

Mighty Roots Academy: Homeschool Program

Supporting Documentation

2019-2020

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Our Mission

The mission of Mighty Roots academy is to provide active, multi-age learning in a nature rich environment.

Our Philosophy

Modern education sees learning as an accumulation of facts; it is content-driven but skills deficient.

Many children don't know what to do with the information they have. The results include an inability to order thoughts and to think clearly or independently. At Mighty Roots Academy, we believe

it is most important to develop the skills of independent learning that equip students for a lifetime of

inquiry and growth. A true education builds the skills needed for becoming a lifelong learner. We

believe that students benefit most when skill-building is the focus, no matter the subject.

To accomplish this, Mighty Roots Academy focuses on nature-based learning, mixed age groups, and cross curricular classes that use active learning.

- **Nature Based Learning:** Nature is at the core of our program at Mighty Roots Academy. We take learning outdoors as much as possible: exploring, playing and growing strong bodies and minds on our beautiful 5-acre campus.
- **Mixed Age Groups:** Traditional schooling is one of the only environments in our culture where children only interact with others of their same age. By using mix age classrooms, students always have someone who knows more than they do from which they can learn, yet at the same time have someone they can help teach. This creates an environment where our staff become guides. Students learn that they are valuable and have something to contribute to the lives of others. They also learn how to seek out guidance as they become life-long learners.
- **Cross Curricular:** Our classes bring together learning from core education subjects, practical arts, and performing arts for an education that focuses on the whole self not just the mind. When students deeply explore their interests, the learning follows naturally with the guidance of our specialized staff.
- **Active Learning:** At Mighty Roots Academy we *do* to learn. Our goal is for learning to feel like play as students move, create, discover, imagine, and explore. Active learning helps foster a desire to always be learning as opposed to only learning while doing academic tasks.

Our Goals

The primary goal of the Mighty Roots Academy's approach is to train students to be curious about the world around them which leads to a constant and lifelong learning mindset as students learn how to learn. Academic success is a natural by-product of this approach.

Mighty Roots Academy aims to:

- Emphasize that “less is better”, meaning that the student is better off listening to and reading books, exploring nature, and learning about the world around them than grinding through workbooks that really don't teach as much as they might seem.
- Emphasize depth over scope of content so that courses really aim for mastery of key skills, which takes time and focused attention. In developing these skills, students will learn how to learn, and thereby will be motivated, competent, independent, lifelong learners.
- Challenge students by making the courses lively, inspiring, and centered around students' individual interest and learning needs.
- Allow families with multiple children the opportunity to provide quality, age appropriate instruction for both older and younger children at the same time.
- Support families in their desire to homeschool by limiting our classwork to the academy day with no required outside homework.
- Encourage parents to learn alongside their children through extension activities at home which are provided by our staff.
- Support parents by sharing in the education of their children, so that through time apart parents can be refreshed and therefore better educators of their children when together.
- Model and, when necessary, guide students in principles such as humility, graciousness, and concern for others.

PARTICIPATION CONTRACT

Mighty Roots Academy's Policies and Procedures 2019-2020

Homeschooling requires parents to assume sole responsibility for the education of their children. While Mighty Roots Academy provides a framework for education and provides the opportunity to work with qualified staff, it is expected that parents will provide the structure and reinforcement to enable their students to learn. As an academy where classes meet only twice weekly and where all parents are required to serve in some way, Mighty Roots Academy is especially dependent upon parents for their cooperation both during a school day and at home during the remainder of the week. This Participation Contract is an essential means of maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect and support essential to learning. The rules are intended to promote an academy culture of safety and courtesy among staff, parents and students. By agreeing to abide by the Participation Contract, parents are supporting their own child's education and supporting the education of all students in the program.

Mandatory Meetings

Students and one parent MUST attend the Back to School Orientation meeting in order to attend classes. There are two opportunities to attend this meeting. Specific dates will be given at a later time. We recommend planning to attend the first meeting in August and using the second meeting only as a backup in case circumstances make it impossible to attend the first. Please plan accordingly. Failure to plan ahead will not be an excuse since families will have many months advance notice concerning the dates. Families who have not had all qualified students and a parent attend a full meeting will not be allowed to begin classes. In that case, parents will have to approach the Board of Directors after the first day of classes; the Board will then meet to consider the case before the student(s) will be allowed to attend.

