



Parent and Guardian Handbook

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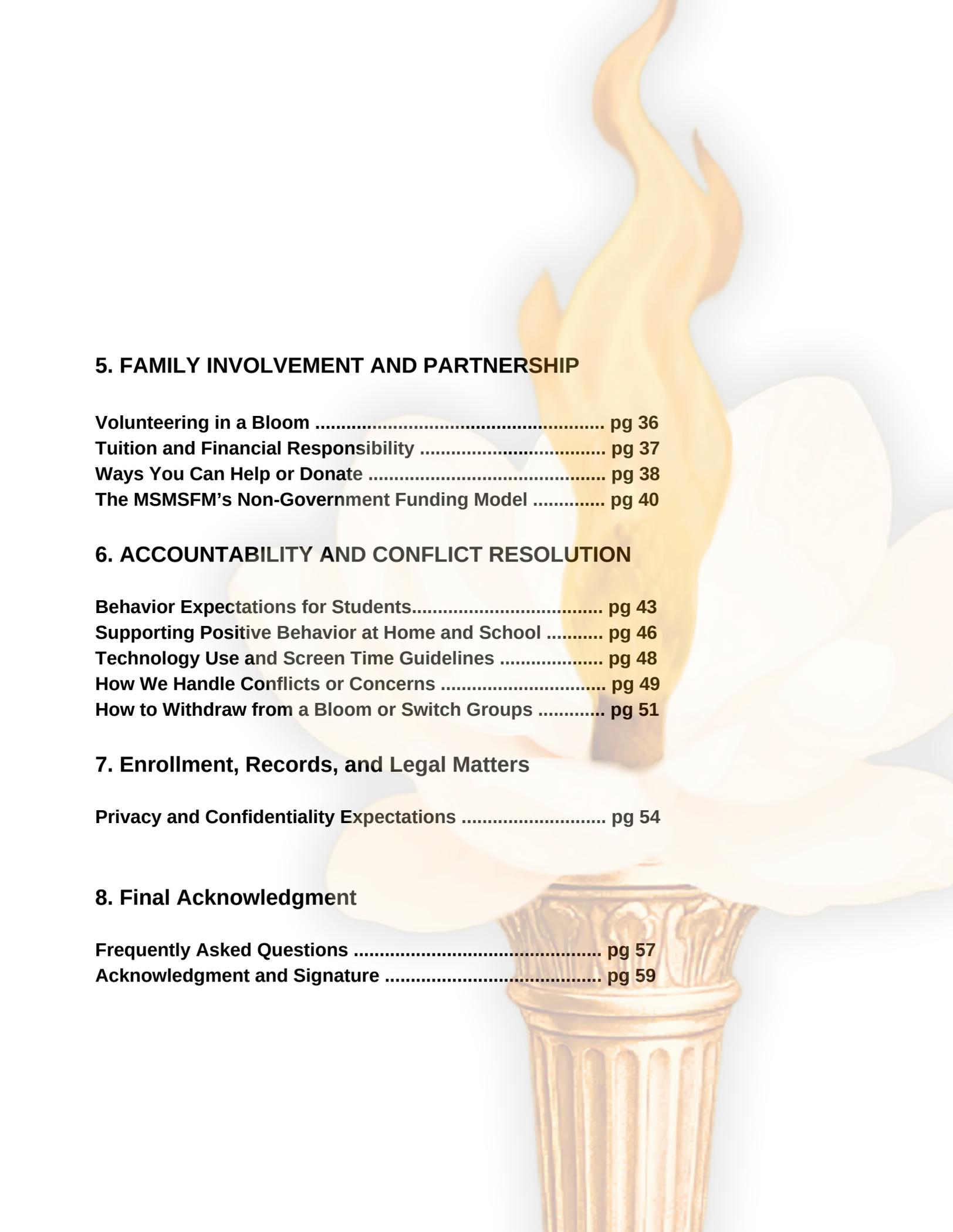
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Dear Families,

Welcome to the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement! We're thrilled to have you join a community of families who believe in protecting childhood, empowering parents, and reimagining education in ways that honor the uniqueness of every child. By choosing to partner with the MSMSFM, you've taken a bold step toward something meaningful and transformative—for your children and for the future of education in Mississippi.

This handbook is your guide to everything you need to know as a participating family in one of our Blooms. Whether you're hosting instruction in your home, volunteering occasionally, or simply supporting your child's learning journey, we want you to feel informed, empowered, and included every step of the way. Transparency, partnership, and mutual respect are core to how we operate.

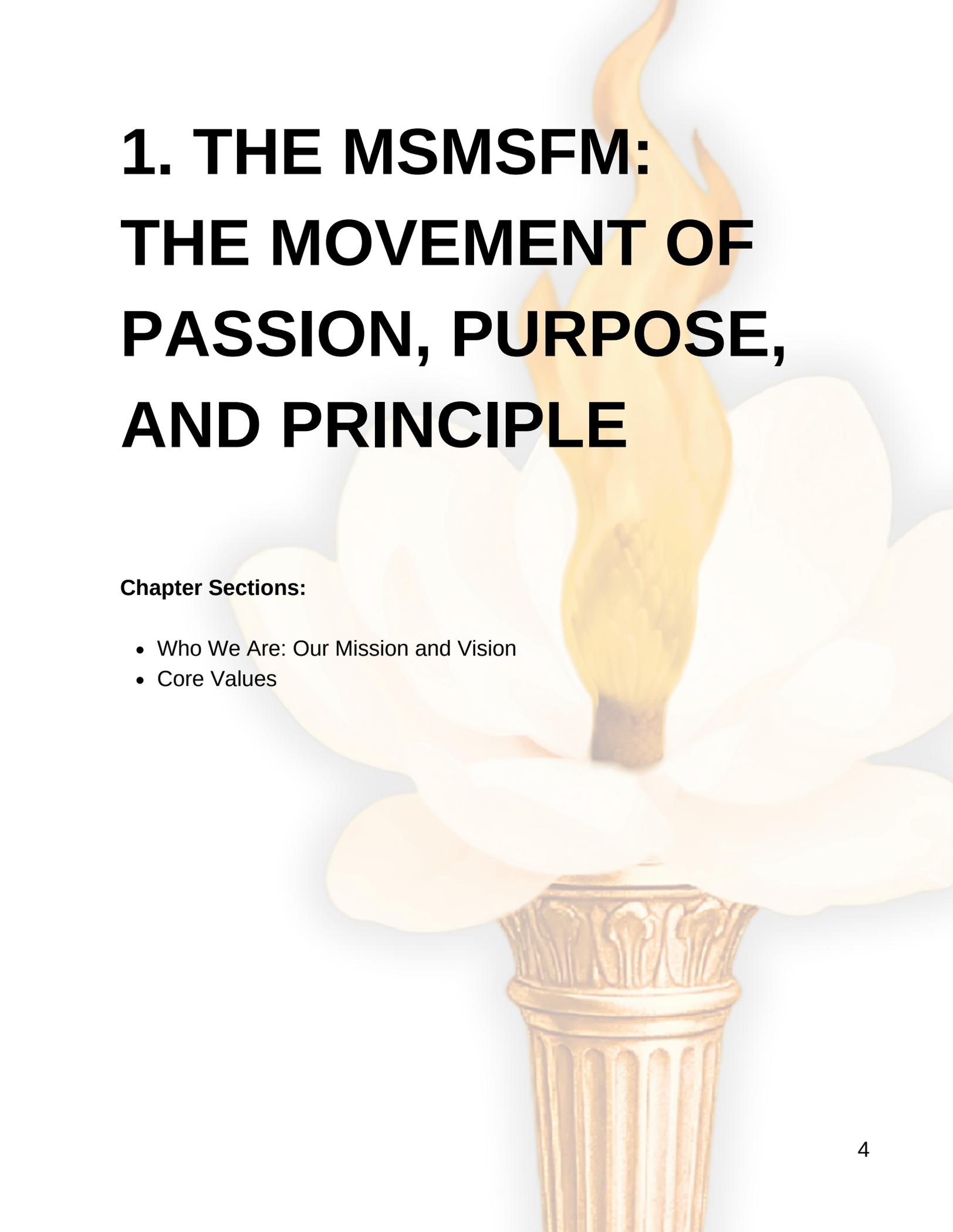
We created the MSMSFM in response to the growing need for child-centered education that puts learning back in the hands of families. We believe that one-size-fits-all schooling is not only ineffective but harmful. Children are not machines to be programmed—they're individuals full of curiosity, potential, and creativity. Our microschools are designed to reflect that, and your role as a parent or guardian is central to our success.

Within this handbook, you'll find everything from what a school day looks like, to how we ensure health and safety, to how you can get involved. It also explains your rights and responsibilities as a Bloom family, what we expect from students, and how we handle challenges if they arise. We ask that you take time to read each section carefully and discuss key points with your child. The more aligned we are as a community, the better the experience will be for everyone.

Above all, thank you. Thank you for trusting us. Thank you for stepping outside the system. Thank you for choosing something different—not just for your child, but for your neighborhood, your state, and generations to come.

We are honored to walk this journey with you.

With gratitude,
The MSMSFM Leadership Team



1. THE MSMSFM: THE MOVEMENT OF PASSION, PURPOSE, AND PRINCIPLE

Chapter Sections:

- Who We Are: Our Mission and Vision
- Core Values

Who We Are: Our Mission and Vision

At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement (MSMSFM), we are more than an educational model—we are a movement built on purpose, passion, and principle. Our goal is to transform education in Mississippi by giving families the freedom to guide their children's learning and to create safe, supportive environments that allow kids to grow into confident, capable, and compassionate individuals.

Our mission is simple but powerful: to create micro-communities of learning that protect childhood, celebrate individuality, and honor the family's right to direct education. We do this by forming neighborhood-based learning pods—called Blooms—led by trained teachers and supported by families like yours. Each Bloom is built on trust, respect, and a shared commitment to meaningful learning outside the limitations of traditional school systems.

We believe that children thrive when they are free to explore their interests, learn at their own pace, and build real-world skills that matter. This means saying goodbye to endless worksheets, test prep, and rigid grade levels—and instead saying yes to curiosity, play, hands-on projects, and individualized instruction that supports every student's growth.

Our vision is rooted in five core beliefs:

1. Education should never be one-size-fits-all. Every child is unique, and their education should reflect that.
2. Parents are the first and most important educators. You know your child best—and your voice matters in shaping their learning.
3. Community is essential. Learning is richer when families, teachers, and neighbors work together to support one another.
4. Freedom in education is a human right. Government control often limits innovation and hurts the very students it claims to help. We are proudly independent—free from government funding, Common Core mandates, and standardized testing.

5. Children deserve joy. We believe that learning should be exciting, empowering, and filled with wonder—not anxiety, comparison, and burnout.

As a member of the MSMSFM family, you are helping to build a better future not just for your child, but for your community. You are part of a statewide network of families choosing hope, creativity, and freedom over fear, pressure, and conformity.

This isn't just school—it's a movement. And we're honored to have you with us.

Our Core Values

The Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement is guided by a strong foundation of core values that shape every decision we make—from how we teach, to how we interact, to how we build community. These values are not just ideals on paper—they're living principles that influence how we treat children, how we support families, and how we protect the integrity of our mission.

Whether you are a new Bloom family or a founding member, we ask that all participants align with the values below and strive to uphold them in your actions, communication, and expectations. This shared foundation is what makes the MSMSFM feel less like a school system and more like a family.

