University Primary School
Family Handbook

2017-2018

“Learning is Serious Delight”
Welcome

The staff and families of University Primary School compile this evolving *Handbook for Families* to share policies and procedures at Uni Primary. Please read and keep this handbook as a reference. Please talk with the director and teachers should you have questions or suggestions for added information to be shared in a future revision.

Contact Information

**Director:**  
Dr. Ali Lewis  
alilewis@illinois.edu  
Room 97 Children’s Research Center  
333-3996

**School Office Specialist:**  
Christine Wyant  
cwyant@illinois.edu  
Room 95 Children’s Research Center  
333-3996

**Emergency Classroom Number:**  
244-2940

**Head Classroom Teachers:**  
Nora Miller (preschool)  
noralovemiller@gmail.com  
Ann Clare (K-1st)  
anclare@illinois.edu  
Kristen Miller (2-3rd)  
ktenmiller@gmail.com  
Jeff Butler (4-5th)  
jbutler3@rocketmail.com

**University Primary Facebook Pages**

Public Page:  
www.facebook.com/universityprimaryschool

Private page:  
www.facebook.com/groups/universityprimaryschoolfamilies

**Mission**

University Primary School's mission is to create an innovative research and teacher training site for Illinois faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, pre-service teachers, community colleagues, and visiting scholars interested in the ways children learn and develop. University Primary School demonstrates The Project Approach and Reggio Emilia-inspiration in action and fosters a professional environment where stakeholders develop and
explore recommended practices in education while providing an exceptional school experience for children and families.

Research
University Primary School encourages and facilitates educational research on the part of faculty, visiting scholars, and University students. Researchers may wish to photograph or record students as they are working and learning. It is helpful to researchers if families sign and return permission and photo/video release forms if they are willing to participate in a research project. Families are always informed of research projects and are given the opportunity to have their child participate or decline participation. Children (who have permission to be involved in a study) are always asked by researchers whether they wish to participate or not participate, on a given day.

Uni Primary Philosophy
The philosophy of Uni Primary is that young children are best served by teaching and curriculum practices that strengthen and support their intellectual growth and development, initiate them into basic skills, challenge them to increase their proficiency in academic tasks as well as intellectual processes, and, at the same time, foster the development of their social competence.

Best Practices
As a teacher training and research site, University Primary School aims to model recommended practices, based on research and accepted learning theories in early childhood, elementary, gifted, and special education. Recommended practices for children at this age include a child-sensitive, individually focused curriculum with many opportunities for students to choose and develop their own learning activities. Children work individually or in small groups most of the time with the teachers who often take the role of guides or facilitators of learning. Children also have time for whole group community meetings and instruction times. Teachers assess and address the strengths of each child and build on these strengths for future learning experiences. Classrooms are inclusive of children with differing abilities and a strong sense of community is fostered by staff, students, and families.

Unique Features of University Primary School
Curriculum
The University Primary School Curriculum represents an eclectic approach to education programming. As a Reggio Emilia inspired school, we have philosophical tenets that permeate the learning day. A blend of student-initiated, teacher-guided, and teacher-directed activities present students with opportunities to pursue their own interest areas and progress at their individual level of instruction. Creativity, problem solving, and self-directed learning are common threads woven through all areas of the curriculum. Students become actively involved in the inquiry process through project studies.

**Activity and Project Studio**

Activity and Project Studio is an essential component of our curriculum. Activity Studio allows students to make choices about their own learning and provides important school time to work on interest areas. The daily schedules reflect this time through exploration, play, and experimentation. Projects present learning to children in real-life contexts and integrate the acquisition and application of basic skills through inquiry modes of learning. Activity and Project Studio time strives to foster "the love of learning" and provide opportunities for teachers to engage in the learning process alongside students. Activities are meaningful and concept-based.

