



Classroom Procedures & Policies Handbook for Students & Their Families



magnolia
speech school

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General Information

Administration

The ultimate authority of Magnolia Speech School, Inc., resides with its board of directors. The board is composed of men and women who have distinguished themselves as civic, business, professional, and philanthropic leaders. Officers of the board are elected annually, and its members are elected for staggered three-year terms. The board's work is to oversee school policies and attend to the financial aspects of the school. This is accomplished primarily through committees elected from its membership or appointed by the president. Non-board voting positions may include a teacher representative elected to the board to voice staff concerns and report back to the staff, and a parent representative who also serves as the president of the Magnolia Speech School Parent Teacher Organization.

The executive director of the school attends board meetings and represents the staff to the board. The executive director informs the staff members of any pertinent board decisions. The executive director is ultimately responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school.

The comptroller attends board meetings to answer financial questions that may arise.

The director of institutional advancement and the director of communications and community engagement may attend board meetings to report development activities and to devise, with board members, strategies for fundraising.

Staff members should discuss any employment problems with the executive director in private. If a board decision is necessary, the executive director will present the problem to the board for action or recommend the staff member contact the chair of the personnel committee.

Affiliations and Accreditation

Magnolia Speech School, Inc., maintains professional relationships nationwide with similar schools for children with challenges in speech, language, and hearing. Magnolia Speech School is a member of OPTION Schools, Inc., an international organization of non-public schools that teach listening and spoken language skills to children with hearing loss. Some Magnolia Speech School staff are active members of the A.G. Bell Association, which also supports spoken language instruction. Magnolia Speech School is accredited by the Mississippi State Department of Education and Cognia.

Programs and Services

Magnolia Speech School offers four programs:

- The Clinic
- Listening and Spoken Language educational program for children with hearing loss
- Association Method for children with language disorders
- Early Intervention Program for families of children 0-3 years diagnosed with hearing loss

All services and programs provided by Magnolia Speech School are reviewed annually by the administrative staff and the board of directors as to content and delivery.

Clinical Services

The Clinic at Magnolia Speech School provides a full range of services in speech-language therapy, audiology, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Certified and licensed professionals conduct initial evaluations and annual assessments for Magnolia Speech School students.

Evaluations are individualized and may include hearing, speech, language, academic, and developmental assessments based on the child's age, performance, and specific needs.

Following the initial evaluation, parents will participate in a conference to review assessment results, discuss recommendations, and ask questions. A comprehensive written report outlining the evaluation findings, interpretations, and recommendations will be provided to parents within two weeks of the assessment.

Outpatient services are offered to clients who:

- have moderate disabilities that do not require classroom enrollment
- are on the waiting list to enter Magnolia Speech School's classroom program and/or
- need a "trial period" to see if Magnolia Speech School techniques will be effective to meet their needs.

A pediatric educational audiologist is available to act as a consultant to school districts and teachers. She provides the following services:

- Otoscopy / Tympanometry
- Otoacoustic emissions
- Hearing screenings
- Comprehensive hearing evaluations
- Hearing aid programming / maintenance
- Cochlear implant mapping / maintenance
- Earmold impressions
- Listening therapy

Our pediatric educational audiologist is readily available to Magnolia Speech School staff and former students. She may also act as a consultant to school districts.

Audiological services and additional academic assessment are provided at no additional cost to students enrolled at Magnolia Speech School. Dyslexia therapy services are available for students with a diagnosis. Speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and behavior therapy are offered through an affiliation agreement with Smart Therapy.

Additional licensed and certified therapists are available as needed through contractual work or affiliation agreements.

Magnolia Speech School

Magnolia Speech School is a Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) non-public, non-profit, special-purpose school that provides self-contained classes in an intensive, individualized language development program. The school's instructional approach combines the multi-sensory Association Method for students with language disorders and a natural Listening and Spoken Language approach designed for children with hearing loss.

Students are placed in small classes of 5–8 children with a teacher and assistant, based on their individual needs, language abilities, and chronological age. Through intensive instruction in language, speech, and listening skills, each child receives personalized support to maximize communication and academic success. When appropriate, students with typically developing communication skills are included in classrooms as peer language models to encourage natural language development and social interaction.

