

# University Primary School

## Handbook for Families 2025-2026



### Welcome

The staff and families of University Primary School compile this evolving *Handbook for Families* to share policies and procedures at Uni Primary. Policies are guided by the Illinois State Board of Education and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, as well as best practices in education. Please read this handbook as a reference. Please talk with the school director, should you have questions to clarify or suggestions for added information to be shared in a future revision. **You will be asked to sign an annual acknowledgement form that you have received and reviewed this handbook.**

### Contact Information

#### School Address:

University Primary School  
Children's Research Center  
2202 Kirk Avenue Champaign, Illinois 61820

**School Phone Number:** 217-333-3996

**Emergency Phone Number to Classrooms:** 217-244-2940

#### Director:

Dr. Alisha (Ali) Lewis [alilewis@illinois.edu](mailto:alilewis@illinois.edu)  
Room 97 Children's Research Center 217-333-3996

**School Office Specialist:**

Christine Wyant [cwyant@illinois.edu](mailto:cwyant@illinois.edu)  
Room 95 Children's Research Center 217-333-3996

**Head Classroom Teachers:**

Natalie Roberts (preschool) [nrrobert@illinois.edu](mailto:nrrobert@illinois.edu)  
Ann Clare (K-1<sup>st</sup>) [annclare@illinois.edu](mailto:annclare@illinois.edu)  
Kristen Miller (2-3<sup>rd</sup>) [kmm10@illinois.edu](mailto:kmm10@illinois.edu)  
Alexandra Warwick (4-5<sup>th</sup>) [warwick3@illinois.edu](mailto:warwick3@illinois.edu)

**Co-Teachers & Spanish Language Teacher:** see school website faculty list for these faculty emails.

## Adventure Play After School & Summer Camp Director

Kelsey Langley [klangley@illinois.edu](mailto:klangley@illinois.edu)

### University Primary Web Address

<https://uniprimary.illinois.edu/>

## University Primary Facebook

Public Page:

[www.facebook.com/universityprimaryschool](http://www.facebook.com/universityprimaryschool)

Private Page:

[www.facebook.com/groups/universityprimaryschoolfamilies](http://www.facebook.com/groups/universityprimaryschoolfamilies)

## Parent Teacher Alliance

Slack Site:

[https://upspta.slack.com/join/shared\\_invite/zt-w19rl0qa-94HHzeWEnTCP6FLqgKdpQQ#/shared-invite/email](https://upspta.slack.com/join/shared_invite/zt-w19rl0qa-94HHzeWEnTCP6FLqgKdpQQ#/shared-invite/email)

## Zoom Link for first Tuesday of the month PTA meetings

**September-May** (no January meeting):

<https://illinois.zoom.us/join/98tyKuGrqTkiGdGVtB-ERpwqB4joWenwmGJbgo1ZrAfKVgR9OzPiAsd6PYRGBoza>

Meeting ID: 837 2835 0463 Password: 696047

### **Mission**

University Primary School's mission is to create an exceptional and loveable school experience for children, families, and educators. We are an innovative research and teacher training site for University of Illinois College of Education faculty, graduate students, preservice teachers, student volunteers, community colleagues, and visiting scholars interested in the ways children and teachers learn and develop. University Primary School is a Reggio Emilia-inspired Preschool-5th grade school, demonstrating inquiries and actions in pursuit of a democratic education to better society.

### **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 (when given caregiver permission to be involved in a study) are always asked by researchers whether they wish to participate or not participate, on a given day, and may stop participation at any time.

### **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 aligned with Illinois Learning Standards, 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.

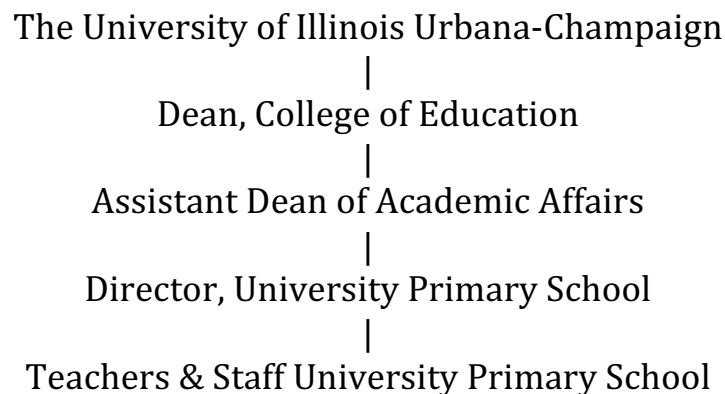
### **Best Practices**

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 and learn with others. Children work individually and in small groups most of the time, with teachers often taking the role of guides and facilitators of learning. Children also spend time in whole group community meetings and whole group instruction times. Teachers listen and document children's theories and strategies for learning and closely examine and plan for proximal next steps. Teachers assess and address the strengths of each child and build on these strengths for future learning. Classrooms are inclusive of children with differing abilities to the greatest extent possible; including but not limited to intellectual, physical, mental, and emotional abilities. A strong sense of democratic processes and community is fostered by staff, students, and families.

### **Governance Structure**

University Primary School is a self-funded unit within the College of Education at The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The organizational relationship and governance for the school is:



### **Parent Teacher Alliance**

The Parent Teacher Alliance is an open group of families, staff, and faculty who meet to consider policy decisions having an impact on school-family-community relationships, community building events led by PTA, communication and fundraising, and other school needs. Though the alliance is not a formal governing structure, it is a venue and voice for school community members to consider improvements in procedure and policy for the school community at large. We need adult

leaders from our school families each year for PTA; please see the director if willing to lead or co-lead meetings and be the “point person” for PTA organizing.

PTA typically meets the first Tuesday of September-May between 6:00-7:00 PM on zoom; the zoom link is found at the top of this handbook and under the “Resources” tab on the school website under “Parent/Family Involvement.”

### **Policy Making at Uni Primary**

Many aspects of school policy are directed and required by The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) as University Primary School goes through an accreditation process to be a State of Illinois Recognized School. Examples of ISBE policy alignment include such things as daily attendance/calendar, health and safety standards, Illinois Learning Standards, building use and space, hiring and evaluation for faculty and staff, faculty and staff professional development and training, etc. Along with ISBE, The University of Illinois also directs and supports policy. University Primary develops policy in consultation with the business and humans resource personnel at The College of Education, The University of Illinois at-large, The Illinois State Board of Education and Champaign Unit 4 Schools, as well as within the faculty, staff, and administration at the school. Policies are also established and communicated to Uni Primary faculty, staff, and families through this handbook and through various email communications throughout the school year more specifically (such as fall registration requirements, health forms, etc.). This handbook is located under the “Resources” tab on the Uni Primary School website, or available in hard copy form by request to the school office.

### **Unique Features of University Primary School Curriculum**

The University Primary School curriculum represents a responsive approach to education programming with Illinois Learning Standards as a basis for skills and understandings. As a Reggio Emilia inspired school, we have philosophical rather than strictly methodological tenets that permeate the learning day such as: image of child, The Hundred Languages of Children, participation of families, teacher role and development, and the classroom aesthetic and environment.

