



**BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL**

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THE DIFFERENCE IS EXTRAORDINARY

# **Parent/Student Handbook**

**2020-2021**

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## INTRODUCTION

### HISTORY OF BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL

Baltimore Lab School first opened as Baltimore Lab: a Division of The Lab School of Washington in 2000, with 18 students, ages 6-11. Sally L. Smith, a legendary pioneer in special education who also founded The Lab School of Washington, founded Baltimore Lab. In 2004, Baltimore Lab moved into historic Goucher Hall and in 2008 graduated its first senior class. To date, hundreds of students from Baltimore and the surrounding region have benefitted from Baltimore Lab's unique and vibrant educational program.

On March 14, 2014, Baltimore Lab ended its status as a part of The Lab School of Washington, and secured its independence as an autonomous Baltimore institution. The dream of our founder had come to fruition, and Baltimore Lab School is now one of four schools using Sally Smith's transformative arts methodology, including schools in Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Today, Baltimore Lab School (hereinafter referred to as the "School," or "Baltimore Lab School," or "BLS") enrolls approximately 135 students from first through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The School continues to provide a very small student-teacher ratio of about 6:1, related service providers (psychologists, clinical social workers, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists), and a rich arts-based education that helps our students reach their potential. Among our seniors, more than 90% attend college after graduation.

The School is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education as a nonpublic special education facility, and is also accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

### ABOUT OUR FOUNDER

Sally L. Smith (1929-2007) designed and founded The Lab School of Washington in 1967 for children with learning disabilities. Traditional schools were not successfully educating her youngest son Gary. Believing that "everyone can learn," Ms. Smith was a pioneer in designing teaching approaches that used art in all its forms as a gateway for teaching academic skills. She developed the Academic Club Method, an experiential classroom model that teaches academic subjects through full immersion in rigorous academic material. Academic Clubs create storehouses of knowledge, vocabulary, language fluency, and critical thinking to facilitate classroom proficiency in multiple disciplines. The success of this model has been repeatedly documented and is replicated worldwide.

For over 30 years, Sally Smith oversaw the Master's Degree Program in Special Education: Learning Disabilities at American University and was a national leader in the field of learning disabilities. Author of ten books and numerous professional articles, Sally Smith mastered the art of translating difficult clinical issues into popular language. Her best known books are *No Easy Answers: The Learning Disabled Child at Home and at School* (Bantam, 1979; Revised, 1995), and *Succeeding Against the Odds: How the Learning Disabled Can Realize Their Promise* (Tarcher/Putnam, 1993). She also was a member of the Professional Advisory Boards of both the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) and the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD).

### ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended to serve as a resource guide to help answer many questions parents and students commonly have about the School and to help you better understand how the School operates. The School may change, delete, replace, or otherwise modify the policies and practices described in this handbook at any time at its discretion. This handbook is not intended to be a contract or to create any contractual rights or obligations. Should you have any questions about this handbook or the information it contains, you are encouraged to contact the Head of School.

## **MISSION**

*Baltimore Lab School is an innovative learning community fostering scholarship and creativity in students with unique strengths and diverse learning needs. In an environment of inquiry, hands-on exploration, and the Arts, Baltimore Lab School students learn to advocate for themselves as they become engaged and compassionate members of a global society.*

## **BELIEFS**

We Believe-

### **STUDENTS**

All children possess unique strengths, can learn, and must develop the ability to self-advocate.

### **EDUCATORS**

Enthusiastic and creative staff must be supported to grow professionally by seeking out non-traditional, evidence-based teaching methods that best meet the needs of diverse learners.

### **ARTS**

The arts can be a vehicle for organizing the learning process, combining multi-sensory instruction and experiential learning for students with learning disabilities.

### **CULTURE**

Student success requires a safe and structured environment, founded on kindness, compassion and the celebration of differences (race, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, military status, or ability).

## **ENROLLMENT**

Baltimore Lab School educates intelligent, often gifted, students in grades 1-12 with moderate to severe specific learning disabilities (SLD), other health impairment (OHI), or Multiple Disabilities (including SLD and/or OHI as at least one listed disability).

The Baltimore Lab School program is designed to meet the needs of the student with learning differences through a highly differentiated academic program that incorporates experiential, project-based and arts-integrated small group instruction.

## **ABOUT OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL**

Mr. Steve Buettner's career began in Baltimore City Public Schools in 1992. He taught Grades 4-7 with a focus on social studies. Steve recognized the importance of hands-on learning experience for his students, so he had his students make period costumes to help immerse them in their learning. Sometimes his students dressed in kimonos, learned conversational Japanese, and ate authentic Japanese food to experience a unit on Japan. Sometimes his students became environmentalists by studying the rainforest beneath a canopy of 10-20 foot palm leaves donated by the rainforest stewards at the National Aquarium in Baltimore. Students wrote their own myths and read them next to an authentic wigwam to better understand the lives of Native Americans in Maryland, as well. These teaching experiences and approaches were all developed as a result of reading Sally Smith's book, Succeeding Against the Odds (1994).

Steve then taught in Howard County Public Schools beginning in 1994. During this time, he supported a classroom environment in which his students created and built miniature villages to better understand the interdependence of colonists who arrived in America in the 1600s. Students created class murals for each unit to support a global understanding prior to learning their social studies content. Mind maps and graphic organizers were used to build knowledge and ensure deeper understanding as students immersed themselves in music, foods, and arts from the same period of history. Steve won two awards for Outstanding Educator in 1998, and again in 2000, by the Howard County Chamber of Commerce.