**Numeration and Problem Solving Skills**

Math is taught with an investigative approach, with a focus on relating math to real-life situations using manipulatives and other concrete materials. Teachers facilitate learning in the following areas at the child's individual readiness level: conceptual skills, numeration, computation, measurement, problem solving, and geometry. Many of the students' projects reflect integration of these mathematical skills. University Primary uses Illinois Common Core Standards and Everyday Mathematics to support and enhance the mathematical development of students.

**Literacy**

Uni Primary emphasizes a whole language approach where children learn to read by reading and to write by writing. Students are actively involved in both processes throughout the day. Importance is placed on the "making sense" process. Generally, learning is within a whole context rather than discreet parts. Early literacy involves three reading cue systems: contextual, grammatical, and phonetic. Teachers create a literacy rich environment and
model meaningful listening, reading, speaking, dramatizing, and writing. Students have opportunities to read in small size book groups with peers, read with buddies, and read individually with teachers.

**Science and Social Studies**

Science and social studies concepts are developed throughout project work and explored during activity time as well as subject matter outside of project work in older grades. Older students experience historical perspectives in more recognizable ways—engaging in global and past-future connections as a part of projects and literacy lessons. Researchers and experts from the field visit our classrooms, creating opportunities for deep questions and discussion. Students venture on field studies in the community and especially on campus (using the MTD bus as often as possible). Non-fiction literature is meaningfully shared with students, and exploration and experimentation abound!

Children are immersed in a democratic environment with daily opportunities to strengthen their own voices and develop multiple perspectives around issues. Students question and dialogue about big ideas, gather historical or topical facts and details in the context of a project or question, and build consensus around open-ended questions. Students investigate global perspectives through books, experts, and on-line resources.

Children and teachers are co-researchers and co-learners at Uni Primary. A solution or resolution to one question leads to another question, and learning is ongoing. We value scientific activities that build upon students’ natural curiosity about the way the world works. We encourage trial and error in experimentation, debate and doubt, and an authentic openness to discovery.

**Expressive Arts**

Music is an intentional part of the schedule in classrooms, where melodic development, rhythm and rhyme, collaborative song and instrument play, and global sounds and culture are explored. Dance and movement experiences are part of music time, often in creative response to song. Music is a part of the school day, infused in subtle ways as background music or as part of a classroom routine during transition times (i.e., cleaning up activities and coming to the carpet for large group). Older students study the recorder and learn to play as an ensemble. Dramatic play is encouraged in all classrooms, during recess and choice time, as inspired by books and stories, and as a specially guided time with a teacher or artist in residence.
Social and Emotional Growth
Teachers take a proactive role in creating a classroom community that is open, honest, and accepting. To this end, discipline is designed around teachers structuring appropriate choices, students learning how to resolve problems, and students sharing in the responsibility of developing a caring classroom community. Teachers encourage self-control and strive to develop both intellectual and emotional self-confidence.

Arts and Aesthetics
As a Reggio-Emilia inspired school, arts are integral to children's learning and assessment. Teachers guide students toward meaningful experiences in the arts with examples, materials, and cultural artifacts. At Uni Primary, student artwork is an expression of ideas, a form of experimentation, and a demonstration of developing understandings about the world. Teachers promote sensitivity to and an appreciation of the environment, developing an awareness of a personal and community aesthetic. The arts are an essential part of the school day, every day.

Physical Development
Physical movement, team play, sportsmanship, and negotiation of rules and fair play are a part of recess and physical education guided by teachers and University students. Outdoor play is highly valued at Uni Primary, and children go outside for non-structured and structured play experiences, even in the gentle rain and definitely in the snow (when temperatures are safe). Gross motor development is assessed and guided in non-competitive ways, with emphasis on cooperative, peaceful choices. To be optimally available to learn, some children integrate sensory activities into their class work or take sensory breaks (some requested, most planned) in the hallways or sensory room.

School Hours
K-5th Grade classrooms hours are from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. The preschool classroom hours are 5-days/week from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm with preschool extended care offered until 3:00 pm. Afterschool for preschool-5th grade hours are 3:00-5:30 pm. There is no before school care.