1. Individualized Learning

We believe each child is a unique learner, and we honor that by customizing instruction to their needs, strengths, interests, and pace. There are no standardized timelines or grade-level pressure. Instead, we foster growth by meeting students where they are and helping them reach their full potential in a way that feels natural and joyful.

2. Parental Choice

Families are the heart of the educational process. You are not just “involved”—you are essential. We trust parents to make decisions about their child's readiness, learning goals, and emotional well-being. Our teachers work in partnership with you, not in place of you.

3. Community-Centered Education

Our Blooms are neighborhood-based for a reason. We believe children benefit when learning happens in small, trusted, connected communities. This model allows for stronger relationships, shared responsibilities, and a genuine support system among families and teachers.

4. Real-World Skills

Education should prepare children for life—not just for tests. That’s why our curriculum includes financial literacy, communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, gardening, cooking, and more. We want our students to graduate from a Bloom not only knowing facts but feeling confident and capable in the real world.

5. Curiosity Over Conformity

We encourage questions. We invite exploration. We spark imagination. At the MSMSFM, children are free to be dreamers, tinkerers, storytellers, builders, and creators. We don’t ask them to fit into boxes—we give them the space to discover who they are and how they best learn.

6. Independence from Government Control

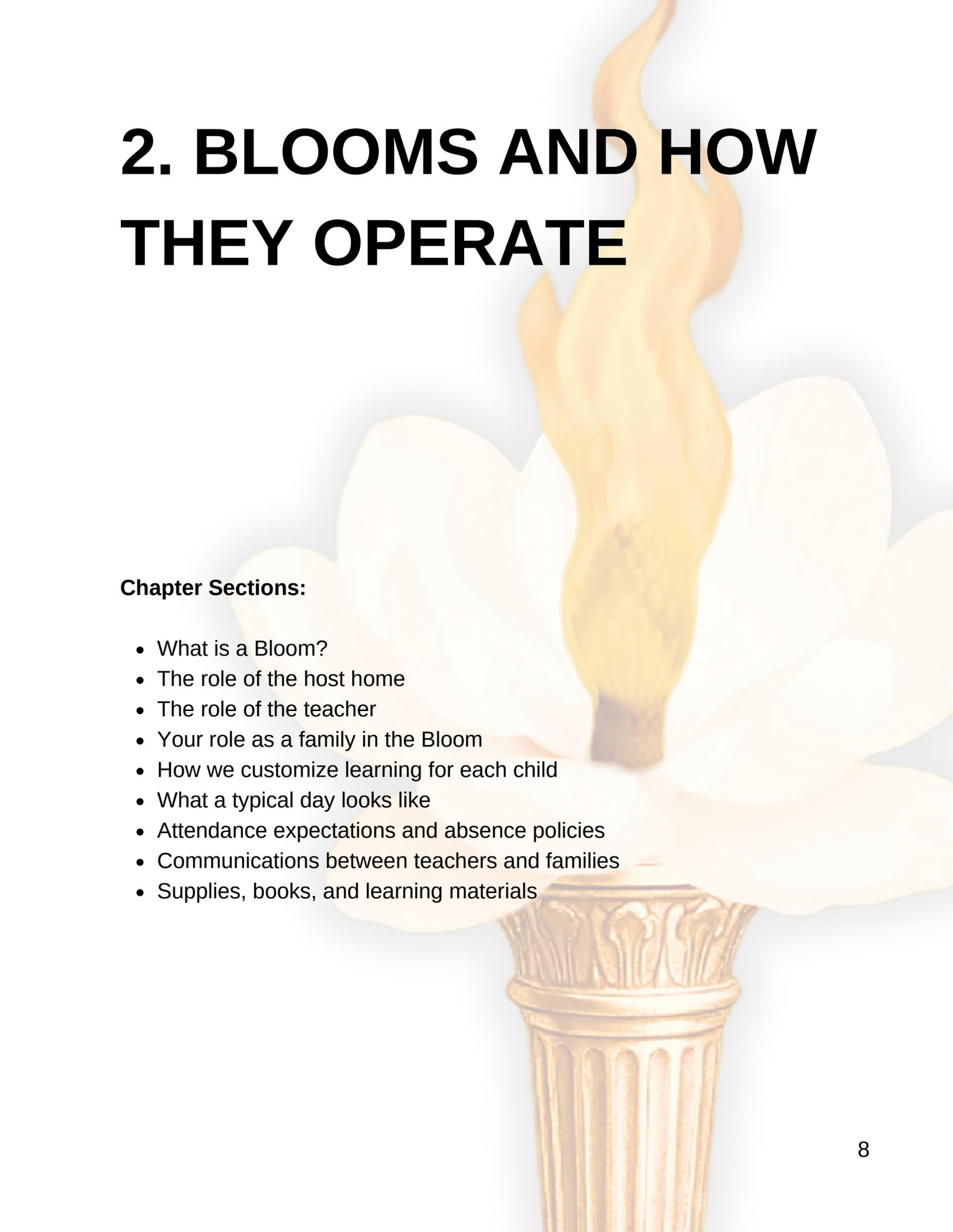
Our program is entirely privately funded by donations and affordable family contributions. We do not accept federal or state funding, and we do not follow Common Core or teach to the test. This allows us to stay true to our principles and flexible in our instruction.

7. Respect, Safety, and Kindness

We believe that all children deserve to be safe, seen, and supported. We create an environment rooted in mutual respect—for students, families, teachers, and homes. We also expect everyone in our community to treat each other with kindness, patience, and a spirit of cooperation.

These values are what make MSMSFM not just different—but better. Thank you for joining us in protecting these values and living them out in your Bloom.

2. BLOOMS AND HOW THEY OPERATE



Chapter Sections:

- What is a Bloom?
- The role of the host home
- The role of the teacher
- Your role as a family in the Bloom
- How we customize learning for each child
- What a typical day looks like
- Attendance expectations and absence policies
- Communications between teachers and families
- Supplies, books, and learning materials

What is a Bloom?

A Bloom is the heartbeat of the MSMSFM—a small, community-based microschool designed to keep learning close to home and rooted in relationships. Unlike traditional school classrooms where children are grouped by age and funneled through a rigid curriculum, a Bloom is flexible, family-driven, and tailored to the needs of its students.

At its core, a Bloom is made up of five or more families who live within about a two-mile radius of each other. This intentional proximity allows for easy transportation, more frequent community connection, and the development of meaningful relationships between families, students, and teachers. Each Bloom has a dedicated teacher, sometimes referred to as a “guide,” who leads instruction and provides customized learning experiences for the group.

Instruction typically takes place in a rotation of family homes known as Host Homes. Families take turns opening their homes for daily instruction, with schedules agreed upon in advance by the Bloom. This shared responsibility prevents burnout, encourages mutual investment, and allows for a variety of learning environments. Some instruction may also occur outdoors, in community spaces, or on educational field trips, depending on the Bloom's schedule and goals.

Each Bloom has a Founding Family—the first family in a neighborhood to commit to launching a microschool in their area. Founding Families play a key role in organizing the initial group, helping coordinate teacher placement, and establishing the culture of the Bloom. However, all families within the Bloom are equally valued and expected to work together respectfully and collaboratively.

What makes a Bloom truly unique is that it isn't just a learning pod—it's a micro-community. Families often become close friends, children of different ages learn from and support one another, and teachers are deeply involved in understanding and meeting the individual needs of each student. There's no bureaucracy, no school board, and no test-driven agendas. Just a group of people committed to giving their children the best possible education, together.

The Bloom model is designed to be flexible, responsive, and sustainable. As your child grows, the Bloom may adjust—welcoming new students, adapting instruction, or shifting locations. But no matter what changes, the heart of a Bloom remains the same: local families, working together, building a better way to learn.

The Role of the Host Home

In the MSMSFM, learning doesn't happen in fluorescent-lit school buildings—it happens in living rooms, on porches, in backyards, and around kitchen tables. That's because our microschoools are built on a unique and empowering structure: families share the responsibility of providing learning space by rotating instruction through their homes. We call these homes Host Homes.

A Host Home is any family home in the Bloom where instruction takes place for the day. Each Bloom determines a rotation schedule that works for its families, often with each home hosting once a week or on a flexible basis that fits everyone's needs. While hosting can feel like a big commitment at first, most families find it deeply rewarding—and easier than they expected—because the MSMSFM provides clear guidelines, the teacher handles instruction, and everyone contributes in small, supportive ways.

The Host Home is expected to offer a clean, safe, and welcoming space for learning. This doesn't mean your house needs to be perfect or Pinterest-worthy. It simply means the environment should be:

- Safe: with working smoke detectors, unblocked exits, secure storage for chemicals or sharp objects, firearms locked up and put away, and a general absence of obvious hazards.
- Functional: with space for students to sit, write, and move around, access to a bathroom, and availability of drinking water and handwashing supplies.
- Flexible: able to accommodate both quiet work and hands-on activities like science experiments, art projects, or games.

Before a Bloom begins, the MSMSFM works with families to ensure that every Host Home meets basic safety standards. All adult residents of a Host Home must pass a background check before hosting, and teachers are instructed to report any safety concerns they notice. This ensures that every child learns in an environment that is both emotionally and physically safe.

Hosting also creates rich opportunities for relationship-building. Your child gets to learn in familiar, home-like settings with people who care about them. As a parent, you get to see learning happen up close and participate in small ways—like helping with snacks, sharing a skill or story, or just being nearby. Some Host Homes even enhance the experience with backyard learning, gardens, or dedicated learning corners.

Being a Host Home doesn't mean you're alone. It means you're part of something—something built on trust, mutual respect, and shared purpose. And together, these rotating homes form the foundation of a community-based learning experience that redefines what school can be.

*All homes should participate in the Host Home rotation unless the home is not up to the MSMSFM safety standards, a resident of the home does not pass a background check, or a reasonable circumstance outside of the family's control. If you feel as if one or more of these circumstances apply to you, please inform the leaders of the MSMSFM.

The Role of the Teacher

In the MSMSFM, teachers do much more than deliver lessons—they guide, inspire, encourage, and nurture. They are trained educators who have chosen to step away from the rigid, test-driven public school system to embrace a model that values curiosity, freedom, and meaningful connection. They are mentors, facilitators, and learning companions who help children grow academically, emotionally, and socially—at their own pace, and on their own path.

Each Bloom is assigned a dedicated teacher who works with all of the children in the group, often across multiple ages and grade levels. This multi-age model allows teachers to create a more dynamic and flexible learning environment—one where older children can take on leadership roles, younger children can learn through observation, and every child is recognized as a unique learner, not just a member of a grade band.

Teachers in the MSMSFM are responsible for creating and delivering individualized instruction based on each child's current academic level, interests, and goals. Using tools like Brain Quest workbooks, project-based learning, Tuttle Twins storybooks, and real-life applications, they build a curriculum that fits the students in front of them—not the mandates of a distant boardroom. They have the freedom to be creative, to adapt lessons on the fly, and to use whatever methods will best engage and support their students.

But academic instruction is only part of their role. Our teachers are also builders of community. They work closely with parents and Host Homes to ensure smooth daily operations. They help establish a respectful and joyful learning culture within the Bloom. They model the behaviors we expect from our students—kindness, responsibility, curiosity, and patience.