Attendance and Supervision

Mighty Roots Academy Homeschool program is a drop-off program. Parents should drop student off between 9:15 and 9:25 on Tuesdays and Thursdays according to the academy schedule. Parents must pick students up between 2:30 and 2:40 at the conclusion of classes unless the student is enrolled in an after hours class that immediately follows the homeschool academy day. Parents are not allowed to remain on campus during the homeschool academy day unless they have received permission by one of the directors. Permission will be granted for parents to be on campus when completing volunteer service hours that have previously been approved by a director. If students are being dropped off or picked up outside the regular pick up and drop off time, the student must be signed in/out and taken to or picked up from their teacher for that class period.

Communication

Managing a school requires good communication. For that reason, every family is responsible for checking and reading email each week, as well as communications sent through our text messaging service. We request that parents be courteous and pick up children promptly as staff are only contracted for class time; parents may be assessed an additional childcare fee if staff are kept late.

Lunch and Discovery Play

Lunch for students is in a designated classroom space or outside with a supervising adult. Children of all ages must be outside with designated adult supervision.

There is no eating or drinking in any area of the building by students except at designated times unless special arrangements have been made. A list of allergies will be provided before the start of the semester, please pack snacks and lunches that do not include foods on our allergy list.

The goal of this time is for students to spend as much time outside in free play as possible. Most days students will eat lunch outside at our outdoor table area. This will be moved indoors when needed. After eating, all students will complete a small school chore from the chore list. The remainder of the time is to be spent in free play with adult supervision.

Safety

- Only those associated with Mighty Roots Academy or The Wedding Place may be in the classrooms or on the grounds during academy hours. All non-staff will need to sign in and wear a visitor's badge during their visit so that we all can recognize an approved visitor.
- All parents should remain alert and be prepared to confront anyone in the building or on the grounds who appears not to belong. Should you become aware of a stranger in the building or on the grounds, or of anyone attempting to interact with students, please call 911 immediately. Use your best judgement to ascertain first whether they are an academy student or parent, but the safety of the children is a priority.
- Students and parents should use the established crosswalks (marked with cones) to cross the driveway. The driveway is never a play area. Nobody should cross the driveway outside of these designated areas. Orange cones will clearly mark the crosswalk area. Please help your children establish the habit of using these crosswalks for maximum safety.

- Students may not congregate in the parking lot. Games may be played in the back parking lot section when cones are making the area and only during Discover play times. This is never allowed during a drop-off or pick-up time.
- Students must stay within the property limits of the rented grounds.
- All visitors must make every effort to avoid disrupting regular class routines.

Required Service Program

Mighty Roots Academy homeschool program parents are required to serve on at least one service team during the semester. If a family is registered at Mighty Roots Academy, that family is required to sign-up for a service task. Having all families serve is necessary to keep the school running safely and efficiently and to keep it as affordable as possible for everyone. Before the school year begins, an online service signup form will be sent to all families listing service areas of need. Those who do not respond during the sign-up period will be randomly assigned to one of the remaining positions. Examples of service areas include weekly classroom set up and putting it back for wedding usage, cleaning, drop-off sign-in and pick-up sign-out supervision, snow removal, substitute teacher, and lunch supervision. Mighty Roots has received a reduction in our rent by providing all our own cleaning, room set up on Tuesdays and putting the rooms back together on Thursdays for wedding services, but it does mean that these are our biggest service areas.

Our Facility Policies

- All non-emergency communications and concerns regarding our facility should go through our director at (816) 873-2022 or at tracy@mightyrootsacademy.com. Should the director be unavailable, please contact a board member. DO NOT contact The Wedding Place directly.
- The owner's home is on the property. Please note that the owners will be in their home while we are using the facility. In order to give the owner the privacy that is needed, never enter their home, the garden with the fountain at the front of their home, or the front porch at any time.
- Absolutely no smoking, vaping, or any recreational drug use on the facility grounds.
- In any emergency situation, call 911 immediately.

Inclement Weather Policy & Extended Class Day Schedule

We will make an in-house determination by 6 am as to whether to hold classes. Most of the time we will follow the cancelation schedule for the Grandview Public Schools. This applies to school being canceled due to road conditions. We may choose to differ from their cancelation schedule when cancelations are due to temperatures or other issues. Families are always able to make the decision for themselves if they feel comfortable driving with the road conditions. Students are never penalized for missing school. Families and teachers will receive a text when classes are canceled.

Cancellations will also be listed on the website as soon as possible. Classes will not be canceled as a result of low attendance. Every effort will be made to make up class days missed according to our schedule due to inclement weather.