Students may arrive between 8:20-8:40 am. Prior to 8:20, the staff will be setting up for the day’s program and children may wait with their adult in a car, school stairwell, or outside of the playground fence. Visitors or
volunteers staying in the school for more than 10 minutes must sign in the visitor’s log. This is a state fire code regulation.

School Closings
University Primary School may close due to inclement weather such as snowstorm or an unforeseen event for which the learning day could be unsafe (electric outage, gas leak, major illnesses across student or staff population). University Primary School may not close for “cold days” when public schools close, however, if the University of Illinois closes, we are also closed. University Primary School closings will be posted on the News-Gazette sites and on WCIA News, check these places for up to date information.

Absences
Absences or expected late arrivals/early pick-ups should be reported by calling 333-3996 and leaving a message with the school office. You may also email the school office specialist: cwyan@illinois.edu or call the school emergency line if your child’s absence will have an impact on a field trip or planned event.

Timeliness
*Please be on time each day* as the first part of the day is Activity Studio and often Project time for the children! This is an important and exciting learning time, and children get the greatest benefit from it if they arrive on time. Families who are chronically tardy should meet with the Director and/or classroom teacher to develop supports for timeliness.

Please pick your children up promptly at 12:00 pm for preschool, 3:00 pm for extended preschool/K-5th dismissal, or 5:30 pm for afterschool. Families who are chronically late will be consulted to begin paying for a portion of extended preschool or afterschool care. Teachers must have planning time after dismissal.

Parking – Children’s Research Center
Please park in the Visitor Parking 30 minute spots in Lot E30 on the southeast side of the Children’s Research Center when coming into the school for a brief time. Park in the handicapped or motorcycle designated
spaces only with appropriate licensure. Bike racks are on the southeast side of the school and we recommend securing bicycles. **University of Illinois employee parking permits for north of Kirby lots are accepted in our E30 lot—if you have a north of Kirby permit, please park in a non-visitor spot to allow room for other families.**

If you volunteer or need to park for more than 30 minutes, meters are available for your use in the parking lot or on Gerty Drive (if you do not have a University of Illinois permit). Parking tickets in Lot E30 are expensive ($60), and we are not able to rescind the ticket after 30 minutes of visitor parking have past, nor rescind a ticket if you park in a non-designated spot.

_Do not park on the west side of the Children’s Research Center for school related activities._

**K-5th Arrival 8:20-8:40 am/Dismissal 3:00 pm**
The short and sweet of all of these next paragraphs is: park on the east/stay in your vehicle on the west!

**Park on the East**
If you walk your child(ren) into school for drop off/pick up, park on the east side of the Children’s Research Center in the designated visitor parking spots if there is space available. If no space is available, park anywhere close and parking will not ticket you _during our designated pick up/drop off time._ Enter into the building through any of the doors except the preschool playground door between 8:20-8:40 am and proceed to your classroom(s); pick up is at the playground fence at 3:00 pm.

**Stay in your Vehicle on the West**
Families of K-5th graders may drop off/pick up children in the west circle drive _beginning the second day of school._ Staff will facilitate drop off/pick up for K-5th students on the west circle drive between 8:20-8:40 am & 3:00-pm. Families must wait for a staff member to meet your vehicle and _may never drop off/pick up a child without a staff member present_ except during inclement weather (see next section for details.)

_Form a car line along the right hand side of the driveway and inner side of the flagpole island leaving a space for the MTD bus to pass across the parking lot._ This traffic pattern is in consideration of our neighbors.
Preschool Arrival 8:20-8:40 am & Dismissal 12:00 pm (Preschool extended care 3:00 pm)
Families of preschool students should park on the east side of the Children’s Research Center in the designated 30-minute visitor parking spots and enter the building through any of the non-playground doors between 8:20-8:40 am. Proceed to the preschool classroom to help your children with the morning arrival routine. Preschool dismissal is on the east side of the building along the playground fence, park on the east side and meet children by the fence. Children not picked up by 12:05 pm will be brought to the preschool classroom and supervised in preschool extended day until their grown up arrives; families will be charged a portion of the extended preschool fee for pick up after 12:05 pm if this is chronic issue.

