



LOWER SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025

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WELCOME TO THE LOWER SCHOOL

Welcome to the Lower School at Milton Academy. All of the Lower School adults (faculty, staff, and administrators) are dedicated to educating students at the Lower School level. We value our partnership with Lower School families and seek to collaborate in support of the success of each student. We are a community of learners who find joy in discovery. In the Lower School, we endeavor to create a learning environment which fosters creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and deep understanding.

The *Lower School Family Handbook* should serve as a reference for important information as well as provide families with a sense of the Lower School's expectations. We know that young learners will make mistakes, both in their academic pursuits and in their behaviors. In the Lower School, we see mistakes as learning opportunities.

This handbook contains information about policies, programs, and other general information about the Lower School and Milton Academy. Please read it carefully. Milton Academy reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to amend, delete, or alter any of the contents of this *Lower School Family Handbook* as necessary.

MILTON ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

Milton Academy cultivates in its students a passion for learning and a respect for others. Embracing diversity and the pursuit of excellence, we create a community in which individuals develop competence, confidence, and character. Our active learning environment, in and out of the classroom, develops creative and critical thinkers, unafraid to express their ideas, prepared to seek meaningful lifetime success and to live by our motto, "Dare to be true."

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & JUSTICE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

- We believe that all human beings have value.
- We believe that injustices exist, both interpersonal and systemic, due to the identities that people hold.
- We believe that we have a responsibility to challenge unjust behaviors, practices, and policies within our sphere of influence.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES (see [map](#) for all locations)

Our school day starts at 8:00 a.m. Students may be dropped off between 7:45 - 8:00 a.m. Note that students should not arrive before 7:45 as they are not supervised before that time.

JUNIOR BUILDING (JB) ARRIVAL (GRADES K-2, see [map](#) for all locations)

- Students may be dropped off at the curb directly in front of the JB, where a teacher will be waiting. Please do not park your car in this area. Students will then walk to the front of the JB and wait/play with others until 8 a.m., when all students will go to their homerooms.
- Parents can also walk students to their classrooms. You may park in one of the legal spaces in either lot adjacent to the JB and then walk to the JB. If you are early, you may wait with your child until the doors to the JB open at 8 a.m. Some children want to be walked to their classrooms, others prefer to be left at the door. You are welcome to walk your child to their classroom, but should find another time if you'd like to speak with a teacher.

GREENLEAF ARRIVAL (GRADES 3-5, see [map](#) for all locations)

- **Pool Lot:** This drop-off location provides a path that leads directly to Greenleaf Hall.

- **“Rock”:** This location is just beyond the JB parking lot and is a good drop-off spot if you have children in JB and Greenleaf. Students may be dropped off at the path that leads to Greenleaf across from the Pritzker Science Center and then walk to Greenleaf.
- **Ware Loop:** Just in front of Ware Hall (on Centre Street) is a loop specifically for Middle School drop-off. Greenleaf Hall is immediately behind Ware Hall. Families with children in the Middle and Upper Schools as well as Greenleaf may use this “one-stop” drop-off site. JB students may NOT be dropped off in the Ware Loop. Ware Loop is only an option for morning drop-off, not afternoon pickup.
- For safety reasons, drop-off on Randolph Avenue along the side of Greenleaf or at the entrance to the circle is strictly prohibited.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Our academic school day ends at 3:00 p.m. Students taking the bus or going to our After School Program (ASP) will be transported by Lower School staff. If students require early dismissal from school, please email their homeroom teacher. Parents should retrieve a student from the office (in JB or Greenleaf) for an early dismissal. Changes to your regular dismissal plan should be entered into our dismissal program, PickUp Patrol, by 1:30 p.m.

JUNIOR BUILDING DISMISSAL (See [map](#) for all locations)

- At 3 p.m., departing JB students will walk with teachers to their dismissal pickup location, to the ASP location, or to the 3 p.m. bus.
- Kindergarten students will be picked up by parents near the Lower School garden. To keep from blocking the Grade 1/2 pickup area, drivers for kindergarten students who come early should stop at the curb beginning near the baseball backstop and continue lining up to the garden.
- Grades 1 and 2 students will be picked up in front of the JB unless they have kindergarten siblings, in which case they will join their younger siblings at the kindergarten pickup location.
- A teacher will make note of the cars as they arrive and call the students.

