There will be four progress reports for the school year.

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Approaches

AppleTree believes that emphasizing social, emotional, and behavioral development should be an integral part of an academic curriculum to ensure children are available and ready to learn both in and out of school. This is done through a Positive Behavior Supports program, based on the nationally recognized PBIS model, that focuses on three key components: Teaching, Reinforcing, and Responding.

Teaching

Direct instruction of social-emotional skills in Every Child Ready (ECR) curriculum, includes 1) a unit focused on skills children need to access learning, including behavioral expectations, feelings identification, and problem-solving strategies ("Getting Ready to Learn"), 2) small group lessons focused on social-emotional skills multiple times a week throughout the year, and 3) teachers' direct instruction of expectations, routines, and skills that are not explicitly covered in ECR. Teaching teams also incorporate social-emotional learning opportunities into daily classroom practices such as classroom jobs or songs and chants to reinforce the social-emotional concepts throughout the school day and week.

Reinforcing

AppleTree connects the teaching of social, emotional and behavioral skills with positive verbal and visual praise and reinforcements. Children engage in daily opportunities to earn classroom celebrations for demonstrating behavioral or social-emotional skills they are learning about in lessons and practicing throughout the day.

Responding

AppleTree believes that children often misbehave because they have not **yet** learned to use the appropriate skill or how to articulate their specific needs in a social or educational situation. In turn, we believe that responses to child misbehavior or heightened emotional expression should be immediate, logical, and serve as an opportunity to teach replacement behaviors and emotional regulation skills.

In addition to facilitating professional development for teaching staff to implement logical consequences, some classrooms may have a Sit and Watch area; this intervention uses contingent observation, which combines instruction with a brief time out. It is used when children need to take time away from a situation to refocus and observe the expected behavior.

Every AppleTree classroom has a Calming Space. This is a comfortable and inviting space in the classroom that provides a designated space for children who need a few minutes to identify and regulate their emotions. Children are taught in the beginning of the year, and reminded throughout the year, that the Calming Space is a safe place to go if they are feeling angry, sad, frustrated, disappointed or aggressive.

If a child engages in behaviors that endanger themselves or others, he or she may be removed from the class for a brief period. Children are removed to ensure their safety and the safety of their classmates and teachers and once calm are welcomed back to their classroom community.

Student Support Services

AppleTree offers a robust Student Support Services program to include language acquisition, positive behavior supports, and special education, all of which are framed within a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework.

A three-tiered RTI instructional program ensures children receive instructional support specific to their academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and language acquisition needs. The first tier is a robust instructional program delivered to all children as part of their everyday classroom experience called, *Every Child Ready* (ECR). *Every Child Ready* is a curriculum that was developed by AppleTree Institute for use in all AppleTree classrooms. This integrated curriculum includes all core content areas: language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, social-emotional development, creative arts, and gross motor. ECR has 10 thematic

units that incorporate teacher support for classroom assessments, differentiated instruction, and centers facilitation. This thematic curriculum builds children's vocabulary, critical thinking, and early literacy skills – and supports social emotional development.

For children who are not making adequate progress in the regular instructional program, students can access tier 2 or tier 3 interventions to meet targeted needs. Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are provided in addition to the regular instructional program in a small group setting. Families will be notified if their child will participate in tier 2 or 3 interventions prior to their implementation and invited to participate in their creation.

Teachers regularly monitor children's progress in Tier 2 and Tier 3. In most cases, the added support results in increased learning and children return to Tier 1.

Regular observation and direct assessment is integral to the RTI process and is part of the regular instructional program. Teachers use assessment data to improve teaching and learning for all children. Data are also shared with families so that they can better understand and support their children's educational progress.

Special Education Program

AppleTree provides Special Education services to all eligible students in accordance with District of Columbia and federal regulations as outlined in the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and AppleTree's Child Find Policy. AppleTree has a Special Education Manager on staff that ensures that all children with disabilities (SWD) enrolled receive appropriate specialized instruction and related services as designated in the student's Individual Education Plan.

At AppleTree, parent(s) may refer their child to go through the special education process, at any time, if they suspect their child may have a disability and requires special education services to access the general education curriculum. Parents are advised to address their concerns with the AppleTree Principal or a member of the Special Education Team (teacher, coordinator, related service provider or Special Education Manager).

The Special Education Coordinator will convene a referral meeting and invite the parents to participate and discuss academic related and/or social emotional concerns. The team will determine if AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School will move forward with the eligibility process.

In order to receive special education services students must qualify as having a disability and show a need for more intensive support in the areas of specialized instruction or related services. These include students who have significant academic, social, speech-language, motor, and behavioral needs. If a student is

found eligible for special education services, the special education team, including the parents and the regular education teacher, will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP is a legal federal document that is an educational plan to support the student in their least restrictive environment.

Disciplining Students with Disabilities (Case by Case Determination)

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change of placement, made in accordance with the following requirements related to discipline, is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a school code of student conduct.

Special Circumstances:

Whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of your child's disability, school personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting (determined by the child's IEP Team) for not more than forty five (45) school days, if your child:

- Carries a weapon to school or has a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function at AppleTree
- Knowingly has or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function at AppleTree
- Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at or at a school function at AppleTree

Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEA and who has violated the school's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the school had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred. The school shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

1. The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
2. The behavior or performance of the student demonstrates the need for such services.
3. The parent/guardian has requested an evaluation of the student for special education.
4. The teacher of the student or other school personnel has expressed concern about the behavior or performance of the student to the school's Principal or Special Education Manager or to other personnel in accordance with the school's special education referral system.

The school would be deemed to not have knowledge as specified in items #1-4 above if, as a result of receiving such information, the school either conducted an evaluation and determined that the student was not a student with a disability or determined that an evaluation was not necessary and provided notice to the parent/guardian of its determination. If it is determined that the school did not have knowledge that the student was disabled prior to taking disciplinary action against the student, then the student shall be disciplined in accordance with procedures established for students without disabilities.

If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subject to disciplinary measures, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student shall remain in the educational placement determined by Local Education Authorities (LEA).