Disciplinary Action at Former Education Institutions

It is the responsibility of the parents to notify Mighty Roots Academy in writing at the time of registration of a student's suspension or expulsion from any other educational institution. These matters will remain confidential and may require further inquiry from the Board.

Attendance Policy

Due to the nature of twice weekly classes, it is important for students to be in class so that they do not have gaps in the learning that takes place. It takes from the time of all students when a staff member has to help a student pick up on missed class experiences. At the same time, please keep sick children home in accordance with our sick policy.

Sick Policy

Children may not attend classes at Mighty Roots Academy if they are running a fever. Children should remain at home for a full 24 hours after a fever has broken. Please remember that bringing a sick child to our academy spreads that sickness to other families and does not look out for our program as a whole. Some illnesses require those recovering to stay home longer than 24 hours. Please keep this in mind when deciding whether your child is healthy enough to come to school. Please consult with your doctor if you are unsure if your child is still contagious.

Behavior Policy

The Mighty Roots Academy setting is an exciting, new social environment for many of our students. It is for the benefit of all that we establish an atmosphere that supports learning. Such an atmosphere is based on respect for one another and the tasks we come together to undertake. Any behaviors which undermine or distract from the learning atmosphere are not allowed at Mighty Roots Academy. If deemed necessary, we may schedule additional mandatory academy-wide meetings for all parents and/or students. These meetings will remind students about academy policies needing attention including, but not limited to, policies regarding dress, manners, and/or behavior. Other offenses that may lead to dismissal include, but are not limited to: theft, plagiarism, dishonesty, slander, profanity, vulgarity, smoking, recreational drug use, public displays of affection (PDA), sexual contact, and use of pornography.

Attire Policy

Modesty is our policy. Shorts should be longer than a child's fingertips when arms are resting at the sides. Skirts or dresses should have shorts or pants underneath due to the active nature of our program. Students should not wear overly tight clothes, or clothing with rude or inappropriate sayings or images. Shirts must cover the entire midriff.

Electronics Policy

Students are allowed to bring electronic devices at their own risk. We see some electronic devices as tools for learning and it is acceptable for them to be used as such. It will not be permitted as entertainment or as distractions in class time. Teachers can further define device policy for their own class. The use of electronic devices is not allowed at all during Discovery Play.

Solicitation of Goods and Services

The selling of any goods or services (i.e., Girl Scout cookies, tutoring, raffle tickets, MLMs, etc.) is not permitted on school premises or via school emails unless associated with a Mighty Roots Academy sponsored function. Exceptions may be given if pre-approved by the Board of Directors. Reproduction and use of Mighty Roots Academy class materials are for Mighty Roots Academy classes only and are not to be used for outside classes. The reproduction, adaptation, distribution, or use of any part or parts of class materials for commercial purposes (ex., for a similar course) without prior written permission from the instructor and Mighty Roots Academy is forbidden.

Attitude of Respect

A vital component of a learning atmosphere is respect. This includes respect for the tasks that we at Mighty Roots Academy are doing, respect for the adults who are there to guide us, and respect for those with whom we share this academy. A respectful attitude is the key to building both good character and true program spirit.

Respect for a class times includes:

- Bringing all supplies with you to class. Any notebooks, text, and writing utensil, as well as ongoing projects like journals that are used throughout the semester.
- Not conversing socially in class. The appropriate time for that is outside of class or during lunch and Discovery Play.
- Being prompt for class by being ready to start as class begins. If for some important reason you need to enter or leave while a class is in session, you must do that with utmost quiet so as not to disrupt the class. Chronic tardiness could result in expulsion from the class.

Respect for adults includes:

- Helping adults who are carrying things and/or holding doors for them.
- Helping to set up or break down chairs, tables, etc. as needed. Every family can contribute in some way. It is not respectful to expect others to do it for us.

Respect for others includes:

- Being considerate. For example, don't discuss social arrangements or exchange gifts in front of those who are not included.
- Not bullying fellow students. A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and they have difficulty defending themselves.
- Refraining from all gossip. Gossip has no place in our school and is an offense of school policy. Parents will be notified if their children are engaging in this destructive behavior. One easy way to check if you are gossiping is to ask yourself, "Is this something I'd be comfortable sharing in front of the person about whom I'm speaking?" If not, don't say it. This goes for adults as well.
- Being open to new friendships. It's easy to fall into comfortable patterns with our friendships, but cliques are destructive and rob students of meaningful relationships with those outside their "group". We encourage all students to enjoy the blessings of new friendships.