- A teacher will help the student into the car.
- Drivers should remain in their cars.
- All drivers in line need to wait until the first cars are directed to go. They can then leave slowly and carefully, keeping an eye out for campus personnel who will be directing traffic. No driver should drive around another car to exit.
- Please be patient. We are all working to make the process as safe and efficient as possible.
- Parents who have students in both the JB and Greenleaf should pick up JB students first. Greenleaf students will be with their younger JB siblings at the JB locations if they are on time to do so. Otherwise, drivers should pick their Greenleaf students up at the “Rock.”
- ASP teachers will escort students to the 4 p.m. buses.

GREENLEAF DISMISSAL (see [map](#) for all locations)

- At 3 p.m., departing Greenleaf students will walk with teachers to their dismissal pickup location, to the ASP location, or to the 3 p.m. bus.
- Greenleaf students will be picked up in the Pool Lot or, if they have JB siblings, will walk to the “Rock” to be picked up.
- At 3 p.m., departing students will walk to the Pool Lot under the direction of one of their teachers.
- Drivers should remain in their cars. Teachers/students walk to the cars for pickup. Teachers will bring any remaining students to the area adjoining the lot to wait for pickup. Campus Safety will direct cars to exit and direct the next group of cars in as space permits.
- No driver should drive around another car to exit.
- Please be patient. We are all working to make the process as safe and efficient as possible.
- Parents who have students in both the JB and Greenleaf should pick up JB students first. Greenleaf students will walk to their younger JB siblings at the JB locations if they are on

time to do so. Otherwise, drivers should pick up these Greenleaf students at the “Rock.” You do NOT need to go to the Pool Lot if you have students in both buildings.

- For safety reasons, pickup on Randolph Avenue along the side of Greenleaf or at the entrance to the circle is strictly prohibited.
- Meeting your child in front of Ware Hall is NOT allowed for pickup.
- Students who take the 3 p.m. bus will be escorted to the bus stop by a teacher.
- ASP teachers will escort students to the 4 p.m. buses.

LOWER SCHOOL COMMUNITY EVENTS

During the school year there are a number of events that are important community-building opportunities for students and families. Information about various events will be provided in weekly emails from teachers. These events can also be found on the [Lower School calendar](#) on Milton’s website. Please reach out if you have any questions about attendance for these events.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

We have a number of ways that we communicate with families. They include:

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

On most Fridays, you will receive a weekly newsletter that includes information from the classroom, important Lower School announcements and updates, and a calendar of upcoming events. To limit the number of emails that parents receive from us, we try to funnel most parent communication through these weekly newsletters.

FAMILY / TEACHER CONFERENCES

The K-5 teachers host family teacher conferences two times during the school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Families are welcome to reach out to teachers at other times during the school year if they would like.

REPORT CARDS

All K-5 students receive a written, narrative report two times during the school year, once in January and once in June. The reports are highly individualized and seek to capture who each student is as a learner and provide families with some specific information regarding progress, achievement, and areas for growth.

PARENT / GUARDIAN PORTAL

Families have access to resource pages as part of the Parent/Guardian Portal within Veracross. This Portal provides information about Milton Academy as a whole, as well as information specific to the Lower School. Families will find an archive of all newsletters in the Lower School section of the Parent/Guardian Portal.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE EMAILS

From time to time, Lower School Parents Association (LSPA) class reps will send out emails to families in the class. These emails could include reminders, updates from the Parents Association, and potential volunteer opportunities

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

There are a number of ways for families to communicate with the school. Please note that we expect families to be in contact directly with the school if they need to communicate with their

child(ren) during the school day, which includes our After School Programming (ASP) from 3:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.

These are the best ways for families to contact the Lower School:

CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Lower School faculty serve as a family's first "go-to" for questions about school. Email addresses for faculty members can be found in the Faculty & Staff directory in the [Parent/Guardian Portal on Veracross](#). Since our faculty are fully present with our students during the school day, you should allow for 24 hours for an email response from teachers, with the exception of weekends. All school email addresses use the following format: **First name_ Last name@milton.edu**

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Parents of students in the Junior Building (K-2) should reach out to [Patrick Broome](#) and parents of students in Greenleaf Hall (Grades 3-5) should reach out to [Monica Furtado](#). These staff members can help you with general questions or can help point you in the right direction. They will also help with attendance and early dismissal, and can also get quick messages to teachers or students during the school day.