In 2000, he was recognized by the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) for outstanding service to supporting Maryland's principals through his work at the Maryland State Department of Education. Through this recognition, he was selected to be the Reading Coordinator (K-12) for Baltimore City Public Schools. During this time, he supported many initiatives such as the Baltimore Sun's Reading by 9 series.

In 2002, he was selected to be the principal of The Mount Washington School. Under his leadership, the school flourished because he worked to ensure that his teachers were given the freedom they needed to motivate and inspire young learners through multimodal experiences. In 2004, he received a Governor's Citation for his successful completion of the Maryland State Department of Education- Principals' Academy. Based on his success with The Mount Washington School, he was recruited by Baltimore County Public Schools to lead Hernwood Elementary School, a comprehensive school with a center for children on the Autism spectrum. Since 2008, Steve has worked at Lutherville Lab, a magnet school for science, mathematics, and communications. During his time at Lutherville Lab, the school won numerous regional and state awards for Destination Imagination, 24 Math Challenge, Young Authors, and in 2014, the school won a national award for Magnet School of Excellence. However, the award he is most proud to have Lutherville Lab win was an award for Outstanding Inclusion Program from the Arc of Baltimore in 2011. It is through this award that he accepts that he is making a difference for all children.

Steve is a member of the following organizations: Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET), Learning Forward- Professional Learning Association, and has served as the Vice President of the Towson chapter of Kappa Delta Pi (KDP)- an international honor society in education.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### SCHOOL HOURS

The School day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday; and begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday. The doors open at 7:45 a.m. every day. Students are not permitted to arrive prior to 7:45 a.m., as we offer no supervision and cannot assume responsibility during that time. At 8:00 a.m. attendance is taken, announcements are made, and students prepare their materials for the day ahead. Students should not arrive later than 8:00am as to avoid disruption to their school day.

### ATTENDANCE

Students must have the continuity and consistency of regular attendance at school. We ask for your cooperation in making sure that your child attends school every day. These guidelines reflect Baltimore Lab School expectations, were designed in accordance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), and were developed in consideration of local school system (LSS) attendance policies.

If your child is ill or unavoidable circumstances arise, please notify the school by 9:00 a.m. (410-261-5500 or [attendance@baltimorelabschool.org](mailto:attendance@baltimorelabschool.org)), otherwise, the absence may be considered unexcused. Although we are an independent school, we must submit monthly attendance reports to the local school systems (LSS) and have to state reasons for absences.

### Excused Absences

Student absences will be coded as excused from school under the following conditions as defined by COMAR:

1. Death in the immediate family
2. Medical Appointment / Illness of student
3. Court summons
4. Hazardous weather conditions
5. School related or approved work (3 College Visits)
6. Observance of a religious holiday
7. Lack of authorized transportation
8. Suspension
9. State emergency
10. Other emergency; as determined by the Head of School

The School must be provided with written documentation from the parent or physician explaining the absence/tardiness/early dismissal within 2 days of the student's return to school or the absence is coded as unexcused. Be aware that repeated absences due to illness will require verification from the student's treating physician. The note should include the name of the student, the date(s) and reason for the absence, and the signature of the parent/guardian/physician. Upon receipt of the note, the school will certify the absence as excused or unexcused. Absences not supported by documentation will be coded as unexcused.

Students with excused absences are eligible to receive make-up work and to participate in any missed assessments.

Missed work (due to excused absence) must be made up or a zero will be recorded as the grade. It is the student's responsibility to get the missed work from the teachers or from another classmate. Arrangements can be made by the parent or student to stay after school or to work with a teacher during an agreed time to make up missed work.

Students may not be allowed to make up work for unexcused absences.

When students are absent they will be given one day for every day they were absent to make up for full credit. (e.g., a student who is absent 3 days will have 3 days to turn in work upon his/her return to school).

After the opportunity to receive full credit for make-up work has expired, students will receive partial credit (60%) of their earned grade for work that is submitted after the absentee grading window. Make-up work for partial credit must be given to teachers within two weeks of the due date of the assignment. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis. Parents will be informed of students who are in danger of failing midway through each quarter via progress reports that will be sent home.

### Unexcused Absences

Absences for any other reason than those defined as excused, are determined to be unexcused.

The school strongly encourages family-centered activity including family trips, but NOT during school time. Our teachers prepare lessons for a set number of school days and students who miss even a day are being deprived of valuable instruction. Our staff is prepared to help students who miss school because of illness or absences that cannot be prevented; however, as a rule, family vacations are not considered to be excused absences.

### Tardiness/Early Dismissal

Students who arrive late to school (8 a.m. or later) are considered tardy. Tardiness will be identified as excused or unexcused in the same manner as absences from school.

Leaving School early is considered an early dismissal. In order to be released before the end of the school day, a student must be signed out at the front desk by a parent/guardian. Early dismissals will be identified as excused or unexcused in the same manner as absences from school.

### Chronic Absenteeism

Each marking period consists of 45 scheduled school days (subject to adjustments in the school calendar due to inclement weather or unforeseen school closures). Regular school attendance is a crucial factor in student achievement. Pupil participation during classroom instruction, involvement in lesson activities and performance on in-class assignments represent a student's classwork grade. Accumulated absences will negatively impact the classwork grade, and thus final quarter grades, in the following manner:

- Students accumulating EXCUSED and UNEXCUSED absences amounting to 20% or more of the classes within a grading period (9 days) may be subject to a failing classwork grade for that period.
- Students accumulating UNEXCUSED absences amounting to 10% or more during a grading period (5 days) may receive a failing final grade for that period.