Each teacher undergoes a thorough hiring process and national background check before working with students. We look for candidates who not only have experience and skill, but

who also share our belief that education should be driven by values, not politics. Teachers are expected to uphold the standards and policies of the MSMSFM, to maintain open communication with families, and to create safe and nurturing environments where every child can thrive.

Your Role as a Family in the Bloom

When you join the MSMSFM, you're not just enrolling your child in a school—you're becoming part of a movement. Each Bloom is a collaborative learning community, and families are a vital part of that ecosystem. This model works best when families are not just supportive, but actively engaged in the life of their Bloom. Your role is essential, and your contributions—whether big or small—help create a successful, sustainable, and joyful experience for all.

In traditional education models, families are often sidelined—expected to help with homework or attend parent-teacher conferences, but not much more. In the MSMSFM, your role is more empowered and meaningful. You're a co-creator of your child's learning environment, a partner to your Bloom teacher, and a valued member of your local education community.

Communication Partner

You are the expert on your child. That means your insights, concerns, and feedback are incredibly valuable to your teacher and your Bloom. We ask families to keep the lines of communication open—share what's working, let us know if something's off, and work with us as a team to support your child's growth. Communication goes both ways, and teachers will keep you informed through updates, progress notes, or informal conversations.

Contributing Member

Most families in the MSMSFM are asked to host instruction on a rotating basis (see page), and even if you are not currently a Host Home, we ask every family to contribute in some way. That might be offering a ride to a field trip, helping clean up after class, donating snacks or materials, or sharing a special skill with the Bloom. You don't have to do everything—but we do ask that everyone do something.

Supporter of Learning

At home, we ask you to reinforce a love of learning by being engaged and curious with your child. Ask about their day. Look through their work. Celebrate their progress. Read together. Provide a consistent bedtime, a good breakfast, and a calm, respectful space to wind down after learning. These small daily habits make a big difference in a child's ability to grow and thrive in a non-traditional setting.

Model of Respect and Cooperation

We expect families to be respectful in all interactions—with teachers, other parents, and MSMSFM leadership. Disagreements or concerns should be handled with maturity and kindness, and always with the child's best interest in mind. We do not tolerate gossip, passive aggression, or disrespectful behavior in our community.

Remember: You are not a spectator. You are a partner. And together, we are building something truly extraordinary—an educational environment rooted in freedom, love, and trust.

How We Customize Learning for Each Child

One of the most powerful features of the MSMSFM is our unwavering commitment to customized learning. We believe children are not standardized, and their education shouldn't be either. That's why we do not follow Common Core standards, government mandates, or rigid grade-level pacing guides. Instead, our teachers design personalized learning experiences based on each child's unique needs, interests, strengths, and challenges.

At the start of each school year—or when a child first joins a Bloom—teachers conduct informal assessments using tools like the Brain Quest workbooks for PreK through 6th grade. These benchmarks give teachers a clear view of where a child currently stands academically, without the pressure of high-stakes testing. From there, the teacher works with families to set realistic, meaningful, and flexible learning goals that reflect the child's readiness and potential.

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In addition to academic data, teachers pay close attention to how your child learns best. Are they a hands-on learner who thrives with projects and experiments? Do they need quiet space and structure, or do they shine in group discussions and play-based exploration? Our teachers use this information to tailor their instruction—adjusting the pace, format, and even the content of lessons to best serve the student in front of them.

But make no mistake—our students are challenged. Customized does not mean easy. It means appropriate. We believe that children need to wrestle with difficult tasks, push through frustration, and rise to new levels of thinking. Growth happens at the edge of comfort, and our teachers are trained to encourage productive struggle without creating stress or shame. Whether a student is solving complex math problems, writing a persuasive essay, or navigating a tough social moment, we support them through it while holding high expectations.

We allow students to move beyond grade-level expectations if they're ready. If your child is 7 years old and already reading at a 5th-grade level, we won't hold them back. Likewise, if a child needs more time to master a skill, we'll give them that space and the tools they need to succeed. The goal is to stretch each child—gently, but consistently—so they build not just knowledge, but resilience and confidence.

We also use real-world applications to bring academics to life. Math might happen while cooking or building. Science might take the form of a nature walk or garden experiment. History might be explored through stories, art, or debate. These hands-on approaches make learning memorable, meaningful, and fun—even when it's hard.

You'll receive regular updates about your child's progress, and your input is always welcome. Together, we'll make sure your child is not only supported, but challenged—because we know that is how growth truly happens.

What a Typical Day Looks Like

One of the biggest questions families have when joining the MSMSFM is, “What does a day in a Bloom actually look like?” The answer: it depends—but in the best way possible. While every Bloom follows a basic framework, no two days are exactly alike. That's because we believe learning should be responsive to the children in front of us—not dictated by bells or rigid schedules.

That said, we do provide consistency and structure, especially for younger students who thrive on predictable routines. A typical day in the MSMSFM begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends around 2:00 p.m., with a break for lunch from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.. Some Blooms may adjust this to fit the needs of the families and teacher, but the general rhythm remains the same across the movement.

Morning Session (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)

The day begins with a warm welcome and group check-in. This could be a morning circle, journaling activity, or reflection on the previous day's work. From there, the teacher leads students through a mix of academic instruction and hands-on learning. This might include:

- Reading comprehension and discussion
- Math games, problem-solving, or workbook practice
- Science experiments or nature-based exploration
- Writing prompts or creative storytelling

A 10 to 15 minute break can be expected around 11:00 a.m.

Because each Bloom is multi-age and small in size, teachers can move between students easily—offering individualized support or group instruction as needed.

Lunch Break (12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

Students bring their own lunch, and Host Homes provide a clean space for eating and handwashing. This time is also used for outdoor play, free time, or social bonding. It's an important part of the day that supports physical and emotional well-being.

Afternoon Session (1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.)

After lunch, instruction continues with enrichment activities that focus on creativity, practical skills, and deeper exploration. This might include:

- Art or music
- Outdoor adventures and nature walks
- STEM challenges or building projects
- Personal finance lessons or real-life math (e.g., shopping, budgeting)
- History or civic literacy discussions using Tuttle Twins books

Because our model is flexible, some days may feature field trips, guest speakers, or community service projects. Others may allow for deep dives into a student-led interest, like building a model volcano or launching a small business.

Wrap-Up and Clean-Up

Before heading home, students help tidy the learning space and reflect on their day. This helps reinforce personal responsibility, respect for the Host Home, and a sense of closure.

Attendance Expectations and Absence Policies

In the MSMSFM, attendance matters—not just for academics, but for the health of the community as a whole. Because our Blooms are built on connection, collaboration, and consistency, each student's presence impacts not only their own learning but the rhythm

and experience of the group. We don't take a factory-model approach to schooling, but we do take commitment seriously—and we ask families to do the same.

Our learning days are short and focused, so missing even a day or two can mean lost opportunities for growth, relationship-building, and hands-on experience. That's why we ask families to prioritize attendance and treat their Bloom schedule with the same level of importance they would a traditional school—perhaps even more, given that your child is part of a small group that relies on each other.

Attendance Expectations

- Instruction typically takes place Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., though specific schedules may vary by Bloom.
- Students are expected to arrive on time and be ready to learn at the beginning of the instructional day.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring punctuality, especially if transportation is shared between families or arranged through the Bloom.
- Teachers will take daily attendance and submit records to the MSMSFM leadership on a weekly basis.

Reporting Absences

If your child will be absent for any reason, please notify the teacher and, if applicable, the Host Home as early as possible—preferably the night before or no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of absence. This helps the teacher adjust their plans and gives the Bloom an opportunity to manage group dynamics accordingly.

We understand that illness, family emergencies, or life events may occasionally interfere with attendance. We simply ask for open communication and a shared effort to avoid unnecessary disruptions.

Chronic Absences or Tardiness

Frequent unexcused absences or habitual lateness can be disruptive to the learning environment and may affect your child's placement in the Bloom. In these cases:

- The teacher will first reach out to discuss the issue and identify potential solutions.
- If the issue persists, MSMSFM leadership will schedule a meeting with the family to determine next steps.
- In rare cases, families may be asked to take a temporary pause from participation or shift to a more flexible support role within the movement.

We do not penalize children for things beyond their control, but we do believe that commitment to the group is essential for the success of the model.

Planned Absences

If you anticipate an extended absence (e.g., vacation, travel, surgery), please notify the teacher and Bloom at least two weeks in advance. In many cases, the teacher may provide optional enrichment work or a re-entry plan to help your child stay engaged.

The MSMSFM values freedom and flexibility—but we also value accountability. When your child shows up consistently, on time, and ready to learn, it sends a powerful message: “This matters.” And that mindset sets them up for success—not just in school, but in life.

Communication Between Teachers and Families

Strong, respectful, and consistent communication is the backbone of every successful Bloom. At the MSMSFM, we believe that families and teachers are partners—not opponents—in a child’s educational journey. We strive to foster open, transparent, and meaningful dialogue between home and school to ensure that every child is supported, seen, and set up to thrive.

Because our classrooms are small and relationships are personal, communication can and should be more frequent and collaborative than what many families may have experienced in traditional school settings. In the MSMSFM, you are not a bystander in your child’s learning—you are an essential part of the team.

What You Can Expect from Your Teacher

Each Bloom teacher is responsible for keeping families informed about their child's academic progress, social-emotional development, and any issues that may arise. This communication may take the form of:

- Weekly or bi-weekly email or text updates
- End-of-day summaries or quick check-ins at pickup
- Informal conversations during Host Home transitions
- Occasional phone calls or in-person meetings
- Student work samples or progress reports shared throughout the year

Teachers may also reach out to share exciting moments, student

What We Ask from Families

We ask that you keep your teacher informed of anything that may affect your child's learning, behavior, or emotional well-being. This could include:

- Changes in schedule, sleep, medication, or home life
- Difficult transitions or social concerns
- Feedback about how your child is feeling about Bloom

You don't need to share private details, but keeping your teacher in the loop helps them better understand your child and adjust their approach accordingly. We also ask that you respond to teacher messages in a timely manner and maintain respectful, professional tone in all communications.

Tools We May Use

The MSMSFM may provide or recommend specific communication platforms (such as Remind, ClassTag, or Bloomz) to streamline contact between teachers and families. These tools help maintain records, send group updates, and reduce the chance of missed messages. If your Bloom uses one of these tools, we ask that you check it regularly.

When Concerns Arise

If you have a concern about your child's experience, we encourage you to first speak directly with the teacher in a calm and respectful manner. If the issue cannot be resolved together, you may request a meeting with MSMSFM leadership. We're here to support healthy communication, mediate when needed, and ensure that everyone feels heard.

At the MSMSFM, we believe that communication is not just about sharing information—it's about building trust. When we communicate openly and with care, we create a learning environment where everyone feels respected, understood, and empowered.

Supplies, Books, and Learning Materials

One of the unique strengths of the MSMSFM is our commitment to hands-on, creative, and meaningful learning experiences. That means we use a wide variety of materials—not just textbooks—to bring lessons to life. From garden tools and baking ingredients to classic literature and economics storybooks, our approach invites children to learn through doing. To make this model work smoothly, every family plays a role in ensuring their child has the basic tools they need to succeed.

What MSMSFM Provides

The MSMSFM supplies each teacher with a foundational curriculum library that may include:

- Brain Quest workbooks for grade-level benchmarking
- Tuttle Twins books for history, civics, and economics
- Storybooks, read-alouds, and nonfiction resources
- Science experiment guides and nature-based learning materials
- Math manipulatives and games
- Art supplies and creative enrichment kits (when available)

Each Bloom receives a shared collection of these materials, and the teacher will manage their use. Teachers may also request additional items or books based on the interests and needs of the students in their Bloom.