LOWER SCHOOL NURSES

We have two nurses who work with us in the Lower School. Their main office is in the Junior Building. Their contact information is:

[Diane M Holland RN, BSN](#)

617-898-1671

Monday and Thursday

[Ann Marie Martens RN, BSN](#)

617-898-1671

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

CLASSROOM TEACHERS

To contact Campus Safety in case of emergency, dial 2911 from any campus telephone, or dial 617-898-2911 from any other telephone. Calls to this number will be answered by a Campus Safety officer on patrol 24 hours a day. Dial 911 from any campus telephone to reach outside emergency services. Dialing “7” first is not necessary when calling 911. If a situation merits a 911 call, please call Milton Academy Campus Safety as well.

In the case of a national, state, or local emergency, the School will communicate appropriately with parents through email and website announcements. We will notify local radio and television outlets; those stations often refer audiences to their respective websites. The School will also use the Milton Academy Campus Emergency Notification system, which includes indoor and outdoor speakers, text messaging and email, notifying faculty and students immediately in the event of an emergency. This communication will be followed with updates posted on www.milton.edu. If warranted, additional information will be communicated to parents through email.

In the event of a national, state, or local emergency, family and friends should not call the Campus Safety extension, as that line should be kept available for on-campus communication.

HOMework GUIDE

Research suggests that the most beneficial form of homework for elementary age students, by far, is reading. This includes reading with an adult as well as independent reading; it is important that students experience both formats on a regular basis. All students K-5 should be encouraged to engage in this type of homework; however, accountability for doing so on a regular basis does not begin until Grade 2.

In general, here are the suggested guidelines for homework time by subject in the LS:

- K: no formal homework
- Grade 1: no formal homework
- Grade 2:
 - Reading: 20–30 minutes/ night
- Grade 3:
 - Reading: approx. 30 minutes/ night
 - Math: 15–20 minutes/ night
 - Select projects in other subject areas
- Grade 4:
 - Reading: 30–40 minutes/ night
 - Math: 20–30 minutes/ night
 - Select projects in other subject areas
- Grade 5:
 - Reading: 30–40 minutes/ night
 - Math: approx. 30 minutes/ night
 - Select projects in other subject areas

STUDENT SUPPORT

Milton Academy strives to foster an environment of equity and inclusion. The School seeks to partner with families of students with visible and invisible disabilities to identify barriers and implement plans for access. It is Milton Academy's goal, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to ensure that individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and receive reasonable accommodations when necessary to ensure equal access

to Milton Academy's programs and services. Milton Academy is dedicated to working with students to provide school-based counseling and support and, when appropriate, arrange accommodations tailored to meet a student's disability-based needs. Milton Academy recognizes that there are many types of disabilities that may require accommodations in the academic setting, and that all accommodations must be narrowly customized to meet each individual's disability-based needs. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Milton Academy has no obligation to provide accommodations that the School determines are unnecessary or unreasonable; constitute an undue burden; directly harm the individual or others; or fundamentally alter the nature of the School's academic program.

PARENT-INITIATED REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

A parent of a Lower School child with a documented learning difference may request academic accommodation by contacting the Lower School director of learning resources. In order for a student to receive a disability-based accommodation, a parent must submit current, comprehensive documentation which defines the student's disability and delineates recommendations for school-based accommodations. Disability-based academic accommodations are those accommodations necessary to ensure that a student with a documented disability can equally access Milton Academy's programs and services.

PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING STUDENT VULNERABILITIES

If a student has been identified by a teacher and/or learning specialist as having a vulnerability in a specific area of their academic functioning, the teacher and/or learning specialist will raise the concern at a Child Study Team (CST) meeting. The Child Study Team is composed of the grade level classroom teachers, learning specialists, the Lower School director of learning resources, and the Lower School principal. If a parent has a concern about their child's learning profile, they should contact the child's classroom teacher along with the Lower School director of learning resources. The concern is subsequently presented and discussed at the next CST meeting.

INTERVENTION PLAN

The CST considers which helpful teaching strategies to implement in view of the reported concern. The teacher and/or learning specialist(s) are tasked with monitoring specific patterns of behavior

and/or performance, and sharing observations with the team and parents in a timely manner. If the concern persists despite intervention, the CST will work collaboratively to support the student and will be in communication with the student's parents to present an action plan. The action plan will be implemented for approximately one month, after which its effectiveness will be assessed. If the action plan is successful, the parents will be notified and the support plan will continue as needed.

OUTSIDE SERVICE PROVIDERS

If the CST determines that the student continues to struggle despite the implementation of the action plan, the CST will meet with the parents to discuss the possibility of pursuing private, outside support services for the student. As such, any services provided outside of the school are the financial responsibility of the family. The School may provide the family with recommended providers. Services could include tutoring, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, literacy intervention, and social pragmatics support. The CST will communicate with outside service providers to align efforts and will monitor student progress in school after the addition of the outside service provider.