Each student has a comprehensive, individualized Service Plan that guides instruction and is supported by the Magnolia Speech School curriculum. Curriculum areas may include audition, receptive language, expressive language, speech, reading and writing, mathematics, science, social studies, Association Method, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, social skills, and auditory processing. Behavioral goals are developed as needed based on individual student needs. Student progress is monitored continuously and shared with families through monthly meetings and written quarterly reports.

To further support student growth, Magnolia Speech School provides a variety of specialized services, including speech-language therapy, dyslexia therapy, auditory training and audition therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, music therapy, library, computer instruction, and physical education. Students also participate in enrichment opportunities such as visual and performing arts, arts and crafts, field trips, social activities, celebrations, and recreational experiences.

Through this comprehensive educational program, students develop the communication, academic, and social skills necessary for a successful transition to less restrictive educational environments and continued success in future school settings.

Family Services

Founded by the mother of a deaf child, Magnolia Speech School has always recognized the important role of the child's family. For children to live a language-filled life, they must be surrounded by sound and words all waking hours, not just at school; therefore, family members and school personnel must work together as a team. Because ongoing support and education are necessary for parents to know how to help their children, the following services are offered to assist families:

Early Intervention Program: Hearing loss is the most common disability in newborns. When the Mississippi Legislature mandated newborn hearing screening in 1996, the Mississippi State Department of Health contracted with Magnolia Speech School to provide an option for listening and spoken language services to families statewide. Services are offered to babies who have hearing loss from birth to age three in both home-based and center-based settings. Magnolia Speech School Early Intervention personnel begin by offering emotional support to these families while providing information that will lead to the family's understanding of hearing loss. A full range of audiological services is then provided to see that the baby is fitted with appropriate amplification, and that the family is provided with information and training concerning current technological options. When they are thirteen months to two years of age, many of the children from this program transition into Magnolia Speech School's full-day classrooms.

Parent Training and Counseling: All families need support in adjusting to the special needs of their children with communication disorders. They also need support in implementing a home program that emphasizes

the use of spoken words. This center-based program is included in tuition and offers experienced staff members' support to families of Magnolia Speech School students. Parent orientation sessions are provided for groups and/or individuals when a child enrolls. All parents are encouraged to participate in the school's parent support group. Magnolia Speech School requires parents to meet with the classroom teacher for a face-to-face conversation once a month.

Enrollment Procedure

After comprehensive assessment, the admission team will make a formal recommendation to the Magnolia Speech School administration regarding new student enrollment at Magnolia Speech School. Once this recommendation is approved the following criteria must be met:

- An intake meeting
- A case history must be completed and copies of reports from other facilities and a signed medical release form must be provided
- The paperwork for eligibility ruling must be completed
- The testing as required for enrollment may include any of the following:
 - Birth to age 5: BDI Screener, DP-III, APPLE, PLS-4, Pre-School CELF, Informal Preschool Language Assessment Checklist, P-TONI, DAP, EVT, PPVT
 - Age 6+: OWLS, R/E, GFTA, EVT, PPVT, CELF, Woodcock Johnson, TONI
- A vision screening
- A hearing screening or an aided/unaided audiogram
- Outpatient visits
- Classroom visits
- The registration packet completed, and the registration fee paid
- A comfort level checklist
- Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language, and Speech and SERVICE PLAN Meeting

Parents are provided "Procedural Safeguards" from the Mississippi State Department of Education. This required and relevant information defines parents' rights in both federal and state law and regulations. The child's right to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) is explained along with information regarding the development of an Individual Education Plan (SERVICE PLAN) and the right to placement in the child's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Details are then explained regarding rights to due process. Magnolia Speech School staff asks that the parent study the "Procedural Safeguards" and return with questions as needed.

Transition Policy

Magnolia Speech School students may transition into traditional classroom settings in local school districts, local private schools, or accredited tutorial programs once the following criteria are met:

1. Formal Test Scores:
 - a. 85% intelligibility in speech
 - b. Language standard scores no more than one deviation below the mean and/or a language age within one year of the child's chronological age and/or the age of the students in the grade the child will enter
 - c. Academic testing at grade level in which the child will enter
2. Criterion referenced post-testing on the student's current Service Plan reflects that the student has met a minimum of 80% of his goals for the current school year.
3. Both the child's current teacher and the department supervisor must formally recommend the student as a candidate for transition.