What Families Are Expected to Provide

Each family is responsible for sending their child with the following personal items, clearly labeled and packed daily:

- A backpack or tote bag
- Their assigned workbook(s) (provided by the teacher)
- A pencil pouch with sharpened pencils, erasers, colored pencils or crayons, and scissors
- A notebook or journal
- Reusable water bottle
- Healthy lunch and snack
- Weather-appropriate clothing, especially on outdoor learning days
- Any required medications (EpiPen, inhaler, etc.) with documentation

Occasionally, your Bloom teacher may ask for low-cost materials (e.g., an empty 2-liter bottle for a science project or an old shirt for painting). You'll be notified in advance and we do our best to keep requests reasonable and accessible.

Shared Materials and Responsibility

Many of the supplies used in a Bloom are communal—books, games, and activity kits that are used across students and homes. We ask that all students treat shared materials with care and respect. Lost or damaged materials may need to be replaced by the family if negligence is involved.

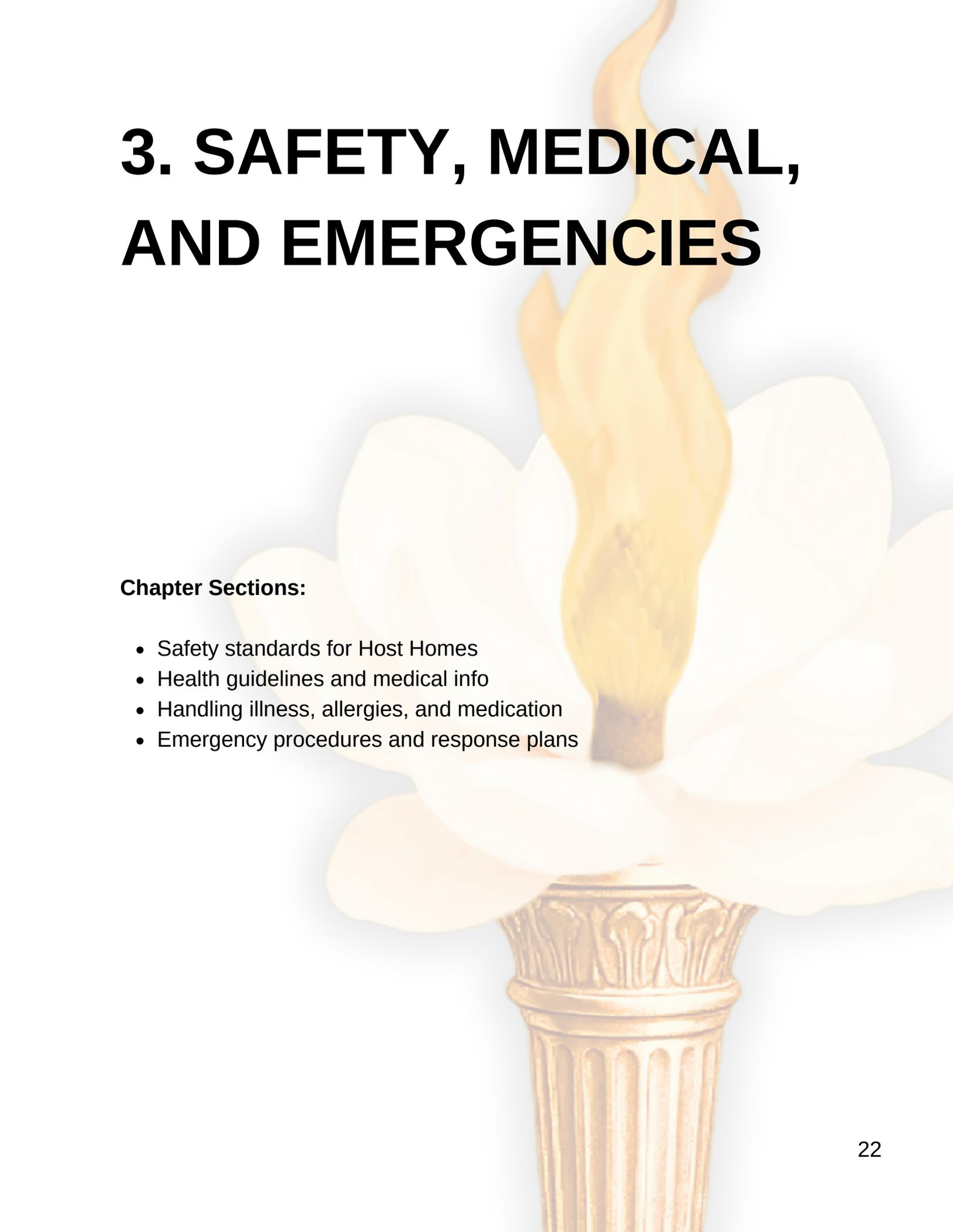
If your family is facing a financial hardship and cannot provide an item, please speak to your teacher privately. The MSMSFM receives occasional donations and may be able to assist through our Materials Assistance Fund.

Storage and Transport

Because learning happens in rotating Host Homes, students may carry their materials between locations throughout the week. A consistent routine—such as packing the backpack the night before—helps children take responsibility for their supplies and ensures they are ready to participate fully.

At the MSMSFM, we don't need fancy tech or endless worksheets. We rely on real books, real tools, and real experiences. With a little planning and cooperation, your family helps make that possible—and your child reaps the rewards of a vibrant, interactive education.

3. SAFETY, MEDICAL, AND EMERGENCIES



Chapter Sections:

- Safety standards for Host Homes
- Health guidelines and medical info
- Handling illness, allergies, and medication
- Emergency procedures and response plans

Safety Standards for Host Homes

At the heart of the MSMSFM model is the idea that learning can—and should—happen in safe, welcoming, real-world environments. Because instruction takes place in rotating Host Homes, we place a strong emphasis on safety, cleanliness, and mutual respect to ensure that every child can learn in a secure and supportive space.

A Host Home is any family home where instruction is held for the day. Hosting is shared among Bloom families to lighten the load and build a sense of community. While we understand that every home is different—and we do not expect perfection—we do require that all Host Homes meet a basic set of safety and functionality standards before instruction can begin.

Minimum Safety Requirements

All Host Homes must meet the following criteria:

- Working smoke detectors on each level of the home
- At least one fire extinguisher that is accessible and functional
- Unblocked exits and clearly marked pathways in and out of the house
- Running water and a clean, sanitary bathroom available to students
- Functioning heating/cooling system appropriate for the season
- Secure storage of hazardous materials such as cleaning supplies, tools, medications, sharp objects
- Firearms locked up and put out of reach
- No known structural issues or hazards (e.g., exposed wiring, broken steps)

If a pool, pond, or other water feature is present on the property, it must be securely fenced or supervised according to the MSMSFM safety guidelines.

Background Checks

All adults over the age of 18 who live in a Host Home must undergo and pass a national background check before hosting begins. This is non-negotiable and is required for the safety and peace of mind of every family. The MSMSFM will provide instructions on how to complete this check and will cover the cost for the teacher; families are responsible for covering the cost for adult household members.

Cleanliness and Environment

While we do not expect homes to be pristine or staged, we do expect:

- Clean and tidy learning areas, free of excessive clutter or debris
- Designated learning space with tables, chairs, or floor seating as needed
- A clean eating area for lunch and snacks
- Pet-free learning zones, or clear guidelines if pets are present
- Neutral or child-appropriate content in sight (e.g., no inappropriate decor, media, or language)

Teachers are trained to complete a daily visual safety check upon arrival. If a safety concern arises, the teacher is required to report it to MSMSFM leadership, and we will work with the family privately to resolve the issue.

Behavior and Boundaries

Adults in the home should model respectful behavior and avoid interfering with instruction unless requested. Family members should not discipline other students, discuss private matters in front of the Bloom, or use profanity or adult content within earshot of the learning space.

We recognize that opening your home is a generous and meaningful act. We appreciate the trust it requires and the effort it takes. Our safety guidelines exist to ensure that all Bloom families feel comfortable, protected, and proud of the space where learning happens.

Health Guidelines and Medical Info

At the MSMSFM, we believe that common sense, clear communication, and mutual respect go a long way in keeping our Blooms happy and healthy. We're not here to enforce harsh health mandates or stir up fear—we simply want to make sure that everyone is doing well, and that when bumps in the road happen (as they always do with kids!), we have a plan to handle them with care and calm.

Because our learning environments are small and personal, it's easy for sniffles—or stomach bugs—to make the rounds. That's why we ask everyone to be mindful and considerate when it comes to health. If your child isn't feeling well, it's okay to take the day off, rest, and return when they're back to themselves. No judgment, no panic, no pressure. We also recognize that every family approaches health differently. Some of you may use traditional medicine, others may rely on natural remedies, and many use a bit of both. We respect your choices and won't push any one-size-fits-all approach. What matters most is keeping communication open and making sure each child's needs are clearly understood and supported.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Please keep your child home if they have:

- A fever of 100.4°F or higher within the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- A persistent cough or unexplained respiratory symptoms
- A rash of unknown origin
- Symptoms of contagious illness such as strep throat, flu, pink eye, or lice

We understand how difficult it can be to arrange childcare at the last minute, but sending a sick child to class could affect the whole Bloom and cause a set back for everyone. Please notify your teacher as early as possible if your child will be absent due to illness.

Medical Forms and Emergency Info

Before your child begins attending a Bloom, we require a completed medical information form that includes:

- Any known allergies (food, environmental, insect, etc.)
- Medical conditions or chronic illnesses
- A list of medications your child takes regularly
- Emergency contact numbers for at least two adults
- Instructions for handling specific medical situations (e.g., seizures, asthma attacks)

These forms are kept securely by your child's teacher and reviewed regularly. Please update them any time there is a change in your child's health or medication.

If your child carries an emergency device—such as an EpiPen or inhaler—it must be sent with them to class each day in a clearly labeled, accessible container. Teachers are not medical professionals, but they will follow your emergency instructions and contact 911 if needed.

Handling Illness, Allergies, and Medication

We understand that kids are kids—and part of that means runny noses, scraped knees, and the occasional allergy flare-up. We don't panic over minor issues, but we do take a thoughtful and proactive approach to managing health concerns.

Mild Illness and General Discomfort

If your child complains of not feeling well during the school day—whether it's a headache, stomachache, or just "off"—the teacher will assess the situation and contact you as needed. For minor symptoms, they may offer a break, a drink of water, or quiet time while keeping a close eye on how your child is doing.

If symptoms worsen or your child is clearly unwell, you'll be contacted for early pickup. Our teachers will never attempt to "push through" serious symptoms or ignore a child who's clearly struggling. You'll always be kept in the loop.

In any situation where multiple students begin to exhibit illness (such as during cold or flu season), the teacher will notify MSMSFM leadership, and general courtesy updates may be sent to the Bloom community (without naming individuals) so other families can monitor their own children.