A blend of student-initiated, teacher-guided, and teacher-directed activities and experiences present students with opportunities to pursue their own interest areas and invite them into interest areas of others, present them with academic skill work and practice, and encourage and monitor progress at individual levels of instruction. Creativity, problem solving, a healthy relationship with learning, and democratic communities are common threads woven through all areas of the curriculum. Students are active participants in the inquiry process through project studies that emphasize questioning, critical thinking, theory making, field experiences, imagination, representation, social justice, and metacognition.

Instruction is in the English language, with the invitation for all children to speak their home languages with themselves, each other, their teachers as they wish. Spanish class is primarily instructed using Spanish language, formally offered to grades K-5<sup>th</sup> three times/week.

### **Play & Project Studio**

Play & Project Studio is an essential component of our curriculum and looks different in scope and length of time based on grade levels. This Studio time allows students to make and initiate choices and provides important school time to work on inquiry-based interest areas. The daily schedules reflect this time through exploration, play, and experimentation. Projects involve learning opportunities in real-life contexts and integrate the acquisition and application of basic skills alongside deep critical thinking and conversation. Project-Play Studio time strives to foster "the love of learning" and provides opportunities for teachers to engage in the learning process alongside students. Teachers initiate provocations, listen, and make theories about not just "what" children are learning, but "how" children are learning in varied contexts. Activities are meaningful and concept based.

### **Mathematics, Numeration, and Problem-Solving Skills**

In our younger classrooms, math is taught with an investigative approach, with a focus on relating math to real-life situations using manipulatives and other concrete materials. In our older classrooms, math has aspects of investigation through project work, and is taught

more directly and practiced with relationship, skill development, and mastery in mind. Teachers facilitate mathematics not limited to the following areas: conceptual skills, numeration, computation and computational thinking, measurement, problem solving, logic and reasoning, and geometry. Many of the students' projects reflect applied use of mathematical skills at or even above their specific grade level. University Primary uses Illinois Learning Standards to support, enhance, and assess the mathematical development of students.

### **Literacy**

Uni Primary emphasizes a literacy approach in which many children learn to read by reading and to write by writing. Many children also need more specified general phonemic practice for mastery, and some children may have a learning difficulty or difference in their acquisition of literacy skills. Importance is placed on the "making sense" process (from interpreting stories to decoding words) and a *love for literacy*. 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. In the elementary classrooms, students have opportunities to read in small book groups with peers, read with buddies, read to themselves, and read individually with teachers. Older students participate in book groups, taking on roles to lead/contribute to critical thinking and analysis discussion.

### **Science and Social Studies**

Science and social studies skills and concepts are developed throughout project work and explored during Studio time and as subject matter outside of project work more specifically. Inquiry is emphasized in both academic disciplines. Older students experience historical perspectives in more recognizable ways—engaging in global and past-future connections as a part of projects and literacy lessons. Scientific processes, experimentation, and processes abound in biological, physical, and social sciences. Researchers and experts from the field visit our classrooms, creating opportunities for deep questions and discussion. Typically, students venture on field studies in the community and especially on campus (using the MTD bus). Walking field trips are held in natural spaces surround the school. Attention to

pro-justice conversation, taking social action, and truth and reconciliation are important aspects of social studies and science. Non-fiction and fictional literature is meaningfully shared with students as one way to share perspectives and stories.

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 and issues of social justice and social studies through books, experts, and on-line resources. Students develop and question understandings of governance structures especially the voting system, representation and rights, patriotism and how patriotism is demonstrated in a variety of ways, history of the US and how history relates from past to present, history and facts about Illinois, and Champaign-Urbana.

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 component of the daily rhythm 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 may study the recorder or other instruments including the voice and learn to work as an ensemble. Dramatic play is encouraged in all classrooms, during outdoor play and Studio time, as inspired by books and stories, and as a specially guided time with a teacher or artist in residence.



### **Spanish Language and Cultures Instruction (K-5)**

Spanish instruction is provided by a qualified native or near-native Spanish speaking teacher during the school week. Our beloved Spanish teacher, Cristina Flores, is a remarkable educator who teaches Spanish at Uni Primary, Academy High, and Parkland College! The purposes of Spanish Language and Cultures is familiarity and love of the language and many Spanish-speaking cultures.

### **Social and Emotional Growth**

Teachers take a proactive role in creating a democratic classroom community that is open, honest, and accepting. We value the participation of interns from the Illinois School of Social Work in our classrooms. Discipline is designed around teachers structuring appropriate choices, students learning why and how to resolve problems, and students sharing in the responsibility of developing a caring classroom. 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 conversation, 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 classroom environment, developing an awareness of a personal and community aesthetic. The arts are an essential part of the school day, every day. The all-school spring art show celebrates arts in its visual forms.

### **Physical Development**

Physical movement, team play, sportsmanship, and negotiation of rules and fair play are a part of outdoor play 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 in the snow when temperatures/conditions are safe. Our playground is designed as a natural space with many movable parts; it is partially curated by the

children and can look “messy” to adults; research in outdoor play informs this space. Gross motor development is assessed and guided in non-competitive ways, with emphasis on cooperation rather than competition. To be optimally available to learn, some children integrate sensory activities into their class work or take sensory breaks to learn how to regulate their bodies as a part of their physical development. “The Field” is a much-loved outdoor space, typically used by K-5<sup>th</sup> graders and Adventure Play After School. Families should consider daily tick-checks during fall, spring, and summer months when children play in the field.

## **Health and Safety**

Health matters are addressed in classrooms in an age-appropriate way including hygiene and disease prevention, personal health habits, and disaster survival through specific health lessons conducted by teachers, student teachers, student organizations here on campus at The University of Illinois and may also include the greater community. Students are taught about safe touch, safe persons, personal space and consent. Consent language is practiced by adults and children. Social Work interns are often available to our students, and able to address issues of mental and emotional health, offering lesson to classrooms for specific training and discussion in healthy choices (as appropriate to age level). An awareness and care of the environment is promoted at Uni Primary, including health of the Earth and nature. Natural and humanmade disasters as related to the environmental sciences are explored, responses and responsibilities practiced, and questions discussed.

Families are responsible for reading emails for any health alerts and reporting [communicable diseases](#), illnesses, or conditions to the school office including: head lice, ringworm, strep throat, etc.

## **Daily Attendance/Absences**

Children are to attend school daily, following the Uni Primary academic calendar. It is highly discouraged for a K-5<sup>th</sup> grade child to miss more than 10 excused absence school days in the school year. Teachers log

daily attendance and tardies using an on-line spread sheet through a secure Illinois Box account.

Absences, late arrivals, and early dismissal for appointments, must be reported to the school office specialist: 217-333-3996 or by email: [cwyant@illinois.edu](mailto:cwyant@illinois.edu) as well as the head teacher. Late arrival/early dismissal for appointments requires a child's adult to walk them to the school door, supervising them until transferred to Uni Primary staff. See drop-off procedures for details.