OUTSIDE TESTING

If students continue to have challenges while receiving outside support, the CST may recommend further evaluation to gain a deeper understanding of the student's learning profile. The student's specific learning challenges will guide which type of evaluation is suggested but could include a neuropsychological evaluation, a psychoeducational evaluation, a speech and language evaluation, an occupational therapy evaluation, or a psychological intake. The School provides families with a list of established evaluators and, upon a family's request, can refer the student to specific providers. Once the student's parents have selected an evaluator, the Lower School director of learning resources will support families in completing the necessary paperwork, including teacher observation forms, a release form, and the evaluator's intake forms. The appropriate School personnel will complete and send all forms directly to the evaluator. Parents are financially responsible for outside testing and any family wishing to discuss financial assistance for testing should reach out directly to the Lower School principal to discuss the availability of assistance. We expect parents to share the results of these educational and cognitive assessments with us. Although disclosing this kind of information may be difficult, having it helps us to work collaboratively to support your child. Please be assured that all outside test results will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Parents may choose to share test results with the Lower School principal or Lower School director of learning resources.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to be positive and cooperative in their dealings with all members of the School community. A student's behavior that does not meet this standard will merit a response and may be considered a violation of essential expectations. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to, deliberate disobedience of or rudeness toward students, faculty, or staff, or repeated violations of any School rules and policies.

Please see the 'Appendix' at the end of this document for further information about various Milton Academy behavior policies.

RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

We expect students to respect community property and the property of others. Stealing and willful destruction of or damage to the property of others, including School property, seriously undermines the qualities of trust necessary in a school. Cases of accidental damage of or destruction to School property will not warrant disciplinary action, but the student(s) involved will be held responsible for the costs of repair. Milton recognizes that its students have legitimate privacy interests in their belongings and in their conduct. However, a student's privacy interests are not absolute, particularly when those interests collide with real or perceived dangers to that student or to others, or when they collide with real or perceived violations of Milton's rules and regulations, or of federal, state, or local laws. Milton accordingly reserves the right to reasonably inspect, search, and/or seize any student's belongings or property at any time that Milton's faculty, staff, or other representative reasonably believes that conduct that violates Milton's rules or policies, or that is unlawful, has occurred, is occurring, or will occur. Milton may take this action on its own, or in conjunction with law enforcement authorities as it sees fit under the circumstances. Moreover, no set guidelines can foresee or describe every situation that might arise, and we can not limit, in any way, the school's ability to act as it deems appropriate under the circumstances.

LOWER SCHOOL DRESS GUIDELINES

Milton Academy honors the joy of childhood and the movement that is central to an excellent elementary education. We also honor the importance of allowing our students to wear clothing

that they are comfortable with. The following guidelines should be considered when selecting clothing for school.

- Students should come to school dressed in clothes ready to move.
- Students should have an extra set of season-appropriate clothing at school. **Please label all belongings to be left at school with your child's name.**
- Students may not wear any clothing with graphics or text that depict violence or that would be hurtful or excluding towards others based on their identities.
- Students are required to wear closed-toed shoes for art/woodworking class and sneakers with laces or velcro straps for P.E. class. A pair of sneakers can be left at school so that students always have a safe pair of shoes for these activities.
- Students and families should consider the weather when choosing clothing for the day and come to school prepared to spend at least 30–45 minutes outdoors. Students are welcome to leave snow pants, snow boots, mittens, and outdoor hats at school for winter play.
- Students may be given dress guidelines for special occasions here at school. Parents will receive specific dress guidelines well in advance of these special occasions.
- If a student comes to school in clothing that restricts their ability to productively and safely participate in learning activities, the school will contact the student's parents/guardians to rectify the situation. Lower School students will not experience any disciplinary action as a result of their dress.

CLASSROOM RULES

All Lower School students are expected to follow classroom rules that have been set up to provide everyone with a safe and comfortable environment. A student who shows a pattern of difficulty with the following rules will face disciplinary action:

- Students should treat all members of the community with respect and kindness.
- Students should not exhibit disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- Students are expected to be inclusive of their classmates. This means that students must show flexibility in including all classmates in any learning and social activities.