Additionally, for students funded by their local school system (LSS), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires the following:

- When a student accumulates 10 or more consecutive excused absences, an IEP team meeting must be held to ensure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). A note from the student's physician will be required. If the IEP team determines the Home and Hospital services are to be appropriate, the IEP will be amended, the student will be withdrawn from Baltimore Lab School, and enrolled in the LSS Home and Hospital program.
- When a student accumulates 10 or more cumulative unexcused absences, an IEP team meeting must be conducted for the purpose of reviewing the appropriateness of the IEP, the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and the school assignment. If the IEP team determines the absences are a manifestation of the student's disability, the team must document it and implement an appropriate behavior plan. If the team determines the absences are not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school will follow the LSS's procedures for

habitually truant students. Attendance will be actively monitored and an IEP team meeting will be convened for every subsequent 10 days of cumulative truancy.

In situations involving chronic absenteeism, the School will work with families to explore all options in an effort to help achieve student success. Families will receive regular notification, via documents such as progress reports and quarterly report cards, summarizing pupil attendance. In situations where concerns arise, school administrators will contact families by letter and by phone and arrange conferences as necessary.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PLAN



**ARRIVAL** - Student arrival time takes place between **7:45 a.m.** and **8:00 a.m.** on full and half days.

**DISMISSAL** - Student dismissal begins promptly at **3:15 p.m.** on full days and **12:30 p.m.** on half days.

### CAR LINE:

- Students being transported via car will be dropped off and picked up at the rear entrance of BLS on Lovegrove Street (indicated by blue circle).
- Please enter Lovegrove Street from 21<sup>st</sup> Street. Cars attempting to enter Lovegrove Street from 22<sup>nd</sup> Street unfairly cut off other drivers.
- Students arriving late (after 8:00 a.m.) must enter through the main entrance and check in at the front desk.

### BUSES:

- Students being transported via school bus will be dropped off and picked up at the side entrance of BLS on E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street (indicated by red circle).

## PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

We are thrilled that you have chosen Baltimore Lab School for your child. We look forward to working together with you.

We believe that a positive and constructive relationship between our School and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or other adults interacting with our school community by virtue of their relationship with the Student is essential to the mission of the school.

We ask that parents check in at the Front Desk when visiting the School. Parents are not permitted to visit the classrooms when School is in session; however, there are events during the year when parents are invited to visit the school and view student work. If a child is leaving before the end of the school day, parents must sign their child out at the front desk and then wait in the front lobby for their child to be dismissed. If lunch and/or other materials are being dropped off, they should be left with the Front Desk, who will make sure that the child receives them.

Through student IEP/PEP meetings and parent conferences, parents will have the opportunity to discuss their child's strengths, talents, and areas of need. Back-to-School Night is another opportunity to get to know the faculty working with our students. Additionally, parents will be contacted periodically throughout the school year by their child's Educational Advisor to ensure that any questions or concerns are being addressed.

We also invite parents to participate in the informational sessions, special events, and celebrations at our school. Parent events, which focus on issues of interest to parents regarding learning differences, ADHD, and related topics, are provided at no cost. Performances, Grandparents and Friends' Day, and other events are additional opportunities for parents to spend time at the school.

We recognize and appreciate the role that parents play in the schooling of their children. We believe that a partnership between parents and the school is vital and we invite parents to fully engage with us. Parents are welcome to email or contact their child's teacher, Educational Advisor, Related Service Provider, Case Manager, Division Head, the Education Director, or the Head of School.

Unfortunately, circumstances may occasionally require the Head of School to conclude that the actions of the parent(s)/guardian(s) (or other adults interacting with the School or its community by virtue of their relationship with the student) impede the school's ability to meet its educational objectives or make a positive or constructive relationship impossible. In those unlikely circumstances, the School reserves the right to dismiss the student.

## BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL WEBSITE AND MOBILE APP

### Communication with Faculty

We encourage open and direct communication with teachers and service providers but ask that you respect the time needed for preparation and reporting for the comprehensive level of instruction and support provided at the School. The School provides a faculty/staff directory on our website at [www.baltimorelabschool.org](http://www.baltimorelabschool.org). You will find titles, photos, and contact information for the members of our staff. We are very pleased to provide this but ask that you use this information judiciously when considering contacting your child's teachers and related service providers.

*Phone Calls:* Teachers have phones in their rooms; however, phones will only be used during non-instructional hours. Please feel free to leave voicemail messages. Teachers will typically return calls within two school days.

*E-mails:* When emailing a teacher, please copy the Head of your child's division. Teachers will be asked to copy Division Heads in their responses to parents. It is important for the Division Head to have a comprehensive picture of what is happening with each student.

Drop off, pick up, lunch, and transportation issues should be directed to the front desk.

Schedules and other administrative issues should be directed to the Division Head, who may direct parents to a specific colleague for assistance.