### **Absenteeism and Truancy Policy (K-5<sup>th</sup>)**

Illinois School code 105 ILCS 5/22 sets forth the four required components of an absenteeism and truancy policy. These components are set forth below, followed by a more detailed explanation of each. This policy was reviewed and written on May 26, 2023.

#### **Definition of a valid cause for being absent.**

In accordance with Section 26-2a of the School Code. Section 26-2a lists the following as a valid cause for absence; Uni Primary agrees that the following list are all valid causes of a student to miss school and adds two additional categories at this time:

- A. Illness, including the mental or behavioral health of the student;
  - MENTAL HEALTH DAY: Absences may include mental health days. Children are allowed 5 total mental health days per school year according to the State of Illinois. These absences must be clearly stated as a mental health day when reporting to the school office specialist as well as the head teacher.
- B. Observance of a religious holiday;
- C. Death in the immediate family or family emergency;
- D. Other situations beyond the control of the student, as determined by the Board of Education in each district [or nonpublic school administration in the case of Uni Primary School]; or
- E. Such other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student.

F. Uni Primary also adds, a valid cause for absence is a family work or family care circumstance whereby the child must accompany the caregiver or it would be of great benefit for the child to accompany.

G. Uni Primary also adds, attendance at a civic event as a valid excuse from school. A civic event is an event sponsored by a non-profit organization or governmental entity that is open to the public. "Civic event" includes, but is not limited to, an artistic or cultural performance or educational gathering that supports the mission of the sponsoring non-profit organization.

**The diagnostic procedures that will be used to identify the causes of unexcused absences.**

- Caregivers will be *called* or *emailed* by the school office for unexcused absences, and first, an excuse will be sought within one of the categories.
- If a valid excuse is not presented, the student is considered to have an unexcused absence, upon which a second unexcused absence is noted as truant.
- A second identified truancy will result in a meeting/interviews with the caregivers, student, and school director to determine any causes and possible supports. Any school personnel who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance issue will also be sought out and interviewed.
- At this initial meeting, a plan will be constructed by which the family and school agrees to follow. Violation of this plan by the family may result in dismissal from the school at the discretion of the school director.

**Identification of interventions and supportive services for truant or chronically truant students:**

- A "truant" is defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause, as defined under this Section, from such attendance for more than 1% but less than 5% of the past 180 school days. Chronic truancy occurs past the 5% point within 180 school days, and the school will call the Department of Child and Family Services for advisement and reporting.
- Uni Primary will provide information on the availability of these supportive services to students and their families who need them.

This may include information on the when, where, and how services will be provided, typically through referral to a counseling service.

- ... [t]hese services shall include, but need not be limited to, parent conferences, referrals to student counseling, family counseling, and information about existing community services that are available to truant and chronically truant students and relevant to their needs.

### **Incorporation of the chronic absenteeism report and support provisions of School Code.**

- Uni Primary will collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success. The review shall include an analysis of chronic absence data from the school in order to identify the students who most need support and how best to support them.

This absenteeism and truancy policy is written and included here in our Family Handbook, updated annually, and posted on our school website under the “Community” tab for family access or provided in hard copy by request.

### **Mental Health Resources & Specialized Health in Illinois**

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline/National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- 988 or 800-237-8255

Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

- 217-753-4117

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- 877-863-6338

Illinois Child Abuse Hotline

- 800-252-2873

Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substance Abuse

- 833-2FINDHELP
- Text “HELP” to 833234

Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES)

- For students who have made threats of harm to self or others
  - 1-800-345-9049

#### Crisis Text Line

- 24/7 support to anyone in any type of crisis
  - Text HOME to 741741

#### Illinois Call4Calm Text Line

- Stress-related to COVID-19 pandemic and need emotional support
  - Text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish

#### Disaster Distress Helpline

- Support for emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters
  - 800-985-5990 or Text TalkWithUS to 66746

#### National Runaway Safeline

- 800-786-2929 or TEXT 66008

#### Sexual Abuse and Prevention Resource Guide:

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf>

#### Trevor Project Hotline (LGBTQ+)

- 866-488-7386 or Text START to 678678

#### Trans Lifeline's Peer Support Hotline

- 877-565-8860

### **E-Learning Days**

❄️ E-learning days are in lieu of the traditional "Snow Days." These days count as part of daily school attendance and do not require adding day at the end of the school year. Families/Staff will receive an announcement regarding the *possibility* of an E-Learning Day as soon as practical (but no later than 2:00 PM the day before) in order to provide time for gathering resources and to prepare accordingly. Once the *possibility* of an E-Learning Day has been announced, we will continue to monitor the weather forecast closely. If it becomes necessary to hold an E-Learning Day, a final announcement will go out to staff and families by 10:00 PM the day prior.

On an E-learning day, Kindergarten-5th graders hold synchronous zoom class for at least 2.5 hours and assign 2.5 hours of asynchronous/independent learning. For preschool, the E-learning time is reduced to 1.5 hours synchronous and 1.5 asynchronous/independent learning. Look for an email from your classroom teachers with a zoom link and times to join synchronous learning via zoom.

Teachers will record attendance on E-Learning Days. Since E-Learning Days count as student attendance days, our focus is to connect with students and as a class, ensuring students are engaging in learning. We strongly encourage students to attend their E-Learning sessions on these days, however, we recognize that each person responds differently to the remote learning environment, and for some people zoom is stressful. Families should use their best judgement for their own child(ren) regarding what is best for them on an E-learning day. Please email your teachers/school office to let them know if your family will be absent on an E-learning day rather than joining the class on-line and/or engaging in the asynchronous work.

### **General Parking – at the Children’s Research Center**

Preschool family only may park in the Visitor Parking Loading Zone 30-minute spots in Lot E30 on the southeast side of the Children’s Research Center when coming into the school. Park in handicapped or motorcycle designated spaces only with appropriate licensure. University of Illinois employee parking permits for lots north of Kirby Avenue 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 who do not hold a permit.

Bike racks are on the southeast side of the school. Securing bicycles with a lock is highly recommended.

If you volunteer or need to park for more than 30 minutes, meters are available for your use in the parking lot or along Gerty Drive (if you do not have a University of Illinois permit). Parking tickets in Lot E30 are expensive (\$60), and we are unable to rescind a ticket if you park longer than 30 minutes or in a non-designated spot; this includes parking anytime before 5:00 PM or 4:00 PM during daylight savings on weekdays.

*ALL FAMILIES: Refrain from parking on the west side parking lot for school related activities including drop off/pick up. We do not want pedestrian traffic on the west circle drive area.*

## **K-5th arrival 8:20-8:40 AM/K-5<sup>th</sup> dismissal is staggered 2:55-3:00**

### **K-5<sup>th</sup> Families Stay in your Vehicle on the West Circle Drive**

Families of K-5th graders should drop off/pick up children using the west circle drive unless taking the bus, walking, or biking. Families, please work on your child unbuckling themselves once they are ready to exit, rather than you getting out of your vehicle. This helps keep traffic flowing for the whole car line.

If you have K-5<sup>th</sup> and preschool children you may drop off at the playground using the east parking lot, following the preschool drop off procedure in the next section. Or you may use the circle drive for your older child(ren), and playground for your preschool child(ren).