Late Arrival After 8:40 am/Picking Up before Designated Dismissal Time
Families arriving/dismissing at times after 8:40 am/before the scheduled dismissal time should park on the east side of the Children’s Research Center in the designated visitor parking spots and enter through the secured playground ramp secure door (intercom/camera). Children may not enter the school alone after the 8:40 am or before their pick up times—the adult must park and walk their child into the school.

Children in Multiple Classrooms
If you have children in preschool and a K-5th classroom, we prefer you bring your children into the classrooms or drop off your older student(s) in the west circle drive and return to the east side parking lot to bring in your preschool student(s).

Inclement Weather
Children will not be dismissed during a severe weather alert (tornado watch/intense lightning storm). Families may come in and get their children or wait out the storm and then dismissal will proceed. *Preschool pick up during heavy rain or extreme cold:* Please park in the east side designated spots and enter the building through the upper floor, southeast stairwell or use the accessible elevator on the upper floor northwest stairwell (let teachers know you need the elevator door). Go down
the stairs/elevator and wait on the other side of the locked doors. At dismissal time, your preschool teacher will open the stairwell or elevator hallway door.

**K-5th drop off during heavy rain or extreme cold:** Families must wait for the staff member to greet the vehicle on the west circle drive and may never drop off a child without a staff member present except during inclement weather when a staff member should not be outside for a prolonged time. During inclement weather, teachers will greet your children at the classroom playground door for drop off (they may walk in from the circle drive on their own) or you can park on the east and walk your children inside.

**K-5th pick up during heavy rain or extreme cold:** During inclement weather, wait in your car in the west circle drive and we will walk back and forth between the drive and the classrooms so children are not waiting in the elements! Or, you can east side park and pick up from the classroom.

**Extended Care Preschool/Afterschool**

Sign up for extended care preschool (12:00-3:00 pm) or afterschool for preschool-5th grade (3:00-5:30 pm) is handled through the school office. Teachers in these programs thoroughly enjoy this extra time with children and both groups have a lot of fun!

On school days where no students are here, neither of these programs are offered. **On most half days, we offer Afterschool for preschool-5th grade between 11:30 am-5:30 pm.** Exceptions include the first and last day of school and the half day before spring and winter break.

For extended care preschool, children should pack a lunch (see lunch guideline section), a blanket, and a lovey. They have lunch, a quiet time, activity time, and outdoor play.

During Afterschool, children preschool-5th grades are combined into one family group led by one or more afterschool teachers and University student volunteers. Snack is provided to this group by the school, and families are also welcome to pack “extra lunch” to be eaten during afterschool. Families can pick up children at or before 5:30 pm.
There are options to join Spanish Language Academy, also held at school after 3:00 for preschool-5th grade students, Monday -Thursday. Depending on the school year, some after school clubs are established, and typically families can find a 3:00-4:15 option, followed by Spanish Language until 5:15 pm. Some families choose to use local childcare buses to pick up their child(ren) or nanny share.

**Childcare**

*Uni Primary staff members are not allowed to provide childcare for Uni Primary families during the school year.* Asking staff for childcare places the staff in a complicated position. We would, of course, wish to be called upon if an emergency arose, but not as an occasional or consistent situation.

**Encouraging Independence and Confidence**

Encourage your child to take on the tasks of arriving and departing. For younger children, hanging up a coat, emptying a cubby, collecting a lunch box or carrying a book bag are tasks your child can master with your support. Your child’s independence and confidence will grow if you can refrain from doing these tasks for your young child. Inch by inch!

For all children, please support them to develop a morning routine that allows them to get to school on time. A hearty lunch should be packed for students who stay for lunch and children should help to gather school-to-home-to-school materials.