### Parent/Student Directory

The School provides an online Parent/Student Directory as part of its website. It is behind a password-protected area of the site and not observable to anyone outside the School community. You have the right and ability to make changes and updates to your directory listing, which will serve us all in keeping things current. Parents have several options during that process to “opt out” of listing your information in the directory, as required by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Although you have the right to do so, we hope that you will choose not to, as having minimal communication information available to staff and other parents is crucial to our ability to communicate effectively with each other. The site also provides an option for you to print a copy of the full parent/student directory for your use.

### Other Website Features

[www.baltimorelabschool.org](http://www.baltimorelabschool.org) provides a wide variety of community information and convenient ways to communicate with the School, such as:

- academic and athletics calendars;
- the latest news about what is taking place at Baltimore Lab;
- health services;
- a mobile version of the site, viewable on smartphones or tablets.

All parents and students can sign in to the private side of the website, where they have access to:

- the student’s schedule and academic resources;
- an online directory of students, faculty, staff, and parents;
- electronic methods for updating personal contact information, and returning school forms;
- Furthermore, every parent is provided access to a secure parent portal called ParentsWeb where they are able to access: attendance reports, quarterly report cards, tuition and incidental billing through FACTS.

### **STUDENT REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Each quarter, a report card is completed for each child which includes information regarding strengths, strategies, areas of difficulty, and progress, in addition to letter grades for each subject for Middle and High School students. Copies of the report cards are sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s), the funding jurisdictions, and to other professionals as requested by the parents. Parents will be informed of students who are in danger of failing midway through each quarter via progress reports that will be sent home. Progress on IEP and PEP goals will also be sent home quarterly.

Parent conferences will be held in the fall and spring on scheduled days. If a parent would like to request a conference at another time, they should contact the appropriate Division Head.

IEP and PEP meetings are scheduled throughout the school year. Parents will be informed of the scheduled meeting date at least 10 days in advance.

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Parents are asked to complete a Student Contact Form, which is available on the School’s website in the Community section. We ask parents to update this information whenever changes are made to addresses, phone numbers, or email contacts. We also ask parents to notify the School when they will be away from home on business trips and to identify a local adult for emergency contacts. Rapid personal contact is essential in an emergency or urgent situation. Also, if a student has or develops a need for special attention during emergencies, please notify the School.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

In case of inclement weather, the School will decide by 5:30 a.m. if there is a change to regular operating hours. As soon as this decision is made, the following steps will be taken:

- The RenWeb Parent Alert System will text every family and report operating status.
- WBAL-TV will be notified.

*A special note for families whose students who receive transportation services through the local school system (LSS)*

- If your local school system is closed due to inclement weather, or if your local school system normally transports students through a county with closed schools, your local school system will not transport students to our school.
- In case of a delayed opening or early dismissal due to inclement weather, check with your individual local school system office regarding their policies.

## **ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL**

Please see the Student Code of Conduct for more details

The following items are NOT allowed at School:

- alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, or any other illegal or controlled substances including inhalants
- any sort of weapon or incendiary (play and/or real guns, knives, or war-like objects, etc)
- threatening or sexually explicit behavior, speech, literature, videos, recordings, emails, text and/or voice messages
- pets and skateboards

Abuse of these rules will result in serious consequences which may include, but are not limited to, a parent meeting, police involvement, suspension or expulsion.

In the interest of preventing and investigating potential violations of school policies and preserving a safe and healthy school environment, the School reserves the right to inspect lockers, desks, electronic systems, and other facilities provided by the school for student use. The School further reserves the right to inspect student handbags, backpacks, vehicles, and other items brought on campus or to school-related, off-campus events. Accordingly, students should not have an expectation of privacy with respect to material brought to campus or school-related events. The School may confiscate material that it reasonably believes is in violation of School policies or rules, poses a danger to the student in possession or others, or violates the law. Students responsible for the presence of such material will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures and may be reported to appropriate legal authorities.

## **Valuables**

Under no circumstances will the School be held responsible for items that are brought to school from home. We discourage bringing money or valuables except when appropriate for a specific School activity.

## **EDUCATIONAL TESTING**

Informal assessments are administered to all students periodically throughout the school year to track progress and to inform instruction.

Students funded by local school systems (LSS) in designated grades must participate in standardized achievement tests. Participation is mandated by the state. These tests are given at the School by staff. Approved accommodations are

specified in the student's IEP and are strictly adhered to during test administration. Parents are notified before the test is given. Please call the Division Head for your child if you have any questions.

Formal evaluations may be administered to students funded by the local school system (LSS) when an IEP determines assessments are needed. These evaluations are usually administered by the local jurisdiction.

For privately placed students, the School conducts its own battery of achievement tests on a rotating basis.

## STUDENT RECORDS

Official school documents will be released as directed on the contact sheet completed by the financially responsible Parent(s)/Guardian(s).

To request a copy of your child's transcript, you must fill out a Transcript Request Form. To obtain a form, please contact our Registrar.

All tuition, fees, and miscellaneous expenses must be current (i.e. all amounts due must be paid) before transcripts, report cards, teacher reports and letters of recommendation will be released to the parent or another school. If, as a result of unmet financial obligations to the School, the School is unable to release a transcript requested by another school, it will notify the requesting school of the reason that the transcript cannot be released.

## PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS

The School complies with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, when applicable. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the Registrar's Office a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Registrar's Office will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

These requests will be included in the student file and the parent/s will fill in the necessary information on the file log sheet. This should include the name of the reviewer, the month, day, year and purpose of the review. This log sheet must be filled in by any person who has been given permission to review the file.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the Registrar's Office, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School's Board; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions, such as but not limited to an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Under certain circumstances, the School may disclose education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

Questions about FERPA and the School's policies/practices should be directed to the Registrar's Office or Educational Services.