*For \*K-5 dismissal, form a car line along the right side of the west driveway and into the parking lot (rather than blocking traffic on Gerty Drive), "hug" the inner side of the flagpole island with the lead car driving all the way up to the sign that says: "Lead Car stop here." On the entry drive, **leave a space for the MTD bus to pass across.** This traffic pattern is in consideration of our Water Survey neighbors and staff may allow you to pass another car by waving you around (do not pass unless staff allows). New families, this will take you a couple of days to get used to, and we will help you!*

K-5th dismissal is staggered by grade level: 4/5<sup>th</sup> 2:55, 2/3<sup>rd</sup> 2:58, and K/1<sup>st</sup> 3:00. K-5<sup>th</sup> families with siblings should come to the youngest sibling dismissal time. \*K-1 families please do not arrive early, form a line with your hazard lights on perpendicular to Kirk Drive in the parking lot until you see the K-1 children begin walking out to the car line. At that time, please start joining the regular car line. K-5<sup>th</sup> children who dismiss to after school will be supervised until joining after school.

### **Preschool Arrival 8:20-8:40 am/Dismissal 12:00 pm (Preschool extended care dismissal at 3:00 pm)**

Preschool arrival families, please accompany children to the playground (or preschool classroom door during inclement weather). Preschool dismissal is along the black playground fence. Do not let your child(ren) see you if you arrive early or stay late, as it can disrupt their sense of security *and* the sense of security of the other children in the class (ie. Where is my adult? My adult left, but now I see them again.) Preschool



dismisses @ Noon or @ 3:00 PM for extended preschool or @ 5:30 for extended preschool plus Adventure Play After School.

Preschool families should park on the east side of the Children's Research Center in designated 30-minute visitor parking spots. Park in the handicapped or motorcycle designated spaces with appropriate licensure. Bike racks are on the southeast side of the school and securing bicycles is recommended. **University of Illinois employee parking permits for lots north of Kirby Avenue 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 who do not hold a permit.**

Children not enrolled in extended preschool and not picked up at NOON make the transition for the extended day group of children and teachers difficult. Even one child's family running late makes this routine stressful for children and staff—you must organize your schedule to be on time. Preschool Families will be charged a portion of the extended preschool fee if lateness is an issue.

### **Preschool-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Tardy Arrival After 8:40 AM/Picking Up before Designated Dismissal Time**

Families arriving/dismissing at times other than the designated school times must park on the east side of the Children's Research Center in the designated visitor parking spots and accompany child(ren) to or from the main school door along the playground ramp. There, families should await a staff member to buzz in at the door. **Children may not be unaccompanied if tardy, they must be accompanied by their caregiver.**

### **Inclement Weather at School**

Children will not be dismissed during a severe weather alert (tornado watch/ intense lightning storm). Rather, we will wait out the severe portion of the storm and then dismissal will proceed. Dismissal is likely to take longer on these days and we will stay in touch via email and/or Slack.

### **Extended Care Preschool/Afterschool**

Sign up for optional extended care preschool (12:00-3:00 pm) and Adventure Play Afterschool (3:00-5:30 pm) is handled through the

school office. Email Christine, office specialist, with questions. Teachers/Playworkers in these programs thoroughly enjoy this time with children and both groups have a lot of fun! Because we must hire additional staff for the extended preschool and after school programs, families are charged for days they sign up.

On school days or early dismissal days when no students are present, neither of these programs are offered.

For all children attending after school, they must pack a hearty, nut-free, *additional* snack to their school day snack/lunch! It helps to designate this snack in a way your child can recognize it (so they don't eat it during the school day).

For extended care preschool, children should pack a hearty lunch (see lunch guideline section), a blanket, and a lovey, all labeled and in a labeled zippered backpack or duffle bag. Extended preschoolers have lunch, a quiet time, play studio time, and outdoor play.

### **Childcare**

**Uni Primary faculty and staff members (teachers, co-teachers, playworkers, etc.) are not allowed to provide childcare for Uni Primary families during the school year.** Asking for childcare places the faculty and 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**

For all children, please support them to develop a predictable morning routine that allows them to get to school on time. Encourage your child to take on tasks involved in their routine of preparing for school. Children can be responsible for washing out water bottles and lunch boxes at home and help with repacking.

### **Carpools**

When your child is enrolled, you may sign a "permission to list" release authorizing the sharing of your name, address and phone number with other families of students in your child's class. A class list of those signing the release is maintained and distributed by the office in the fall

and throughout the year as changes in address or phone occur. Should you wish, you can use this class list to arrange carpooling and childcare with each another. Returning families, please consider how you can reach out to new families via Slack in the summer!

### **First Day and Weeks of School: Preschool (and possibly older grades too!)**

The first days of school are a transition as new places, faces, and routines are learned. Please be patient and allow for extra emotion--it's a big deal to be at school for your child and for you!

**Consider a shorter rather than longer drop off routine.** Once you are out of sight, this allows children a defined transition from your care to teachers' care and eventually, classmates. When you linger nearby or watch your child to make sure they are "okay" this not only might disrupt your child's routine but the routine of other children.

Preschool Families socialize only out of eyesight of the playground at drop off and pick up—please go to a place in the east parking lot where you cannot be seen or re-seen by children as this is difficult for them *and other children* who see a caregiver. We know transition is difficult for you too...please talk with each other, and please talk with the teachers or school director if you have questions about transition to school.

### **School Supplies/Toys**

PreK-1<sup>st</sup> grade children use school provided tote bags for hauling items, and 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> may bring their own backpacks (no wheels) in addition to the school tote to school.

Keep all toys at home except when given permission by teachers. This includes trading cards, toy jewelry, stuffed animals, etc. An exception is a lovey/blanket for extended preschool. Exceptions are also made for children for whom a teacher and family determine a care item is helpful.

Your supply fee covers typical school supplies (pencils, markers, scissors, glue, etc.) and we select these supplies for the classrooms. You are asked to provide a lawn chair or an appropriate size, indoor shoes, an extra set of clothes PreK-5<sup>th</sup>, and a family photo. Label items with your child's name.

## **Clothing/Statement on Clothing and Hair & Inside Shoes**

*Please clearly mark your child's name in all outdoor gear and indoor shoes, as many items look very similar or are exact replicas! Tip: Mark with your last name if your children share a last name and items will be passed on to a younger sibling.*

**Please send children in clothes that are able to receive paint spills, stains, mud, grass, etc.** We discourage *younger children* from wearing removable 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 in our section of campus. For snowy days, children need water resistant snow pants, boots, hats, gloves/mittens, and a winter coat to participate in snow play. Cloth gloves do not dry for same day use; please provide a water-resistant glove type. Label everything!

\*Smart Watches are not allowed in grades PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> at school. In 4/5<sup>th</sup> grades smart watches are highly discouraged. Agreement from the teacher, director, and family may be granted in extenuating cases for 4/5<sup>th</sup> grade. In the case that we agree, the smart watch must be kept in the child's backpack.