Allergies

If your child has food, environmental, or medical allergies—mild or severe—please be sure they are clearly noted on your medical form and communicated directly to the teacher. This includes common concerns like:

- Peanuts or tree nuts
- Bee stings or insect bites
- Dust or pet dander
- Seasonal allergies (pollen, mold, etc.)
- Reactions to soaps, detergents, or sunscreen

If your child uses an EpiPen or antihistamine, it must be sent with them daily in a clearly labeled case or pouch. Teachers are trained on how to identify signs of a reaction and to follow your emergency instructions, including contacting emergency services if needed. To support allergy safety, your teacher may occasionally request that families avoid sending specific items in lunchboxes (e.g., peanuts) depending on who is in the Bloom. These requests will always be communicated respectfully and clearly, with flexibility where needed.

To support allergy safety, your teacher may occasionally request that families avoid sending specific items in lunchboxes (e.g., peanuts) depending on who is in the Bloom. These requests will always be communicated respectfully and clearly, with flexibility where needed.

Medication

The MSMSFM does not require or expect teachers to administer medication of any kind. If your child takes medication during the day and needs support with timing or reminders, you may discuss this privately with your teacher to come up with a workable solution.

However:

- All medications must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage.
- Medications should never be shared between students.
- Teachers should not be asked to administer prescription medication without written authorization from a parent or guardian.

If your child takes medication at home before school (for allergies, asthma, ADHD, etc.), we simply ask that you let the teacher know if it might impact their mood, energy level, or focus that day. That helps us create a supportive environment and better understand what your child may be experiencing.

Vaccines and Medical Autonomy

The MSMSFM does not require or track vaccine records. We believe in medical freedom and family choice. You know what's best for your child, and we support you in making those decisions.

Health and wellness are part of life, and we handle them with honesty, calm, and cooperation. When families and teachers work together with a spirit of grace and flexibility, everyone stays safer, stronger, and more supported.

Emergency Procedures and Response Plans

While emergencies are rare, we believe in being prepared. The MSMSFM takes a calm, common-sense approach to emergency situations, focusing on clear communication, fast response, and keeping children as safe and supported as possible. Because our learning environments take place in homes and small community spaces, our procedures are designed to be practical, flexible, and family-informed.

Each Bloom follows a simple emergency response plan that accounts for the location of instruction, the needs of the students present, and the unique features of the Host Home or outdoor learning space.

Types of Emergencies We Prepare For

While every Bloom is different, we generally plan for:

- Medical emergencies (e.g., allergic reactions, injury, asthma attacks)
- Fire or gas leaks in the Host Home
- Severe weather (e.g., tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding)
- Power outages or unsafe conditions that make the home temporarily unusable
- Unexpected intrusions or safety threats in the learning space

Your Role as a Parent or Guardian

Before your child begins participating in Bloom instruction, we'll ask you to:

- Provide accurate emergency contact info (two adults minimum)
- Indicate who is authorized to pick up your child
- Note any specific instructions in case of evacuation or medical emergency
- Ensure your child's medical info and emergency forms are up to date and accessible

It's also important to keep your phone on during learning hours whenever possible and notify the teacher if you'll be unavailable.

Emergency Preparedness in the Host Home

Host Homes are required to have:

- Working smoke detectors
- A fire extinguisher
- Unblocked exits

A basic understanding of evacuation routes from the main learning area

Teachers are encouraged to check these safety features when arriving and to conduct a brief “safety talk” with students if instruction is taking place in a new location.

In severe weather situations, students will be moved to the safest part of the home and families will be notified of any delays, changes, or closures due to weather-related threats.

If an Emergency Happens

In the event of a serious emergency:

- The teacher will remain with the students and immediately contact 911 if needed.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted right away by phone or text.
- If evacuation is required, the Bloom will follow the pre-planned route or relocate to a nearby safe location. You’ll be notified where and when to pick up your child.
- A brief incident report will be submitted to MSMSFM leadership within 24 hours and shared with the family.

In situations where students are injured or affected in any way, we handle the response with privacy, compassion, and clear follow-up.

We hope emergencies never happen—but if they do, you can trust that your child is in the care of trained, thoughtful adults who will respond quickly and responsibly. We believe that preparedness doesn’t need to create fear—it creates peace of mind.

4. DAILY LIFE IN A BLOOM

Chapter Sections:

- Nutrition, lunch, and snack guidelines
- Outdoor Learning: Clothing, Weather, and Safety
- Field Trips and Transportation Guidelines

Nutrition, Lunch, and Snack Guidelines

At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, we recognize that healthy bodies fuel healthy minds. Our approach to nutrition is centered on flexibility, respect for family values, and a shared responsibility for ensuring students are physically prepared for a full day of learning and exploration.

Each Bloom follows a “bring-your-own” food model. Families are responsible for sending lunch and snacks with their children each day, unless otherwise arranged for a special event or group meal. We encourage families to pack nutritious, balanced meals that will sustain children throughout the day. High-sugar foods or excessive processed snacks can lead to energy crashes and distraction, so we ask that you be mindful when selecting what to pack. That said, we understand every child is different—and so are family routines. Our goal is not to police what’s in the lunchbox, but to promote healthy habits and foster a supportive environment.

Because students eat together in a communal setting, please avoid sending food that is excessively messy, difficult to manage without assistance, or disruptive to the group. All meals should be packed in clearly labeled containers with any utensils your child may need. We also ask that families avoid sending energy drinks, sodas, or anything requiring heating unless the Host Home has specifically approved it. Microwaves are not guaranteed.

If your child has specific dietary needs or allergies, it is your responsibility to inform your Bloom leader during the intake process and provide updated documentation as needed. We take food allergies seriously. While we do not require all Blooms to be “nut-free,” families will be notified if any student in the Bloom has a life-threatening allergy, and we ask for your cooperation in minimizing risks. Teachers will guide students to avoid food sharing and will monitor meals with safety in mind.

We also encourage families to involve children in the process of packing their own meals when possible. Allowing students to choose or help prepare their snacks and lunches is a wonderful opportunity to build independence, responsibility, and awareness of healthy choices.

Occasionally, your Bloom may hold a group lunch, picnic, or potluck. These will always be communicated in advance, and participation is optional. We want every child to feel included and nourished—physically and emotionally—during their time with us.

If you ever have concerns or questions about food routines in your Bloom, we encourage open dialogue. Communication and shared responsibility are key to keeping our students healthy, happy, and ready to thrive.

Outdoor Learning: Clothing, Weather, and Safety

Outdoor learning isn't just an occasional activity in the MSMSFM—it's a fundamental part of how children grow, explore, and connect with the world around them. Whether it's reading under a tree, identifying bugs on a nature walk, or just letting off steam during unstructured play, we believe the outdoors is one of the best classrooms a child can have.

Because of this, families should prepare for daily outdoor time, regardless of the weather—within reason and safety. Your child will go outside almost every day unless weather conditions are hazardous (such as lightning, extreme heat, severe storms, or freezing temperatures). A bit of drizzle or mud won't cancel our plans; in fact, those days often spark the best creativity and teamwork.

To keep your child safe and comfortable, it's essential that they come to their Bloom each day dressed for the season and forecast. This includes:

- Rain jackets or ponchos for wet days
- Sun hats and sunscreen for hot days (sunscreen must be applied at home unless permission is given to reapply at school)
- Layers in cooler weather, including gloves and hats
- Close-toed shoes that can get dirty or wet (no flip-flops or open sandals)

We ask that you send your child with a labeled water bottle each day and a change of clothes in a labeled bag. Please understand that play is messy—and learning is, too. It's common for children to come home dusty, damp, or muddy after a full day of hands-on, outdoor exploration. This is a feature, not a flaw.

Safety is always our top priority. Bloom leaders will monitor outdoor areas for hazards and hazardous weather, use appropriate ratios for supervision, and maintain a first-aid kit on hand. Insects, sun exposure, allergens, and uneven ground are all considered and managed as part of our planning. You can help by notifying us of any relevant allergies or medical conditions and making sure your child's emergency contact info is always up to date.

Please don't worry about your child being bored or "doing nothing" while outside. Even in unstructured time, they are learning critical social and emotional skills, building resilience, and engaging with the environment in ways that textbooks can't replicate.

Outdoor learning gives our students the space to breathe, wonder, and grow—and we ask your support in making sure they're prepared to embrace it every single day.

Field Trips and Transportation Guidelines

Field trips are a vibrant and important part of the MSMSFM learning experience. We believe that children learn best not just by reading or listening—but by seeing, doing, and exploring the world around them. Whether it's a visit to a local farm, a community service project, a hike through nature, or a tour of a small business, every outing is designed to extend learning beyond the walls of the Bloom.

Each Bloom will plan field trips throughout the year that connect directly to what students are studying, while also allowing space for discovery, creativity, and fun. These trips are not just educational; they also help students bond as a group and strengthen real-world skills like communication, cooperation, and problem-solving.

All field trips will be announced in advance, and families will receive a permission slip or digital waiver outlining:

- The destination and purpose of the trip
- Departure and return times
- Transportation arrangements
- Any costs involved (if applicable)
- What your child needs to bring (lunch, clothing, supplies, etc.)

Transportation varies by Bloom and may include walking, parent carpools, or staff vehicles. We do not use buses or charter services unless coordinated specifically for large events. If a parent or guardian is transporting students other than their own, that driver must be

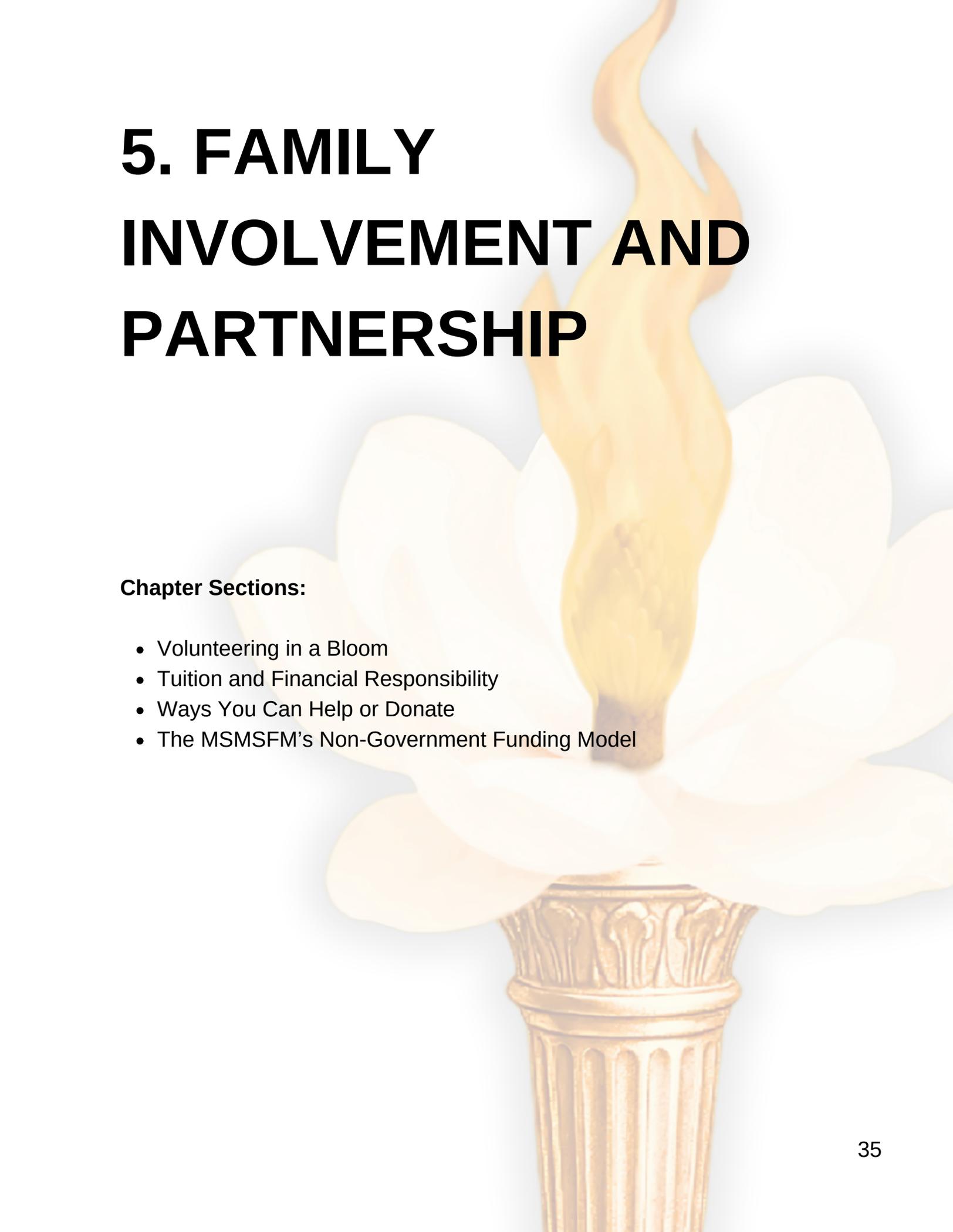
approved through the MSMSFM's volunteer screening and background check process, have a valid driver's license, insurance on the vehicle, and the vehicle must be safe and reliable. Drivers are expected to drive in a safe manner and obey all traffic laws. All children will be secured in seat belts or approved car seats as required by law. No exceptions.