## **EDUCATIONAL TESTING RECORDS MAINTENANCE, RETENTION, AND DISPOSAL POLICY**

The following policy pertains to educational testing conducted by School personnel, with School students. "Test records" involve all data, scores, and test protocols involved in the testing and evaluation process. "Test protocols" refer to the protocols used to conduct and score testing. "Score summaries" are documents produced after testing is completed, consisting of test scores.

### **Record Security and Maintenance**

All test records are to be stored securely. Records are only accessible by qualified School personnel.

### **Record Retention and Disposal**

Complete test records will be retained for a period of no less than four (4) years after the date of test administration. Test scores will be entered into a secure database and become part of the student's academic record.

Test protocols may be destroyed after four (4) years have elapsed since test administration. These protocols may be retained indefinitely at the discretion of the School. Score summaries will be retained, in paper or electronic form, until the student is twenty-two (22) years of age. After this point, score summaries may be retained, or destroyed, at the discretion of the School.

This policy shall be made public to all parents of School students, each year, in the School Parent Handbook. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Registrar's Office or Educational Services.

## **FEES AND COSTS RELATED TO LEGAL PROCEEDINGS**

When the School or its faculty, staff or agents are called as witnesses or are otherwise required to participate in legal proceedings initiated by or involving former, current, or prospective parents/students, the School may incur significant expenses, including but not limited to compensation for participants and their replacements, attorneys' fees and other costs.

Any fees, expenses, or costs incurred by the School related to legal proceedings involving a current, former, or prospective student and/or parent automatically will be charged to the student's account and will be due under the same terms as other fees.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Applicable state and local laws require School staff members to report the suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of a child. Staff members who do not comply with these requirements face legal penalties.

School staff will make reports as required by applicable law. The applicable laws do not give a staff member with suspicion any legal alternative except to make a report to the proper authorities for appropriate review and investigation, in accordance with the School's Policy on Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect. A staff member with such suspicions does not have the authority to review and investigate the suspicions to rule out the possibility of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or child neglect. Please refer to the specific reporting procedures described in the School's Policy on Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect.

# **SAFETY**

## **EMERGENCY PLAN**

The School has a very comprehensive Emergency Plan. In the event of a local or national emergency, information regarding the operating status of the School will be communicated through the Blackboard Connect phone, text, and email system and if possible [www.baltimorelabschool.org](http://www.baltimorelabschool.org)

We are prepared (with food and water) to shelter-in-place for our students and staff for up to three days in the event that this becomes necessary. Parents are urged to consider the need for medications and special diets during an extended stay for emergency purposes. Contact the School Nurse (410-735-0033) to make arrangements.

## **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner.

These regulations assign schools many responsibilities. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our Asbestos Management Plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or in progress. You can review this plan during normal business hours without cost or restriction. If you have any questions about the BLS Asbestos Management Plan, please contact the Business Office at 410-261-5500.

## **BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION**

Baltimore Lab School follows [MSDE's policy](#) regarding bullying, harassment, and intimidation, which includes a reporting form that can be filled out by the students, a staff member, or a parent. Staff and students are informed annually of the procedures to address incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

Definitions:

Bullying: exposing a student to intentional negative actions on the part of one or more other students which adversely affect the victim's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities.

CyberBullying: means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device and includes the use of social media sites. Cyberbullying shall include any future applications that fall under "electronic communication".

Harassment: perceived or actual experiences of discomfort with identity issues in regard to race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other identifying characteristics by a student which adversely affects that student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities.

Intimidation: subjection of a student to intentional action that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority which adversely affects that student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational program or activities.

Verbal abuse: the use of words to cause harm to the person being spoken to. Verbal abuse may consist of shouting, insulting, intimidating, threatening, shaming, demeaning, or derogatory language, among other forms of communication.

Sexual harassment: the broader term that encompasses conduct of a sexual nature such as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment also includes acts that are not overtly sexual but rather are directed at individuals based on their gender such as profanity or rude behavior that is gender-specific.

If it is determined that a member of our community has engaged in harassment of any form, including but not limited to bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, or intimidation, that member may face consequences ranging from school suspension to expulsion. BLS strictly prohibits the disparagement of others based on race, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, military status, or ability.

### Reporting Procedures for Instances of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

If you believe your child or another student has been subjected to bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any kind, you should report the harassment to the student's Division Head using the MSDE Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation form found at:

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/SSSP/Bullying/BullyingHarrassmentIntimidationReportingForm.doc> .

If you are uncomfortable making the report to the student's Division Head, you may make the report directly to the Head of School. Similarly, if you believe the student's Division Head has not adequately resolved the matter, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Head of School. The School is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent bullying, harassment, or intimidation, and will make every reasonable effort to promptly and completely address and correct any such conduct that may occur. However, the School cannot take prompt and effective remedial action unless each member of our community assumes the responsibility of reporting such incidents to an appropriate School employee. Each report of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be investigated promptly and impartially.

## PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING HOSPITALIZATION

There are a variety of reasons why a Baltimore Lab School student might need to be hospitalized (psychiatric and/or medical). In order to maximize the benefits of hospitalization and to facilitate a successful re-entry to Baltimore Lab School, we have developed this set of guidelines for parents and hospital personnel.