Magnolia Speech School staff will be available to provide ongoing support to students and families as the student transitions. Support provided may consist of visiting the new school/classroom with the family during the spring before the child finishes Magnolia Speech School's program. Additionally, Magnolia Speech School staff can be available to observe the students during the first semester and make recommendations regarding Service Plan development and/or needed revisions. Parents will need to make a request in writing to receive these services.

Classroom Instruction

Instructional techniques include language activities that require active learning. Staff members model, shape, and expand spoken language during the entire school day (e.g. in the cafeteria, on the playground, in the library, etc.). The child learns that with spoken language they can control their environment and be successful.

The classrooms include:

Listening and Spoken Language Instruction for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Each classroom has a maximum of eight students with hearing impairments. When appropriate, one typical hearing student is placed in the classroom for purposes of language stimulation. With a low teacher/pupil ratio, each child has a better opportunity to receive individualized instruction from the certified teacher of the deaf and/or the teaching assistant. The Magnolia Speech School curriculum is used to set goals and monitor progress for each child. The student's instructional day includes conversational activities (e.g. journals, show and tell, etc.) and academics (based on both the Mississippi Department of Education Standards and the Magnolia Speech School curriculum), along with practice in language use through role-playing, storytelling, problem solving, etc. The children are in an auditory/oral environment for the entire school day. Using active learning and language-based instruction, the teacher models language within each experience/activity. After the child learns to imitate the model, the teacher shapes and expands the child's communication skills until appropriate language structures are mastered.

Magnolia Speech School staff are careful to monitor each child's amplification. Sound Field Systems are used in every classroom so the students will receive better quality sound. A full range of audiological services is offered to every student. Teaching the children to listen and understand what they are hearing is central to classroom instruction. A "listening attitude" is developed as each hearing-impaired student at Magnolia Speech School is surrounded by sound and immersed in language until typical oral skills emerge. Individual listening therapy will be provided as needed for children with hearing loss. Cochlear implant mapping will be provided at Magnolia Speech School as needed for children who transfer audiological care from their cochlear implant center.

Association Method Instruction for Language Disorders

Children with language disorders at Magnolia Speech School have varied diagnoses and etiologies; however, all our students need intensive oral language and speech instruction because neurologically based disorders prevent language acquisition from occurring easily and naturally. Teachers who are certified in speech/language and/or special education provide intensive daily instruction to no more than eight children in a classroom. Each student is allowed to learn and progress at his or her own rate. Occupational therapy plays a key role in classroom consultation at Magnolia Speech School. Every student participates in music classes and physical education. Audiological services, occupational therapy, and additional speech therapy are provided to the students according to their needs and availability.

Core instruction for children with language disorders at Magnolia Speech School is based on the Association Method for teaching oral language. This methodology was devised by Mildred McGinnis and has been proven successful in treating children with severe receptive and expressive language deficits, reading disorders, dyslexia, and hearing impairment. The instruction is multi-sensory, incremental, and phonetically based. The classrooms for language-

disordered children at Magnolia Speech School are highly structured and incorporate repetitive drills to build core skills in attention, retention, and recall. These skills are essential for language acquisition. Each student in this department has a Service Plan that outlines goals in thirteen varied curricula areas (including language, speech, academics, motor, social interaction, auditory processing, and the Association Method). This population “learns how to learn with language” at Magnolia Speech School until they can speak clearly and effectively and, ultimately, transition into more typical settings where they will successfully compete in academics.

The Magnolia Speech School Curriculum

The Magnolia Speech School curriculum will be used in all classrooms. This in-house criterion- based document includes skills in thirteen areas: audition, receptive language, expressive language, speech, reading, math, social studies, science, Association Method, fine motor, gross motor, social interaction, and auditory processing. Teachers and support staff will write annual Service Plans and weekly lesson plans based on the skills, criteria, and activities contained in this curriculum. The curriculum is subject to ongoing revision by committees comprised of professional staff.

Annual Assessment Plan

Each student is assessed when they are enrolled, and baseline performance information is recorded. Progress is assessed and tracked at Magnolia Speech School using the following methods:

1. **Criterion referenced evaluations** which are based on the skills and criteria outlined in the Magnolia Speech School curriculum. The skills are reflected in the student’s Service Plan goals and are assessed weekly by the classroom teacher. The results of this assessment are reported every quarter on Magnolia Speech School progress reports and are provided to parents, sponsoring school districts, and are included in the child’s hard file.
2. **Language samples** are regularly recorded at Magnolia Speech School and are used to analyze specific grammatical markers and language goals. Language samples from HI classrooms are analyzed using the CASLLS.
3. **Annual formal assessment** of every Magnolia Speech School student. Standardized tests are used in areas of speech, language, listening, academics, and development to track and record progress. The resulting assessment information for each student is placed in the school office in a secure hard file.

Data Collection and Management

Copies of each student’s personal identifying information, Service Plans, test results, and other pertinent educational information are kept in a hard file in locked, fireproof cabinets in the school office.

Financial Support and Funding

Magnolia Speech School is a non-public, non-profit school for children with significant communicative disorders. Significantly reduced fees are assessed for tuition and clinical services. Tuition is charged for classroom enrollment. While some school districts contract to send their students to Magnolia Speech School, most children are granted financial assistance using donated funds. These funds are provided through United Way, civic clubs, churches, various foundations and grants, corporate gifts, and individual donors. The development office conducts fundraising events and directs ongoing annual and/or capital campaigns to secure funds. The Magnolia Speech School Parent Teacher Organization also provides ongoing financial support.

Members of the Tri-County area (Hinds, Madison, Rankin) communities and many others throughout the State of Mississippi have supported the work of Magnolia Speech School since its founding in 1956. Their financial support and volunteer efforts have enabled Magnolia Speech School’s staff to offer life-changing services to children with severe communication disorders. It is because of the generosity and compassion of so many that children have learned and are learning to speak for themselves at Magnolia Speech School.

Magnolia Speech School receives generous financial gifts from dedicated enterprises and organizations. Parents wishing to discuss fundraising ideas should approach the Director of Communication and Donor Engagement or the Director of Institutional Advancement.

Parent Partnering and Communication

Parents of Magnolia Speech School's students are considered Magnolia Speech School's partners. Open, honest communication is necessary between home and school for the child to succeed. Daily notes are often sent between parents and staff for the purposes of reporting and discussing the child's needs, program, and progress. If a family is bilingual, the school will use volunteers or appropriate services to interpret as needed. Every family is encouraged to make regular observations at the school, and **every parent is required to meet face-to-face with their child's teacher monthly**. Clinical/support staff are also encouraged to participate in these meetings. Both supervisors and administrators at Magnolia Speech School have open-door policies for families. Annual Service Plan meetings and other parent/staff meetings are held annually or throughout the year as needed.

General Schedule

The academic school year begins in August and continues through May. This term is followed by an extended school year session that concludes at the end of June. There is no school in July.

Before-School Care is available in the cafeteria for students who arrive at school between 7:00 am and 8:00 am. The cost of this care is \$30 per week, and the "drop-in" fee is \$10 per day. Beginning at 8:00 am, students go to their respective classrooms.

Students arriving after 8:30 am will be considered tardy.

Lunch period is from 11:00 am until 12:30 pm with classes rotating through the lunchroom in 30-minute intervals. Following the lunch period, students will either rest or have playtime, depending on their age. Students participate in free play, organized games, or sports during morning and afternoon breaks. They are grouped by age and size on appropriate playgrounds, weather permitting. Students should be dressed appropriately for outdoor play. If the weather does not allow for outdoor play, students will play in the gym.

School dismissal begins at 2:50 pm. After-School Care is available from 3:15 pm until 5:30 pm on days when school is in session. If a student has not been picked up by 3:15, he/she will be sent to after-school care for \$65.00 per week. The "Drop In" fee for the afternoon is \$20.00 per day.

Students receiving individual listening therapy, dyslexia therapy, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and/or behavior therapy will receive these services at various times throughout the day. All students participate in music therapy, physical education instruction, library time, and the computer lab throughout the week.

Student Information

Attendance

School attendance guidelines are set forth by the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law.

School hours are 8:00 am – 2:50 pm, Monday through Friday, August through June. Teachers and assistants arrive by 7:45 am to organize the day. Students may enter the classrooms between 8:00 am and 8:30 am.

School attendance and promptness are extremely important. Parents should call the school office to report any tardiness or absence. Should a student arrive after 8:30 am, the parent will be asked to sign their child in and wait in the lobby with their child until the teacher or the teacher's assistant comes to escort the student to the classroom. Check-outs are not permitted after 2:30 pm. Parents should make the teacher aware of any planned early dismissals or expected absences beforehand. This allows teachers to plan student work and assignments accordingly. When students are picked up early, parents will wait in the lobby, and the students will be escorted to their parents.

Parent Participation

Nothing is more important to a student's success than parental involvement. As a condition of enrollment at Magnolia Speech School, parents must agree to work with their child on completion of daily homework on a consistent basis at home, attend the Service Plan meetings, and meet monthly with their child's teacher. All parents are encouraged to observe their child in the classroom, participate in PTO, and have regular individual meetings with their child's teacher and/or therapists. Parents are asked to schedule observations ahead of time with the office manager or director of instruction and special programs. When observing, stop in the school lobby prior and sign in. Observations are limited to one-hour sessions. Staff and parent communication is crucial. A parent wishing to contact a Magnolia Speech School staff member during school hours may call the school office to request a meeting or send an email.

Fees

All fees are the responsibility of the parent(s) and must be paid in full by the 20th of each month, with automatic draft being the preferred method of payment. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the office manager of informational changes related to billing, such as address changes or changes to automatic bank drafts.

If monthly tuition is not paid by the 20th of each month, a late fee of \$25.00 will be added to the amount due. Tuition payments or other fees that are paid to the school by check and returned by the bank, for any reason, will be charged a \$25.00 return check fee.

Tuition not paid by the end of the month will result in a warning from the school administration. If tuition is still delinquent after two months, the child will be suspended until the account can be brought current.

Morning and After-School Care

Morning Care and After-School Care is offered to busy parents as a convenience on days when school is in session.

Morning Care is available 7:00 am - 8:00 am. A fee of \$30 per week is charged for morning care. The "drop-in" fee is \$10 per day.

The After-School care program is available from 3:15 pm – 5:30 pm. Students participate in free outdoor play on the playground or indoor play in the gym on inclement weather days, snack time, homework time, and structured play (table toys, puzzles, etc.) A fee of \$65 per week is charged for After-School care. The "drop-in" fee for After-Care is \$20 per day.

Fees for Morning Care and/or After-School Care will be added to monthly statements.

It is not necessary for students to bring toys, blankets, or other personal items to daycare. The school provides toys and activities for the students.

Lunches/Dietary Restrictions

Parents are to provide daily lunches for their child. Please send juice, milk, or water (no soda). Please make sure your child's teacher and the office manager are aware of any dietary restrictions. Magnolia Speech School staff will make every necessary accommodation.

Most classrooms have a snack each day. These are generally supplied by the teacher or parent. If a child has a limited or restricted diet (i.e., Gluten-free, dairy-free), that child's parents must provide their teacher with snacks that are suitable for their child to eat. For convenience, these snacks can be sent to school on a daily, weekly, or bi-weekly basis.

Attire

Parents should ensure that their child is dressed appropriately each day based on the season. Footwear should be comfortable and suitable for outdoor play and physical education (sneakers, well-fitting sandals, etc.). Flip-flops are not allowed. Slide-on shoes may interfere with daily activities and are discouraged for everyday wear.

Classroom Observation

Any parent wishing to observe their child's class in progress should schedule an observation session with the office manager or director of instruction and special programs. Sign in at the reception desk upon arrival. Teachers will be informed of the parent's visit in advance so that they can plan a meaningful session that focuses on the child. Observation sessions are restricted to one hour or less. Guided observation with a staff member present will help observers better understand the classroom activity. Parents opting for a guided observation session should schedule in advance with the teacher and/or supervisor.

Transportation

Parents are required to submit a written list of people who are authorized to pick up their child from school. No child will be released to someone who is not included on their list of approved drivers. If it becomes necessary for someone other than the people included on the list to pick up a child, written notification from the parent must be sent to the school with the student authorizing staff to release the child to that person. Parents may also email authorization to beverly.cunningham@magnoliaspeechschool.org or your child's teacher.

Morning carpool is 8:00 am – 8:30 am. For safety reasons, parents are asked not to park and enter the school with their child during this time. Staff will be available to help the child exit the car and proceed to their classroom.

The afternoon carpool is 2:50 pm – 3:15 pm. Each student is assigned a carpool number. Parents are asked to display this number so it can be easily seen by staff. For safety reasons, parents are asked not to park and enter the school to pick up their child during this time. Staff will be available to assist the child in entering the car.

Drivers should not block or impede the flow of traffic during carpool, nor should they exit their car during carpool drop-off or pick-up. Staff will not place a child in a car without a car seat. For safety reasons, drivers may not use cell phones during carpool time.

During the first few days of the new school year, staff will be waiting to assist parents in helping their children reach their classrooms. Ultimately, it is the goal of Magnolia Speech School that each student goes to their classroom independently. Parents will not be allowed to escort their children to class after the first week of school.

Parent and Teacher Meetings

At least one parent is expected to attend the “Back to School” meeting in August.

Parents will receive progress reports every quarter (October, December, March, and May). Each student will have an annual formal comprehensive evaluation performed after which a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the scores with parents. Informal assessment (including language sampling and analysis) is ongoing. Mandatory individual parent and teacher conferences will be held monthly to discuss progress, special needs, or problems.

Teachers are available for conferences daily from 7:45 am – 8:30 am and during lunch breaks. They are also available Monday - Thursday from 2:45 pm– 3:30 pm. Appointments may be made by contacting the teacher directly. Conferences should be scheduled in advance to allow the teacher appropriate planning.

Should parents have any questions or concerns regarding their child’s therapy or hearing, they may schedule a conference by contacting the audiologist or therapist directly.

Any written communication to parents from Magnolia Speech School staff will be sent by mail, email, or as a note sent home with the student. Parents should not text a teacher after school hours unless teachers allow it to. In case of an emergency, please call the school office.

Student Records

Careful records are kept by Magnolia Speech School on each student’s progress. All these files are confidential and available only to school staff who are directly involved with that student’s education. Magnolia Speech School occasionally hosts university students who work with our students to receive practicum experience. While they do have access to certain student records, these students are bound by the same privacy laws as Magnolia Speech School staff. The confidentiality guidelines and policies set forth by the Mississippi State Department of Education are strictly followed and enforced by Magnolia Speech School. No student records are released without proper written parental consent. When a student leaves Magnolia Speech School, the student’s account must be paid in full to transfer or release student records.

Health

All children enrolled at Magnolia Speech School must submit a Certificate of Compliance from the Mississippi State Department of Health or from their physician indicating that all required immunizations are current. A student will not be allowed to attend school if proof of current immunizations is not provided. If a student’s immunizations are not kept current, Magnolia Speech School will suspend the student until they are brought current. If there is a reason why a student cannot receive immunizations, parents must have a Mississippi State Department of Health Medical Exemption Request (Form 139-M or Form 139-R) completed and signed by their child’s physician and turned into the school office.

Students may not attend school if they have any signs or symptoms of illness such as fever greater than 100.4°, vomiting, diarrhea, severe congestion/coughing, sore throat, etc. Should a child become sick while at school, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child within an hour. Students must be free of fever, diarrhea, or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents are asked to contact the school immediately if their child is diagnosed with a contagious condition such as “pink eye”, impetigo, head lice, influenza, COVID, etc. When a student has been absent more than 2 consecutive days, a doctor’s release will be required before the student is allowed to return to school.

For a student to receive any type of medication (prescription or over-the-counter), parents must complete an Authorization to Dispense Medication Form detailing the name of the medication, dosage, and times to be given. No medications will be dispensed without parental permission. A separate form must be completed for each medication to be given. Prescription medications must be brought to the school office in the original bottle with the pharmacy label.

The Magnolia Speech School building as well as its entire campus (including the parking lot) is smoke-free. Anyone who is found smoking on the school grounds will be asked to leave.

Supplies

Students will receive a school supply list that is specific to their classroom before the school year. The supplies may be brought to school on Meet and Greet day or on the first day of school. Personal items such as coats, book bags, lunch boxes, etc., should be labeled with the child's name clearly visible.

Regardless of the student's age, all parents are asked to provide a change of clothing for their child that can be left at school. The change of clothes should be placed in a bag that is clearly labeled with the child's name.

If a child is in diapers or pull-ups, parents should bring a minimum of a week's supply at a time to be kept in the child's cubby. Parents should also provide wet wipes.

If a child wears hearing aids, parents must supply spare batteries to be kept on hand by their child's teacher. Teachers check hearing aids twice daily and need to have fresh batteries available in case of failure. A working hearing aid is essential for the student's class participation and involvement. Parents should strive to always keep the aid in good working order.

If a child has a cochlear implant, it must be maintained. Parents must provide their child's teacher with the following:

1. a set of replacement batteries
2. an extra set of cords

These are crucial to the students' ability to participate in the classroom. All students who have implants and/or hearing aids are expected to wear them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with the only exceptions being while bathing and sleeping. If a child arrives at school without the device, the parent will be contacted and asked to bring it to school immediately.

Parties

Parents wishing to have a birthday party for their child during school hours should plan with their child's teacher at least one week ahead of the requested date. Teachers will need to make sure the lunchroom is available on the desired day and time. Reserving the lunchroom for this purpose will be done on a first come/first serve basis. Teachers may also elect to hold parties in the classroom or in the little kitchen.

Special parties will be held at the school on the following occasions: Fall Festival, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and on the last day of school. Parents may volunteer or may be asked to help prepare for these and other celebrations throughout the school year.

Field Trips

Magnolia Speech School students may participate in field trips each semester. Field trips enhance language and learning experiences and are designed to be both fun and educational. Teachers will send home trip information and permission forms in advance. Signed permission slips (and money, if required) must be handed in to the teacher prior to the trip. Students without a signed permission slip will not be allowed to participate. While parents are welcome to accompany their child, siblings are not permitted on class outings. If a parent agrees in advance to help chaperone a trip but becomes unable to do so, they should inform the teacher of this at least three days prior to the trip so that the teacher can make other chaperone arrangements.

PTO

The Parent-Teacher Organization provides amazing support and resources to the students, staff, teachers, and parents of Magnolia Speech School. Parents are encouraged to join and participate in PTO meetings and fundraising activities. Participating in the PTO is also a great opportunity for parents to get to know one another and work together to help support and expand programs and activities at Magnolia Speech School.

Off-Campus Informational Presentations

Magnolia Speech School administrative staff will sometimes make informal presentations at civic clubs, United Way functions, churches, etc. as part of an effort to raise awareness about Magnolia Speech School. A teacher and a student frequently participate in these presentations as representatives of the school. A request may be made to parents for this purpose. Parental permission will be required in writing before a student is allowed to participate. Details regarding where and when the meeting will be held, and which staff member(s) will accompany the student, will be provided. Magnolia Speech School students have always enjoyed these outings and are proud to represent their school in this way.

Professional Development

According to the guidelines set forth by the Mississippi State Department of Education, each school is required to provide professional development opportunities for its certified staff to maintain accreditation. All certified staff are required to obtain a specific number of Continuing Education Units to maintain licensure from the Mississippi State Department of Education and/or the Mississippi State Department of Health. Professional Development days are indicated on the Academic Year Calendar, which is provided to parents at the beginning of the school year.

Discipline

The basis of Magnolia Speech School's student discipline policy is the belief that a positive approach creates the optimum environment in which children learn. It is mandated that each child be treated with respect. A reward system is used to encourage good behavior.

Removal of privileges or "time out" may be used to discourage unacceptable behavior. Certain behavioral incidents require written notification to parents. If the teacher and administration conclude that a formal behavioral intervention is necessary, parents will receive a written, detailed description of the plan that will require their signature before implementation.

It is the policy of Magnolia Speech School, set forth by its Board of Directors, that no form of corporal punishment, manhandling, or verbal abuse of a student will be tolerated under any circumstances.

Suspension/Expulsion

Termination of services may occur if parents are uncooperative or do not work with staff to meet the Service Plan goals that have been mutually agreed upon. Services might also be terminated if teachers and staff feel it is in the best interest of the student to transfer to another program. At Magnolia Speech School, there is zero tolerance for aggressive acts and/or threats, whether it is to students or employees. Such behavior will result in expulsion from the school grounds.

Parent Complaint

If a parent wishes to file an official complaint regarding a staff member, the following will take place:

- The individual filing the complaint will be asked to make a written report detailing the nature of the offense.
- The school administration will meet with the employee in question to review and discuss the complaint. Details of the meeting will be recorded including what, if any, disciplinary actions were imposed. All records regarding the event will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

- The Personnel Committee of the Magnolia Speech School Board of Directors will be advised of the complaint and of the results of the employee meeting.