We believe that field trips are stronger, safer, and more enriching when families are involved. Therefore, we ask that at least one parent or guardian plan to attend each field trip with their child whenever possible. Your presence not only ensures adequate supervision, but also fosters stronger relationships between families, teachers, and students. These trips are meant to be shared experiences—ones that spark conversations, build memories, and strengthen the MSMSFM community.

If a parent or guardian is unable to attend, they must notify the Bloom leader in advance. In some cases, your child may still be allowed to attend the trip with another trusted, background-checked adult who has been pre-approved by the family and the Bloom. However, space in vehicles is limited and not guaranteed, so advance planning is essential. We will do everything possible to ensure your child can participate, but safety and communication remain our top priorities.

Field trips are not optional enrichment—they are a vital part of our educational model. We see these outings as extensions of the classroom and core to our hands-on, passion-driven philosophy. With your cooperation, they become more than just days away from home—they become transformative, shared learning adventures.

5. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP



Chapter Sections:

- Volunteering in a Bloom
- Tuition and Financial Responsibility
- Ways You Can Help or Donate
- The MSMSFM's Non-Government Funding Model

Volunteering in a Bloom

Family involvement is not just welcomed in the MSMSFM—it's essential. Our entire movement is built on the belief that education works best when families and educators work in partnership. Volunteering isn't about filling a quota or earning credit. It's about building community, deepening trust, and creating the kind of learning environment where children thrive because they see adults around them showing up with intention and care.

Every Bloom is a little different in its structure and rhythm, but all Blooms need family support to operate smoothly. Some families volunteer every week. Others step in for special events, field trips, or supply runs. No act of service is too small. Whether you're sweeping after an art project, organizing a group snack, reading a story aloud, leading a hands-on workshop, or just playing tag at recess, your time is valuable—and deeply appreciated.

When you register your child for the MSMSFM, you become part of the movement, not just a spectator. We ask all families to contribute in some way throughout the year.

That may look like:

- Helping with daily routines such as setup, cleanup, or transitions
- Leading a short lesson in an area you're passionate about
- Providing materials or helping stock learning supplies
- Driving for field trips or outings
- Assisting with group projects or classroom support
- Joining planning teams for events or special initiatives
- Mentoring other families who are new to the Bloom

All volunteers must be cleared through our family partnership screening process, which includes a background check, a short code of conduct agreement, and alignment with our values. We are creating a safe space for children, and that requires a team of adults who are consistent, trustworthy, and grounded in the MSMSFM mission.

You don't have to be a certified teacher to make a difference. You just have to care about children and be willing to show up. If you're unsure how to help, talk to your Bloom leader. They will be happy to guide you toward opportunities that fit your schedule and strengths.

Volunteering in a Bloom is not an obligation—it's an opportunity to invest in something meaningful. You're not just giving time. You're helping shape the childhood experience your student—and their peers—will carry with them for a lifetime.

Tuition and Financial Responsibility

At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, we believe families deserve access to high-quality, personalized education that reflects their values—without relying on government systems that fail to meet their children’s needs. Because we do not accept government funding of any kind, the success of each Bloom depends on the commitment and investment of the families we serve and the wonderful donors who share our vision for the future of education.

Each Bloom operates on a modest monthly tuition model. For most families, the standard rate is \$50 per week, per student, totaling \$200 per month. This base tuition helps cover:

- Teacher compensation
- Basic classroom materials and learning tools
- Utilities and maintenance of the learning space
- Administrative and operational support

Tuition ensures each Bloom runs smoothly—but it’s not intended to cover everything. Special events, field trips, additional programs, and extracurricular experiences may be funded through donations or Bloom-led fundraisers. Families are encouraged to support and participate in these efforts. If a Bloom wishes to organize a fundraiser, they must submit a simple fundraiser request form for approval. This helps us maintain consistency, transparency, and community alignment across the movement.

The MSMSFM is not a daycare or drop-in service. Tuition is due regardless of attendance unless prior arrangements are made for extenuating circumstances. We ask families to pay tuition by the first of each month using the methods provided by their Bloom leader or central team.

We also understand that life happens. If your family is experiencing hardship, please reach out. Thanks to generous donors, scholarships and flexible payment options are sometimes available on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to family tuition, the MSMSFM is also supported by outside donors—individuals, businesses, and organizations who believe in educational freedom and want to invest in a better future for Mississippi children. These generous supporters help make scholarships possible, fund expansion efforts, and provide emergency relief when families face financial challenges. Their contributions remind us that this movement reaches far beyond individual Blooms—it's a growing network of people who believe in what we're building.

But we'll be honest with you: tuition alone is not enough. This movement is powered by families who believe in doing education differently—and that means showing up, pitching in, and helping however you can. Whether it's through time, talent, or treasure, your involvement matters.

By enrolling in a Bloom, you're not just buying a seat. You're joining a mission. One rooted in freedom, responsibility, and a deep belief that we can do better—together.

Ways You Can Help or Donate

The Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement isn't just an educational option—it's a community-powered revolution. We don't rely on government grants. We don't receive federal funding. What we do have are families who care deeply about doing right by their children and donors who believe that Mississippi deserves more than the status quo.

Every Bloom exists because someone showed up. Someone gave. Someone believed. And now, it's your turn.

We ask every family to see themselves not just as beneficiaries—but as builders. Tuition covers the basics. It keeps the doors open. But the kind of education we're offering—the freedom, the creativity, the hands-on experiences, the field trips, the guest speakers, the science projects, the community events—that's funded by you and others like you who want something better for our children.

Give What You Can, When You Can

We understand that not every family has the same resources. Some give \$10. Some give \$1,000. Some give their time, talents, or professional services. Every bit helps.

Here are ways you can make a meaningful impact:

- One-time or monthly donations through our website
- Sponsoring a Bloom or helping another family with tuition
- Donating supplies or equipment based on your Bloom's wishlist
- Hosting a fundraiser with friends, churches, or local businesses
- Donating services like printing, graphic design, marketing, construction, teaching workshops, etc.

All donations are tax-deductible and directly support the education of MS children outside of government control. You're not donating to a distant bureaucracy. You're investing in real people, real kids, and real change.

In-Kind Contributions

We welcome physical items in good condition. Depending on your Bloom's needs, this could include:

- Art supplies
- Furniture or storage
- Books and learning kits
- Cleaning supplies
- Gardening tools
- Outdoor gear

Always check with your Bloom leader before donating to ensure the item meets current needs.

Help Us Spread the Word

You may not think of this as a "donation," but it's one of the most powerful gifts you can give:

- Share our posts on social media
- Invite friends to visit a Bloom
- Talk about the MSMSFM in your community
- Ask your workplace to support or sponsor us
- Nominate us for local grants or civic awards

The more people who know what we're doing, the stronger this movement becomes. Every voice matters.

Want to Do More?

Let us know. We'll match your skills or interests to a need. We can't do this alone—and we don't want to. That's the beauty of the MSMSFM. It belongs to all of us.

You are the movement. Your support—whether financial, practical, or relational—is what keeps the vision alive. Together, we're not just talking about change. We're building it, one Bloom at a time.

The MSMSFM's Non-Government Funding Model

The Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement was born from a simple but powerful idea: education should belong to families, not the government. Every policy we've adopted and every dollar we raise is rooted in that principle. That's why we have chosen a fully independent funding model—free from government money, grants, mandates, or control.

We do not receive any federal, state, or local government funding.

We do not apply for government grants.

We do not partner with government agencies.

And that's intentional.

Government money always comes with strings. Once those strings are attached, true freedom is lost—bit by bit, rule by rule, regulation by regulation. We've seen it happen too many times: the grant that requires a curriculum change, the partnership that demands testing, the funding that hinges on compliance with ever-shifting mandates. Not here. Not in this movement.

Instead, the MSMSFM operates entirely through:

- Family Tuition Contributions
- Private Donations from Individuals and Businesses
- Community Fundraising Events
- Corporate Sponsorships and Local Partnerships
- In-Kind Donations and Volunteers

This model allows us to stay true to our mission: passion-driven learning, flexible groupings, non-standardized teaching, and child-led growth. It also allows us to build strong community relationships, because every dollar we receive is tied to someone who actually believes in what we're doing—not just checking boxes on a grant report.

Of course, this model requires work. It means we must be transparent, responsible, and creative in how we manage resources. It means every Bloom must participate in local fundraising. It means every family plays a role—not just as a parent, but as a stakeholder in the movement.

The benefit? We're free.

Free to build a program around real children.