- Conflict can happen anywhere. Even a small miscommunication can be hurtful. Teachers may arbitrate to help children reconcile conflicts with others by following the pattern of (1) Take responsibility for your own actions, (2) Say I'm sorry or dialog about the issue, (3) Make a plan for doing something different moving forward, and (4) Ask for help from another staff member if necessary.

Respect for our facility includes:

- Remembering that we are meeting in someone else's home and property and we should treat it with respect.
- Cleaning up after ourselves throughout the day and especially at lunchtime. This goes for both outside the building as well as inside.
- Sitting only on chairs - not on tables or chair backs.
- Taking care to not wear muddy shoes into the building.

Protocol for Addressing Concerns

In the event parents are dissatisfied with any aspect of the school, or have a disagreement with anyone associated with the school, they are encouraged to seek resolution by beginning with privately addressing the matter only with the person(s) directly involved with the problem and to make a good faith attempt to resolve the issue. In general, parents have a responsibility to realize the negative effect gossip can have on others and on the school. For this reason, they shall not discuss the matter with anyone else. Should parents be dissatisfied with the result of this approach, they should bring the matter to the Board of Directors and all parties will promptly be given an opportunity to be heard and present their concerns. The Board of Directors and the parents will agree to cooperate in making arrangements to meet in person in a timely fashion at a location specified by the school and at a time mutually agreeable to all parties.

Any such meeting is to take place no later than 8 days after the initial notice of the parent's request and shall be attended by the individuals (including parent, teacher or Board member) involved. Should parents have concerns about the curriculum or the teacher of a class, they should first speak with a director or a board member to discuss the matter. In some cases, parents may be advised to address the situation with the teacher directly. In other cases, a director may find it necessary to intervene. The respective director may bring the matter to the Board of Directors for further intervention if necessary. With regard to all of the above situations, the Mighty Roots Board of Directors will make findings with respect to the matter and determine what, if any, decision is appropriate, including a possible determination of suspension or termination of the academy's relationship with parent(s), their child or children, teacher, or other person associated with Mighty Roots Academy.

In the event of a decision of suspension or termination, there will be no refund of tuition or fees. In the case of a teacher dismissal, the teacher will only receive pay for the class sessions taught. The decisions of the Academy's Board of Directors are binding and final.

Failure to Abide by the Participation Contract or Egregious Conduct

In the event that the Board of Directors believes that any terms of the Participation Contract have been breached by any person associated with the Mighty Roots Academy, the Board of Directors have the right to require a meeting in person to discuss its concerns. Additionally, should any conduct not enumerated in this contract be considered by the Board of Directors to be egregious and a threat to the wellbeing of the academy, the board reserves the right to require a meeting in person to discuss its concerns. For either circumstance, any such meeting is to take place no later than 8 days after the initial notice, and will be at a location specified by the board and at a time mutually agreeable to all parties.

Failure to cooperate in scheduling and attending said in-person meeting will be grounds for the BOD to suspend or terminate the family's involvement with and attendance at Mighty Roots Academy. The school's Board of Directors will make findings with respect to the matter and determine what, if any, decision is appropriate, including a possible determination of suspension or termination of the academy's relationship with parent(s), their child or children, a teacher, or other person associated with the academy. In the event of a decision of suspension or termination, there will be no refund of tuition or fees. In the case of a teacher dismissal, the teacher will only receive payment for class days taught. The decisions of the school's Board of Directors are binding and final.

Classroom Disciplinary Issues

Discipline by the staff during class will follow this procedure:

The student will be given one warning concerning inappropriate behavior. If the student continues to misbehave, he/she will be removed from that day's class and parents will be notified. If an issue persists after sincere attempts to address it with the parent and child, the teacher will bring it to the attention of the director, who will confer with the family to reach a resolution. Repeated misbehavior will result in further disciplinary actions determined by the director in consultation with the Board of Directors to be appropriate for the situation. In extreme cases, a student may be asked to withdraw from the class for the remainder of the year with no refund of fees or tuition.

Special Needs Policy

Mighty Roots Academy accepts enrollment of Special Needs students on a case by case basis. We are happy to serve families with special needs. We must make sure that what we as an academy and our staff are able provide will meet the students and family's needs. As long as the Board of Directors, Program Director, and family accepts the accommodations plan of action that is created, the student may enroll.