Language Acquisition Program

AppleTree supports English Learners by engaging in systematic language proficiency screenings, the Pre-IPT and subsequently providing language acquisition interventions. Students are administered a screening assessment based on parent/guardian responses on the Home Language Survey provided during the enrollment process. Families will be notified of their child's results on the Pre-IPT within 2 weeks after it is given. They will also be notified of the instructional supports that will be available to support the language development of their child. Students classified as Non-English Speaking (NES) or Limited-English Speaking (LES) based on the assessment are provided additional instruction in basic vocabulary and expressive language by the classroom teacher or English Learner Teacher.

A parent/guardian has the right to opt their child out of language acquisition supports by contacting the Language Acquisition Manager using the contact information found at the end of this document.

How are English Language Learners identified?

Home Language Surveys are given to each family in the enrollment process. If a family member answers "yes" to any of the questions, the student is identified as a student who is a possible ELL student and will receive the English Language Proficiency Assessment.

Positive Behavior Supports Program

AppleTree operates a behavioral response to intervention process led by the school-based clinician based in social work and behavior consultation practices. When a teaching team has a concern that a child's behavior is impacting their wellbeing or access to learning, they initiate a consultation meeting. During this meeting, data and anecdotal information is shared and together, the clinician and

teaching team decide on the appropriate classroom-based accommodations and interventions to implement for a finite period of time. Family input and involvement in designing supports is welcomed and necessary.

If a child is persistently aggressive or disruptive to the educational environment, or persistently tardy or absent, AppleTree will work creatively to support the needs of the child and family to the extent practical. Family cooperation and support for these efforts is required. **A parent or other family member's participation during field trips may be requested if a child's safety or the safety of others is at risk.**

Social Work and Counseling Services

AppleTree offers social work services that are provided by licensed and professionally trained social workers and counselors. Each campus has an assigned social worker/counselor that helps to ensure that all AppleTree students are physically, socially, and emotionally available for instructional experiences.. The following direct services are currently provided by AppleTree's social work team:

- Short-term counseling and consultation services to families who need support*
- Short-term support in the classroom for children who are having difficulties with social or behavioral skills
- Individual play therapy to children experiencing emotional challenges, behavioral problems, or difficult home situations*
- Social Skills Groups*
- Individualized, special education social-emotional and behavioral services
- Crisis response support and assistance to staff, children, and families
- Professional development on areas of expertise to school personnel
- Parent workshops on various child and parent related topics
- Coordination of community agency services (e.g. vision and dental services)
- Community resources and referrals

*A parent must provide written consent prior to their child receiving services outside of the classroom setting. The social work team maintains strict confidentiality with regard to all aspects of student information learned while providing services.

The social work team has an open door policy. Parents are strongly encouraged to contact their campus social worker to learn more about available services and resources.

Student Support Partnerships

AppleTree partners with several institutions and organizations in order to provide high quality and responsive learning environments for our students and families.

Our partners support us in providing valuable services to our students and families and support our quality improvement efforts. Our partners include, but are not limited to, Mary's Center: Healthy Families America home visiting program, Edgewood-Brookland Family Support Collaborative, the Georgetown University Early Childhood Innovation Network and the WISE Center (MedStar Georgetown Center for Wellbeing in School Environments) Early Childhood Mental Health consulting team (elaborated upon below). Additional partnerships may be established throughout the school year.

Wise Center

Select AppleTree campuses participate in an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) program through our partnership with the WISE Center (MedStar Georgetown Center for Wellbeing in School Environments). The goal of ECMHC is to promote our students' social, emotional, and behavioral health. Consultants from the WISE Center collaborate with teachers, support staff, and school leaders to create supportive learning environments that encourage students' social-emotional learning and to prevent, plan for, and respond to challenging behavior in the classroom. Consultants do not work directly with individual students or pull students out of the classroom; instead consultants partner with teachers and other school staff to support students' positive engagement in the classroom. Assessments of individual children are collected as part AppleTree's routine student assessments (see Assessments and Progress Reports), unless additional assessment is recommended by a consultant. To support high quality social-emotional instruction, all AppleTree classrooms are assessed through observation and teachers' report of their practice and impressions of the school environment. As part of a school's participation in ECMHC, AppleTree staff also provide feedback on their involvement in the program to support quality improvement.

Homeless Families

AppleTree adheres to the guidelines of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act to ensure all families experiencing housing instability receive the services for which they are eligible. Please contact your school social worker and/or the appendix of this handbook for more details.

Biting Policy at AppleTree:

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at our schools:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm reprimand.
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.

- Staff will remove the biter from the situation.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water.
- A staff member will take a picture of the bite wound for documentation. If it is determined that there was a blood exposure, further steps will be taken as outlined below: "Procedure for Incidents involving Blood Exposure."
- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Incident Report).
- *Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.*
- The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.

Child Physical Support Policy

AppleTree advocates the use of nurturing touch for the optimum growth of children (e.g., high-fives, child-solicited hugs, hand-holding for child safety). In order to promote the physical autonomy and independence of children and minimize in-class conflict over "teacher time" teachers avoid unnecessary touching (e.g., placing the child in their lap, laying down next to children at nap).

There are times when a child's safety is at stake. When this happens, some physical support may be necessary. Examples would include to keep a child from harm (e.g., physically preventing a child from running into the street or from falling off of climbing equipment) and to stop a child from harming himself or herself, another child or an adult.

All AppleTree teachers are trained in *Non-Violent Crisis Intervention* from a certified trainer through the Crisis Prevention Institute. *Non-Violent Crisis Intervention* is a program committed to providing students, families, and teachers with an environment of care, welfare, safety and security. Teachers are trained in verbal techniques to support students and de-escalate potentially aggressive behavior. Additionally, teachers are also trained in how to most safely intervene and physically support children who may become physically aggressive or at risk of hurting themselves or others.

AppleTree is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. **Please do not physically discipline your child on school grounds.**

Family Involvement

AppleTree encourages parents as partners in their children's learning. Children whose families are involved in their education are far more likely to succeed. Family

members are best able to provide the daily expressions of interest and encouragement a child needs to thrive.