**Carpools**

When your child is enrolled, you may sign a release authorizing the sharing of your name, address and phone number with other parents of students in your child’s class. A class list of those signing the release will then be made and distributed prior to the academic year and throughout the year as changes in address or phone occur. You can use this class list to arrange carpooling and childcare with one another should you wish.

**First Day and Weeks of School**

The first days of school are a transition as new places, faces, and routines are learned. Please be patient and allow for extra time and emotion--it’s a big deal to be at school no matter what the grade! **Families off all students should come to the classroom(s) for drop-off the first day of school.** Parents wishing to stay in/near the classroom(s) at the start of the day are
welcome to do so, but as the first group meeting is happening, we invite you to room 26 for a breakfast treat. We welcome families of younger students to stay and observe from the observational booths (PreK and K/1 have booths) any or all of the first day of school and periodically thereafter. Please talk with your teacher or school director if you have questions about transition to school.

School Supplies/Toys
All students will be given a cloth bag (that fits our coat hooks) on the first day of school to transport belongings to and from school. Students should not purchase a backpack for school purposes except for 4/5th graders who may purchase a non-wheeled backpack.

We discourage bringing toys from home because cherished items often get lost or broken, or competition with toys can occur. A small “lovey” which can be kept in a cubby or classroom basket is welcome. We do not have a “Show and Tell” time in our program; instead, during the large group meeting children demonstrate and talk about things they have created at school. Children are also invited to bring in items to share as “experts,” depending on the class schedule. Your classroom teachers will further communicate this “expert” time as the school year is underway.

Your supply fee covers school supplies (pencils, markers, scissors, glue, etc.) and we select supplies for the classrooms. Occasionally, a teacher may have a special supply she may ask older student families to purchase, but this is not typical.

Clothing & Inside Shoes
These are “hands-on” classrooms! Please send children in clothes that are able to receive occasional paint spills, stains, mud, grass, etc. We discourage younger children from wearing jewelry or watches to school as these items can break or become misplaced in the classroom. Children will be going outside each day as long as it is not raining heavily, above 104 heat index, or below 20 degrees wind chill. For snowy days, children need snow pants, boots, hats, mittens, and a coat to participate in snow play. Please clearly mark names in clothing and shoes, as many items look very similar.

Please keep a seasonal set of extra clothes for your child at school for emergencies. Helpful Hint: Try to buy clothing that your child can manipulate (i.e., unzip, unbutton). Mark with your last name so the item can be passed on to a younger sibling.
All children should bring a pair of inside shoes to be kept at school. This keeps the room much cleaner and quieter throughout the day. Please purchase inside shoes that are easy for your children to slip on and off—crocs, slippers with a sole, etc. If your child has a special type of footwear s/he needs to wear indoors or outdoors, please let your classroom teachers know.

**Homework**

Children are engaged all day long at University Primary School; they work hard and we hope their home time can be filled with natural learning experiences (cooking, shopping, outdoor time, etc.) and lots of reading time. Homework is not typically assigned with the exception of the 4/5th grade classroom. Some homework assignments in other classrooms that may occasionally occur include: project surveys, literacy logs, Junior Great Books, or journaling.

**Lunches**

Lunch is a favorite time of day, and we love all of the different foods children bring from their homes! Children in K-5 or in Preschool extended care should bring a hearty lunch, non sugared drink (juice is okay, water is great too), and a large cloth napkin (to be used as a placemat) each full day of school. **Due to severe food allergies, students are not permitted to include any peanut or tree nut products in their lunches. We are a nut free zone!** Products that “may contain traces of nuts” are acceptable and will be contained to the cloth napkin placemat. Children are allowed to bring egg, dairy, and gluten lunch products to school, though we do have children with these allergies. We do not have facilities for either heating or cooling foods so you may try an icepack or thermos. Students are not permitted to trade lunch items with other students. Helpful Hint: Test home and purchased containers/wraps for user-friendly openings. Try soy or sun butter as sandwich spread alternatives to nut spreads.

**Snacks & Cooking Activities**

Snacks are provided by Uni Primary, and are a part of the semester materials fee. Preparation for snack and cooking activities are welcome and necessary volunteer jobs! Efforts are made to make all snacks and cooking experiences allergen-free; however, we anticipate some times when not all children will be able to participate in a given snack or cooking activity (due to a dairy or
Allergies
At Uni Primary we strive to create a safe learning environment for all students. Please be aware that there are children with life-threatening food allergies (peanuts, tree nuts, milk) attending our school. If your child has a known food allergy, known allergy to insect venom or latex, please complete an Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan form provided by the school office. This form, including your child’s photograph, medications (Epi-pen, single doses of liquid Benadryl or pills—no bottles) and special instructions should be brought to the school office where we will have you assemble a “kit” of materials needed in case of emergency. Uni Primary will keep a school Epi-pen, as allowed by the state of Illinois for unknown anaphylactic emergencies (such as venomous insect sting). Staff is trained in Epi-pen use and will dispense Epi-pen should an emergency occur. Uni Primary does not ban any allergen except nuts, due to the difficulty of containing other allergens and the frequency these allergens are a part of children’s diets.

Illness/Wellness Policy
Children must be well (free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea) for a full 24 hours before returning to school. If your child experiences fever, vomiting, or diarrhea the afternoon or night before a school day, they must stay home until the following school day. We will send your child home if they have a fever over 100.0 degrees as measured on our school thermometer. Parents should report contagious diseases (e.g., chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, fifth’s disease, or head lice) to the school office immediately so that a notice can be sent home to students in the same class as a precaution to alert other families for symptoms. A child’s name is never shared in this note. We may conduct head checks if lice are reported in a classroom—this involves a staff member looking for lice or nits on a child’s head.

Please remember that your child needs plenty of sleep and a good breakfast before school each day.

Medications
Please talk with your physician about scheduling prescription medication to avoid school hours whenever possible. If this is not possible, you will need to fill out a SCHOOL MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM (obtained from the school office) and have your physician sign the form.
You will need to provide a form for each medication to be given—this includes epi-pens. The medication must be in an original container, labeled by a pharmacy. The label must show the name of the child, the dosage, the schedule of administration, what the prescription contains, the date of purchase and the doctor’s name. All prescription medicine to be administered by school staff should be taken to the school office at the beginning of each school day by an adult. Staff members are not allowed to administer over-the-counter medications “as needed.” You may opt to come to school and give your child prescribed medication rather than completing the authorization form.

**Emergency Forms**

It is imperative that you provide us with a completed INFORMATION and EMERGENCY MEDICAL RELEASE FORM on or before the first day of school. We must know how to contact you or others in case of an emergency. We have dialed 911 before! The information form also authorizes others to pick up your child from school. Please add to the authorized list of names throughout the year as your child makes new friends. The Emergency Medical Release portion of the form authorizes emergency treatment at your preferred hospital if you cannot be reached. PLEASE UPDATE THIS INFORMATION IF YOU MOVE OR CHANGE WORK/CELL NUMBERS.

**Health Forms**

Health forms must be updated and on file on the first day of school. Health forms that reflect a physical less than a year old are required the first year of: preschool and kindergarten. All students must have a health form on file. Kindergarten students must have their vision exam completed by “a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a licensed optometrist”. Dental exams are required for kindergarten and second grade students. Please submit the appropriate state form for these exams to the school office. In addition to the above, hearing screenings are mandated by the State of Illinois for all students in grades preschool – 5th grade and vision exams are mandated for preschool students. These screenings will be done at the school by a state licensed screener from the Champaign-Urbana Public Health Department. You will be informed if your child does not pass one of these screenings.