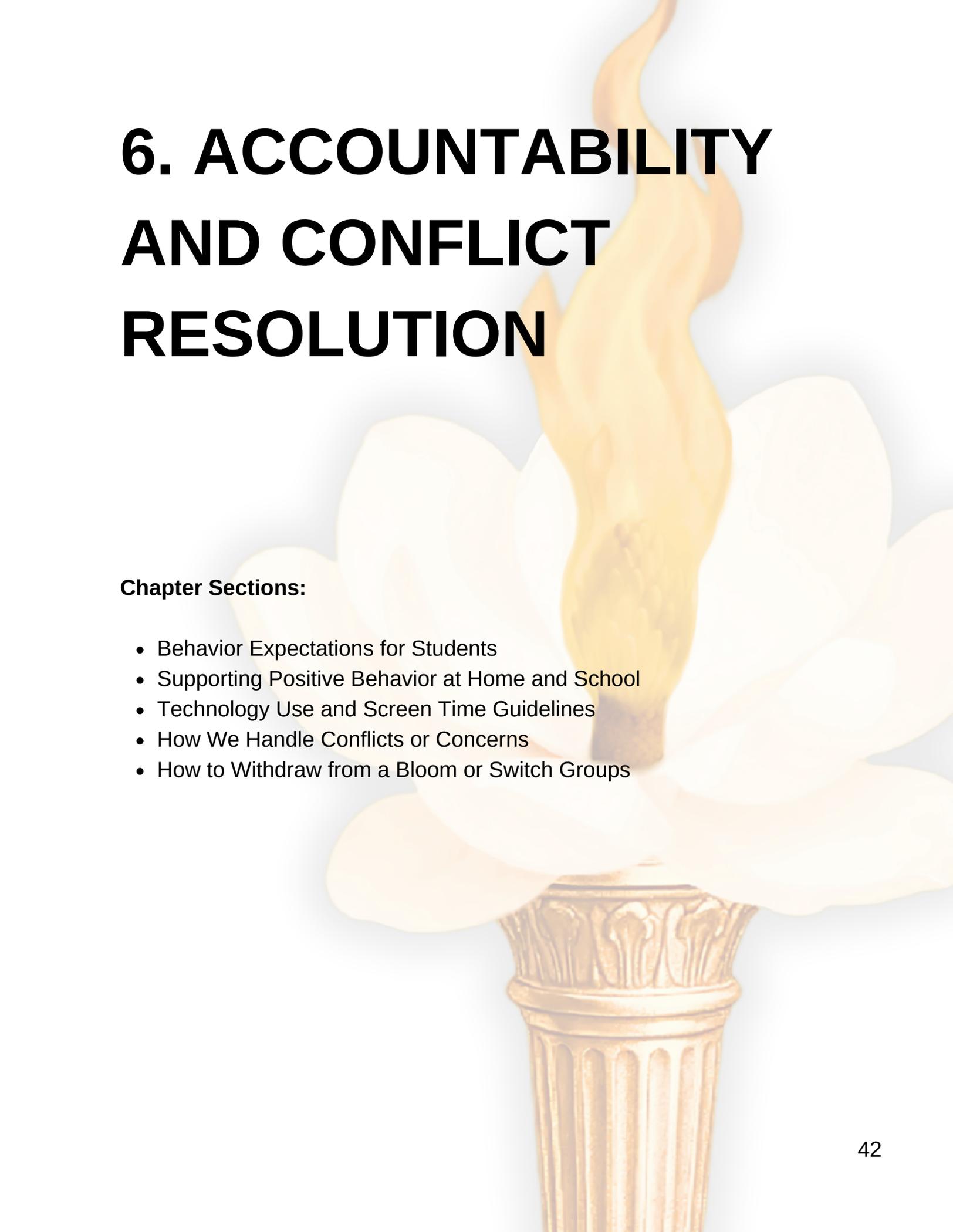
Free to respond quickly to needs without red tape.

Free to innovate, experiment, and adapt.

Free to say "no" when something doesn't align with our values.

We believe this model is not only possible—it's powerful. And it's growing. Every time someone gives their time, money, or voice to this mission, they are proving that you don't have to be part of a broken system to build something beautiful.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Chapter Sections:

- Behavior Expectations for Students
- Supporting Positive Behavior at Home and School
- Technology Use and Screen Time Guidelines
- How We Handle Conflicts or Concerns
- How to Withdraw from a Bloom or Switch Groups

Behavior Expectations for Students

At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, we believe that children rise to meet expectations when those expectations are clear, consistent, and rooted in mutual respect. Because our Blooms are built on freedom, trust, and community—not rigid rules and fear-based control—we rely on shared values and personal responsibility to guide student behavior.

Our goal is not to force compliance. It's to cultivate character. That means we don't hand out a long list of "do nots." Instead, we teach children to understand why behavior matters and how their choices affect others. We create environments that are safe, calm, and structured—but not authoritarian. Children are given space to express themselves, to ask questions, and to make mistakes. Growth comes through guidance, not punishment.

In the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, we don't expect children to be perfect—but we do expect them to be respectful, responsible, and ready to grow. Our behavior expectations are rooted in dignity, self-awareness, and accountability, not fear or control. We believe that children, like adults, thrive in environments with clear boundaries, mutual respect, and natural consequences.

Each Bloom sets its own rhythm, tone, and daily culture, but our expectations for student behavior are consistent across all learning spaces. These expectations are not arbitrary rules—they are the foundation of a safe, kind, and productive community. Our students are held to a high standard not because we want to punish them, but because we believe they are capable of rising to it.

While each Bloom may have its own set of age-appropriate rules, the following behavior expectations apply across the MSMSFM:

Respect Others

Students are expected to treat their peers, teachers, volunteers, and the learning environment with kindness and consideration. This includes:

- Speaking politely
- Listening when others are talking
- Keeping hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Respecting personal boundaries
- Avoiding teasing, name-calling, or exclusion

Take Responsibility

Students should own their choices, clean up after themselves, and seek help when needed. Accountability is not about shame—it's about learning from experience.

Solve Problems Peacefully

We teach children to use words to resolve conflicts, to ask for help when emotions run high, and to use calm-down strategies when needed. Physical aggression or intimidation is never acceptable.

Be an Active Learner

Participation is part of the experience. Students are expected to engage in learning activities, follow their Bloom's rhythm, and put in genuine effort—even when something feels new or challenging.

Care for the Space

Students take part in maintaining the cleanliness and organization of their learning environment. This fosters respect, independence, and a sense of ownership.

We understand that behavior looks different at different ages and developmental stages. Our educators use positive reinforcement, gentle redirection, and relationship-based guidance to help students build strong self-regulation skills over time. If a student repeatedly struggles to meet expectations, families will be contacted and invited into the process of finding solutions.

Every child deserves to feel safe and valued in their Bloom. By setting high standards for behavior—rooted in compassion and understanding—we create the kind of space where true learning can take place.

How We Handle Misbehavior

When a child struggles to meet these expectations, we don't rush to punish. Instead, we guide.

Depending on the situation, the following approaches may be used:

- **Calm Redirection:** Gently reminding the student of the expectation and helping them shift course.
- **Natural or Logical Consequences:** Allowing the consequence to match the action (e.g., a child who spills must help clean it up).
- **Check-ins:** Talking to the child explore what's going on beneath the behavior.
- **Cool-Down Time:** Offering a break from the group to breathe, reset, and reflect.
- **Restorative Conversations:** Helping the child understand the impact of their actions and brainstorm ways to repair harm.
- **Parent Partnership:** Reaching out to families for insight and collaboration if a behavior becomes ongoing.
- **Support Plans:** In rare cases, a temporary behavior support plan may be created to help the child find success within the Bloom.

We do not use public shaming, isolation, or punitive punishments. We believe that discipline should teach—not intimidate. However, we also believe that safety matters. If a behavior threatens the safety or well-being of another student, staff member, or the group, it will be addressed swiftly and seriously. Extreme cases of repeated aggressive, harmful, or disruptive behavior may result in suspension from the Bloom or removal from the MSMSFM entirely.

Working Together

Behavior isn't just a school thing—it's a whole-child, whole-community process. We ask parents and guardians to stay engaged, respond when we reach out, and support the same values at home. We are not here to assign blame. We're here to partner in helping each child become their best self.

At the MSMSFM, we don't expect perfection. We expect progress. And we walk with children—and their families—every step of the way.

Supporting Positive Behavior at Home and School

When it comes to behavior, consistency is everything. Children thrive when the expectations they experience at home and at school complement each other. That's why the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement doesn't view families as separate from the learning process—we see them as partners in shaping behavior, values, and character.

We know that no child behaves perfectly all the time. Growth isn't linear, and challenges are part of the journey. But when families and Bloom leaders work together, children receive the unified support they need to navigate those challenges and build strong internal tools for the future.

Shared Values, Shared Language

All MSMSFM Blooms operate from the same core behavioral values: respect, responsibility, peaceful problem-solving, and self-awareness. These are not just words on a wall—they are the compass we use to guide students. Families are encouraged to use similar language and values at home. When children hear consistent messages from all the adults in their lives, those messages stick.

For example:

Instead of “Be quiet,” try “Let's listen respectfully.”

Instead of “You're being bad,” try “That hurt someone—how can you make it right?”

Instead of “You're in trouble,” try “That's not how we do things. Will you try again?”

These shifts may seem small, but they teach children that behavior is not about pleasing adults—it's about learning how to be part of a community.

Partnering Through Challenges

If a student consistently struggles to meet behavior expectations, families will be contacted with respect and compassion. Our goal is not to scold parents or pass off responsibility.

Instead, we invite you into the process of understanding what's beneath the behavior and what strategies might help—whether it's sensory needs, family stress, emotional development, or social dynamics.

We may:

- Share observation notes or patterns we've noticed
- Ask questions about routines, transitions, or challenges at home
- Offer specific tools or scripts that work well in the Bloom
- Create a simple support plan together, if needed

Sometimes, just knowing that a child's team is working together can be enough to shift a tough pattern.

Ways Families Can Support Positive Behavior

Here are simple, everyday ways families can reinforce what we're teaching in Blooms:

- Stick to routines at home, especially around sleep, meals, and screen time.
- Model respect and self-regulation in how you handle stress, conflict, and mistakes.
- Give your child choices when possible—this builds confidence and decision-making skills.
- Use logical consequences instead of punishment. (E.g., "You broke the toy. Let's fix it or find a way to replace it.")
- Check in daily about your child's day. Ask open-ended questions like "What made you feel proud today?" or "Was anything tricky for you?"

We are always happy to suggest strategies or brainstorm with you. We don't expect families to be experts in child behavior. We just ask you to walk with us, stay curious, and never forget: your voice matters in your child's growth.

Together, we can raise kids who are not just well-behaved—but kind, resilient, and self-aware.

Technology Use and Screen Time Guidelines

In a world increasingly dominated by screens, the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement takes a mindful, intentional approach to technology. We are not anti-tech—but we are pro-child, and that means we prioritize developmentally appropriate, purpose-driven use of digital tools. Technology should never replace real-world learning, human connection, or outdoor exploration—it should only support and enhance them when necessary.

Each Bloom is designed to be a low-tech, high-engagement environment. The majority of learning takes place through hands-on activities, face-to-face discussions, physical exploration, and collaborative projects. Children are encouraged to move their bodies, use their hands, ask questions, and interact with peers and mentors—not with screens.

Student Technology Policy

Unless a specific Bloom activity calls for it, students will not be using computers, tablets, or phones during the school day. If technology is used, it is:

- Supervised by an educator
- Purpose-specific (e.g., looking up research for a project or watching a short educational video)
- Time-limited
- Free from advertising and data tracking
- Students may be allowed to use basic tools like calculators, audio recorders, or cameras for specific projects—but this is determined by the Bloom leader and varies by age and need.

Personal electronic devices such as phones, smartwatches, or tablets should not be used during school unless a parent or educator has made a special agreement due to a specific need. If a student uses a device without permission, the Bloom leader may hold it until the end of the day

Why We Limit Screens

Science continues to show that excess screen time—especially for young children—can impact attention, sleep, emotional regulation, and academic outcomes. Many families

choose the MSMSFM because they're looking for something different than the screen-heavy classrooms they left behind. Our low-tech approach helps children:

- Develop focus and sustained attention
- Build social and emotional skills through live interaction
- Strengthen motor skills and sensory awareness
- Cultivate imagination, creativity, and problem-solving

We know not every student has the same experience at home, and we do not shame families for their screen habits. However, we ask that families respect the screen policies during instruction time.

Home Technology Tips

- Set daily screen limits that leave time for play, chores, family meals, and rest.
- Use parental controls and monitor your child's online activity and device use.
- Avoid screen time within one hour of bedtime.
- Co-watch when possible—talk about what your child is viewing.
- Choose high-quality content that aligns with your family's values.

Children will always be curious about technology—and that's okay. Our goal is to help them become thoughtful, intentional users of digital tools, not passive consumers. By keeping screens in their proper place, we give children the space to fully engage with the world around them—and the people in it.

How We Handle Conflicts or Concerns

Conflict is a natural part of life—and in any community built around children, families, and passionate people, it's going to happen. At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, we don't shy away from conflict. We view it as an opportunity for growth, reflection, and strengthening relationships. What sets us apart is how we handle it.

We believe that concerns should be met with clarity, not confusion... and that resolution comes from open dialogue, not silence or avoidance. Whether it's a student disagreement, a miscommunication between adults, or a concern about a policy, our goal is to approach each situation with honesty, empathy, and solution-seeking.

Student Conflicts

Children are still learning how to navigate emotions, boundaries, and social dynamics—and sometimes, that means conflict. Our Bloom leaders are trained to respond calmly and proactively.

We use restorative practices to guide students through:

- Identifying the problem
- Recognizing their part in it
- Understanding how others were affected
- Brainstorming ways to repair the situation

In most cases, student conflicts are resolved within the Bloom through gentle conversation, redirection, and relationship-building. If a conflict persists or involves more serious behavior, families will be contacted and invited into the resolution process.

Concerns from Parents or Guardians

We want to hear from you. Truly. If something is bothering you—whether it's a question about curriculum, a worry about another child's behavior, or a concern about leadership—please reach out directly. We ask that families:

- Speak to your Bloom's teachers leader first for concerns related to day-to-day operations
- Use respectful language and assume good intentions
- Avoid gossip, social media venting, or triangulating other parents
- Give staff time to respond with thoughtfulness and care (typically within 24–48 hours)

If the issue is unresolved after speaking with the Bloom leader, you may escalate the concern to the MSMSFM's leadership team. We are always open to feedback and giving help—but we believe that the best solutions happen closest to the people involved.

Serious Concerns

If a situation involves safety, bullying, discrimination, or any violation of the MSMSFM principles, it will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. We have **zero tolerance** for harassment or abusive behavior—whether from students, adults, or families. These sorts of behaviors will result in removal from the Bloom, the MSMSFM, and the behavior will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Our Conflict Resolution Philosophy

- We believe honest conversations solve more than formal complaints.
- We believe accountability can be kind.
- We believe everyone involved deserves to be heard.
- And we believe that when handled with care, conflict can be the soil where trust grows.

We are building something radical here: a place where children and adults learn to communicate, take responsibility, and repair harm. That doesn't just happen in the classroom—it happens in the relationships between students, teachers, and families.

How to Withdraw from a Bloom or Switch Groups

We understand that circumstances change. Whether due to a move, a change in family schedule, a shift in needs, or simply the natural evolution of your child's growth, families may occasionally need to withdraw from a Bloom or request a transfer to another group. At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, we aim to make this process as respectful, thoughtful, and smooth as possible—for both your family and the Bloom community you're leaving.

Withdrawal Process

If you decide to withdraw your child from the MSMSFM:

1. Notify your Bloom Leader as early as possible. The more notice we have, the better we can support your child and ensure a smooth transition for the group.
2. Submit a withdrawal form, which can be requested from the Bloom leader or found on the MSMSFM website. This helps us keep our records accurate and your child's experience documented.
3. Return any borrowed materials or supplies. Items such as curriculum books, art materials, or learning tools should be returned in good condition unless otherwise noted.
4. Schedule an exit conversation (optional but encouraged). This gives families a chance to provide feedback and allows the Bloom leader to support the child in saying goodbye.

Tuition is not refundable for the current month once a child has attended, but families will not be billed for future months after the date of withdrawal unless previously agreed upon in writing.

Switching Blooms

We understand that sometimes a Bloom isn't the right fit—or that a child may need a different age group, environment, or teaching style. Requests to switch Blooms are handled on a case-by-case basis and require the following steps:

1. Speak with your current Bloom leader to express your concerns and intentions.
2. Contact your region's MSMSFM coordinator to discuss options and availability.
3. If a new placement is possible, both Bloom leaders (current and receiving) will meet with the family to coordinate a transition.

Transfers are not guaranteed, as space is limited and each Bloom has a unique dynamic. However, we will always do our best to accommodate your child's evolving needs.

A Note on Transitions

Whether withdrawing or switching groups, please help your child understand the process in an age-appropriate way. Children benefit from closure—especially in small, close-knit learning communities like ours. We encourage families to give their child a chance to say goodbye, reflect on their growth, and know that they are always a part of the MSMSFM story, no matter where life takes them next.

7. Enrollment, Records, and Legal Matters

Chapter Sections:

- Privacy and Confidentiality Expectations

Privacy and Confidentiality Expectations

At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, we honor the trust that families place in us. That trust includes how we handle sensitive information, student records, and personal conversations. Because we are not part of a traditional school system, we are not bound by all of the same laws as public schools—but we still hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards when it comes to privacy and confidentiality.

We believe that children thrive in environments where their personal needs, challenges, and triumphs are treated with respect. Families deserve the same. What happens in a Bloom should stay in a Bloom—unless there is a legitimate reason for wider disclosure.

What We Protect

We make every effort to safeguard:

- Student academic and developmental records
- Medical or health-related information shared with staff
- Behavioral observations and notes
- Any family disclosures related to home life, trauma, or personal struggles
- Parent-teacher communications
- Photos, videos, and recordings involving students

Student files—whether digital or physical—are stored securely and only accessible to the Bloom leader, relevant MSMSFM leadership, and (when necessary) staff providing services to your child. We do not sell, trade, or share personal data with outside vendors, businesses, or third-party apps.

If a student is featured in any public-facing media (such as a social media post or marketing photo), it will only occur with documented, written consent from the parent or guardian.

Conversations Stay Private

Bloom leaders and the MSMSFM staff are expected to treat sensitive conversations with discretion. If a parent shares concerns, observations, or private information, that trust will not be broken unless:

- The information involves risk of harm to a child or others
- There is a legal obligation to report or share (e.g., in suspected abuse cases)
- The parent gives explicit permission for the information to be shared with other staff or families

We ask families to mirror this same approach. Please avoid discussing other students, families, or the MSMSFM staff with people outside your Bloom. If something concerns you, we want to hear it directly—not through social media, group texts, or third-hand retellings.

Respect for All

Every family's story is different. Some of our students have unique learning needs, personal challenges, or family circumstances that are not publicly known. We expect all members of our community—adults and children—to treat each other with kindness, empathy, and a commitment to confidentiality.

The MSMSFM is a place of trust. That trust begins with how we treat each other's stories. And that's a responsibility we take very seriously.

8. Final Acknowledgment

Chapter Sections:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Acknowledgment and Signature

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Is the MSMSFM a homeschool program or a private school?

A. Neither. The MSMSFM is a microschool movement made up of small, independent learning groups called Blooms. Most students are registered as homeschoolers with the state, and parents remain the legal guardians of their child's education. But the Blooms themselves are led by trained educators, run on structured academic plans, and provide community-based, consistent instruction—just without the red tape of the public system.

Q: Is the MSMSFM accredited?

A. No, and that's intentional. Accreditation often requires compliance with Common Core standards, state testing, and government oversight. We believe in educational freedom. Our curriculum is academically rich, developmentally appropriate, and deeply meaningful—but it's not boxed into bureaucratic requirements. Families looking for a traditional, accredited school model may want to explore other options.

Q: What does it cost to attend?

A. We ask families to contribute \$50 per week per child, which totals \$200 per month and helps cover operating costs. This is not tuition in the traditional sense—it's a shared commitment to the sustainability of your child's Bloom. No family is turned away for financial hardship, and we work with donors and community sponsors to keep the program accessible.

Q: What curriculum do you use?

A. Each Bloom chooses from a variety of pre-approved curricula that align with our values of critical thinking, creativity, and personalized learning. We use tools like The Tuttle Twins, Brain Quest, Beautiful Feet Books, and other literature- and project-based resources. Curriculum is selected based on the age and developmental stage of the learners.

Q: Do I have to volunteer?

A. We expect all families to contribute in some way, whether through volunteering, fundraising, supply donations, or helping with events. We believe every family has something valuable to offer, and we trust you to show up in the way that works best for you.

Q: Can I use ESA funds or public scholarships to pay for tuition?

A. Not yet—but we’re working on it. Education Savings Accounts are not yet universally available to all Mississippi students. However, we are actively advocating for school choice and the expansion of ESA access to every family in the state. We are forced to pay taxes for education. Why can't we decide where that money goes for our own children? Once the program is available to all children, we plan to accept ESA funding while preserving our core mission and independence.

Q: Are there options for special needs students?

A. Yes—and we welcome them. Many of our students are neurodivergent, have had IEPs or 504s, or have struggled to thrive in traditional school settings. Our small group structure, individualized pace, and nurturing environment often provide a better fit for children who feel overlooked in larger classrooms. While we don't offer clinical therapies at this time, we work closely with families to accommodate sensory needs, learning styles, and emotional regulation strategies. If your child needs a calmer, more supportive learning space—we might be exactly what you're looking for.

Q: Is this legal in Mississippi?

A. Yes! Mississippi is one of the most homeschool-friendly states in the country. As long as families register their intent to homeschool with the local school district and submit an annual certificate of enrollment, they are free to educate their children as they see fit—including participating in a microschool like MSMSFM.

Q: Can I start my own Bloom?

A. Absolutely! We’re growing every day and welcome families and educators who share our values to join the movement. If you're interested in starting a Bloom in your area, reach out to us. We'll help walk you through the process and provide the tools, training, and support to get started.

Acknowledgment and Signature

At the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement, transparency is one of our core values. We want every family to know exactly what we stand for, how we operate, and what to expect from participation in a Bloom.

This handbook was created to outline the beliefs, policies, procedures, and guiding principles that shape the MSMSFM. We ask that all parents or guardians read this document carefully and thoroughly, and that they discuss age-appropriate portions with their children so everyone is informed and prepared.

By signing this page, you acknowledge the following:

Handbook Agreement

- I have read and understand the Mississippi Microschool Freedom Movement Family Handbook in full.
- I understand that the MSMSFM is not a government-funded or accredited school, but a private, family-led microschool movement.
- I understand that my role as a parent or guardian is collaborative, not passive, and that my involvement—whether through communication, volunteering, or support—is essential to my child’s success in a Bloom.
- I agree to uphold the values and behavioral expectations outlined in this handbook for both my child and myself.
- I understand that participation in MSMSFM is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time by following the withdrawal procedures provided.

Communication and Conflict

- I agree to address concerns respectfully and directly with MSMSFM leaders.
- I understand that gossip, public shaming, or passive-aggressive communication undermines the integrity of this community and will not be tolerated.

Contributions and Support

- I acknowledge the requested family contribution of \$50 per week per student and understand how these funds are used to sustain the program.
- I understand that MSMSFM does not currently accept government funding but may accept ESA funds once they are available to all Mississippi students.
- I agree to do my part to support the movement—whether through donations, spreading awareness, fundraising, or simply honoring the mission in word and deed.

Signature

Please sign and return this page to the MSMSFM leadership team. By signing this document you are acknowledging that you fully understand and agree to the terms listed above. A copy will be kept on file and another will be given to you for your records.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Print: _____

Child's name: _____

Date: _____