Family Handbook Meeting

In order to help all families fully understand AppleTree's policies and procedures, a parent or legal guardian is required to attend a parent handbook meeting within the first three weeks of the child starting at school. These sessions are an opportunity to discuss AppleTree's procedures and to ask any questions and clarify any misunderstandings families may have. If parents do not attend a handbook meeting, they must schedule a time with their principal for the review. There will also be a Back to School night where parents and families will learn more about the instructional program and talk with their child's teachers. See your child's principal for more information and scheduling.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities throughout the year to support your child's classroom. Families are strongly encouraged to volunteer at least once a month at the school or in the child's class. Some opportunities include:

- Chaperoning a field trip
- Sharing unique experiences about family or culture
- Helping teachers set up in the classroom or create materials
- Reading a story to the class or a few students in the library
- Assist in classroom during centers

Families are always welcome to visit AppleTree and should be scheduled with the principal, not the teacher. AppleTree discourages family members from staying in their child's classroom for an extended amount of time, which can often cause a distraction for both the students and teachers. Periodic classroom visits arranged with the teachers often provide both the student and the parent with a more meaningful and enjoyable experience.

Families are welcome to call their child's teacher at any time. However, please understand that teachers are working in the classrooms with the children and may not be readily available to accept telephone calls. The best time to reach teachers by phone is before and after school.

AppleTree appreciates parents who chaperone field trips. While chaperoning, parents' attention must remain on students at all times. Parents who chaperone must refrain from smoking and/or consuming alcohol on the trip. AppleTree also requests that chaperones ride the bus with the students to and from the location to support with supervision.

Lending Library

The Lending Library is filled with high quality, age appropriate books and other materials for families to take home and enjoy together. Books and other materials should be checked out one at a time. More information about the Lending Library will be presented at the Back to School night, and the Lending Library will be open after that date.

Family Literacy Events

Throughout the year, special events will be held at the school. These events will focus on different early literacy skills your child is learning in school, and will provide families with the opportunity to engage in fun activities together. Families who attend the events will receive a book to take home!

Parents at AppleTree (PAT)

Parents at AppleTree provides a link between parents and administrators. All parents/guardians of students at AppleTree are automatically part of PAT and are encouraged to attend and participate in regular meetings. If you are interested in taking on a leadership role in PAT, please speak to the Principal at your campus.

Parents at AppleTree is committed to bringing parents and staff together to support the students at our school. In support of this goal, PAT will:

- Support teachers by coordinating volunteers to support school-wide events, such as the Book Fair, seasonal celebrations and the stepping up ceremony.
- Provide feedback and input to the principal about past and upcoming programs and activities.

Family Surveys/Interviews

All families participate in an informal family interview within the first two weeks of the school year. This casual meeting with the teacher will help AppleTree become better acquainted with each child and family. We encourage your honest participation during these meetings so that we can learn more about how to support each child.

In addition, throughout the year we will ask for formal feedback on families' experiences and satisfaction with AppleTree through surveys. AppleTree greatly values family feedback and looks forward to learning more about how the school can exceed your expectations!

Homework / Extension Activities

ECR includes weekly extension activities for families to implement at home with their children that directly tie to an ECR book or theme-related focus. Teachers encourage completion of all activities to promote greater reinforcement of classroom

and unit materials, and build excitement in students about classroom learning opportunities.

Communication

Teachers are available before and after the academic day and by appointment. It is important that families communicate with teachers, staff, and other family members in a calm and respectful manner at all times. Teachers are also accessible by email, and should respond to parent emails within one business day. Please be considerate of response time and only use email for professional communication with your child's teacher.

AppleTree staff is not permitted to use social networking sites to communicate with parents or guardians, and may not post any information about your child to social networking sites unless previously approved by parent/guardian and principal for use on official AppleTree platforms (e.g., picture of student work on AppleTree Facebook page, Class Dojo). Please do not use social networking sites as a means of communication with teachers and school staff.

Confidentiality

The staff of AppleTree will respect the rights of each family to confidentiality and privacy regarding all records of health, behavior and development concerning their child.

Parent Conduct Policy

In the event that a family member verbally abuses or physically accosts any individual or exhibits any threatening, unwarranted or abusive behavior towards any adult or child while on school property, the police may be notified and the parent may be banned from the building. The child may continue to attend AppleTree, but the family member may not enter the building. In the event of this happening, the Principal will notify the parent in writing. Family members may appeal the Principal's decision by contacting the school's Chief Academic Officer within 24 hours of notification. If a family member is banned from the building, he/she must arrange for someone to drop off and pick up their child.

Complaint Procedures

AppleTree makes every effort to make children's and families' association with our school a very positive one. Every staff member shares the mission and goals of this organization and will strive daily to live out our mission and reach each of our school goals. However, in the event that family members have a complaint about any of the policies, practices or procedures at AppleTree, families are encouraged to communicate them to the Principal and/or the Operations Coordinator. Parents should address the Principal with any issues concerning the instructional program, interactions with teachers, or family engagement. Parents should address the

Operations Coordinator with any concerns related to the operations of the school including meal service, the physical plant, and health and safety. The administrative team takes parental feedback seriously and will work to find solutions.

If after talking with school leadership, the matter is unresolved, please forward your concerns to the Chief Academic Officer. All contact information is available on the last page of this handbook. If the matter is unresolved, please contact the Chief of Schools and/or Board Chair.

Attempts to encourage unrest or disrupt the school day without problem solving through the appropriate administrative channels may undermine the sound operation of the school. Behavior that is abusive or undermining the sound operation of the school may result in banning from school grounds.

Birthdays and Other Celebrations

Birthdays may be celebrated during the afternoon snack period at 3:15 p.m. or at a designated time set by the school Principal. Parents must talk to the classroom teachers to schedule a birthday celebration. Please bring no more than one treat for each child. AppleTree encourages nutritional treats such as muffins or fruit. **Soda or any food containing nuts should not be sent to school. It is helpful if parents host the distribution of the birthday treat.** Parents should provide plates, napkins and cups for a celebration. No decorations are permitted. Please do not distribute goody bags or extra treat bags.

Birthday invitations should be distributed at the school **only** if **all** the children in the classroom are invited to the child's celebration. If, for religious reasons, a family does not celebrate birthdays, please inform the child's teachers, and the teacher will make arrangements for the child.

AppleTree invites parents to share their cultural heritage and traditions. If a parent has a tradition they would like to share with their child's class, please contact the child's teacher to discuss how to fit it into the instructional program. Teachers will work with parents to prepare age-appropriate celebrations that will focus on cultural rather than religious themes. Please let us know if you would prefer your child to not participate in seasonal celebrations. During our end of the year Step Up ceremony, there will be no cap and gowns.