Financial Matters

Enrollment/Tuition Payment Obligation

Mighty Roots Academy reserves the right to refuse registration to any family. New families are required to submit an application and complete an interview before permission to register will be granted. Classes at Mighty Roots Academy are for students aged 5 through 13 before August 20th of that school year. Any student who will turn 14 before August 20th of the designated academic year may not register without prior permission from the Board of Directors.

- The Registration Fee, \$100 per student or \$200 per family must be paid before enrolling in classes for the academic year.
- Registration Fee applies to all students registered in a class.
- Enrollment is considered a full year obligation. Any family who defaults on payment will not be eligible for future registration. In addition, families who enroll after classes have begun are still expected to pay for the entire semester/year. We do not prorate classes should a student enter once classes are in session, as the instructor might need to spend extra time helping those students catch up.
- We understand that circumstances change, and other opportunities arise, and we want to reasonably accommodate those changes. We provide a grace period during which a family may drop or add a course for a fee by notifying the director at tracy@mightyrootsacademy.com.

Class Payments

Please read our payment policy carefully. \$250 of the semester tuition is due on June 1st for fall semester and December 1st for spring semester. The remaining \$750 is due August 1st for fall semester and January 1st for the spring semester.

A payment plan may be available based on a family's financial circumstances for the remaining \$750. This can be four payments of \$200 due the first day of the month starting the month classes start. (See Tuition Payment Program).

Late Fees

Failure to pay on time will result in immediate loss of a student's place in the class. Chronic tardiness of payments may result in the termination of a family's participation at Mighty Roots Academy by the Board of Directors, and no refunds will be provided.

Tuition Payment Program

A payment plan may be available based on a family's financial circumstances. Families should contact the Treasurer for special permission prior to registration. Families on a tuition payment schedule will submit payment to the bookkeeper or online for efficient recordkeeping. Families who do not pay on time will not be allowed to use this installment option in the future.

The payment of \$750 can be cut into four payments of \$200 due the first day of the month starting the month classes start. This payment would be due the 1st of each month - August, September, October, November in the fall semester and January, February, March, April in the spring semester.

Registration Fee

Registration Fee applies to all students registered in a class. The Late Registration Fee, \$25 per student, applies to all registrations not processed on a scheduled registration day.

Refunds

Registration Fees and Tuition Fees are nonrefundable. The only circumstances in which tuition may be refunded is if a course is cancelled or if it does not reach a required minimum number of students. In the case of a class that does not reach the minimum number of students required, the Treasurer will notify families. Families will not be reimbursed for missed classes due to student illness, vacation, inclement weather, or other school closings. In the event of a staff member's absence, every effort will be made to provide a qualified substitute. In the rare event when a qualified substitute cannot be found, (as in the case of teacher emergency) the class will join the Discovery Play class.

Fundraising

Mighty Roots Academy will hold at least one fundraiser for each semester. The funds that a family raises will be applied to a family's total tuition cost for the semester. For families that raise more than their total tuition cost for the semester, the balance can be transferred forward to the next semester. If a family does not enroll in the following semester the remaining funds will be deposited into the Mighty Roots Academy general spending account.

10 Basic Rules of Mighty Roots Academy

Each student must be aware of these rules and agree to abide by them before they may attend Mighty Roots Academy.

1. Students must be with their designated class and under the supervision of an adult.
2. Students are expected to show respect for classes by being on time and bringing all necessary supplies.
3. When a student is absent, it is his or her responsibility to contact the teacher for missed activities and work so they will be on track when returning to class.
4. Students must save all social conversation for lunchtime or Discovery Play, not during class.
5. Attire needs to be modest and not distracting.
6. Electronic devices are allowed as learning tools and can be used as such in classes with the permission of the teacher. Mighty Roots Academy and staff are not responsible for students' electronics. All electronics are brought at the owner's risk.
7. Lunch for all students is outside within designated areas under adult supervision. When moved inside, students must stay in the designated area.
9. No play of any kind is allowed in the drive way or main parking lot.
10. Students must show respect for students and adults alike, as well as respond appropriately.

Please sign and date here to affirm that you have read and will adhere to Mighty Roots Academy's policy and procedures:

SIGNATURE OF PARENTS:

_____ DATE: _____

_____ DATE: _____

SIGNATURE OF STUDENTS:

_____ DATE: _____

_____ DATE: _____

_____ DATE: _____