Please keep a labeled **seasonal** set of extra clothes for your child at school for emergencies PreK-3<sup>rd</sup>. If your child uses these clothes, send a new set in the next day. Tips for younger children: Try to buy clothing your child can manipulate (zip, button).

## **Right to Expression**

University Primary School will not and does not prohibit hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

Clothing is an expression of self, and therefore clothing/styles of all genders is welcome to be worn by all genders of children and adults.

Clothing with indigenous mascot imagery, clothing that displays hate imagery (see Antidefamation League <https://www.adl.org/>), or clothing that displays hate speech or violent language is prohibited. Cos-play and

costumes are highly discouraged with the exception of special events and spirit days.

**All children must bring a pair of inside shoes to be kept and worn inside at school.** This keeps the room much cleaner throughout the day. Please purchase inside shoes that are easy for your children to slip on and off—crocs, slippers with a no-slip sole, etc. Please replace these indoor shoes when your child outgrows them. If your child has a special type of footwear they need 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 and play time. Homework is not typically assigned PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> (see below for 2/3<sup>rd</sup> year-long assignment and 4/5<sup>th</sup> grades).

Homework is assigned in the 4/5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, typically math-reading-writing. Some homework assignments in younger classrooms that occasionally occur include: project surveys, literacy logs, books, or journaling.

Children in 2/3<sup>rd</sup> grade are expected to practice their addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division basic facts 0-12 at home (flash cards, computer games, etc.) and have facts mastered as much as possible prior to entering 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Facts are also practiced at school!

Children should be reading nightly for at least 20 minutes (can be with a grown up) as much as possible. 20 minutes is only a suggested time! Shared reading with a grown up, discussing stories for comprehension and perspective taking, vocabulary, and debate lays a foundation for more independent reading/comprehension during older years.

## **Lunches**

Lunch is a favorite time of day, and we love all of the different foods children bring from their family cultures! Children in K-5 or in Preschool extended care should bring a hearty nut-free lunch, non-sugared drink (juice is okay, water is great), and a large cloth napkin (to be used as a placemat; replace with a fresh napkin each day). ***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 (such as items made in your home if you consume nuts in your home) and will be contained to the cloth napkin placemat. Children are allowed to bring egg, dairy, soy, and gluten lunch products to school, though we do have children with these allergies or sensitivities. Children may not share any lunch items. We do not have facilities for either heating or cooling foods for student lunches so you may try an icepack or thermos. 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**

Please pack a hearty, nut-free snack and daily water bottle—wash all snack bags and bottles nightly. Some cooking activities take place in classrooms, and we welcome volunteers for cooking!

### **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, etc.) 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 on or before the first day of school. 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 are bi-yearly trained in First Aid/CPR including 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 other children’s diets. We have worked with and are advised by Carle Hospital allergist specialists on this decision.

### **Illness/Wellness Policy:**

We will send your child home if they are experiencing symptoms of illness for known or unknown reasons, including a fever of 100.4 degrees or above as measured on our school thermometer. If a child has

allergies, those are not a symptom of illness. Caregivers must 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 cohort as an alert. A person's name is not shared in this alert.

**Children must be 24-hours fever, vomit, and/or diarrhea free without symptom reducing medication to return to school for any illness.** When in doubt, stay home another day for the wellness of the individual and school community!

We may conduct head checks if lice are reported in a classroom—this involves a staff member checking for lice or nits on a child's head and reporting to the family if lice or nits are found.

### **Medications**

Uni Primary does not employ a school nurse. 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 and provide legible details on the form regarding that medication. You will need to provide a form for each medication to be given—this includes self-administered Epi-pens and diabetes medication.

All 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. Without these components, medication may not be kept at the school. A child's grown up may administer medication to them at school; use the main door to alert staff of your arrival. 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; under special circumstances, the office or classroom may hold a child's prescribed medication.

In accordance with Illinois State Board of Education student medical rights, University Primary School and school personnel incur no liability for injuries occurring when administering asthma medication, and

epinephrine auto-injector, or an opioid antagonist. Parents/guardians signature acknowledge this protection on the handbook review form.

For self-carry/self-administration of asthma medication, we will need the following in your child's file:

1. A signed parent/guardian permission notification (i.e., the SCHOOL MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM), and
2. A copy of the prescription.

For self-carry/self-administration of epinephrine injectors, we will need the following in your child's file:

1. A signed parent/guardian permission notification (i.e., the SCHOOL MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM), and
2. A copy of the prescription.

For self-carry/self-administration of diabetes medication, we will need in your child's file:

1. A signed parent/guardian permission notification (i.e., the SCHOOL MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM), and
2. A signed physician diabetes care plan that also carries a parent signature.

For self-carry/self-administration of seizure medication, we will need in your child's file:

1. A signed parent/guardian permission notification (i.e., the SCHOOL MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM), and
2. A signed physician seizure care plan that also carries a parent signature.

For administration of a medical cannabis infused product to a student who is a registered, qualifying patient:

1. A parent/guardian or other designated care giver may administer the product subject to the restrictions outlined in school code 105 ILCS 5/22-33.

Parents/guardians may opt to come to school and give their child prescribed medication rather than completing the doctor signed and prescribed authorization form. There will be a trained "delegated care aide" to work with students with diabetes; however, safety is a first



priority for your child and for other children. Therefore, if staff do not feel qualified/properly trained to supervise a specific child's self-administered medication, we will talk with a family member to support us in training.

Physician, family, and a designated school care aide (typically the principal or classroom teacher) will create a care plan for diabetes medication and management during the school day including monitoring blood glucose, insulin, and carbohydrates.

Staff members and are not allowed to administer over-the-counter medications "as needed" to children. Children are not allowed to administer over-the-counter medications "as needed" to themselves. The school does not allow the administration of: undesignated epinephrine injectors, undesignated asthma inhalers, or undesignated glucagon.

University Primary agrees to comply with any other State or federal law or regulatory requirement, informed by Illinois School Code.

### **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 called 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.**

It is expected that children who become ill at school be picked up in 30 minutes or less from the time their adult is called. Please arrange for this contingency—you may have to designate adult friends!

### **Health Forms**

Health forms must be updated and on file on or before the first day of school via directions sent from the School Office. (If the requirements

for health examinations and immunizations have not been met by October 15, the student will be excluded from attending school until evidence of requirements through required forms are presented. )

- All students must have a health form on file.
- Health forms that reflect a physical less than a year old are required the first year of: preschool and kindergarten.
- 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.
- In addition to the above, hearing screenings are mandated by the State of Illinois for all students in grades preschool – 5<sup>th</sup> grade and vision exams are mandated for preschool students. These screenings will typically be conducted 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.

### **Birth Certificates**

Prior to the start of school, or at least within 30 days from the start of school, each parent/guardian must submit a certified copy of the child's birth certificate.

### **Accident & Incident Reports**

Safety is paramount to learning, and despite watchfulness, unanticipated accidents happen at school. The Uni Primary faculty or 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 known 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) or sprain and the child's adult should pick up
- bodily fluids are involved, such as spitting or biting
- a teacher is unsure about the extent of an injury

A teacher is not asked to complete an accident form or contact a parent/guardian for scrapes, scratches, and bumps (unless above the neck). Please communicate with your child's teacher if you have questions about a specific situation; *some accidents remain unknown to us until a child reports at home.*

Toileting accidents occur and do not require an accident form. 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!