Classroom teachers will work with students who have trouble with these rules with the goal of seeing improvements. Any teacher may reach out to the Lower School principal at any time for support with student behavior. What follows is the general protocol used by Lower School adults (faculty & staff) when working with students whose behavior has fallen outside of our established expectations:

- The teacher will speak with the student about the problematic behavior and will give the student a warning.
- If problems continue, the teacher will notify parents about the issue and will work with the family on strategies to improve behavior.
- If problems persist, the Lower School principal may arrange a meeting with the teachers, parents, and/or the student, to create a behavior improvement plan.
- If the student continues to break classroom rules while on the behavior improvement plan, the Lower School principal will meet with parents to discuss next steps, which could include dismissal from school.

STUDENT SAFETY GUIDELINES

The following behaviors are not allowed under any circumstances and may result in serious disciplinary action, even on the very first offense:

- Unkind, mean, or derogatory remarks to classmates or teachers
- Being physical, in any way, with other students
- Culturally insensitive or offensive comments
- Engaging in unsafe behavior in person, on the internet, or after school hours
- Harassment or Bullying (as defined in the appendix of this document)
- Teasing and/or name-calling
- Damaging school or personal property
- Dishonesty, lying, and cheating
- Disobeying the directive of a Lower School faculty or staff member

Unlike the way that we handle failure to follow classroom rules, breaking a Student Safety Guideline just once may warrant serious consequences. Failure of a student to follow these guidelines may result in the following protocol:

1. The Lower School principal will gather information to understand the details of the situation. They may then consult with other members of the Lower School team, and will ultimately decide on any appropriate consequences.
2. The Lower School principal will contact the student's parents to discuss the situation and communicate next steps. Depending on the situation, the consequence could include (but is not limited to) being sent home from school for the day, a multiple-day suspension, expulsion from school, and possibly contacting outside authorities.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE LOWER SCHOOL

Milton provides its students with network-based technology. However, that technology (computers, iPads, peripherals, and the campus data network) is shared by everyone at Milton, so policies for its acceptable use are necessary. Technology is also a form of distance communication, where you cannot see the reaction of the person with whom you are communicating. We expect our students to use the computers with complete integrity, respecting the ideas and creations of others and facilitating the open expression of ideas. Disconnecting or moving monitors, computers, related equipment or cables interferes with others' use and is considered an act of vandalism. Similarly, users may not change, modify or add to the installed software or hardware, preference files, Internet addresses or other configurations. All students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines when using school technology resources, on- or off-campus.

Any violations of these policies may result in the suspension of privileges and/or disciplinary action. Technology is a constantly changing environment. Therefore, additional policies and guidelines may be developed as situations warrant. Changes in policy will be prominently announced, and students will be expected to be aware of them and to follow them closely.

KEEP DEVICES SAFE AND CLEAN

Parents are responsible for any damage done to student devices. Students may not embellish their school-issued device in any way, nor may they remove identification stickers placed by the School. Students should not share passwords. Passwords to accounts provided by the School are private to

each individual. Using another's password, attempting to find out another's password, or sharing a password with someone else are all considered integrity violations.

USE DEVICES FOR SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Students should use school-issued devices for school work only. Devices should not be used for socializing, communicating with other students, or accessing non-school-related websites and apps.

AVOID RESTRICTED SITES

Milton Academy permits access to the internet, with restrictions on content not appropriate for an academic community. Students who inadvertently access inappropriate content should let an adult know immediately. Attempting to circumvent filtering software is prohibited. Students who need to access restricted websites for academic reasons should contact the technology teacher or classroom teacher.

TREAT EQUIPMENT WITH RESPECT

Students are expected to handle all School-owned devices carefully, understand that they are learning tools provided for their use by Milton Academy, and that the School in its discretion may monitor students' use as it determines is advisable or necessary. The technology department will make every effort to repair damaged devices; however, families will be charged for damage beyond our ability to repair, which may include the full replacement cost.

TECHNOLOGY USAGE IS MONITORED

All campus use of student laptops, smartphones, email accounts, hard drives, network storage, and internet activity are monitored by Milton Academy, as well as off-campus use of School-owned devices and internet accounts. Additionally, School-owned or personal devices may be searched at any time if there is a suspicion of violation of any of the School's policies or concern for a student's well-being.

PERSONAL DEVICES

Personal electronics (including cell phones, personal laptops, smart watches, tablets, and other devices) that are brought to school may not be used during the school day. They should be stored in a backpack and kept turned off while school is in session. This includes school-sponsored activities after the traditional school day, such as our After School Program (ASP).

APPENDIX

[Milton Academy Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan](#)

[Middle School and Lower School Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)

[Massachusetts Hazing Law](#)

[Student Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)