Student Harassment or Abuse

Sometimes the nature of the communicative disability of students served at Magnolia Speech School interferes with their ability to protect themselves from inappropriate sexual advances and the ability to report such conduct. At all times the staff of Magnolia Speech School is cognizant of the safety and well-being of all students. Students are constantly in the presence of at least one staff member.

Safeguards against allegations of sexual misconduct with students will be provided in the following ways:

- Self-help skill deficits (e.g., dressing, toileting) will be identified by staff and parents, and permission to teach such skills at the school will be obtained in writing from the parents.
- Parents will be notified that staff members of the opposite sex may be assisting their child in the bathroom when necessary and teaching various self- help skills to their child.

Complaint Procedure for Student Harassment or Misconduct

An individual who believes he/she has witnessed harassment or misconduct by a student should report the incident immediately to the executive director so that a prompt investigation into the matter may be conducted. Once reported, interviews will be conducted with all parties involved in the alleged incident. If it is determined that misconduct did occur, the student's parents will be notified. A report will be written documenting the incident and filed in the student's school record.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

In accordance with MS Code 43-21-353, any school employee having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child, shall immediately report their suspicions to the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Emergency Information

Parents are asked to provide emergency contact information at the beginning of each school year. It is the responsibility of the parents to notify the school immediately should any of this contact information change. Parents are also asked to provide students with medical information such as allergies, current medications, dietary and/or activity restrictions and any other medical information parents feel is pertinent for the care of the student. School staff should be notified of any changes to this information.

In the event of severe weather, parents should monitor local media reports for announcements concerning Magnolia Speech School. Parents will receive messages via "Notify My School" regarding school closings, etc. The school will conduct preparedness drills for fire, severe weather, and school-wide emergency situations.

Magnolia Speech School conducts background checks for all employees. The school is fenced and gated.

Staff and Teachers 2026-2027

Administrative Staff	
Angy Graham <i>Executive Director</i>	Joshua Friedel <i>Director of Institutional Advancement</i>
Nancy Davis <i>Director of Instruction and Special Programs</i>	Katy Agnew <i>Director of Communication and Donor Engagement</i>
Melissa Newman <i>Admissions Coordinator</i>	Betty Murphy <i>Development Support Specialist & Computer Teacher</i>
Beverly Cunningham <i>Office Manager</i>	Angie Tuner <i>Comptroller</i>
Gennifer McCrory <i>Support Specialist</i>	

Teachers	
Mary Alford	Ami Hall
Andrea Barksdale	Cappi Quave
Christa Bryant	Bree Smith
Brianna Butler	Courtnei Thomas
Donna Jo Culpepper	Morgan Vann
Alisa Finch	Baily Wood

Teacher Assistants	
Olivia Cole	Tyrinda McDougale
Karen Colvin	Holly Morris
Emily Holland	Trevor Robinson
Bobbie Jimenez	Mary Rodgers
Darla Kemmerer	Macey Thornton
Victoria Malone	Elisa Ward

Clinic Staff	
Gina Russell <i>Audiologist</i>	PT provided by Smart Therapy <i>Physical Therapy</i>
Kelanie Farmer <i>Dyslexia Therapy</i>	Shane McArthur <i>Psychometrist</i>
Cecil Patton <i>Dyslexia Therapy</i>	Kristen Dickey <i>Speech/Language Pathologist</i>
OT provided by Smart Therapy <i>Occupational Therapy</i>	ST provided by Smart Therapy <i>Speech Therapy</i>

Support Staff	
Jennifer Rittenhouse <i>Music Therapist</i>	Velma Fowler <i>Library & Morning Care</i>
London Lofton <i>Physical Education Teacher</i>	Betty Murphy, Coordinator Darla Kemmerer, Assistant <i>After Care</i>

Early Interventionist
Molly Eastland <i>Coordinator</i>



2026-2027 MSS Classroom Procedures and Policies Handbook for Students and Their Families

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form

Student Name (PRINT): _____

Classroom/Teacher (PRINT): _____

Acknowledgment Statement:

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the **Magnolia Speech School 2026–2027 Classroom Procedures and Policies Handbook for Students and Their Families**. I recognize that this handbook contains important information regarding school policies, procedures, and expectations.

I agree to support the implementation of these policies and to partner with Magnolia Speech School in promoting a positive, safe, and productive learning environment for my child.

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email Address: _____

Please return this signed form to your child’s teacher by **August 22, 2026**.

Thank you for your partnership and support!