Photography & Video

AppleTree reserves the right to photograph/videotape its students, faculty, staff and facilities in connection with the activities of the school and to reproduce such images to promote, publicize, or explain the school or its activities. This includes the right, without limitation, to publish such images in the school newsletter, and

PR/promotional materials such as marketing and admissions publications, advertisements, fundraising material, and any other school-related publication. These images may appear in any of a variety of formats and media now available or that may be available in the future, including but not limited to print, broadcast, videotape, and electronic/on-line media. Parents who do not wish to have their child included in the above coverage should inform the principal in writing.

AppleTree Early Learning PCS is in partnership with AppleTree Institute. As part of the regular program, your child's teachers will assess your child's academic and social skills. AppleTree Institute reviews the data internally and with your child's teacher to improve instruction. De-identified data are also shared with staff, consultants, educators, and in educational reports. Within this partnership, AppleTree Institute reserves the right to photograph/videotape students, faculty, staff and facilities in connection with the activities of the school and to reproduce such images to promote, publicize, or explain the school or its activities. These images may appear in any of a variety of formats and media now available or that may be available in the future, including but not limited to print, broadcast, videotape, and electronic/online media. Parents who do not wish to have their child included in the above coverage should inform the principal in writing.

Health and Nutrition

Health

All children must have completed a Department of Health Certificate before they attend AppleTree and this must be updated if it expires during the school year. This includes an immunization history documenting up to date immunizations against measles, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, chicken pox, hepatitis A, Pneumococcal, and haemophilus influenza type B. Immunizations must be current. Children who are not properly immunized are not allowed to attend school. Any student who fails to receive proper immunizations during any time of the academic school year will receive a maximum of five days to acquire all necessary immunizations.

The following immunizations are required for incoming three and four year old students:

- **Pneumococcal Vaccine** – 1-4 age-appropriate doses
- **Chickenpox (Varicella) Vaccine** – 1st dose after 1st birthday, 2nd dose at least 3 months after 1st dose
- **Hepatitis A** – 2 doses

Proof of testing for lead poisoning is also required as part of the Health Certificate. Medical examinations and immunization records are only valid for one year and

must be provided on an annual basis. Each year vision and hearing screenings are done at school. Parents will be advised of the results and are required to follow up with their doctor if necessary.

Children with asthma are required to have an asthma action plan completed by their doctor. This form should be completed along with the Health Certificate Form. **Children may not attend school until these forms are completed.**

Visits to the Doctor

If you take your child to the doctor for any reason, they MUST be accompanied by a note clearing them to attend school. If there is no note, the child will not be allowed to return to school.

When Children Must Stay Home

AppleTree wants each student to maintain at least 95% attendance. However, young children may occasionally be ill. In an effort to keep all children healthy and well, if a child should exhibit symptoms of illness, which may be a contagious illness or condition, he/she should not attend school on that day. Please keep your child at home if any of the following symptoms are present:

1. **Fever** -- any reading over 100° Fahrenheit (37° Celsius). **A child must be fever-free without benefit of medication (Tylenol/Motrin) for 24 hours before returning to school.** If a child has a fever on a Sunday, the same policy applies. If a child wakes up sick or with a fever, please keep the child home.
2. **Diarrhea** -- defined as an increased number of stools compared to the child's normal pattern. Exclude from school for at least 24 hours. If upon the child's return, the staff determines that the diarrhea continues, an early pick up and exclusion until the child's physician is consulted will be required.
3. **Vomiting** -- one or more times in the previous 24 hours. Students may return when symptom free for 24 hours.
4. **Rash** -- with fever or behavior change, until a doctor has determined the illness not to be a communicable disease.
2. **Conjunctivitis (“Pink Eye”)** -- if white of eye is red, even without seeping. Child must be home for 24 hours **AFTER** the start of medication. A note from the doctor clearing the child to return to school must be provided.
3. **Severe Cold** -- with fever, sneezing, coughing, and nose drainage. If your child's runny nose is due to an **allergy** you must send in a doctor's note stating that he/she is not infectious and is fine to come to school.
4. **Strep Throat** -- child must be home for 24 hours after the start of medication.

5. **Ringworm, Head Lice, Pinworm, Bedbugs, Scabies** -- child must be home for 24 hours AFTER the start of medication. A note from the doctor clearing the child to return to school must be provided.
6. **Chicken Pox** -- child must remain home for 7 days after outbreak and lesions must be crusted over.
7. **Other signs of possible severe illness** -- including unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, persistent barking type cough.

If your child has any of the above symptoms, please do not bring your child to school until he/she has been seen by a doctor and has begun treatment or until the symptoms either go away or improve considerably. **If your child has been put on antibiotics, he/she must have been on the prescription for 24 hours before returning to school.**

If a child seems really sick without obvious symptoms, please keep him/her at home. In this case, a child may look and act differently than normal. He/she may be unusually pale, irritable, tired or uninterested.

If a Child Becomes Ill at School

If a child should develop mild symptoms while in school, the teacher or a school administrator will contact the parent to report the symptoms. If the condition presents an immediate risk of infection to the staff or other children, the child's parents will be contacted and are required to make arrangements for the pick-up the child within one hour from the time the call is made. A note will be sent home explaining why the child must go home and when he or she can return to school. If the child's symptoms are severe and he or she is not picked up within an hour, an ambulance may be called and the child will be taken to the hospital. All parents should ensure that phone numbers are updated in student's files to reflect emergency contacts.

In case of a serious injury or illness, the school Principal or his/her designee, may call an ambulance and the child will be taken to an emergency medical facility. The parents and/or persons listed on the Emergency Contact Form will be immediately contacted.

In the event a child is injured while at school and requires medical treatment, it is the parent's health insurance that provides the primary payment for the medical treatment. In the event of a non-life threatening injury, parents will be notified by telephone or at pick-up time, depending on the severity of the injury.

Staff members are CPR-certified and First Aid-certified. All injuries, accidents and incidents are documented on a Child Incident Report. The parent is responsible for

reading and signing this report to ensure that they have been made aware of the incident or any injury.