### **Notice Home Report**

If a child/children direct emotional and physical harm to another person, teachers will complete an Notice Home Report for all parties involved. This report is given to families and the director, to determine any patterns of unhealthy actions/inactions/vulnerabilities which may be occurring over time. Teachers use their discretion as to the seriousness of a Notice Home Report. For example, an unkind word or attempt at exclusion which may harm another person emotionally, may warrant or not warrant a Notice Home Report. We have this reporting system as a primary means for communicating greater incidents of concern including fighting, patterns of unkindnesses, boundary crossing, etc.

### **Concussions and Head Injuries**

Any student or adult who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the activity and a parent/guardian contacted. The student may not return to play or PE until cleared by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches.

### **Emergency Procedures**

**WEATHER EMERGENCY:** If there is a weather emergency (tornado warning, snowstorm, 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.

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

**LOCK DOWN:** If staff see suspicious persons on school grounds or in the building, and feel or are threatened in any way by such a person or persons, they will take students to a designated place of safety and call 911. A lockdown on the University campus will follow campus protocol and students will be taken to a predetermined designated place of safety in our building. 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 police-supervised lock down with children once a year. Families will be alerted to this practice date; all children attending school that day will be required to participate. The lock down is gentle and matter of fact; it is not harsh and intimidating.

**BUS:** Children practice bus safety and evacuation procedures led by the Mass Transit District staff.

### **Annual Asbestos Notification Letter**

*Dear Faculty, Parent/Guardian, and Staff,*

*University Primary School (UPS) at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U of I) continues with its goal to maintain a safe educational and working environment. As part of this, University Primary School makes every effort to comply with the Asbestos Hazards Emergency Response Act (AHERA) rules, which were promulgated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Per these rules University Primary School periodically inspects its school building and performs repairs as needed; maintains updated Asbestos Management Plans in the*

*school office; and, annually notifies the parents, faculty and staff of the availability of these Management Plans.*

*The Asbestos Management Plan for University Primary School is available through the school business office and the Facilities and Services (F&S) Division of Safety and Compliance. You may request to review these plans during regular business hours.*

*If there are any specific questions regarding the asbestos management in the University Primary School, please contact Jeremy Neighbors, Associate Director of Safety and Compliance at the F&S Division of Safety and Compliance, (217) 265-9828.*

*Sincerely,*

*Dr. Ali Lewis*

*University Primary School Director  
Asbestos Designated Person*

### **Ineffective Behaviors and Anti-Bullying**

University Primary School revised this policy June 15, 2025, as a continued commitment to fostering a safe and caring school environment for all persons. We will treat each other with peace and kindness and find traits within our classmates and one another that we appreciate.

This anti-bullying policy is revised and based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians, families, teachers/staff, social work interns, and our school affiliation with The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, at-large. The policy is reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education for compliance with school code legislation 105 ILCS 5/27-23.7.

**Defining Bullying:** "Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a

student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of

one or more of the following:

- (1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- (2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- (3) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- (4) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. "Cyber-bullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

**Contrary to State Law:** Bullying, including cyberbullying, is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion]. Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

**Reporting Bullying/Point of Contact Person:**

Children are instructed and practice involving an adult when unsafe behaviors or situations arise around physical or emotional well-being. This includes bullying. Promptly reporting bullying is part of school culture, so that issues can be addressed and rectified. All instances of self-harm or threats believed to result from bullying must be reported to guardians by the school.

Steps for reporting bullying include:

1. Incidents of bullying must be documented by staff using the School Accident Form and documentation includes but is not limited to, providing the persons involved with the incident and the school point of contact person information. The point of contact person for bullying is the School Director, Dr. Ali Lewis, e-mail address: [alilewis@illinois.edu](mailto:alilewis@illinois.edu) and school telephone number: 217-333-3996.

The procedure for anonymous bullying reporting is to mail a letter to the school director at the school address 2202 Kirk Drive Champaign, IL 61820, or email Dr. Lewis at [alilewis@illinois.edu](mailto:alilewis@illinois.edu) or call and leave a message for the director at 217-333-3996. Phone and email may not be fully anonymous if the phone system identifies the caller or the email identifies the sender. If a student wishes to remain anonymous, their parent or guardian/caretaker should report on their behalf to the staff and to the school director, so situations are known and effectively addressed. Formal disciplinary action will not be based solely on an anonymous report.

2. Once the point of contact person receives the report, the school shall make diligent efforts to notify the parents or caretakers of all students

involved in a bullying or alleged bullying incident within 24 hours after school administration is made aware of the students' involvement, utilizing all contact information the school has or can reasonably obtain. A meeting will be planned for the soonest possible date involving parties together or separately.

3. At the meeting, restorative measures will be sought including resolutions and follow through, resources shared, as well as appropriate consequences decided upon. (see below for further details)

**Reports and incidents of bullying are:** Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians/caretakers of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying within 24 hours and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. Student privacy rights include protecting identifying information when necessary. Once a bullying incident is reported to a staff member, the staff member reports to the school director in person and through documentation on the Accident Report Form. The school director promptly calls parents or guardians/caretakers of all students within 24 hours, involved in the alleged incident of bullying. The director discusses, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, outside of school counseling, outside of school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures. "Restorative measures" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that:

- (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety,
- (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,
- (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and
- (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.



(vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

The school will promptly investigate and addressing reports of bullying, including the following:

(A) Making all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying.

(B) Involving appropriate school support personnel and other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process.

(C) Notifying the principal or school administrator or his or her designee of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as possible after the report is received.

(D) Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, providing parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the principal or school administrator or his or her designee to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

### **Bullying Interventions:**

Interventions taken to address bullying, include, and not limited to, social work intern services, restorative measures at the classroom and school level, social-emotional skill building, education regarding signs of bullying and defining bullying, and teaching children regarding procedures for reporting of unsafe behaviors/feelings and bullying to trusted adults/teachers/school director. Though our school does not directly offer counseling and school psychological services, community-based services may be able to be recommended by staff and the school director to support students involved in bullying incidents.

### **Statement of Reprisal or Retaliation:**

Reprisal or retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports an

act of bullying, including for a person found to have falsely accused another person of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying. The consequences and remedial actions for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation, or falsely accusing as a means of retaliation or bullying includes:

1. Meeting with the Director and family for mutual agreement toward positive and effective supports and expectations on behalf of those involved.
2. If mutual agreement cannot be reached, a family may be asked to pursue an alternative school placement at the discretion of the school director.
3. If agreements are not fulfilled, a family may be asked to pursue an alternative school placement at the discretion of the school director.

### **Reviewing and Re-evaluating Policy:**

This bullying prevention policy will be included in the Family Handbook, distributed annually to all parents, guardians/caretakers, students, and staff, including new employees upon hiring, and posted online under the 'Community' tab on the school website. Additionally, the Family Handbook which contains the full bullying policy is distributed annually through the summer mailing and/or by request in hard copy from the school office.