**Accident Reports**
Safety is paramount to learning, and despite careful watching, unanticipated accidents happen at school. The Uni Primary staff member present at the time of an accident will complete an Accident Report and contact (or have another staff member contact) a parent/guardian within 20 minutes on all student accidents where:
- the injury is above the shoulders--to the head, face, or neck
- the teacher is suspicious of a broken bone (swelling, discoloration of skin)
- bodily fluids are involved, such as spitting or biting
- a teacher is unsure about the extent of an injury
- a child hits or kicks another person

A teacher is not asked to complete an accident form or contact a parent/guardian for minor scrapes, scratches, and bumps (unless above the neck). Please communicate with your child’s teacher if you have questions about a specific situation.

Occasional bathroom accidents occur. Children will change their clothes and soiled clothes will be bagged up and sent home for washing. Please return an extra set of clothes the following day! There is no form completed for a toileting accident.

**Emergency Procedures**

**WEATHER EMERGENCY:** If there is a weather emergency (tornado warning, snow storm, or severe storm warning) at the time of dismissal, teachers will remain with their students until parents are able to arrive and take their children home or until it is safe to leave. Students will be secure in an inside hallway on the lower level for monthly tornado drill procedures the first Tuesday of the month in a duck and cover position or in the event of a tornado warning.

**EARTHQUAKE:** If the ground is shaking, we will Drop, Cover, and Hold On! Students occasionally practice for an earthquake by dropping to the ground, taking cover by getting under a sturdy desk or table, and holding on to it until the shaking stops.

**FIRE:** Children will practice fire drill procedures throughout the school year. There are exits from the hall and to the outdoors from all classrooms.

**LOCK DOWN:** If teachers see suspicious strangers on/near school grounds or in the building, or if they feel threatened in any way, they will get
students to a designated place of safety and call 911. A campus lockdown will follow campus protocol and students will be taken to a predetermined designated place of safety. The specifics for this procedure are not openly shared in this handbook or during parent meetings, but the staff has specific procedures and will practice a lock down with children.

**Ineffective Behaviors and Anti-Bullying**

The University Primary School community is committed to making our school a safe and caring environment for all people. We will treat each other with peace and kindness and find traits within our classmates that we appreciate. Our teachers model positive support from teacher to pupil and we recognize each others’ abilities rather than inabilities. We address ineffective behaviors and bullying behavior or incidents individually and with small groups of involved students (and often families). Children are instructed to involve an adult when unsafe behaviors or situations arise around physical or emotional well-being. Teachers and students work on an agreement to address situations, and communication with parents and the director is often involved.

A parent meeting will be called by the teacher or director if incidents continue, and mutual decision making around programming and support will occur. If a mutual agreement for positive support cannot be reached, a family may be asked to pursue an alternative school placement at the discretion of the director.

**Financial Assistance**

There is a limited set of funds available each year for applicants seeking financial assistance for our program. Interested families should complete a Tuition and Fee Waiver Form during the application process or when renewing a contract. If you are interested in providing financial assistance funds, please see the paragraph on giving!

**Fundraising and Giving**

There are intermittent fundraisers for Uni Primary depending on the parent-staff group’s desires; however, students occasionally participate in community service projects such as “Eastern Illinois Food Bank” Food for Families. If your family or extended family would like to make a monetary contribution to University Primary School for scholarships, special materials, and staff development, please connect to the College of Education Website.
and click on “Make a Gift” under the alumni/giving tab and then under “other” specify University Primary School.

**Tuition & Materials Fees**

Parents will be billed tuition monthly by the University of Illinois. After the due date specified on the bill a finance charge will be automatically assessed at the rate of 18% per year or 1.5% per month for an effective rate of 19.56% for late payments. Families who relocate mid-year should let the director know plans or pending plans as soon as possible so families on the waiting list can be contacted. **All families relocating mid-year will be billed:** 1) their child(ren)’s last month of attendance, 2) the following month’s tuition, 3) the May deposit will not be returned. Material fees and Spanish Language fees for K-5 in-school Spanish must be paid each semester.