While a student is hospitalized:

It is essential that the hospital treatment team and/or parent establish and maintain regular contact with Baltimore Lab School staff throughout the student's inpatient stay. A Division Head from Baltimore Lab School will work with the treatment team and/or parent to ensure schoolwork and/or educational programming continues so that the student may keep up with his/her studies.

If the student who is hospitalized is funded by the Local School System (LSS), and the parents anticipate the hospitalization to approach or exceed 10 school days, the Division Head will confer with the Education Director to determine when the LSS should be notified. Once the LSS is notified, an IEP meeting will be scheduled in order to discuss the possible necessity for Home and Hospital services in order to ensure the child's academic needs are being met during their hospitalization.

Transitioning back into Baltimore Lab School:

If a student is returning to Baltimore Lab, it is necessary for Baltimore Lab School staff (Division Head and/or Director of Student Services) be notified. The Baltimore Lab School staff will decide on a reentry plan.

If a staff member perceives that a student is a threat to himself or others, Baltimore Lab School reserves the right to require the student to be seen by an outside professional BEFORE returning to school. The student will be marked absent during their time out of school.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING**

### **ATHLETICS**

Updated and accurate information regarding our School athletic program can be found at [www.baltimorelabschool.org/athletics](http://www.baltimorelabschool.org/athletics).

All participants are expected to adhere to the Athletic Code of Conduct, which is distributed to students each year.

### **SUMMER PROGRAM**

Baltimore Lab School offers a Summer Program for every age group, which also meets the requirements for an Extended School Year (ESY) program for students funded by the LSS. Baltimore Lab School's summer program is designed to help students discover their strengths, exercise their creativity, overcome academic difficulties, and prepare for the school year ahead. The curriculum varies from year to year.

In addition, specialized summer programs are offered by our Related Services providers.

## **PAYMENT FOR SERVICES**

The School has engaged FACTS to invoice and collect all payments online for tuition, clinical, and outpatient services at the School. Additionally, we add after school, transportation, sports and ancillary charges to the same invoice to parents. More information on the specifics of payment options can be found on the School's website.

### **OVERDUE BALANCES**

At the School, we strive to be the best stewards of the tuition, fee and giving dollars you invest here. To that end, it is critical that we spend less staff time collecting outstanding debts to the school. We know you would rather we invest in classroom resources than in administrative staff to follow up on past due balances. FACTS charges a \$25 late fee on each overdue invoice.

Students with an outstanding balance may not commence classes in the fall or return to class after the winter or spring breaks. Further, the School will not be able to provide related services or after school classes to students with those balances outstanding.

Thank you for joining us in the effort to apply our dollars to the students we serve.

Please do not hesitate to contact the School's Director of Finance and Operations if we can answer questions or be of assistance to you.

## SCHOOL PROCEDURES

### LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Dismissal takes place between 3:15-3:30 each day except for Wednesday when it takes place between 12:30-12:45. If a student's ride has not arrived by 3:30 (or 12:45 on Wednesdays) they are "dropped in" to aftercare, where staff are regularly scheduled to supervise the students until 5:30 p.m.

The following fees apply:

- 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.- \$25 (\$40 on Wednesdays from 12:45-5:30) flat rate drop-in fee
- 5:30 p.m. – pick-up - \$25 per quarter hour after 5:30 p.m.

### LUNCH

If your child is bringing lunch to School, we suggest bringing a sandwich and fruit. We discourage excessive snack foods and candy and ask that you send a healthy lunch and snack.

If your child needs a mid-morning snack, please put an extra piece of fruit or half a sandwich in with his or her lunch.

Only when children forget their lunches do we give them a substitute lunch. In the event that this happens, the student is to report his/her forgotten lunch to the front desk in the morning so that an alternative lunch can be arranged. Please check to be sure your child remembers to bring lunch.

### FOOTWEAR FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND OUTSIDE PLAY

We urge parents/guardians to encourage students to wear safe and protective shoes. Students who vigorously run in the gym, play outside and scramble up play structures require good traction, support and protection from rocks, branches, and other protruding objects. Transitions include travel through hallways, up and down stairwells, between outer buildings with sometimes wet pavement. Classroom chairs, desks, or studio equipment can cause injury to the unprotected foot. Flip flops and open toe sandals protect the toes from neither force nor materials, and they are a frequent reason for injured toes and ankles. We encourage students to wear footwear that is safe and comfortable.

### HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is individualized according to a child's needs and abilities. Part of the homework assignment is remembering to bring it home, and to complete and return the assignment as part of fostering the development of executive function skills. Our goal is for students to do their homework entirely by themselves. In the event that the assigned homework is causing undue stress, please contact your child's teacher to discuss an alternative assignment or plan.

### PARTIES/CELEBRATIONS

We welcome families to send in some form of pre-packaged store bought treats with clearly listed ingredients for the whole class on or near the child's birthday.

Please do not distribute party invitations at school; we encourage parents to be sensitive to the hurt feelings that often result when a student is excluded. Also, please hold parties on weekends if possible. If a party will be held after school, we ask that guest children not bring birthday presents to school.

### INSPECTION

In the interest of preventing and investigating potential violations of School policies and preserving a safe and healthy School environment, the School reserves the right (given probable cause) to inspect lockers, desks, electronic systems, and other facilities provided by the School for student use. Baltimore Lab School further reserves the right (given probable cause) to inspect student handbags, backpacks, vehicles, and other items brought on campus or to

school-related, off-campus events. Accordingly, students should not have an expectation of privacy with respect to material brought to campus or school-related events. The School may confiscate material that it reasonably believes may be in violation of School policies or rules, pose a danger to the student in possession or others, or violates the law. Students responsible for the presence of such material will be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures and may be reported to appropriate legal authorities.

## POLICY AGAINST SMOKING, VAPING, AND TOBACCO USE

The School is a smoke-free, nicotine-free, and tobacco-free environment. No smoking, vaping, or tobacco use in any form (including but not limited to tobacco products, smoke-related devices, imitation tobacco products, lighters, vaporizers, electronic cigarettes, and other electronic nicotine delivery systems are prohibited) is allowed on School property or at the entrances or exits to the School. There is no smoking, vaping or tobacco use allowed on School field trips or events. Off-campus smoking, vaping or tobacco use during the School day at local establishments and/or around nearby schools is prohibited. Students are representatives of the School and are expected to promote a positive reputation for the School. Abuse of this policy may lead to serious consequences, including but not limited to suspension.

## PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Attempting to represent another's academic work as your own is characterized as plagiarism. Allowing another student to copy and turn in your work is also a serious offense. Cheating includes but is not limited to looking at another's work in a quiz/test, copying of homework, labs, essays or written papers or submitting information cut and pasted from the web into your own assignments. Instances of cheating or plagiarism may result in but are not limited to receiving a failing grade, being asked to redo the assignment, doing additional work, suspension or expulsion. All incidents will be reported to the administration for review.

## STUDENT BEHAVIOR

### STUDENT DRESS CODE

At Baltimore Lab School, we encourage students to express their individual personalities and to determine individual patterns of dress and grooming, provided that such dress and grooming do not interfere with the health and safety of themselves or others, are not distracting to others, and do not interfere with the educational process of the school. We encourage students to dress in good taste and present a general appearance that is commendable.

***The following articles of clothing are unacceptable in school and during school events:***

- *clothing with references to drugs, illegal substances, violence and hate*
- *low rise pants that expose skin and/or another article of clothing under the pants*
- *hats and hoods*
- *tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops*
- *see-through clothing*
- *short skirts and shorts (length should reach the bottom of the fingertips when arms are hanging straight down)*
- *pajamas (except for on designated spirit days)*
- *clothing that is too tight or too loose*
- *other attire deemed extreme or inappropriate by administration.*

### TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (TAUP)

Students are expected to follow the terms and conditions of the Technology Acceptable Use Agreement. This agreement must be signed and returned to school prior to the first day of school. Student electronic devices will be distributed once the signed TAUP is returned to school.

### STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

To help provide a positive, productive, and safe learning environment, the School has established a Code of Conduct for all of its students to follow, with the support of their parents/guardians. While the School cannot anticipate and list every example of impermissible conduct or every example of expected appropriate conduct, the School intends for the Code of Conduct to help students and their parents/guardians understand the general parameters of student conduct. **The full Code of Conduct is included at the end of this handbook and must be signed by each student and their parent and returned to school.**

The conduct of students may reflect on the School, regardless of whether it occurs during School hours, on School property, or at School-related events. Accordingly, students and parents should understand that there may be School disciplinary consequences for violations of School rules, behavior that is not consistent with the mission and philosophy of the School, or violations of local, state or federal laws, regardless of whether the activity takes place outside of the School or outside of school hours. This includes student behavior on the internet, such as, but not limited to, email, instant messages, blogs and social networking websites, text messages, and communications via telephone or other method.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

Students of Baltimore Lab School are representatives of our school. Our actions at school, as well as outside of school, reflect on the entire community. Students are expected to demonstrate **safe, respectful, and responsible** behaviors at all times.

The Student Code of Conduct will be reviewed quarterly in advisory classes in order to clarify school-wide expectations for each student. Students and parents will sign the Student Code of Conduct at the beginning of each school year to verify that they have received the document and are in agreement with the guidelines. Violations may result in detention, parent/teacher/administrative conferences, the loss of school privileges, parent contact or student suspension.

**Behaviors that are not considered safe, respectful, and responsible include...**

- destroying property.
- writing on walls, furniture, or books.
- leaving trash around or littering.
- damaging or taking others' things without their permission.
- disrupting the education of others
- threatening the safety of others.
- being physically or verbally aggressive.
- teasing and/or being rude to others.
- spreading rumors and gossip.
- ignoring directions.
- bullying, intimidating, or harassing other students.
- swearing.
- running in the halls or stairwells.
- leaving the designated area without permission.
- using the phone or texting without permission from an instructor.
- violating the Technology Acceptable Use Policy.
- insubordination, non-compliance or talking back to teachers.
- wearing hats, hoods, visors, or sunglasses indoors.
- invading the personal space of others, including inappropriate/unwanted touching.
- making a public display of affection, including kissing.

**I understand that...**

- personal electronic devices should not be brought to school without prior approval from a teacher or school official.
- **if I need to bring my cell phone to school for use before or after entering the school building, I need to keep my cell phone turned off (silenced) and in my locker until I leave the building. Cell phones are not to be visible or turned on in the classroom during the school day. Cell phone usage disrupts the classroom and the school environment. Phones may be taken by a school official and returned to parents.**
- personal vehicles should not be parked on school property without prior approval from the Head of School
- pets and skateboards should not be brought to school.

**I will respect the school dress code listed in the Parent/Student Handbook. In summary, the Student Dress Code states that the following items are unacceptable in school and during school events:**

clothing with references to drugs, illegal substances, violence and hate; low rise pant that expose skin and/or another article of clothing under the pants; hats and hoods; tank tops, spaghetti straps and halter tops; see-through clothing; short skirts and shorts (length should reach the bottom of the fingertips when arms are hanging straight down); pajamas; clothing that is too tight or too loose; and other attire deemed extreme or inappropriate by administration

**I understand that violation of the following rules may result in suspension and/or expulsion from Baltimore Lab School...**

- threatening and/or abusive language or actions to self and others.
- physical aggression towards others (hitting, kicking, spitting, fighting, etc)
- leaving the building during school hours without permission.
- entering school grounds before or after school hours without permission.
- bringing alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, or any other illegal substances including inhalants onto school grounds.
- arriving at school under the influence of an illegal substance.
- bringing or creating any sort of weapon (**play** and/or **real** guns, knives, or war-like objects, etc) onto school grounds.
- theft of any kind.
- sexually explicit behavior, speech, literature, videos, recordings, emails, text and/or voice messages.

## **DISCIPLINE AND CONSEQUENCES**

Consequence for failure to comply with the rules of conduct set forth in this handbook is determined on an individual basis. Such actions may include, but are not limited to the actions listed below, as well as letters of warning or reprimand, probation with terms and conditions. While the School may elect to apply these actions in succession, the School is not required to do so and has discretion to determine the appropriate action for the particular circumstance:

1. An IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION may be appropriate for certain behaviors. Students and parents speak with administrators to address the issue, and then the student will be monitored as he/she completes schoolwork.
2. In some situations, a student may face SUSPENSION from School due to a violation of the student Code of Conduct. The student's parent(s) or guardian will receive a call by the Division Head, requesting that they participate in a suspension conference either by phone or in person and then take the student home.

Suspension may also be used to give students time for reflection and also give the school time to plan with and prepare teachers and staff on using strategies that may support a student's successful re-entry into school. This is a therapeutic suspension.

- a. The suspension conference will include the student, when appropriate, the parent/s or guardian, the Division Head and any other appropriate School staff members. The conference will include:
  - Notice of grounds for suspension
  - An explanation of the facts and/or evidence upon which the School has determined that the student is subject to suspension
  - When appropriate, an opportunity for the student to present his/her version of the facts or explain the situation upon which the suspension is based.
- b. The School shall make available all class-work assignments to the student during the period of the suspension.
- c. The length of the suspension shall be at the discretion of the School. If the student is placed and funded by the LEA and has one or more suspensions that constitute 10 school days, the Division Head will send written notice to the LEA. At that point, for LEA funded students, a Manifestation IEP meeting will be held to determine if the reason for the removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. A revision of the student's IEP goals and objectives may be necessary as an outcome of the meeting.

- d. The students and the parent/s or guardian must attend a re-entry conference with the Division Head and any appropriate School staff member before being permitted to return to School.
  - e. If behavior becomes so problematic that the School recommends a change in placement for a funded student, the Division Head will notify the LEA in writing 60 days prior to a student's proposed change in placement. An IEP meeting will be scheduled with the student, the parent/s or guardian, the Education Director and the LEA to discuss the needs of the student and reasons for the proposed change of placement. The School will maintain the student's placement during mediation, due process proceedings, or until an approved placement is found.
3. In the unusual case where the School expels a student for engagement in criminal activity, disruptive or dangerous behavior to himself/herself or others, or other inappropriate behaviors in the sole discretion of the School, the Division Head will call an emergency meeting, which will include the student when appropriate, the parent/s or guardian, the Division Head, the Head of School or a designee, any appropriate Baltimore Lab School staff, and a representative of the LEA if the student is funded.
4. If a student is suspended or expelled, the Division Head or a designee will promptly notify all the members of the academic team working with that student, including related service providers.  
Documentation of suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary actions will be included in a student's record.



## Student Code of Conduct Parent/Student Agreement

Students of Baltimore Lab School are representatives of our school. Our actions at school, as well as outside of school, reflect on the entire community. Students are expected to demonstrate **safe, respectful, and responsible** behaviors at all times.

The Student Code of Conduct will be reviewed quarterly in advisory classes in order to clarify school-wide expectations for each student. Students and parents will sign the Student Code of Conduct at the beginning of each school year to verify that they have received the document and are in agreement with the guidelines. Violations may result in detention, parent/teacher/administrative conferences, the loss of school privileges, and/or parent contact or student suspension.

**Behaviors that are not considered safe, respectful, and responsible include...**

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**I understand that...**

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- leaving the building during school hours without permission.
- entering school grounds before or after school hours without permission.
- bringing alcohol, tobacco or any other illegal substances including inhalants onto school grounds.
- arriving at school under the influence of an illegal substance.
- bringing or creating any sort of weapon (**play** and/or **real** guns, knives, or war-like objects, etc) onto school grounds.
- theft of any kind.
- sexually explicit behavior, speech, literature, videos, recordings, emails, text and/or voice messages.

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Student Code of Conduct and agree to follow all school wide expectations of the Baltimore Lab School.**

**Parent and student are to sign this form and return it to the Division Head**

**Student printed name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_