As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the bullying prevention policy there is policy evaluation to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes:

- frequency of victimization reported to families
- student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school assessed via yearly family surveys
- Using Accident Report data for Bullying Reports: identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. (The non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members if there are any, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.) The school uses data information for policy evaluation

through parent-teacher conferences, school surveys, and student council meetings.

### **Policy Consistency**

This policy is consistent with the policies of the school board, charter school, or non-public, non-sectarian elementary or secondary school. (Uni Primary is a non-public, non-sectarian elementary school.) The bullying policy strives to align with the University of Illinois policies regarding harassment and discrimination as appropriate to minors.

### **Sex Discrimination, Harassment, and other Sexual Misconduct Statement**

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX notice of nondiscrimination is located at: [go.uillinois.edu/StatementonSexDiscrimination](http://go.uillinois.edu/StatementonSexDiscrimination).

The University of Illinois System Statement reiterates that the University of Illinois prohibits and will not tolerate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and other sexual misconduct in its education programs and activities. Should you have any questions regarding the Statement or any related system or university policies and procedures, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at the number or email address included in the Statement.

For all reports or complaints alleging Title IX Sexual Harassment ([see University Sexual Misconduct Policy for definitions](#)), the Procedures for Addressing Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaints will be used to process the report or complaint. Processing a report or complaint under the Procedures for Addressing Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaints does not mean that the University Primary School will not process some or all allegations of a report or complaint as described above, to the extent allowed by Title IX and other laws.

For all other reports or complaints of sexual harassment other than Title IX Sexual Harassment, the process for addressing ineffective behaviors and bullying behaviors will be used. Please note that the range of discipline for Title IX Sexual Harassment for our students extends from conversations with the child's family to make a plan for

safety and understanding, to dismissing the child, following appropriate parental notification and involvement as referenced above.

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

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!

As the University's College of Education Lab School we remain deeply committed and also adopt 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 and will comply with all federal and state non-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders, and regulations. This nondiscrimination policy applies to admissions, employment, access to and treatment in the University programs and activities."

Specifically, University Primary shall comply with applicable federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination, including, but not limited to, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC 1681 et seq.), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (20 USC 1400 et seq.), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (29 USC 621 et seq.), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC 2000d et seq., 2000e et seq.), the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.), the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5], and relevant case law, including Plyler v. Doe for immigrant families, 457 U.S. 202, 102 S.Ct. 2382 (1982).

Families experiencing or concerned about issues of discrimination are encouraged to consider and follow the procedures as outlined in "communication with families," taking a matter of discrimination directly to the head teacher, then school director, and if needed, further with the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and the Dean of Education at the College of Education. Families may choose to directly address a

matter of discrimination directly with any of these parties, in any order, at their discretion, as they feel most safe and appropriate.

Individuals who believe that a University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign employee has subjected them to discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy should contact the Office for Access and Equity at [accessandequity@illinois.edu](mailto:accessandequity@illinois.edu) or (217) 333-0885.

Please click the link to see the [University of Illinois System Statement on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct](#).

No student, parent/guardian, employee, or other member of the school community will be subjected to retaliation as prohibited by law.

Any person who believes any student, employee, or third party or the school generally has engaged in conduct prohibited by Title IX or the University Sexual Misconduct Policy should report the conduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Danielle Morrison serves as the University's Title IX Coordinator and can be contacted in person or by mail at the Title IX Office, 616 E. Green Street, Suite 214, Champaign, IL 61820; by phone at (844) 616-7978; or by email at [titleixcoordinator@illinois.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@illinois.edu). The Title IX Coordinator can also assist with supportive measures and remedies. Students may also report such conduct to any school employee, including any teacher, counselor, or school administrator. Reports may also be made online using the University Reporting Form. The University prefers that all reports and complaints are in writing; however, verbal information will be accepted and processed.

Inquiries about any of the above laws may also be directed to one or more of the following agencies:

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)  
Chicago Office  
JCK Federal Building  
230 S. Dearborn Street, 37th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604  
Telephone: (312) 730-1560  
Facsimile: (312) 730-1576

Email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)  
Chicago District Office  
JCK Federal Building  
Chicago, IL 60604  
Telephone: (312) 872-9744  
Facsimile: 312-588-1260  
Info@EEOC.org

Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR)  
Springfield Office  
535 West Jefferson  
1st Floor  
Intake Unit  
Springfield, IL 62702  
Telephone: (217) 785-5100  
Facsimile: (217) 785-5106  
Email: IDHR.webmail@Illinois.gov

### **Cell Phones, Smart Watches, & Tablet Policy for Children**

Pending a specific child or family need, communicated and agreed upon by the family, teacher, and director of University Primary School ahead of time, children may not carry or bring cell phones or personal tablets to or from school. We can make a phone call/text to a family should a child have a concern to share with their caregiver. Smart Watches are not allowed either, except with special agreement made in 4/5<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Technology, Use of Internet, Social Media**

At Uni Primary, we view use of computers, iPads, and all of their many uses as *tools* by which we may learn. We understand use of screen is to be limited with young children, both at school and at home, and we generally do not have screen use except for whole-class instruction in Preschool-1<sup>st</sup> grades. Children in 2-5<sup>th</sup> grades use iPads for: reading books on-line, math practice, monitored research using the internet, and as a tool for writing/editing (paper/pencil are also used), presentations, basic programming, and digital arts.

Though we highly discourage any child from having a social media account, we understand that some families allow for such accounts. Children are not allowed to use social media or access social media accounts at school, post to such accounts regarding school matters, and are not allowed to use photos of school/school events on such accounts. If it is reported or discovered that social media is used in a disrespectful or damaging way by a current student at school, the school will hold a meeting with the student and their caregivers to rectify the situation.

Families should also use great discretion if posting photos of any school events on personal social media accounts; families must obtain permission from other adults to use their image or their child's image from any school related event (examples: Fall Family Reading Night, 5<sup>th</sup> grade promotion) verses a birthday party at one's home with friends from school.

In accordance with Illinois School Code: Uni Primary School may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information for our school to gain access to a student's account or profile on a social networking website. Uni Primary School may investigate or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy; and the school may require the student to share content during such an investigation.

### **Financial Assistance**

There are limited funds available each year for applicants seeking financial assistance for our program. Interested families, specifically families who qualify for Federal Free and Reduced Lunch income categories, should complete a Tuition and Fee Waiver Form during the application process and when renewing a contract to have consideration to assistance. If you are interested in *providing* financial assistance funds, please see the paragraph below on school-giving!

### **Fundraising and Giving**

There are intermittent fundraisers for Uni Primary depending on the Parent Staff Alliance's group's desires; however, students occasionally participate in community service projects such as Eastern Illinois Food Bank Food for Families or monetary collections for community causes.

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 <https://give.education.illinois.edu/> then under “Other” as a category, specify University Primary School. Monetary gifts go to the Uni Primary enhancement fund for special projects like technology, playground and classroom beautification, etc.