Administration of Medications

Parents should administer any prescription medication for their children at home. If this is not possible, a member of the teaching staff or the principal will administer the medication provided the parent/ guardian has given AppleTree written permission to do so. All medication (prescription and nonprescription) may be administered by staff members that are trained in medication management. In compliance with licensing regulations, the following procedures must be followed by parents:

1. A completed Medication Administration form, asthma action plan, or medical action plan signed by a physician must accompany all prescription medication. Instructions for medication must be clearly labeled.
2. Medicine must remain at the school. Over the counter medications must be in **original packaging** with printed dosages appropriate for age or weight. Non-prescription medication must be placed in a Ziploc bag with the child's name clearly printed on the bag. Prescription medication must be in a currently dated prescription vial or properly labeled container that correctly states the student's name, the name of the physician or dentist with directions for administering the medication.
3. Sunscreen, Neosporin, other non-prescription topical salves are included under the umbrella of "medications". AppleTree must have a complete Medication Administration form to be able to apply these items to your child. Lip balm may be left in your child's cubby for the child to apply as needed.
4. Except for topical medications like sunscreen, only one dose of a nonprescription medication may be administered unless a licensed health practitioner approves the administration of the nonprescription medication and the dosage.

Because of the possibility of an allergic reaction, the first dosage of a medication will not be given at the school.

All medicine should be given to the School Operations Coordinator. Medicine that must be refrigerated is stored in a locked box in the refrigerator. Medicines not needing refrigeration are stored in a locked box in the office. A Medication Administration form must be filled out by a physician and submitted with the medication. A medicine measure is recommended for doses other than one teaspoon. Under no circumstances should prescription or nonprescription medications (including cough drops) be placed in children's coat pockets or backpacks. A parent

may also come to school and administer medicine to his/her child. Please advise teachers if you have administered any medication to your child.

Toilet Learning

AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School does not exclude children based on Toilet Learning ability. Teachers should be sensitive to parent concerns and offer open communication with parents concerning Toilet Learning, as it is developmentally appropriate for 3 year olds to be engaged in toilet learning activities.

Children who are fully toilet trained are less prone to accidents and can fully access the school curriculum. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, most children (approximately 98%) achieve bowel control and daytime urine control by 3 years old. As the Mayo Clinic indicates, “if a potty-trained child reverts or loses ground — especially at age 4 or older — or you're concerned about your child's accidents, contact his or her doctor.”

In order to support children, families, and teachers with Toilet Learning, AppleTree implements the following processes and procedures to support all parties and help children achieve age and developmentally appropriate self-help skills. In order to achieve success in this process, it is crucial that all parties maintain open, honest, and supportive communication so that children feel comfortable and can be successful. Please remember that Toilet Learning has to be reinforced at home as well as at school. No child will be forced to sit on the toilet nor will any child will be singled out for not being toilet trained.

At AppleTree, a child can be defined as not toilet trained in two ways:

- Parent discloses on the student enrollment form
- Child has more than 3 accidents (while awake) in a week for two consecutive weeks

As part of AppleTree’s regular schedule and curriculum, children will be taken to the bathroom on a regular schedule and will be allowed to use the bathroom whenever they request. AppleTree recognizes that as part of the toilet learning process, children may have accidents.

In order to ensure we can support your child’s toilet needs at school, AppleTree will provide the following to ensure proper, sanitary care of your child when they have accidents: latex gloves, toilet paper, bags for soiled clothing, trash cans with lids for appropriate disposal. All staff are trained on proper procedures for managing accidents.

School Provides
Latex Gloves
Toilet Paper
Bags for soiled clothing
Trash cans with lids for appropriate disposal
Training for staff on proper procedures for managing accidents

For children who are not fully toilet trained, as identified by the parent in the enrollment packet or as indicated by the frequency of accidents at school, families are required to bring the following to school in order to support the process:

Family Provides	
Wipes	
Toilet Training Diapers	Children should not be sent to school in standard diapers, as we want children to get used to the process of putting on and taking off underwear.
Two changes of clothing (including socks)	Please ensure that pants and belts are easy to remove (elastic waist bands, Velcro belts, snaps, not buttons)
An extra pair of shoes	If possible
Families are responsible for ensuring all of these items are in their child's cubby.	

If families fail to have these items on hand and the child has an accident, the parent will be required to bring these items to the school within an hour. If parents fail to bring these in, their child will not be allowed to attend school until these supplies are verified as on hand unless the family has developed an agreement with the social worker about obtaining clothing and/or supplies. If you have any questions, please speak with your child's teacher or the school social worker.

Emergency Change of Clothing

Young children's clothes can become dirty or soiled in the course of the school day and a change of clothes may be necessary for the comfort of the child. Parents are required to leave an extra set of clothes at school. The extra clothing should meet

the standards of the uniform policy and each article should be labeled with the student's name. An extra set of clothes includes:

1. Underwear
2. A pair of socks
3. A bottom
4. A top

Teachers will bag up the dirty clothes so that they go home with the child that day. If a child uses his/her emergency change of clothes, parents must send a new set of emergency clothes the following day. If a child needs to change and does not have an emergency change of clothes, parents will be contacted and expected to bring a set within an hour. We have a limited amount of extra clothes kept at the school. If you borrow clothes from the school, please wash and return the next day.

If you need support with purchasing uniforms, please speak with the Principal Instructional Leader or Social Worker. AppleTree is not responsible for lost or stolen children's items.

Note: Any child with an Individualized Education Plan or an Individualized Family Service Plan that includes goals for Toilet Learning will follow the plan and guidelines outlined in the plan.

Rest and Well-Being

All children rest daily in the early afternoon for one hour as part of the regular day. Children are assigned a cot or mat that is marked for their personal use. AppleTree requires each family to provide a small blanket. Parents should label the blanket with their child's name. Blankets are sent home on Fridays to be washed and should be returned the following Monday.

The National Sleep Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control recommends that children aged 3-5 get 10-12 hours of sleep per night. Please plan this into your daily schedule so that children are rested and ready to learn at school.

Children may bring one comfort item (stuffed animal, picture or book from home) to hold during naptime. The comfort item is stored in the child's cubby. Parents should be aware that comfort items may be lost or broken.

Toys are not allowed at school. If a child brings a toy to school, the toy will be left in the office in order to minimize the disruption that it may cause. AppleTree is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken children's items. Please check your child's backpack to ensure there are no important items, toys or food.

Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, Sexual Harassment and Child Molestation

"Child abuse and neglect is the intentional, physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of any child under the age of eighteen by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened." (DC Code 16-2301(9)(23))

According to DC Code 2-1357, all school employees are designated as mandated reporters of any suspicion of child abuse. AppleTree will fully comply with these statutes and will cooperate with law enforcement agencies. In the event of suspected child abuse, AppleTree will contact the Child and Family Services' Child Abuse Hotline at 202-671-SAFE (7233). ECEA and OPRMI will also be notified of the incident.

AppleTree's Protocol for Access to Children, Information and Records by CPS Investigators and/or their Agents

All requests by CPS investigative staff to observe or interview students enrolled in AppleTree shall be honored as expeditiously as possible. CPS investigative Staff shall present their credentials in person before AppleTree allows them to interview or observe students. CPS shall at all times endeavor to effect such observations and interviews without undue disruption. Periodically, the CPS work may find it necessary to remove student from school for further investigation or safety concerns. Removal of a child from his or her home or other environment is also authorized under Title 4.

All CPS Record Requests shall be received, preferably in writing, and processed as expeditiously as possible. Requesters shall be CPS investigators or their agents, who shall be identified by appropriate picture identification, current letter of introduction, or other indicia satisfactory to AppleTree to verify. Records shall be provided through hand-delivery, U.S. mail or fax, at the request of the CPS investigator or agent.

Disputes concerning access to children, information and records by CPS and the release of any records or other information shall be settled through the General Counsels for AppleTree and CFSA.

Safety Policies

Emergency Contact

Upon enrollment, parents are required to complete an Emergency Contact Information form. It is extremely important that this information is kept current. Parents must contact the School Operations Coordinator immediately if there are any changes to their contact information (home or work addresses, email address,

telephone or cell phone numbers, emergency contact information). Parents must list two additional non-guardian emergency contacts for the child and provide up to date phone numbers for each of them.

It is the responsibility of the child's parent to submit official paperwork that documents any changes in guardianship or restraining orders to which the school must adhere. All changes to pick-up authorizations (additions and deletions) must be made in writing.

Severe Weather Emergencies

AppleTree will be closed when the weather is deemed too dangerous for our students and teachers to travel to school. AppleTree's leadership team will make the decision regarding school closings and/or delayed openings as soon as possible and post the information on our website and also through text and email. If weather conditions are severe enough to warrant school closure during the day, the school staff will call parents to make arrangements for the child to be picked up.

Occasionally facilities issues (such as lack of heat or security issues) may require school to be canceled. AppleTree will inform all families of closures as soon as possible.

Fire/Emergency Evacuation Drills

Fire Evacuation Drills are conducted monthly to ensure that all staff and children are prepared to evacuate quickly and safely in the event of a true emergency. These drills are unannounced and are planned and coordinated by the School Operations Coordinator. Everyone in the building at the time of the fire drill is expected to follow our policies and procedures. In the case of an actual emergency evacuation, parents will be notified as soon as possible and will be asked to pick up their child.

Unusual Incidents

In accordance with Regulation 322 in the Department of Health Child Development Facility Regulations, when any unusual incident occurs, an Incident Form will be filled out by the teacher. The original form will go home with the child and a copy will be retained in the child's file. An additional copy will be reported to the Department of Human Services and Early Care in Education.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In the case of an emergency or other unforeseen events (such as a plumbing leak) the school will undergo an emergency relocation. Please refer to the Campus Information for more details about emergency relocation and designated pick up spots. This information will be distributed at parent handbook review meetings.

Access to School Building

Only individuals with legitimate AppleTree business are permitted on school grounds. For the safety of all, AppleTree attempts to limit access to the school. If parents are “buzzed” into the school, they should not allow others with whom they are not familiar to follow in behind them. Parents should alert any AppleTree staff member if they are followed in or if they notice any suspicious activity. For the safety of all children, students must be signed in and out daily and picked up through the front of the building. Because drop off and pick up tend to be busy times, please limit the number of people in your party.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

AppleTree has a vital interest in maintaining a safe and efficient working and learning environment. The school is committed to maintaining a drug free environment and will strictly enforce anti-substance abuse policies. To this, the following conduct is strictly prohibited at AppleTree:

- Possession, transfer, sale, distribution, use or solicitation of illegal drugs on school grounds and facilities (including the parking lot and adjacent areas)
- Possession or use of alcohol during AppleTree operational hours in AppleTree facilities
- Arriving at school to pick up a student while intoxicated or impaired by alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited; the police and Child and Family Services will be contacted should this occur.

School Dress Code

In order to promote an environment of academic and social success AppleTree has adopted a mandatory dress code policy. The uniform colors for the school are blue and white.

Please refer to the list below for detailed uniform standards.

Uniform Requirements

- Navy blue or khaki pants, skirts, dresses, jumpers, shorts (warm weather)
- White or light blue long sleeve, short sleeve, knit shirt- no pictures or patterns
- Navy blue or white sweatshirt or sweater- no pictures or patterns
- Navy blue or white socks
- Rubber soled enclosed shoes or sneakers (sandals – open toed shoes and party shoes are not permitted)

It is strongly recommended that children wear clothing that is appropriate for their dressing skills. Simple belts and elasticized waistbands are recommended.

Most three- and four-year old children are not able to tie their own shoes. AppleTree encourages families to purchase slip-on shoes or shoes with Velcro-fasteners instead of shoes with laces. Loose shoe-strings make it difficult for children to walk and can result in tripping. High tops can also be challenging for children to put on. Jewelry should be limited to simple stud earrings. Hoop earrings, chains, bracelets and rings can be damaged or cause injury to young children. AppleTree staff is not responsible for jewelry worn by students. If parents are concerned about children losing jewelry, we recommend that jewelry stay at home.

Parents should always dress their child appropriately with regards to the weather. Parents may be called to bring a change of clothes in their child is brought to school without a uniform or otherwise inappropriately attired. On occasion AppleTree has “dress down” and special “dress up” days. Parents receive written notification for those specifically designated school days.

Names should be written on or attached to all clothing and other valued possessions. Parents are urged to clearly mark children’s clothing with permanent ink. AppleTree is not responsible for lost or stolen clothing items. AppleTree maintains a Lost and Found Box located near the administrative office. It is important to keep in mind that preschool is messy at this age and the uniforms will get paint, dirt, etc. on them. This means your child is having fun at school! Although most materials are washable, AppleTree will not replace uniforms that become messy or stained.

Uniform Donations

Three- and four-year olds grow quickly. If a child grows out of uniform clothes and they are in good condition, parents are encouraged to donate them to AppleTree. AppleTree is a 501(c)3 organization, so donations are tax deductible.

We look forward to a great year with you and your child/ren this year. We encourage your active participation and cannot wait to show you the growth your child will demonstrate!

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

I/we have received and carefully read the AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School (AppleTree) Parent Handbook and understand it is intended to represent the policies, practices and procedures of the AppleTree. AppleTree reserves the right to change any policy, practice or procedure without any advance notice.

I/we fully understand that it is my/our responsibility to contact the Principal of AppleTree should I/we have questions or need clarification regarding any policies, practices or procedures.

I/we fully understand that any failure on the part of myself or of my child to follow the policies, practices or procedures of AppleTree may result in the termination of my child from the school.

Child's Name

Parent's/ Guardian's Signature

Date

Parent's/ Guardian's Name (Print or Type)

Parent's/ Guardian's Signature

Date

Parent's/ Guardian's Name (Print or Type)

Staff Contact Information

Campus/phone #	Principal Instructional Leader	Operations Coordinator
Columbia Heights 202-667-9490	Karen Stona Karen.stona@appletrainestitute.org	Lesly Hudgins Lesly.Hudgins@appletrainestitute.org
Douglas Knoll 202-629-2545	Charlie Crabtree Charles.crabtree@appletrainestitute.org	Drake Anthony Drake.anthony@appletrainestitute.org
Parklands 202-506-1890	Niesha Cumberbatch Niesha.cumberbatch@appletrainestitute.org	Sherika Dawson Sherika.dawson@appletrainestitute.org
Lincoln Park 202-621-6581	Shirvon Smith Shirvon.smith@appletrainestitute.org	Latricia Irby Latricia.irby@appletrainestitute.org
Oklahoma Ave 202-629-2179	Terica Alleyne Terica.alleyne@appletrainestitute.org	Danielle Jones Danielle.jones@appletrainestitute.org

Position	Responsibilities	Contact Information
Special Education Manager	Supervises the special education program	Kenyetta Singleton 202-594-2036 kenyetta.singleton@appletrainestitute.org
Language Acquisition and Family Literacy Manager	Supports teachers in ensuring that schools provide optimal support to all children, regardless of language status.	ChaQuan Wilder, 202-526-1503 cwilder@appletrainestitute.org
Positive Behavior Support Manager	Oversees the Social Work department to ensure standardized and evidenced-based mental health and behavioral support practices.	Megan Berkowitz, LICSW 202-656-7156 megan.berkowitz@appletrainestitute.org
Director of Community and Family Engagement	Supports the enrollment and transition processes at all sites and provides support to all AppleTree Schools.	Juanita White, 202-526-1503 Juanita.white@appletrainestitute.org
Director of Student Support Services	Oversees programming for Special Education, ELL, social work and positive behavior supports.	Allison Trentman, 202-455-5213 allison.trentman@appletrainestitute.org
Director of Operations and Compliance	Oversees all operations at schools, including facilities, school meals, billing. Supervises Operations	Tony Taylor, 202-526-1503 Tony.taylor@appletrainestitute.org

	coordinators.	
Director of School Leadership	Oversees school leaders and works to ensure the development of high quality principals.	
Chief Academic Officer	Oversees all academic programming at AppleTree Early Learning PCS.	Kathleen Black 202-526-1503 Kathleen.Black@ appletreeinstitute.org
Chief of Schools	Oversees the overall school and ensures all aspects of the program stay in good standing	Jamie Miles, 202-695-2226 jamie.miles@ appletreeinstitute.org
Board Chair	Serves as the chair of the Board of Trustees of AELPCS	Jack McCarthy, 202-488-3990 jmccarthy@appletreeinstitute.org

Appendix

Appendix 1

DC Public Schools Homeless Children and Youths Program Educational Rights Public Notice

The mission of the Homeless Children and Youths Program is to ensure free, appropriate, public educational opportunities for homeless children and youths; to provide technical assistance to schools, shelters and the community; and to heighten awareness of homeless issues. Homeless children and youths should have equal access to the same educational opportunities and services as non-homeless children and youths. In addition, homeless children and youths should have the opportunity to meet the same challenging academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

1. What is the definition of homeless children and youths?

The term “homeless child and youths” means:

- Children and youths who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelter (including D.C. transitional housing); are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and
- Unaccompanied youth, including youths who are not in the physical custody of a family or guardian, who qualify as homeless because they live in circumstances described above

2. Can a homeless child enroll in school?

Yes, the child may continue enrollment in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness. The school is the one the child attended prior to becoming homeless or the school in which the child was last enrolled. The child may also enroll in the school for the attendance area where he or she is living temporarily. If a dispute

arises over school selection or enrollment, the school must immediately enroll the homeless student in the school, pending resolution of the dispute. If the local school cannot resolve the dispute, the school must follow the process, not to exceed fifteen (15) days, as outlined in Directive 200.33, Dispute Resolution Process. The local school must provide the family, guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written statement of the school placement decision and the appeal rights.

3. Whom should be contacted if a dispute arises regarding enrolling a homeless child or youth in school or if other assistance is needed?

The Homeless Children and Youths Program is designed to assist homeless children and youths and their families regarding educational issues. If a homeless child or youth is experiencing difficulty in enrolling in school, please contact the Homeless Children and Youths Office at (202) 698-3321 or email Deltonia.Shropshire@dc.gov.

4. What services are provided by the Homeless Children and Youths Unit?

The Homeless Children and Youths Program provides the following services: transportation assistance; dispute resolution; after-school tutorial programs; school enrollment assistance; special projects; Homeless Awareness Month; staff development; and interagency collaboration.

Appendix 2

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

1. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
2. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
3. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record.

However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Appendix 3

AELPCS ANTI- BULLYING POLICY

Appletree Early Learning Public Charter School responds to the issue of bullying very seriously whether amongst children or adults, and has strict procedures that will be adhered to should there be any evidence within the school. AppleTree is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

What is bullying?

Bullying means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct whether physical, electronic, or verbal that:

1. May be based on a youth's actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place or residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth's association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics; and

2. Can reasonably be predicted to:
 1. Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to their person or property;
 2. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth's physical or mental health;
 3. Substantially interfere with the youth's academic performance or attendance; or
 4. Substantially interfere with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by an agency, educational institution, or grantee.

Bullying includes actions taken by one or more people with the deliberate intention of hurting another person (in any of the above ways). This policy is designed to support the schools behavior policy, equal opportunities and anti discrimination policies.

Bullying is about a premeditated act, which relies on a stage of cognitive development in order to think the process through.

Aims and Objectives

- Bullying is wrong and is damaging to individual people. AppleTree PCS proactively implements policies and procedures to prevent this, by developing a school in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- Bullying is prohibited from all AELPCS school grounds and functions sponsored by AELPCS, including:
 - On any transportation provided by AELPCS (such as buses to field trips)
 - Through any electronic communication;
 - On an AELPCS campus
 - With AELPCS property
 - And/or to the extent that it interferes with the youth's ability to participate in or benefit from AELPCS' services, activities, or privileges.
- We aim to deliver a safe and secure environment where all children can play and learn without fear or anxiety.
- This policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying and staff have a responsibility to eradicate bullying in our schools.
- We do not tolerate any kind of bullying as stated above on any grounds, and support all parties involved to gain a full understanding of our school's core values.

Code of Conduct and Consequences

AppleTree has developed universal school rules and language to help children understand behavioral expectations. All adults in the building reinforce these rules throughout the school day, creating a consistent, positive school culture. The first ECR unit, “Get Ready to Learn!”, was designed to provide children with an introduction to the school rules, and targeted practice opportunities to begin internalizing the rules. It is helpful if families can adopt this language if they find it useful. The AppleTree school rules are listed below:

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Use your inside voice and be kind.
3. Stay in your own space.
4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
5. Try your best!
6. Relax and enjoy learning.

AppleTree teachers use the specific, universal, proactive strategies outlined below, as well as additional classroom management tools, to help children follow the school rules and develop appropriate school-behaviors.

1. Teachers and instructional staff use clear and concise language when delivering praise, reprimands or instructions.
2. Teachers explicitly teach all rules and procedures multiple times. During each instructional episode, children model and practice the targeted skill or behavior.
3. Teachers praise students’ effort frequently to reward children for trying their best (“You are really paying attention to your friends” or “You are working so hard on your art project!”).
4. Teachers implement an established series of response strategies for children who are not following directions. The sequence can include:
 - a. A non-verbal reminder such as a look or gesture (finger over lips to discourage talking).
 - b. An individual verbal reminder (“Please do not throw the blocks.”)
 - c. Coaching through the appropriate behavior
 - d. Removal from the current activity that includes a chance to observe children behaving appropriately
 - e. Debriefing to help children identify and use acceptable replacement behaviors in situations previously associated with problem behavior.

Rough and Tumble Play

AELPCS acknowledges and highlights the need to recognize rough and tumble play as distinct from inappropriate or aggressive behavior. Television or films, which include superheroes, often influence young children or weapon play and they will

mimic this behavior through their play. We endorse the following strategies to manage this kind of play:

- Set boundaries for the games to be set out in
- Use planning opportunities to discuss the concept of 'good' and 'bad'.
- Support the play to find alternative solutions to weapon play, exploring different scenarios.

Hurtful Behavior

Very young children are 'egocentric' which means that they put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. We acknowledge that this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported and that very young children do not intentionally wish to cause hurt. If hurtful comments are made, our strategies are:

- To recognize that very young children are not always able to manage or regulate their own feelings and deliver them with language or appropriately
- Assist in this management to support their cognitive development.
- Offer support the student body by discussing the inappropriate behaviors through social skills groups and the ECR curriculum.

Anti - Bullying Procedure

The Role of the Principal

- It is the responsibility of the Principal to implement the schools anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff is aware of the policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.
- The Principal ensures that all children begin to learn that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behavior at AELPCS. The Principal monitors that anti-bullying procedures are being implemented on a regular basis.
- The Principal ensures that all staff is in receipt of sufficient training to be equipped to deal with any incidents of bullying.
- The Principal acts as the point of contact for complaints of bullying, including anonymous reports; no formal response shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- The Principal acts as the point of contact and is responsible for investigating complaints of violations of the bullying policy and retaliation. The contact list of principals may be found on the final pages of the Parent Handbook.

The Role of Staff

- Staff in the school take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. A record is kept of all incidents of bullying that happens in the school and these are shared with the principal

- and administration.
- For all incidents of bullying behavior, the challenging behavior form should be completed. We record all incidents of bullying that occur within the school. The form includes the date, time, location, context of the incident, and names of the individuals present.
 - In the event of a bullying incident:
 - Staff shall appropriately redirect the behavior, prevent retaliation and protect the target of the bullying.
 - Consequences for the student engaged in bullying include but are not limited to: temporary time out from classroom activity, visit to the principal's office and / or suspension. Consequences are unique to the incident and vary based on the nature of the incident, developmental age and any history of problem behavior.
 - AELPCS prohibits retaliation against:
 - Any person who reports bullying
 - Any victim of bullying
 - Any witness of bullying and/or anyone else with reliable information that a person has been subject to bullying. AELPCS may impose disciplinary action against a person who engages in retaliatory behavior.

The Role of Parents

- Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact the principal immediately. Parents may report an act of bullying anonymously.
- Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti bullying policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.
- Parents are expected to help develop their child's social skills at all times, in support of the school interventions.

Appeals Process

- Parents who are not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation into bullying complaints may appeal in writing within 30 days of the conclusion of the initial investigation to the Chief Academic Officer.
- A secondary investigation conducted by the Chief Academic Officer or her designee will be completed within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal, unless:
 - Circumstances require additional time to complete a thorough investigation, and these circumstances have been communicated in writing. The additional time is not to exceed 15 days.
- Any person filing an appeal has the right to seek further redress under the Human Rights Act.