**Celebrations**

We celebrate our diverse classroom communities by encouraging children to share their family traditions with the class. *Please speak to the classroom teachers about the celebrations or traditions that you would like to share.* We also enjoy celebrating birthdays in the classrooms by asking families to share a special activity with all of the other students (rather than a food treat). This may include reading your child’s favorite book, playing a special game that your family enjoys, or doing a special activity (craft or song). Some families donate a book or wishlist item to the classroom in honor of their child’s birthday. If your child is planning a birthday party and inviting some but not all children in the class, please do not distribute the invitations in school cubbies, but rather use email or US mail.

**Non-Discrimination, Human Rights, & Love for Families**

As the University’s College of Education Lab School we remain deeply committed to our University’s non-discrimination statement which says, “...we will not engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, genetic information, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran...” [https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/policy_compliance/policy_library/university_of_illinois_non_discrimination_statement](https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/policy_compliance/policy_library/university_of_illinois_non_discrimination_statement)
At University Primary School we welcome and love each of our families. We believe in human rights for all, and we advocate for the special protection and rights of children and families to the best of our abilities. We are beautified by each of you!

**Conferences**
Parent/Teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring. During conferences, you will be shown samples of your child’s class work from his or her portfolio and the teacher will discuss your child’s progress. At the end of your child’s year or years here, portfolio sample work including photos and creations will be returned in mass! *If you have concerns about your child, at any time, please contact your child’s teacher to arrange an appointment. Many concerns are handled best when addressed early.*

**Communication with Families**
At University Primary School, we have many informal and formal means of communicating with parents. Newsletters are sent home in each classroom. When questions or concerns arise, every attempt is made to address them in a timely manner. Parents may have brief daily contacts with their child’s teachers at drop off/pick up times; however, this is not a productive time to have a discussion. Parents who have a concern that cannot be addressed through the informal means of communication should make an appointment with the head teacher. If the issue is not resolved, the head teacher and/or the parents may request a meeting with the director. If the issue is still not resolved, then concerns may be taken to the Assistant Dean at the College of Education. After these steps, issues that are still not resolved may be taken to the Dean of the College of Education.

**Parent-Staff Group**
The primary purpose of the parent-staff group is to meet regularly and plan for community building, promotion, and fundraising. This is a group of parents (grandparents welcome) willing to organize and make special things happen on behalf of the school. If you would like to be involved, please look for the first meeting date in September!

**Room Parents and Other Volunteer Opportunities**
We LOVE to have parent volunteers at University Primary School. Early in the school year you will be asked to complete a parent survey to identify when and where you would like to help. Please let your child’s teacher know...
about activities, hobbies, traditions or other areas where you can share or enhance the program. Teachers will schedule and coordinate volunteer times. Teachers may also ask for a room parent, which is a contact person who assists with organizing field trip drivers, assisting with classroom celebrations, or helping with other events.

**Pet Policy**

All of the classrooms may have pets as a way for children to learn about animal habitats and caring for animals. The pets add a great deal to the nurturing environment of the classroom and make many children feel more “at home.” The teachers are very careful to consider student allergies before taking in a pet, and are extremely conscious about the safety of having pets in the classroom. Please check with your child’s teachers before bringing a pet from home to be near any of the children. Some students are afraid of dogs, cats, or even hamsters if they are unannounced strangers in the environment. Also, for the safety of children, please refrain from bringing pets to school when picking up your child. This is often a hectic time for the children and the teachers. Pets are not always predictable!

**Field Trips**

The Project Approach to our curriculum involves students doing their own field work, therefore many field trips will be a part of each classroom curriculum. Teachers will send a permission home for trips and provide a week’s notice *when possible*. We will ask your permission for a standing waiver form indicating your child(ren) may/may not use MTD campus and city buses with teacher chaperones. In addition to MTD, we depend on parents to help transport students; *please arrange your schedule to transport children on at least one field trip each year!*

Parent drivers need to complete an Insurance Information form with the school office before transporting children. It is difficult for teachers to make last minute arrangements, so when you volunteer to drive, please understand the importance of that commitment. Children under 80 lbs. must be placed in the back seat in a car seat/booster. Parents need to provide a car seat for field trips, marked with a child’s name.