### **Tuition & Materials Fees**

Families are billed tuition monthly by the University of Illinois, and all revenue comes back to University Primary as a self-sustaining unit within the University. After the due date specified on the bill, a finance charge is 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. Families are held to a semester’s tuition once that semester begins, and for the spring semester, a family is charged tuition for at least January if they do not inform the director by December 1 of their plans. Removing your child from Uni Primary mid-semester means, you will be billed: the remaining semesters’ tuition, and the non-refundable May deposit will not be returned. Material fees must be paid each semester. See your family’s specific contract for tuition and fee requirements for enrollment.

### **Celebrations: Birthdays, Traditions, Holidays**

**Traditions:** We celebrate our diverse classroom communities by encouraging children and their families to share family traditions with the class. *Please speak to the classroom teachers about the celebrations or traditions that you can share—all are welcome.* Traditions may be cultural, holiday, religious, or a special family tradition, even tradition in the form of a routine can be a part of family culture to share! Contact your teacher about sharing traditions with the class; we are stronger community when we learn together.

**Birthdays:** We enjoy celebrating birthdays by asking families to share a special *activity* with all of the other students instead of 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 wish list 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, you may not distribute the invitations using email or US mail; if your child is inviting the whole class you can distribute invites at school.

**Holidays:** Generally, we do not celebrate holidays unless a family is coming in to share the way they celebrate/information about that holiday with a class. For Halloween, we do not "Dress Up" at school, nor do we pass out "Valentine's" on Valentine's Day for example. Exceptions may be classroom specific, so please read emails from your teachers.

### **Conferences, Chats, & School Records**

Family/Teacher chats are held at the beginning of the school year. These are informal, 15-minute check ins with teachers and attendance at these meetings (though informal) is valued!

Family/Teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring for 30-minutes with more formal presentations. **Conferences are mandatory at Uni Primary, and an essential time for communicating together.** During conferences, caregivers are shown samples of their child's work from their portfolio and the teacher/family discusses a child's progress. Older children are often included in helping to lead and participate in conferences about their learning. Uni Primary uses a growth model for assessment, evident through photo, video, student work, math and reading assessments, and anecdotal notes. Families should receive an end of semester summary report in the fall and a transition report in the spring, which serve as a record of growth from the semester/year. *If you have concerns about your child's growth outside of the conference times, please contact your child's teacher to arrange an appointment. Concerns are handled best when addressed early.*

Families transferring from or transferring to Uni Primary will work with our school and the transfer school to share student records in a timely way. Certified copies of transfer students' records shall be requested within 14 days of enrollment, if not prior to enrollment, at Uni Primary. Uni Primary shall send unofficial records of transferring students to

other schools within or before 10 days of the other school's request. Student files are kept for five years after a child's last enrollment year, at which time files are disposed of in a confidential manner.

In accordance with The Missing Children Records Act, Uni Primary shall flag a reported missing child's record for compliance with the Illinois State Police, should the police request the record. The record shall be flagged by manner of the school office specialist and communicated to the school director.

### **Communication with Families**

At University Primary School, we have informal and formal means of communicating with families. Newsletters and emails are sent home via email or hardcopy in each classroom. When questions or concerns arise, every attempt is made to address them in a timely manner. Preschool families may have brief contacts with their child's teachers at drop off/pick up times; however, this is not a productive time to have a lengthy discussion.

Families who have a concern that cannot be addressed through informal means of communication should make an appointment with the head teacher/teaching team. If the issue is not resolved, the head teacher and/or the family may request a meeting with the director. If the issue is still not resolved, 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.

### **Family Participation and Volunteer Opportunities**

We LOVE to have family volunteers at University Primary School. Please let your child's teacher know about activities, hobbies, traditions, or other areas where you can share or enhance the classroom community. Teachers will schedule and coordinate volunteer times. All-school opportunities are abundant through our Parent Teacher Alliance, and through needs communicated by the director via email.

### **Pet Policy**

Classrooms may have pets as a way for children to learn about animal habitats and care. The pets can add a great deal to the nurturing environment of the classroom and make some children feel more “at home.” Teachers take care to consider student allergies before taking in a pet and are conscious about the safety of pets in the classroom.

**For the safety of children, please refrain from bringing family pets (especially dogs) when dropping off or picking up your child(ren). This is often a hectic time for the children and the teachers. Pets are not always predictable!**

### **Field Trips**

The inquiry project work in our curriculum involves students observing and questioning in the real world, therefore field trips are part of each classroom curriculum.

Teachers will seek email confirmation for permission for trips outside of campus and provide a week’s notice of a field trip when possible. When we venture on campus, we typically use the MTD bus and inform you of those trips as soon as possible as well. We ask your permission for a standing waiver form indicating your child(ren) may use MTD campus and city buses with teacher chaperones. In addition to MTD, we may depend on families to help transport students; **please arrange your schedule to transport children on at least one field trip each year!**

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. For car field trips (not bus), families whose children still use car seats need to provide their seat, marked with a child’s name and dropped off the morning of the trip.

### **Student Teachers**

University of Illinois Student teachers are regularly placed in classrooms, with the head teachers serving as “cooperating teachers.” Student teachers provide a vital connection between The College of

Education and University Primary School, where education students see recommended practices in education, including democratic classroom communities, inquiry work in-action, and wholistic assessments. Student teachers may be responsible for leading shorter or longer lessons, may take the lead for smaller or larger groups, may prepare and lead some family conferences, and work alongside the head teachers, co-teachers, and director for direction and guidance. Student teachers pass fingerprint background checks and are held to expectations for privacy regarding student and family information, care, and supports.

### **Social Work Interns**

A School of Social Work intern may be placed in a classroom for the springsemester. Interns complete 400 hours, 27 each week. Hours in and outside the classroom can vary, depending on the schedule worked out with Ali and the head teacher. Interns help with daily classroom duties and routines, provide social-emotional support to students, organize school-wide events, and work with the University and the greater Champaign-Urbana community to connect students, families, and teachers to resources. Interns lead a training session on a topic determined to be beneficial to the class. Social Work interns are valued members of the classroom team and provide a different lens by which to consider wellbeing.

### **Our Handbook**

A reminder that this Handbook is an *evolving document*, as informed by the school community, Campus, the State of Illinois, and the Nation. The need to check school emails and any alerts to the procedures and policy changes are still expected.

## University Primary School Handbook Signature of Acknowledgement

This statement below is collected electronically by the school office from families, no need to sign here—this is a copy held in the handbook.

As a parent/guardian of a child or of children at University Primary School, it is important to us that you acknowledge you have both received and reviewed the University Primary School Family Handbook, via electronic form. Given the wide range of topics pertinent to your child(ren)'s school experience, the Family Handbook is the key document by which our school communicates policies, procedures, structure, and guidance for children and their families.

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Dear University Primary School Family,

Your signature on the acknowledgement form indicates that you have both received and reviewed the University Primary School Family Handbook for the current school year. Also, your signature/ digital completion of the form acknowledges the protection of school and school personnel as holding no liability for injuries occurring when administering asthma medication, an epinephrine auto-injector, or an opioid antagonist in accordance with Illinois School Code.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Name/grade of child(ren) attending University Primary School:

Current School Year: