



# *Family Handbook*

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## Introduction

Montessori philosophy states a child has an innate desire to learn and produce purposeful, meaningful work. Dr. Maria Montessori believed the role of an adult in a child's education is to provide an appropriate environment to facilitate the child's discovery of knowledge and skills.

Montessori education emphasizes self-motivation. The classroom is a carefully prepared environment which promotes individual instruction and self-paced learning. Teaching techniques and materials are designed to maximize children's learning experiences in the classroom. Teachers model for students how to appreciate and create order, and to discover concepts through the carefully demonstrated lessons which can then be practiced at will.

Dr. Montessori believed a child's spirit should be nurtured by addressing individual needs, celebrating differences, and developing their problem-solving skills through modeling and teaching. Opportunities are provided for quiet individual work, as well as cooperative activities. The child's independence is promoted, allowing the child to be responsible and accountable for their choices. Community is fostered through the sharing of responsibility and collaboration in the caring of their environment and all that it contains.

The Montessori Method of education has been successful for students with diverse abilities and age ranges for over 110 years. California Montessori Project (CMP) has provided this teaching methodology to our students since 2001.

# Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Core Beliefs

## Mission

The Mission of the California Montessori Project is to provide a Quality, Tuition-Free, Montessori Education that challenges our students to reach their full potential.

This mission is achieved through the dedication and commitment of the CMP Learning Community: parents, teachers, community groups, the legislature, CMP Governing Board, Campus Advisory Committees (CAC), and, most importantly, the individual child.

## Vision

The Vision of California Montessori Project is to provide a Montessori education that supports the intellectual, social and emotional development of every child.

This will be achieved by:

- Promoting independence
- teaching respect for one's self and others
- building confidence
- creating a sense of social responsibility, and
- empowering every student to be a global citizen

## Core Values

The Core Values of the California Montessori Project are to offer a Kindergarten through Middle School program which has the environment, materials, curriculum, resources and support to enable students to become educated to high academic standards and to develop themselves to their full potential as competent, happy, productive individuals who contribute to a better society and a peaceful world.

The California Montessori Project provides a Montessori curriculum, integrated with the California Common Core State Standards, for students ranging from Kindergarten through eighth grade. ***The California Montessori Project is committed to serving the best interest of the student.*** Parental participation is encouraged and highly valued in terms of the contribution it makes to the child's education and the school community.

High academic standards and expectations of achievement, with emphasis on core subjects, are maintained through adherence to these values:

- Education of the whole child
- Creative, passionate, progressive teachers (California State Credentialed and Montessori-certified) who are committed to Montessori philosophy
- Responsibility, accountability, and freedom for individual student progress within the academic framework
- Development of critical reasoning skills, the encouragement of creativity, and service learning

- High, unwavering standards of conduct, emphasizing respect for self and others, honesty, responsibility, and courtesy
- Collaboration, peer accountability and goal-setting according to developmental readiness
- Parent involvement in their child’s education and collaboration through governance, parent and campus meetings
- Low student/teacher ratios
- Incorporating technological trends
- Common Core State Standards aligned with Montessori curriculum

### **Fundamental Values**

- Comprehensive academic/social skills development using Montessori-based curriculum
- High academic standards and expectations, with emphasis on core subjects
- Quality Montessori learning materials for all students
- Participation in state-authorized Teacher-Training Program
- Responsibility, accountability, and freedom for individual student progress
- School-wide technology-based foreign language program

### **Core Beliefs**

Dr. Maria Montessori’s fundamental goal was to prepare the child for the “real world” and to recognize each student as an individual with unique personal, social, emotional, and educational needs. As we acknowledge the individual nature of each student and staff member, consistency is achieved when social, academic and professional decisions are addressed through a set of values and principles identified by CMP.

The following list of core beliefs outlines the professional attitudes and actions of CMP staff members:

- Our actions and words should always maintain the dignity and respect of both child and adult
- Adults will model appropriate and respectful behavior for students
- Students are allowed opportunities to be accountable for their decisions, as these provide valuable learning experiences and preparation for the real world
- Emphasis will be focused on maintaining safety, helping to nurture the campus climate and culture, and to establish boundaries for behavior
- School problems will be handled by school personnel. Criminal activity will be referred to the proper authorities.



## **ABC (Acceptance, Belonging, Caring) Statement**

*“We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are a part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.”*

— Maria Montessori

***CMP commits*** to cultivate, welcome, and celebrate diversity in order to fulfill our mission, affirm the principles of Montessori education, and carry out a responsible role in our community.

***CMP endeavors*** to honor the qualities that make us similar to each other and those that make us different, co-creating a space that values and respects the race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity, size, sexual orientation, relationship status or choice, and different levels of ability, exceptionalities, and neurodiversity of all students, families, and employees.

***CMP promises*** to encourage everyone to choose respect over hate, embrace diversity, act with empathy and remind our community that being a global citizen comes with responsibility.

***CMP works*** to promote a sense of appreciation, belonging and care for every learner, family, educator and employee. CMP will do this by:

- Recruiting and retaining a diverse student body.
- Hiring and retaining diverse staff.
- Exposing students to a well-rounded curriculum to prepare students to be global citizens.
- Empowering our students to become changemakers.
- Creating safe, and brave, spaces for all members of our community.
- Fostering learning environments that are accepting to everyone and represent everyone.
- Teaching and modeling to students how to show empathy, kindness, and gratitude to others.
- Creating a community that recognizes how we are alike and celebrates our differences.
- Creating safe, shame-free spaces for all members of our community where students and staff are supported in having crucial conversations centering around diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Treating every person with dignity, always seeking to understand and support, while also upholding these commitments.

***CMP understands*** this effort is constantly evolving, and the achievement of such principles grows from the work of educating ourselves and each other as we address our biases and revisit program curriculums, classroom practices, and school policies. The empowerment of the members of our community will bring confidence and compassion for understanding, our community will be able to communicate with a more inclusive language, challenge discrimination and stereotypes, and provide guidance.

## Academic Program and Overview

### Who was Maria Montessori?



Maria Montessori was a physician, research scientist, and educator from Italy in the late 1800's – early 1900's. The Montessori Philosophy of Education is based on her observations that children have a natural desire to learn. She identified specific stages of development when children are more sensitive to learning particular concepts. Trained adults prepare the environment and materials where children can learn independently. The teacher guides and serves as the link between the children and the materials which is achieved through observation and assessment. This enriched learning environment cultivates individuals who learn to make independent decisions and to solve problems creatively.

### The Montessori Approach to Education

Montessori education provides children with a lifetime gift – the opportunity to develop their innate intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential. CMP encourages parents to be an integral part of their child's education by learning about the Montessori philosophy, observing in the classrooms, and volunteering in the school.

Dr. Montessori designed purposeful learning environments and created materials to support and enhance a child's innate desire to learn. Montessori materials offer learning experiences in a clear, concrete manner and allow for the smooth transition to the abstract concept. Students are able to use multi-sensory learning modalities to master concepts: visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic. There is an emphasis on the sequential and orderly acquisition of both motor and cognitive skills. This approach allows for the development of the child's independence as they work and learn at their own pace. Over the years, the curriculum and materials have evolved to further challenge students and to educate children at higher-grade levels.

Multi-age classrooms mirror family dynamics and benefit both older and younger students. The older student gains confidence by working with and role-modeling for younger students, which provides for leadership opportunities. The younger student is exposed to higher concepts and a rich academic and language-filled environment. These interactions aid the development of responsibility, collaboration and cooperation. In a multi-age environment, children learn to appreciate the perspectives of others.

A well-prepared Montessori learning environment is given careful attention. This allows and encourages the child's accessibility to all materials. Through this framework of organization, the student is able to concentrate on work allowing an increase in independence and responsibility.

CMP offers these prepared classrooms in a variety of age/grade combinations. In the early grades, students receive the foundation of the Montessori curriculum by learning and practicing the cornerstone concepts of:

- Care of Self,
- Care of Environment,
- Control of Movement,
- Grace and Courtesy

### **Areas of the Classroom**

Areas of the classroom are arranged by subject matter. Each classroom contains materials which teach specific concepts for the particular age range. The materials are arranged in a logical sequence for skill acquisition and concept building while reinforcing the development of abstract thinking.

Through observation and standardized assessments, the teacher determines the needs and levels of each student and guides them on their path of individual learning. As needed, teachers can make adjustments in individual student learning plans, both academically and behaviorally. All students work at their individual pace and must demonstrate mastery of the concept before moving on.

### **Planes of Development**

Montessori focuses on the continuation of the student's education by introducing materials and concepts at varying levels, depending on the student's ability level and plane of development. The same Montessori material may be used at each grade level, but for a more complex concept. Students work on more advanced concepts first through the use of the concrete materials. The goal is always to bring the student from the concrete to the abstract.

During the First Plane of Development (birth - six years of life), children absorb the world around them through their senses, and the mastery of concrete experiences takes place, and in the Second Plane of Development (six - twelve years), students begin building abstractly on these early concrete experiences. The Third Plane of Development (12 - 18) is the time of adolescence and a period of reflection. The students develop their interpretive mind, social independence, and sense of justice.

These distinct planes consist of developmental characteristics and should be considered in formulating a plan for the child's education. These varying characteristics may be considered from four distinct aspects: Intellectual, Social, Emotional, and Moral.

**Intellectual:** Dr. Montessori identified two sensitive intellectual periods during the second and third planes: imagination and the understanding of the abstract. Imagination is the great power of this age.

Between the ages 6 to 12, the student's need to assimilate concepts using the concrete Montessori materials, is still prevalent. However, the elementary aged child develops the ability to move more quickly from the concrete into abstraction of a concept, after repeated opportunity.

Between the ages of 6 to 18 is the period of life during which the elements of all science should be given. This time frame could be called the “sensitive period of culture.” In the early years of life, the child takes in their immediate environment. After the age of six, the child becomes involved in the greater community, growing into global awareness. In Montessori education, the child is able to do this through the Montessori “Cosmic Education”.

The starting point of Cosmic Education is to introduce a vision of the world as a whole. To offer culture in terms of a cosmic vision means to show the intimate and interrelated relationship between things, living nature, and humankind. It also means the ability to understand the cosmic task of each element and of each force in the cosmos, including our human society and each of us as individual members of society.

**Social:** In the second and third planes, the group beyond the family, the peer group, now attracts the child. Children begin to form a society of their own peers and resist adult control. The basic moral principle in operation during these periods requires a commitment from the individual: the commitment of the individual to the peer group.

**Emotional:** The child aged 6 to 16 is generally less accommodating to adults. Dr. Montessori explained this developmental change in terms of Nature’s logic, whose aim is to arouse in the child, not only a hunger for knowledge and understanding, but also a claim to mental independence, a desire to distinguish good and evil by one’s own power, and to resist limitation by arbitrary authority.

**Moral:** During the second and third planes, a sensitive period of morality comes to the forefront. A concept of justice is born at this age, together with a growing understanding of the relationship between our acts and the needs of others. Children at these ages will react strongly against anything they regard as unjust or unfair.

According to Dr. Montessori, nature has equipped the children in this plane of development with the qualities of loyalty, generosity, a sense of responsibility, a strong sense of justice, admiration for what is outstanding and progressive, and distaste for trivialities. The children of this age want to become self-sufficient, prove their new independence, and help others.

One of Montessori’s basic principles is the adult should understand the natural tendencies driving the child at each plane of development and cooperate with those tendencies, rather than go against nature.

### **Basic Academic Areas of CMP’s Montessori Educational Program**

Montessori education offers a wide variety of academic study which supports the development of the whole child. One of the components of the Montessori approach is to provide daily, uninterrupted work time for the students to allow for a deep level of concentration.

At CMP, breaking the academic day into two distinct parts provides these periods of work time: core academics (language arts, math, and geometry) are most often presented in the morning, and cultural subjects, such as history, geography, and science are usually presented in the afternoon. Practical Life lessons are practiced daily (care of self, care of environment, control of movement, grace and courtesy), and subjects traditionally referred to as cultural in nature (fine art, performing art, world languages, etc.) are interwoven throughout the week.

## **Core Subjects**

English Language Arts are essential for all areas of learning. Children learn phonetically through the use of tactile materials such as sandpaper letters, through auditory repetition, and visual identification. They then progress into reading and working independently with various materials. Reading and language are integral parts of all lessons.

Writing is integrated in academic experiences across all planes of development. Handwriting, printing, and cursive are developed as the child is ready.

Math (number recognition, counting, addition and subtraction) are stressed as the prerequisite for accomplishing the more-advanced math that follows: fractions, long multiplication and division, powers of numbers, systems of numeration, squaring, and cubing.

Geometry is studied as it assists in the development of a creative capacity in the child. This progression flows naturally from the 3-6-year-old experience with sensorial materials.

## **Cultural Subjects**

Subjects such as history, geography, and science are referred to as cultural lessons and are studied as interrelated aspects of the same world.

History begins with the concept of time and evolves each year through a study of the Fundamental Needs of Humans, the Timeline of Life, and Stages in the Progress of Civilization. Upper levels focus on Ancient Civilizations, California, US, and World History.

Geography continues from the preschool period with completed work in maps. Successive work includes a study of landforms and their classified nomenclature in conjunction with the study of the earth as our home.

Science encompasses units of study in areas such as Biology, Astronomy, and Chemistry in the later grades, and is presented in a way which allows the student to explore and observe the world. Biology is initially presented to younger students through dual studies divided between Botany and Zoology; beginning with Botanical and Zoological Classified Nomenclature. These units of study continue with experiments on vital functions of the plant kingdom and a comparative study of the vital functions of the different phyla and classes of the animal kingdom, progressing into a study of human functions and structure, and culminating in the later years with family life studies and family life education. Upper levels focus on Earth, Physical, and Life Sciences.

## **Research and Projects**

Within the Montessori curriculum, opportunities for study and projects on various levels of thinking are essential. Critical and creative-thinking skills are an integral link to the philosophy and curriculum. Furthering a child's study and understanding of concepts is accomplished by applying their learning in research projects and presentations.

## **Physical Education**

CMP provides Physical Education through all grade levels.

## **Technology**

CMP offers an on-line supplemental program appropriate to all program levels and is threaded throughout all curricular areas.

## **Homework**

CMP acknowledges that homework is a valuable way to extend the classroom lessons, giving students more time to practice and review concepts they are learning. Homework benefits the student by developing good study skills, discipline, and responsibility. It also provides parents the opportunity to be involved in and stay current with their child's education.

Homework assignments may consist of weekly math computations, spelling practice, reading, research projects, and practical life assignments. Homework relates to classroom instruction, reinforces and extends learning, promotes immediate recall of basic skills, and matches the student's needs and academic level. CMP teachers have developed their own homework practices, which are shared with parents at the beginning of each school year.

When there is no assigned homework, students are encouraged to read.

## **Plagiarism and Cheating**

CMP stresses character development through monthly assemblies and classroom discussions. Honesty is one of the values that is emphasized. Plagiarism and cheating, as forms of dishonesty, are explained to students starting in the lower elementary grades.

“Plagiarism is defined as: taking someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own; as well as a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work” ([www.freedictionarydefinitions.com](http://www.freedictionarydefinitions.com)).

Consequences for acts of plagiarism and/or cheating are based on a student's grade level and their ability to understand. By the upper grades, students will be required to re-do the work, and will receive a reduced grade on the assignment.

## **CMP Climate and Culture**

CMP believes staff and families need to be committed to:

- Montessori methodology
- Making safety a priority
- Pro-active and positive affirmation
- Uniqueness of each child
- Respect for established classroom and campus expectations
- An atmosphere in which students feel safe to express their differing viewpoints
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- Working and collaborating as a team, trusting the process for the child's success
- Personal responsibility and accountability
- Clear and timely communication, assuming best intentions
- Respect for self and others

### **CMP's Expected Student Learner Outcomes (ESLOs)**

- Students make safe, respectful, and responsible choices for themselves and empower others to do so, as well.
- Students are Montessori learners who work independently, demonstrate initiative, utilize the power of concentration, and think critically.
- Students are ambassadors of grace and courtesy who celebrate the diversity in our global community.
- Students are agents of change who have a strong sense of community, are socially responsible, are connected to their environment, and are advocates for themselves and others.

## Normalization

Dr. Montessori used the terms “normal” and “normalization” to describe a unique process she observed in child development. When children are allowed freedom in an environment suited to their needs, they blossom. After a period of intense concentration, working with materials, which fully engage their interests, children appear to be refreshed and contented. Through continued concentrated work at their own academic level, children grow in inner discipline and peace. This progression of self-development and harmony is what Dr. Montessori referred to as the “normalization process”. Dr. Montessori cited “normalization” as “the single most important result of our work” (“The Absorbent Mind”, by Dr. Maria Montessori, 1949).

During the normalization process in a Montessori classroom, students form strong bonds and build their ‘community’. The characteristics of normalization include:

- Love of Work: refers to the ability to choose work freely and feel a sense of accomplishment
- Concentration: appears as individual children in a group becoming absorbed in their work through completion of an activity
- Self-discipline: refers to persevering and completing cycles of activity
- Sociability: refers to patience in getting the materials one needs, respect for the work of others, help and sympathy of others, and harmonious working relationships among member of the community

At the beginning of each school year, teachers and other staff members refer to the Period of Normalization. This process may take between six to ten weeks and is unique to each classroom. In order for this process to occur, it is important the classroom routine be maintained without interruption. Parents will be invited into the classroom once normalization has been determined.

## Code of Conduct for CMP Parents

In the spirit of Montessori, all members of the school community (staff, students, parents/guardians, and family members) will strive to exhibit grace and courtesy at all times. By exhibiting the qualities of respect, dignity, self-discipline, and cooperation, adults are the models of those values we wish to see in the children. See Appendix 1 for the complete *Code of Conduct for CMP Parents*.



# The Montessori Classroom Environment

## **Kindergarten Program: (culmination of ages 3 to 6)**

Kindergarten is the culmination of the early childhood program, which addresses the needs of the child during the first Plane of Development. Within the Kindergarten class, students transition from parallel play to an attitude of cooperative play. During this stage of development, children gravitate toward a desire to work with their peers. The Kindergarten classroom allows these concepts to develop naturally through the role modeling of the teachers, as well as the integration of age levels and interests.

In the Kindergarten environment, the students explore Montessori materials. In mathematics, the Golden Bead Material is used to introduce the decimal system and progresses into the four mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) in a concrete fashion. The Sensorial area concentrates more on geometry that eventually ties in with concepts in math. Language and reading materials guide the child toward recognition of the alphabet both by letter name and phonetically. “Sight words,” those words in the English language not phonetically pronounced, are introduced gradually.

Upon mastery of the above foundational tasks, pre-reading and reading skills are integrated with the use of small primer books designed to allow the child to read successfully at their own level. Writing extensions are now integrated to strengthen the interest in reading. Manuscript handwriting is incorporated in all areas of the classroom, both in prewriting or tracing activities, culminating in the creation of their own stories.

The Practical Life area of the classroom enables children to extend their concentration, coordination, and independence into a stronger sense of order for the future. In Kindergarten, the cultural lessons explore the areas of zoology, botany, geography, history, art and music. Within each area, specific units of study are presented. Physical Education is also explored within a group process, both indoors and out.

## **Lower Elementary Program: First through Third Grade Levels (ages 6 to 9)**

The California Montessori Project focuses on the aspects of the Cosmic Curriculum of the Montessori philosophy. Work continuously increases self-direction and independence of the lower elementary child. In achieving these goals, students gain a strong sense of self and develop self-responsibility. In order to provide an appropriate learning environment, the child must be encouraged and given opportunities for reflective thinking, problem solving, and critical evaluation. The Montessori environment provides opportunities for creative expression and critical thinking skills. Teaching strategies may vary to accommodate the needs of each individual student.

CMP integrates the expectations of the California Common Core State Standards for this age and developmental stage and has paid careful attention to aligning these state standards to the Montessori curriculum. Physical Education is based on California standards and occurs within the school week.

### **Upper Elementary Program: Fourth through Sixth Grade Levels (ages 9 to 12)**

The philosophy of Montessori education is to encourage the student to classify, analyze, and evaluate information based on the introduction of any given academic subject matter from an impressionistic viewpoint. The goal for the student is to take information and apply it to real life experiences. These experiences then create opportunities for critical thinking and logical analysis.

The upper elementary curriculum continues to be specifically designed with the elementary child in mind. Core subjects of language arts, mathematics, and geometry are integrated throughout the cultural subjects (including but not limited to: history, geography, and science) as they remain the base for further knowledge and deeper exploration. Students continue to enhance their technology and research skills in preparation for future academic and professional applications. Physical Education is a regular component of the curriculum, as well.

### **Middle School Program: Seventh and Eighth Grade Levels (ages 12 and older)**

A strong part of the Montessori philosophy is to consider the unique developmental stages of adolescent students in order to support their changing needs.

In addition to continuing the acquisition of core academic information, Montessori middle school students extend their grasp of abstract interpretive concepts. Students use a form of Socratic discussion to interpret core data in terms of the social and environmental issues of the world, past and present.

Classes are taught in cycles of 6-week durations. Each cycle emphasizes a specific part of the curriculum and provides students with the opportunity for in-depth study, exploration, and research. During the last week of each cycle, the students participate in an “immersion experience” in which they spend time away from the classroom participating in applicable hands-on learning in the real world (known as field lab trips).

Class structure is based on collaborative learning and research-based projects. The middle school program guides each student to develop their own abilities to become effective young adults. Technology based multi-media is also integrated throughout this period of learning.

### **Materials in the Montessori Classroom**

CMP utilizes the American Montessori Society’s recommended materials list when selecting Montessori instructional materials. In addition, CMP has developed a process for carefully reviewing and selecting all of the other instructional materials. The review process is very important to ensure consistency throughout our program.

For the younger students in the Montessori classroom, learning materials are arranged on low, open shelves. The materials are beautiful and inviting, increasing the child’s interest in using them. During specified periods of uninterrupted work time, children may choose from the materials which have been demonstrated to them to complete their work.

Each lesson in a Montessori classroom isolates one specific quality. In this way, the concept which the child is to discover is presented more clearly. Moreover, the materials are self-correcting.

When a piece does not fit, or is left over, the child easily perceives the error, thus reducing the need for adult correction. The child is able to solve problems independently; building self-confidence and analytical thinking skills, and earning the satisfaction, which comes from accomplishment.

For the older students, instructional materials are appropriate to their level of learning, and a higher level of independent work takes place. New concepts are introduced using the Montessori materials, and as understanding takes place, the students move to abstract work with the concept. Many of the same Montessori materials introduced in the lower grades are utilized once again in the upper elementary classroom, but are used for more complex curriculum.

### **Movies Shown in Class**

Occasionally educational movies will be shown at school. These movies have been reviewed by staff and are shown specifically for their educational content in conjunction with the relative curriculum. “G” rated non-educational movies may be shown on occasion. Appropriate PG and PG-13 movies will require prior parental permission. No other ratings will be permitted.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an essential component of the Montessori curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to utilize knowledge gained in the classroom and apply it through experiences in the greater community. Field trips are age appropriate and are linked to the curriculum as much as possible. See Appendix 2 for CMPs *Field Trip Policies and Procedures*.

## **The Faculty of California Montessori Project**

*The Montessori teacher observes and participates in all classroom activities.* The goal of each staff member is to assure that each student's needs are being met from the perspectives of safety, physical and emotional well-being, and academic excellence.

The style of teaching in a Montessori "prepared environment" is quite different from that of the teacher in a traditional classroom, who usually imparts the same lesson to all the children at the same time. In a Montessori "prepared environment," the teacher's role is more of a guide or facilitator of the many different concurrent learning projects. To do this effectively requires special training to observe each child for signs of readiness, and to select the appropriate material to introduce at the appropriate time.

CMP is committed to the preservation and implementation of Montessori methodology, principles, and curriculum within its educational program. One of the requirements of the California Montessori Project is for all teachers to have both their Montessori and California credentials. In all classrooms, teaching assistants are part of the classroom community. CMP teaching assistants have knowledge and/or background in early childhood education as well as previous successful experience working with children. The lead teacher and TA work closely together for the success of the students.

CMP promotes and teaches the concepts and skills of positive discipline through verbal reasoning and conflict resolution. CMP believes by role modeling these aspects of growth within a consistent program, students will develop a sense of responsibility and a desire to work and learn in a cooperative manner with others.

As a learning environment, CMP is committed to providing faculty with a highly professional environment where they are safe to grow, continue their own professional development, and to nurture their own personal love of learning. CMP has designed a comprehensive teacher support program and regularly offers a variety of staff development opportunities throughout the school year.

As a Montessori teacher, preparation of self is equally important to preparation of the environment. All CMP teachers are provided with morning and afternoon preparation time to allow them an opportunity to feel well organized prior to greeting their first student of the day. Staff are encouraged to take a few minutes each morning for self-reflection to allow for proper mental preparation before class begins. Please be respectful of these preparation times by keeping interruptions before school to a minimum. Teachers are always willing to schedule in advance a convenient time to meet with parents to answer questions or address concerns. Parents are also encouraged to send in written notes or communicate through teachers' emails, to which the teacher should respond within one or two days.

## Montessori Assessments, Report Cards, and Testing

### Assessments, Progress Reports and Report Cards

Assessment in the Montessori classroom is the hourly, daily, and weekly appraisal of student progress. Early in their educational career, students learn self-assessment from the prepared environment of self-correcting materials and the examples/modeling provided by the adult teaching staff. Self-assessment, self-reflection and self-correction are important lifelong skills students acquire from the earliest years in a Montessori environment. Additionally, students also learn from their earliest years that their learning is a partnership with their teachers and parents.

Adults and students establish and agree upon daily, weekly, and monthly goals. Teachers maintain written records of the work presented and mastered, and each student has an individualized “work plan” which is used to guide them through the lessons and academic work required for that week.

At any given time, a Montessori teacher knows where a child is academically, developmentally, socially and emotionally. With frequent one-on-one interaction and individual, personalized assessment of student work, issues and concerns are addressed as they emerge.

CMP teachers conduct Montessori Assessments for placement in Montessori math, geometry, and language materials. Pretests and post-tests are conducted to assess student mastery of concepts. Reading assessments are conducted for appropriate reading levels, and additional assessment tools are utilized to determine areas where a student may need reinforcement, as well as to demonstrate a student’s academic advancement in any subject area.

In our program, parents are alerted to any concerns throughout the year. Additionally, CMP provides formal documentation of the student’s progress three times each year. While parents are most familiar with the traditional “A-B-C-D” report card, CMP’s grade reporting (Kindergarten through Sixth) has been carefully designed to give parents and students a progressive account of the student’s academic mastery. As a result, letter grades have been replaced with assessments which give a view of the child as a whole. Mastery of concepts at a child’s ability level is balanced with information pertaining to the state grade level standards. A student’s goal is to attain proficiency/mastery in all subject areas, yet we recognize some students may require more time to reach this goal. Effort put forth in their ability level is also a necessary element in determining a child’s progress. Conversely, a student whose abilities are above grade level will be challenged academically, and the assessments will reflect that advanced work.

In the CMP Middle School Program, letter grades are introduced in order to prepare students for high school. Further information can be found in the CMP Middle School Handbook.

See Appendix 3 for CMP’s *Assessments and Grading Policy*.

## **Annual State Testing**

As a public school, CMP students participate in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) state academic tests. The CAASPP system is designed to promote high-quality teaching and learning by giving information to teachers, students, and their families about what students know and can do. This information is just one piece in understanding a student's college and career readiness.

If you do not want your child to participate in one or more areas of the California Assessment of Performance and Progress (CAASPP) testing program, you must submit a written request to the school office prior to the testing start date each school year. Include your child's name, birth date, grade level and the specific test or content area from which you want them excluded.

Newly enrolled students who need to take the English Learner Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) will be tested at their school site within the first 30 days at the school. If students are identified as English learners, they will be assessed annually until they meet the requirements to be reclassified as fluent in English.

Results for state assessments are distributed to families through CMP's Aeries Parent Portal. The results provide valuable information to teachers, students and families during and after the learning process.

## **Testing Schedule**

As part of the CAASPP this year, students in grades 3-8 will take computer adaptive and performance task tests in English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Additionally, students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade will take the California Science Test (CAST) and students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade will take the Physical Fitness Test (PFT).

<b>Test</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Grades</b>
California Assessment of Student Performance & Progress (CAASPP) ELA, Math and Science	April - May	3-8 ELA and Math 5 and 8 Science
California Physical Fitness Test (PFT) FITNESSGRAM	February - May	5 and 7
English Learner Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC)	February - May	All English Learner Students

# Student Health and Safety

## **Health Examinations, Immunizations, and Oral Health Assessments**

The California Montessori Project (CMP) Governing Board recognizes that periodic vision and hearing examinations of students may lead to the detection and treatment of conditions that impact learning. These examinations also may help in determining whether special adaptations of our program are necessary for the student's success.

Each CMP campus will conduct vision and hearing examinations of students annually at certain grade levels, as indicated by law. Dates and results of all screenings will be recorded in the students' health record. An annual report of the school's assessment program is provided to the State Department of Health Services.

To protect the health of all students and staff, and to curtail the spread of infectious diseases, the CMP Governing Board cooperates with state and local health agencies to require immunization of all students against preventable diseases.

### **Immunization Records and Health Exams**

The California Department of Health and Department of Social Services requires all students to receive polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, rubella and tuberculosis immunizations. Kindergarteners are also required to have hepatitis B and chicken pox (varicella). Seventh and eighth graders are required to have an additional pertussis vaccination.

#### **Effective January 1, 2020:**

- A child who has submitted a medical exemption before January 1, 2020, may continue to enroll in school until the child enrolls in the next "grade span." Grade spans are defined as follows:
  - Birth to Preschool
  - Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten to Sixth Grade
  - Seventh to Twelfth Grade
- When a child completes one grade span and seeks to enroll in the next, parents must submit a new medical exemption.
- The California Department of Public Health will create a monitoring system that includes review of schools whose overall immunization rates are less than 95 percent; schools that do not provide annual reports of vaccination rates; and physicians who submit more than five medical exemptions in one year, starting January 1, 2020.

#### **Effective January 1, 2021:**

- Schools may no longer accept any type of written statement from a licensed physician. Instead, physicians must complete a standardized exemption form that contains specified information, and they must submit those forms electronically, both to the school and also the California Immunization Registry. Unless a standardized medical exemption form is on file, schools may not admit students who are not fully immunized on the basis of a medical exemption.

- Exemptions based on temporary medical conditions will continue to be valid for only one year. Exemptions based on permanent medical conditions will be valid for only one grade span. When a child with a permanent medical condition completes one grade span and seeks to enroll in the next, physicians must complete a new exemption form.

Students who do not have proof of immunizations will not be allowed to attend school until the immunization requirement is met.

If you have specific questions about the required immunizations and your child's needs, please consult with your medical provider. If you have additional questions regarding the new law, please visit the California Department of Public Health website at <http://www.shotsforschool.org>.

### **Oral Health Assessments**

Within the school year, students entering kindergarten or the first grade must present proof to the school of having received an oral health assessment by a licensed dentist or other licensed dental health professional. Upon initial enrollment in kindergarten or first grade, the school will notify parent/guardians of the required oral health assessment on the California Department of Education approved form.

See Appendix 4 for the complete *Student Health and Safety Policy* containing additional information and details regarding Health Examinations, Immunizations and Oral Health Assessments.

### **CMP Health Guidelines**

**The following is a summary of health guidelines, which the school abides by:**

1. California Montessori Project allows students to attend school when they have minor allergies.
2. Any contagious illnesses and/or a fever of 100°F or higher require the student to be absent from school. The child must remain fever-free, without medication, for twenty-four hours prior to returning to school. For certain contagious illnesses, the school may require a doctor's note to indicate the child is no longer contagious and may return to school.
3. **Please call the school each day your child will be absent.** If it appears your child may have a lengthy illness, please notify the school office as soon as possible, and obtain a doctor's note to be kept with the attendance records.
4. **Please contact the office as soon as possible if your child is diagnosed with any communicable diseases.** These include, but are not limited to, chicken pox, strep infections, influenza, fifth's disease, or conjunctivitis (pink eye). The school will notify the other parents to be aware of symptoms related to these diseases. This is the most effective method of preventing/limiting a potential outbreak of illness.
5. Please note CMP has a no nit policy for head lice. Your child will be sent home in the event lice or nits (eggs) are found. Instructions will be given to you for treatment of the lice as well as procedures to follow to clear the home of any infestation. Your child may return to school only if there are no lice (alive or dead) or nits (eggs) present. Before being admitted back to class, please bring your child into the school office for a re-check.



6. In the best interest of the child, and of all CMP students and staff, if health issues or symptoms of communicable illness or infection are observed in a student, the student's parents will be notified immediately and will be asked to pick up their child. In this instance, the student may not return to school until a medical practitioner has treated such symptoms or until the student has been symptom free for at least twenty-four hours.

### **Medications Administered at School**

CMP staff do not administer over-the-counter medications to students, nor may students bring medicines to school.

If your child needs to take over-the-counter (OTC) medications, a parent/guardian must come to the school to administer it to their child.

CMP staff may administer OTC medications if there is a written note from the child's doctor giving specific dosages, directions, length of time, and use of the OTC Medication. The OTC medication must be sent in its original container with the child's name clearly labeled on it.

For safety reasons, children may NOT carry over-the-counter medications with them, such as throat lozenges, cough drops, cortisone cream, and the like.

When any prescribed medication needs to be given to a child, the school must have written permission and instructions from the parent **and** the child's doctor before school staff can administer the medication. A *Permission to Administer Medication* form may be obtained from the school office. The prescription medication must be in the original container with the child's name and directions clearly labeled.

Notify your child's teacher and school office, in writing, if your child is taking medication only at home. This will enable the teacher to act accordingly in case of allergic reactions or other side effects at school. Should either of these events occur at school, parents will be notified immediately.

All medications must be collected from the office by the end of the school year unless the student is enrolled in Club Montessori for the summer intersession.

See Appendix 5 for CMP's *Administration of Medications, Anti-Seizure Medication, Emergencies Policy*.

## **Nutritional Health**

A daily balanced diet is essential to every child's physical, mental, emotional, and physiological needs. Please make every effort to provide your child with healthy and nutritionally balanced meals comprised of fresh fruits and vegetables, and protein for the best possible day!

**Breakfast** is essential. Be sure your child begins each morning with a balanced meal to provide the brain energy needed for the activities of the day. If your child is unable to eat breakfast at home, you are welcome to pack a breakfast for them to eat at school prior to the start of class time.

**Snacks** and **Lunch** are the parents' responsibility, although some campuses may offer optional lunch programs. Every CMP campus offers either a lunch or a breakfast program, so inquire at your campus office. Please plan to send a bag or lunch box with your child each day, and make sure to label all containers to be taken home with your child's name.

When preparing your child's lunch and snacks, please make every effort to send items which your child can eat easily, can open and/or close independently. Lunch must be something which can be eaten without heating. Please note that soda and candy are items for home, so please do not include these in your child's lunch.

## **Food Allergy Practices**

CMPs Food Allergy Practice is a collaborative partnership between the school campus and families which will help parent/guardians and their children to make the transition between the safety of their home environment onto the school campus. Each partner has a vital responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment.

Responsibilities of Students with Food Allergies:

- Do not trade or share food.
- Wash hands before and after eating.
- Sit in designated eating areas which are restricted from food allergens.
- Learn to recognize the symptoms of an allergic attack.
- Say "No thank you" when offered food which did not come from home.

Responsibilities of the Parents/Guardians of a Student with Food Allergies:

- Inform campus administration of your child's allergies prior to beginning of the school year – or as soon as possible after a diagnosis.
- Complete an Individualized Health Care Plan for Allergies, which can be obtained in your campus office, with your child's physician.
- Fill out Administration of Medication Form, which can be obtained in your campus office.
- Provide updated medication and appropriate number of emergency kits.
- Provide a list of alternatives for snacks and lunches.
- Work collaboratively with campus administration to educate the school community with respect to food allergies.
- Be willing to provide "safe snacks" to be kept in the classroom so there is always something for your child to choose from during an unplanned event.

- Be willing to go on your child’s field trips and/or campus events if possible and if requested.

Responsibilities of CMP:

- Support a proactive process when informed of a student with a food allergy by making sure the Individualized Health Care Plan is implemented.
- Notify the classroom community when a student has a food allergy.
- When community snacks are offered to classes which have student(s) with a food allergy, ask parents to completely refrain from the identified food or products produced in factories where the identified food is processed. If an item is questionable, it is not served.
- Establish eating areas which are restricted from food to which the student is allergic.
- Wash eating tables after every use with appropriate cleanser to remove all possible residues of food and oils.
- Encourage general practice for all students to wash their hands before and after eating.
- Provide appropriate training for staff in administration of medication.
- Provide all staff with Individualized Health Care Plan of students with food allergies.
- Provide opportunities for the campus community with education and awareness of food allergies.

Responsibilities of Parent/Guardians of Students **without** Food Allergies:

- Be aware of your child’s classroom community.
- Respect your child’s classmates by looking for opportunities to provide appropriate snacks and lunches.

Responsibilities of Students **without** Food Allergies:

- Be a good citizen by respecting your classmates and celebrating our differences.
- Do not trade or share food.
- Refrain from sitting in designated eating areas when your lunch/snack contains the restricted food.
- Wash hands before and after eating.

## Safety

### Posting on Social Networks

CMP wishes to remind parents to never post photos of, or information about, other students without parent permission.

### California Safety Laws

As of January 1, 2012, if your child is age 8 or younger and is less than 57” (4’9”), your child is required by California State law to be transported in an **approved child safety restraint seat**. Please take the time to ensure the safety of each child in your car, as well as your own, by buckling up.

Various agencies offer car seat safety clinics to check for the proper installation of child safety seats in your vehicle. Approved safety seats are often available at these events at a reduced cost or free of charge. In contrast, the Highway Patrol fines individuals for each unbelted individual in the car. If you have financial difficulty complying with these requirements, contact your local Highway Patrol office. There are funds available to assist families in meeting this requirement.

No CMP employee shall knowingly allow a child to be transported without the proper safety requirements. In these cases, the child shall remain at the school until the parent or adult transporting the child has returned with the proper safety seat in place (this includes field trips). An adult who knowingly transports a child without the appropriate safety restraints in place may be subject to charges of child endangerment and may be reported to Child Protective Services.

For those students who may ride their **bicycles** to and from school, **helmets are required**. Please discuss this with your child along with other pertinent safety topics. Be safe, not sorry!!

### Safety Operations Plan

California public schools are required to comply with California Education Code (CEC), Section 35294, dealing with the preparation of “safe school plans.” In keeping with this task, California Montessori Project (CMP) developed a Comprehensive School Safety Plan which includes a Site Emergency Response Plan to help guide the CMP school administrators with their safety and response plans. Each of these plans will address policies and procedures, hazard prevention, emergency preparedness, response and recovery. These plans adopt both the framework of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the model of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), developed by the State of California and are designed to centralize, organize and coordinate emergency response among various CMP organizations and public agencies. NIMS/SEMS provide an effective framework for managing emergencies ranging from minor incidents to major earthquakes.

CMP’s mission for the *Safety Operations Plan* is to provide a *Comprehensive Safety Plan* and a *Site Emergency Response Plan* for ensuring a safe, healthy and productive learning environment for all stakeholders.

### **CMP's Safe School Vision**

1. CMP will provide a safe, orderly and secure environment for learning.
2. CMP will create a school in which students will attend regularly and be safe from both physical and social-psychological harm.
3. CMP will solicit the participation and views of stakeholders to promote a safe and healthy environment.
4. CMP will develop a plan to work cooperatively and collaboratively with parents, students, staff, administrators and community agencies to provide a safe and orderly school and neighborhood.
5. CMP will provide training opportunities to staff and students that will promote preparedness in the event of an emergency.

The Safety Operations Plan, which can be found on the [CMP Web Site](#), includes, but is not limited to, policies such as Suicide Prevention, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination, and Child Abuse Reporting.

### **Partnerships with Law Enforcement**

CMP creates partnerships with local law enforcement agencies to assist in the event of an emergency or the need to act on a threat of violence at a CMP Campus.

Students can be interviewed by law enforcement officers while at school. In instances where law enforcement is involved, the principal or designee shall attempt to minimize disruption at the school and provide privacy to the student. School staff are required to make every effort to contact a parent or guardian at the time a peace officer requests to interview a student, unless directed not to by the peace officer.

**If a peace officer removes a student from school, the principal or designee shall take immediate steps to notify a parent or guardian, except when a student has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse or neglect. In such cases, the peace officer will notify the parent or guardian. [E.C. 48906; Penal Code 11165.6]**

## **Registration and Enrollment**

As a public charter school, CMP is a school of choice, and eligibility for enrollment is based on California residency, not on district of residence boundaries.

As a public school, CMP follows state requirements for Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade admission. Transitional Kindergarten children must turn five on or after September 2<sup>nd</sup> and before December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Kindergarten children must be 5 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they enter school.

First grade children must be 6 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they are to be designated as a first-grade student.

In California, Kindergarten is not compulsory (mandatory), though it does help prepare children for elementary school. CMP does not administer kindergarten readiness assessments prior to enrollment. All assessments are conducted by the teacher, at the time the student begins, to establish the creation of the student's individual learning plan. If you have questions about your child's readiness for Kindergarten, please contact the school to which you are interested in enrolling.

As a public charter school, we implement an open enrollment policy. Families will find that students who are self-motivated, have the ability and capability to work independently, and who are responsible and accountable for their own actions, are a good match for Montessori methodology. We encourage those who enroll to understand and value CMP's mission and commit to CMP's instructional and operational philosophy. As a California public school, admission to qualified applicants is determined by lottery at the end of the open enrollment period.

See Appendix 6 for the *Student Admissions Policy and Procedures*.

### **Re-enrollment**

Each spring, families will be given a re-enrollment packet for the upcoming school year. These must be returned by the due date to ensure a place for your child. Late re-enrollment packets may result in the parent/guardian having to put an application back into the general lottery.

### **Classroom Placements**

Students are assigned classes based on a number of factors. Grade level balance, student needs, and class enrollment numbers are all considered. Although students are often with a teacher for two to three years, at times a student may need to be moved to a different class for various reasons.

Although it is understandable that parents wish to make requests for a particular teacher, due to the factors that go into the decisions, as well as the number of students at a campus, it is not feasible to honor parent requests.

## **Education for Homeless Children**

California Montessori Project (CMP) will ensure homeless students will have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education provided to all other students enrolled within our network. CMP will provide homeless students the same challenging academic standards and will not segregate on the basis of the student's homeless status nor will homeless students be stigmatized in any way. See Appendix 7 for CMPs *Education for Homeless Children Policy*.

## Calendar

CMP utilizes a trimester school calendar, which adheres to the number of instructional days required by the state. The school calendar is established and approved on an annual basis by the CMP Governing Board of Directors and is subject to change.

A calendar is provided in the enrollment/re-enrollment packets and can be located on the [CMP website](#) under the Family Resources tab.

## School Hours and Extended Day Programs

CMP adheres to, and exceeds, the state's required number of instructional minutes for the school year. Due to school traffic requirements, some campuses may have variations in the actual school drop off and pick up times, and these will be communicated to families by each campus, and may also be found on the CMP calendar. CMP's Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten program is a modified full-day.

CMP offers professional development for staff during early release days as noted on the calendar. Please refer to your campus calendar for specific dismissal times and closure days.

CMP offers an optional extended care and intersession program (Club Montessori) to provide year-round care options for our CMP families including Early Release days. Informational brochures are available from the campus office and on [CMP's website](#).



## Guidelines for Arrivals & Departures

Due to traffic and facility configurations, each CMP campus has its own drop off and pick up procedures. These procedures will be available at your school campus prior to the start of school and during “Back to School” Orientation events.

In general, parents should plan to drop off their child(ren) at the designated location. Likewise, parents should plan to pick up their students at the end of the day in the same designated location to alleviate traffic and campus congestion.

If you have a need to come on to the campus during the school day, please be sure to park in the designated parent/guest parking areas. Parking in staff areas, even if only for “a second” can create parking problems for the entire staff.

As explained in the Academic Overview, students are provided with uninterrupted units of time to support their ability to concentrate on the lessons of the day. **For the benefit of the students, CMP seeks to limit classroom interruptions and asks that parents refrain from entering the classroom after the start of the school day and before school has been released.** Forgotten homework, lunches, etc., are to be delivered to the school office where they will be given to the teacher or delivered to the student at the appropriate time.

For safety reasons, all parents/guests coming onto the campus during the school day must sign in through the school office and obtain a visitor/volunteer badge. At the completion of your visit, you will need to check back out at the school office and return the visitor/volunteer badge. In the event of a school emergency, this is the most effective way to keep track of who is on the campus grounds at any given time.

For a detailed description regarding absences, tardies and early departures, please refer to the *Attendance Policy* in Appendix 8. For purposes of this section, students arriving at school late or departing early must be cleared through the school office. When late to school, parents should plan to:

- Accompany their child/ren into the school office
- Sign them in using the designated office logbook
- Assist each child in obtaining a tardy slip from an office staff member
- Keep disruption to a minimum, by not entering the classroom.

If your child is frequently tardy to school, per CMP’s attendance policy, you will receive a letter and a meeting will be scheduled to discuss a plan of action that will correct this problem. Children arriving late are often self-conscious and feel uncomfortable entering the room. It also affects their ability to settle into the business of learning when they are in this emotional state. The class often takes care of a variety of business during this time and/or begins quiet journaling activities at this time. Students arriving late create an unwelcome disruption to the rest of the class. Please support your child to be on time. This is a life skill which will be of great benefit as the child gets older.

In the Montessori classroom, a great amount of learning happens at all times of the day, including the afternoon hours. Afternoon lessons are filled with all the cultural activities of history, science, art, etc., and incorporate practice of core academic subject material, as well. CMP stresses the importance of the afternoon curriculum. Parents need to understand and respect the need for the

student to attend school for the entire day. When an early pickup from school is necessary and unavoidable, parents should plan to:

- Contact the school office or the teacher in advance of the early pick up so that staff can assist the child and the class to prepare for the interruption and transition.
- At the time of pickup, parent/guardian must check in at the school office and sign the student out in the designated office logbook.
- The office staff will contact your child's classroom and have them come to the office for pick-up.

Safety of our students is a priority at all times. If there is an occasion where someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up your child from school, please contact the office by telephone or with a written note. The transportation authorization portion of the student's emergency card must have this person's name listed, or the parent must provide a written, signed request before the student will be allowed to depart with this person.

***Due to custodial agreements, and for every child's safety, it is vital we have the appropriate, complete, and most up-to-date information regarding who is authorized to transport your child/ren.***

If your child will be attending Club Montessori, parents must park and escort their child into the designated Club Montessori classroom and sign their child in for the day. Likewise, parents must park and walk to pick up and sign out their child from Club Montessori.

If you have not notified the school, or picked up your child within 15 minutes after the end of the school day, the school will be utilizing the emergency contact card to reach an authorized person for student pick-up.

### **Separation: Kindergarten/First Grade Students and Parents**

Sometimes it is difficult for both parent and young child to adjust during the first few days of school. If you anticipate tears or other expressions, may we offer a few suggestions?

- ***Please bring your child by the campus for a visit prior to the first day of school.*** Providing a visual reference to the place where the child will be spending their day can sometimes make a world of difference! Campuses will arrange a campus-wide visitation day one to two days prior to the first day of school.
- Make sure your child knows when school is over and who is picking them up. This reinforces the abstract concept that you WILL be returning to pick them up at the end of the day.
- Express your own happiness about school. Give the child something to focus on during your absence (i.e. "I'm really looking forward to hearing the names of your new friends ... can you try to remember some of them for me?" "I bet the teacher is going to read a story today. Can you listen really carefully so you can tell me all about it?")
- Encourage a hug and kiss, etc. and **promptly** leave. ***Try to avoid power struggles by sticking around!*** The child will usually engage in an activity within five minutes of your departure.
- ***You are invited to call us to assure yourself your child is doing all right.***

## Parent Communications at CMP

CMP highly values communication to all stakeholders. Parents can access information about what is happening at their child's classroom and school through a number of avenues.

The following is a list of CMP approved modes of communication:

- **CMP Email and Phone:** CMP employees will use network phones and emails (a cacmp.org account) to communicate with parents. We discourage our staff from using personal phones and/or personal email accounts for professional communication. Text messaging or instant messaging students and parents from personal phones or accounts are not a CMP approved method of communication. (An exception may be given during overnight fieldtrips to directly contact CMP staff on a cell phone in lieu of calling the CMP Administration Office).
- **ParentSquare:** All CMP schools utilize ParentSquare as an all-encompassing communication platform. This tool allows us to send emails, text messages, voice dialer messages and emergency alerts to our CMP families and staff. It also gives parents the opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with teachers with the direct messaging feature. Other features also include: community posts, conference & meeting sign-ups, volunteer opportunities, school activity reminders, Club M sign-ups, field trip updates, newsletters & campus updates, sync calendar events to your device, and more!
- **School and Network Websites:** Each CMP campus has a website. Please check your school website for campus specific information and updates. You can access a list of campus websites on the network page at <https://www.cacmp.org/>.
- **Aeries Parent Portal Accounts:** All Parents have been given access this year to view Portal accounts which allow parents/guardians to access class(es) summary, attendance data, immunizations, Student Score Reports (SSRs) from state tests (grades 3-8), as well as English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) tests (all grades as applicable), and grades/assignment tracking (middle school only).

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

CMP identifies parents and teachers as two integral parts of the student's academic success team. As such, CMP encourages parents and teachers to stay in close communication regarding student progress. In addition to informal discussions and communications throughout the year, CMP offers three opportunities each school year for parents and teachers to meet individually to discuss the child's progress. Parents/guardians may request an additional meeting at any time throughout the year.

### Campus Newsletters and Updates

Campuses will publish newsletters and updates on a regular basis which include information regarding special projects and events, holiday activities, field trips, fundraising, and various other informational items of interest to our CMP families. Campus newsletters are posted on the web site and will be sent home with your student upon request. Look for these updates to keep informed of important school information.

## **Class Newsletters and Updates**

Each teacher composes their own lessons and newsletter information. This information will be published at regular intervals and is another way for you to stay informed about your child's education. We encourage you to share this newsletter with your child.

## **Parents are Vital to Every Child's Success**

CMP recognizes that parents are vital to every child's academic success. The following are offered to assist you in developing a plan of support for your child:

- Schedule an appointment to visit your child's school; you are a welcomed visitor!
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep, eats a healthy breakfast every day, brings a healthy lunch and snacks for school, wears appropriate clothing for the weather, and arrives at school on time and ready to learn.
- Read to your child every day, or encourage your child to read independently.
- Insist your child treat themselves, other students, teachers and staff with respect, and obey home and school rules.
- Call your child's teacher or the school office, write a note, or email the teacher at the classroom email address when you have a question, a compliment, or a concern.
- Volunteer your time. There are often volunteer tasks which can be done at home.
- Join the standing committees developed to support your child's school.
- Attend Campus Advisory Council and/or Governing Board meetings.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's progress and any challenges they may be encountering.
- Carefully review your child's report cards, school newsletters, and other information from school.
- Participate in school activities. Encourage your child to do the same. These activities and events have been planned to provide families with the opportunity to participate in the school community and enhance relationships between students, parents, and school staff.

## **School Evaluations**

CMP regularly conducts surveys of both parents and staff regarding their experience at the school. We invite you to provide us with feedback to help us continually improve. The results of these surveys will be shared with appropriate stakeholders. Many of our best ideas have come from parents and staff.

## Parent Communications and Disputes

### Do you have a Compliment or a Concern?

CMP has confidence in the competency and professionalism of its staff. CMP encourages open and respectful communication from individuals and groups within the community regarding compliments, suggestions, questions, and concerns about any part of the school program or any employee of CMP. CMP utilizes this information to effect improvement and positive change in our program whenever possible.

CMP utilizes a communication style which both validates and assumes best intentions. CMP first discusses what is working, and then what needs improvement. CMP finds this style of communication is easier heard and received. Additionally, we model this communication style for the students because CMP believes it helps people achieve positive outcomes.

If you would like to share a compliment, feel free to connect with that person directly. Similarly, should you have a concern, please speak with the individual first. Should the concern not be resolved, refer to the Governing Board approved *Parent Communications and Dispute Resolution* process (Appendix 9).

## **Family/School Community Partnership, Parent Participation & Parent Education**

The California Montessori Project strives to partner with parents and guardians to best serve the needs of the children. This is accomplished through parent education and orientation, frequent and positive communication between staff and families, and regular parent involvement.

### **Parent Education and Orientation**

CMP provides a variety of parent education opportunities and events throughout the year. Within the first few weeks of school, an orientation Back-to-School Night will take place. This is a very important evening to provide parents with information about the curriculum, classroom schedule, field trips, and other pertinent policies.

Within the first month or two of school, a parent information evening will be scheduled which focuses on preparing volunteers for helping in the classrooms and on field trips. This is especially important for new families, but does vary in content each year to encourage all parents to attend.

Later in the year, teachers may schedule curriculum informational evenings, as well as Watch Me Work evenings when children demonstrate to their parents the special materials they use each day in class.

Information about these events will be provided in the campus calendars and weekly newsletters. At times, CMP will also arrange for educational professionals to provide workshops or presentations for families and teachers.

### **Parent Participation is a CMP Priority**

CMP recognizes the importance of family involvement in the school. Parent support is greatly appreciated by the teachers and staff, and is important to your child and their classmates. Please refer to the Governing Board approved *Family/School Community Partnership, Parent Participation & Parent Education Procedures* under Appendix 10 for details.

## **Registration of Volunteers & Visitors Policy**

Governing Board Approved 06/08/20

Per Ed Code 234.7, all visitors (including parents/guardians) coming onto school grounds must first present themselves at the school office. A sign is to be posted at each school entrance that indicates visitors and volunteers are to sign in at the campus office, as well as signing out when departing. Individuals who do not sign in will be considered as trespassing.

Volunteers who have the appropriate clearances are to wear a badge for identification. This badge is to be kept visible at all times. Staff are to be vigilant about looking for this identification when individuals are seen on campus.

Visitors who do not have clearance will be escorted by school staff to their destination (e.g. for a classroom observation). Visitors will wear an identifying badge that indicates they are not a cleared individual. The visitor is to be escorted again by school staff to the office to sign out.

The principal or their designee has the right to refuse access to the school by a visitor if it is deemed their presence will interrupt either the students, teachers, or staff of the campus. Anyone entering the school with a weapon, drugs, or other dangerous items will be refused access, and law enforcement may be contacted.

## Behavior and Discipline

The Montessori philosophy and educational model emphasizes respect for all individuals which is a key component in building a strong community. Adults serve as models in the way they address the children. Lessons in “Grace and Courtesy” begin at the earliest grades, and students have the opportunity to learn peaceful ways to work through their conflicts. When issues and misbehaviors do occur, a positive discipline approach, based on respectful, relevant, and related consequences, are utilized.

The CMP staff utilizes positive discipline methods. The classroom curriculum includes Peace Education, with an emphasis on personal peace and acceptance of others’ differences. Conflict resolution tools, such as a Peace area, and classroom meetings, assist the children in learning these important life skills.

A positive discipline approach is practiced at each site. Students are presented with lessons, which include scenarios for all areas of the school, discussing the reasons for safety, respect, and responsibility in those locations. Data is collected to determine if further training is necessary. The emphasis is on training and positive reinforcement for the desired behavior, as opposed to a punitive approach.

When a student is observed not following a rule, the child is asked if they know the rule and is then redirected to show the appropriate behavior. Only when a child repeatedly misbehaves are they referred to the school office and parents contacted. Some behavior may require immediate action.

Physical violence will result in immediate action. Parents will receive a written notification (Incident Report), and a phone call. Students disrupting their classroom may be relocated to do work in another room or in the office. Generally, once a child has completed a designated amount of work, they are invited to return to their own classroom.

Communicating with parents is an important element in building a team of staff and families. Phone calls and written notes or reports sent home are ways the school can keep parents informed about how their child is doing in the school environment. When necessary, parent/teacher conferences and meetings with the administrator will be scheduled to assist teachers and parents in finding the most beneficial ways to support a student’s success at school.

When behavior which is unacceptable occurs, the following steps will be taken:

1. For minor incidents, staff will provide opportunities for re-direction and a chance to “try again.”
2. Repeated offenses may initiate a progressive system of meetings starting with a conference between the parents/guardians and teachers.
3. Should the behavior(s) continue, a meeting may be scheduled with a campus administrator, the teacher(s), and the parents/guardians. Other school staff and family members may also be included if deemed appropriate. In this process, the team identifies concerns, works



together on solutions, and creates an action plan. It is customary for follow-up meetings to take place to discuss progress or the need for additional interventions.

4. Serious incidents may lead to an immediate referral to a campus administrator. Parents/guardians will be notified by phone or in writing, and a suspension warning may be issued.
5. It may be deemed appropriate for the student to be placed in an alternate setting on campus for the school day (another classroom or in the school office).
6. Serious or repeated infractions may result in one or more days of suspension from school.
7. With incidents involving multiple students, please allow the school the opportunity to handle the situation to ensure accurate information is compiled and to maintain student confidentiality. Please remember student confidentiality, and that parents should never talk about any student to another student, parent or other third party.

Refer to Appendix 11 for CMP's *Focus on A Peaceful School Environment (a proactive approach to prevent bullying in our schools)*; Appendix 12 for CMP's *Student Discipline procedures*; and Appendix 13 for CMP's *Suspension and Expulsion Procedures*. See the Safety Operations Plan, Plan 2 Section 3: 2.3.1.7 Threat of Violence.

## **Student Conflict Resolution**

It is the intent of CMP to integrate conflict resolution skills into the curriculum. Students who have complaints against other students are encouraged to first address the issue with the person directly using the learned conflict resolution skills without the intervention of a school employee. If, however, the student does not feel comfortable with this approach, the student should notify a teacher or another school staff member. The teacher or staff member will notify the principal or dean of students if the complaint cannot be resolved immediately or if the complaint involves suspected sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination. The student's parent/guardian will be notified by the administration of the complaint in those instances. Refer to Appendix 11, CMP's *Focus on A Peaceful School Environment (a proactive approach to prevent bullying in our schools)* for more information.

Students who have complaints against school staff or programs may notify a teacher, the dean of students, or the principal. If a teacher, or any other staff member, is notified of a student complaint against school personnel or programs, the teacher is to notify the principal.

The principal, or designee, will undertake a responsible inquiry into the student's complaint to ensure it is reasonably addressed in a timely manner. When appropriate, a written statement of the complaint should be obtained from the student.

# Instructional Use of the Internet

## **Instructional Use of the Internet: School Use of Internet Services is a Privilege**

CMP recognizes the necessity for students to be computer literate, and computers are provided in each classroom for student use. Before students may use the Internet at school, they must have parental permission on file and meet with their teachers to review school policies regarding Internet use, which include the consequences for not following these policies. Students wishing to use the Internet will need to sign CMP's *Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement* and abide by these policies. The policy statement details what is expected of anyone using the Internet, email services, designing a webpage, researching, or using education programs online. Content filters are installed by CMP to limit exposure to undesirable Internet sites.

### **School Use of Internet Guidelines:**

- Use of the Internet, aside from classroom curriculum and state testing, is a privilege.
- Those under 18 may not reveal their last names, addresses, or phone numbers.
- The user acknowledges that email has no guarantee of privacy and all content on school computers is subject to periodic review.
- Messages related to or supporting illegal activities will be reported to authorities, and messages are subject to the same restrictions as any material prepared for distribution.
- Transmission or reception of copyrighted material; material protected by trade secret; product advertisement or political lobbying; material that is obscene, libelous, slanderous, gang-related, incites students and/or staff to create a clear and present danger by promoting unlawful acts on school grounds, violation of school regulations, or disrupts orderly operation of school are prohibited and will result in termination of the user's Internet privileges. Additionally, the user will be subject to all applicable consequences.
- Acts of vandalism, such as knowingly downloading or uploading computer viruses, will result in termination of the user's Internet privileges and will subject the user to all applicable consequences, including but not limited to financial restitution from the family to repair/replace damaged equipment and resources.

The *Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement* signed by students, parents, and teachers may be found in Appendix 14 of this handbook, or viewed on the [CMP website](#).

## Dress Code

Montessori education is concerned with the inner development of the child's social, emotional, and physical well-being. As such, we seek to limit undue focus of attention on external appearances. After much discussion about the relative values of a dress code and individual freedom, CMP has adopted the following middle path Dress Code. We believe your child will be happiest when dressed in casual, comfortable clothing.

In general, students are expected to wear appropriate clothing, which is clean, fits properly, is not distracting, and does not prevent them from participating in any school activity. All clothing should be neat and in good condition, free of commercialism or distracting media messages. We define commercialism as characters, symbols, or slogans referring to products, companies, movies, video games, television shows, etc. Distracting media messages include, but are not limited to, movie and television characters, derogatory comments or slogans, gruesome or violent pictures and/or obscenities. This type of attire may be a source of distraction, cause some children to focus on externals, and may cause distress for those who are unable to afford rapidly passing fads. We believe by limiting commercialized and distracting media on our campuses, children will feel more comfortable and able to focus on exploring their learning environment.

Individual campus policies vary slightly based upon Campus Advisory Council recommendations. Please check with your local CMP campus office for specific dress guidelines.

# Personal Items at School

## Lost or Stolen Items

CMP assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items.

## Toys and Sharing

Participating in sharing at group time enables children to feel important and special. It also facilitates verbal expression. Good suggestions for sharing may be seashells, rocks, library or special books, pictures or treasures from a trip. Please consult with your child's teacher regarding sharing practices for a particular class. Read the weekly updates and monthly newsletters to discover sharing suggestions relating to the units of study for the month. We do ask that toys be kept at home, or left in the car, as they often create distractions and possible power struggles between other students when they are brought to school.

## Extra Changes of Clothes

Students are encouraged to bring an appropriate change of clothes to store in their cubbies or lockers for emergency use; most especially kindergarteners. Teachers will communicate with parents as the clothes are used and need to be re-stocked. Please remember to label all items with the student's name and sent to school in a plastic bag or other disposable/re-usable carrier.

## Other Personal Items at School

Toys, trading cards, electronic games and other personal items unrelated to the student's daily schoolwork should be left at home. These items tend to create disruptions at school and will be held by the teacher.

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones and other items of value to school. Cell phones, pagers, iPods, and the like, are to remain off and out-of-sight during school hours and may only be used once the student has left the school grounds. In the event parents require their child to have such items, contact the teacher or principal to discuss your child's personal circumstances. If approved, these items are to remain in the student's backpack or locker until the end of the school day. **If the student uses such items during school hours, the item will be confiscated and only returned to the parent. Permission may be granted by the teacher or administrator to use a cell phone during school hours for a specific situation only. CMP is not responsible for loss or damage of such items. eReaders are permitted at school following a meeting with the parent/s, student, and the Dean of Students to review and sign the appropriate use of these items at school. Teachers will keep eReaders in a secure location in the classroom.**

## Promotion/Retention

Montessori instruction accommodates the varying interests and academic development of individual students. Students will progress each year by completing the Montessori and State Standard curriculum necessary to support their success at the next grade level.

When considering promotion (accelerating a student an additional grade level), the child's social and emotional growth is to be taken into consideration. Parents, teachers, and the principal will determine if this is the best course of action for the student by using criteria such as intellectual maturity, academic achievement, including standardized testing, physical, social, psychological, and emotional considerations. Retention (remaining at the same grade level for a second year) is an action which may be taken to assist a student to be more successful in their learning.

Reference Appendix 15 for more detailed information regarding CMP's *Student Policy for Promotion/Retention*.

# Special Occasions and Events

## **Birthdays**

Children love to share their birthdays. Each teacher has developed her/his own practice for acknowledging birthdays. This information will be provided during parent orientation for your child's class. If you would like to share a special treat in honor of your child's birthday, please consult with your child's teacher ahead of time with respect to her/his celebration practice. This event is usually incorporated into the cultural history unit during group time experience.

If your child has allergies and cannot partake in these snacks, please ensure the campus office has been notified and refer to the Food and Allergy Practices in the Student Health and Safety Section.

## **School Holidays and Vacation Periods**

Please see the CMP school calendar for a schedule of days off and intersession services throughout the year. Please plan and schedule your family vacations during school intersessions and summer break.

## **Religious Holidays**

The Supreme Court has ruled that public schools may not sponsor religious practices (Engel v. Vitale, 1962; Abington v. Schempp, 1963) but may teach about religion. While avoiding a definitive ruling on religious holidays in public schools, the Supreme Court let stand a lower federal court decision stating that recognition of holidays may be constitutional if the purpose is to provide secular instruction about religious traditions rather than to promote the particular religion involved (Florey v. Sioux Falls School District, 8<sup>th</sup> Cir., 1980).

Montessori classrooms are rich in cultural lessons and materials; therefore, CMP takes into account the role of religion in history and cultures. This serves as part of the academic studies to learn about the traditions of particular religions within a pluralistic society.

Teaching about religious holidays will be conducted when natural opportunities arise during the course of the year as students study different cultures and communities. Teachers are alerted to the distinction between teaching about religious holiday celebrations, which is permissible, versus religious practices. We desire to foster understanding and mutual respect for differences in belief and culture. Please understand, CMP neither promotes nor inhibits religion.

Students may be excused from classroom discussions or activities related to particular holidays. CMP acknowledges that some holidays considered by many people to be secular (for example, Halloween and Valentine's Day) are viewed by others to have religious overtones. Excusal from the requested activity will be granted for classroom parties and similar non-academic activities.

In addition, some parents and students may choose to make requests for excusals from discussions of certain holidays even when treated from an academic perspective. Such requests may be granted as needed on a limited, specific discussion, in order to strike a balance between the student's religious freedom and the school's interest in providing a well-rounded education.

Students may be allowed a reasonable number of excused absences, without penalties, to observe religious events within their traditions. Students may be asked to complete makeup assignments or examinations in conjunction with such absences.

## **Student Freedom of Speech/Expression**

Free inquiry and exchange of ideas are essential parts of a democratic education. Students attending the California Montessori Project (“School”) have the right to exercise free expression including, but not limited to the use of bulletin boards, distribution of printed materials or petitions, and wearing buttons, badges and other insignia. The Governing Board (“Board”) respects students’ rights to express ideas and opinions, take stands and support causes, whether controversial or not, through their speech, their writing, their clothing, and the printed materials they choose to post or distribute.

See Appendix 16 for the *Student Freedom of Speech/Expression: Publication Code Policy* including Freedom of Expression Procedures for on, and off, campus expression.



## **Special Education and Services**

CMP desires to meet the needs of all of our students. California law requires public schools, including charter schools, to provide a free and appropriate public education to all students, including those with exceptional needs. Although most students' needs are met through the traditional Montessori curriculum, occasionally supplemental services are needed. CMP may arrange for outside agencies or a neighboring school district to provide these services if they are not available at the CMP campus. If your child has special needs, please talk with their teacher and the principal so they may be addressed.

### **Section 504 Accommodations**

California law requires schools to provide a free, appropriate education to qualified disabled persons. When a student qualifies under Section 504, an accommodation plan is designed to meet the student's special needs.

*CMP is committed to providing students with a highly professional environment where they are safe to grow and learn, and which nurtures a love of learning. CMP honors each student's learning style and developmental level.*

## **School Records and Student Privacy**

Through the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), your child's school record is accessible to you through a request to the Principal. If you believe there is an inaccuracy in your student's educational record, there is a process to request an amendment. For further information, please contact your campus principal. These records are confidential and not available to unauthorized parties. See Appendix 17 for CMP's *FERPA Policy*.

# Appendices

## **Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for CMP Parents**

## Code of Conduct for CMP Parents

RT Approved 1/10/20

Thank you for your contribution to the school and the students. The following Code of Conduct was developed to ensure an optimum learning experience for all. We appreciate your willingness to abide by this code.

In the spirit of Montessori, all members of the school community (staff, students, parents/guardians, and family members) will strive to exhibit grace and courtesy at all times. By exhibiting the qualities of respect, dignity, self-discipline, and cooperation, adults are the models of those values we wish to see in the children.

- Show respect toward all people and their ideas, beliefs and opinions.
- Be an advocate for school programs and philosophies. Recognize and support the customs and traditions of the school. Demonstrate pride in the school, teachers and students.
- Establish a supportive relationship with teachers, the principal and dean, and the office staff. Commit to developing and practicing understanding and trust.
- We are committed to direct, solution-oriented communication. It is the goal of the administration and teaching staff to address concerns in a timely manner when they are brought to our attention. Please bring concerns to the teacher or principal as soon as possible. We strongly discourage participating in unhelpful discussions in parking lots, social media, etc. When individuals choose to discuss their concerns with you, please redirect them to the appropriate individual (refer to Appendix 8: Parent Communications and Dispute Resolution Policy in this Handbook).
- As a parent volunteer, please respect the ability of the teachers to direct their own classroom. Reserve discussions for a time when the teacher is not directly responsible for the students.
- When visiting the classroom, please refrain from initiating interactions with students. Quietly and unobtrusively observe the students as they go about their work.
- All students deserve the utmost confidentiality, and since parents may become aware of student information, please maintain student confidentiality at all times. Under no circumstances should you ever discuss a student with parents, other students, or outside parties.

As a parent of a CMP student, I acknowledge that I have received a copy and understand the importance of the above **Code of Conduct for CMP Parents** for the purposes of helping to establish and maintain a positive environment for students and productive relationships with my child's teachers and other school staff. As such, I agree to abide by this code for the entire time that my child is enrolled at CMP.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature (1)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature (2)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix 2: Field Trip Policies and Procedures**

## Field Trip Policies and Procedures

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19; updated 09/01/20

Field trips are an essential component of the Montessori curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to utilize knowledge gained in the classroom and apply it through experiences in the greater community. Field trips are age appropriate and are linked to the curriculum and CA State Standards. It is not unusual for an elementary or middle school class to attend a field trip approximately once every six weeks.

### **Field Trip Participation, Costs and Payment Options:**

All students are to have equal access to the field trips as a part of the curriculum. CMP realizes the more costly field trips may be a financial burden for some families. Therefore, the Campus Advisory Council has authorized fundraising efforts to offset field trip costs.

Because these funds are limited, we ask parents to help out with the field trip costs by contributing the cost per student listed on the permission form by doing one or more of the following:

- 1) Pay the full cost per student at the time it is due.
- 2) Divide the total amount into smaller amounts, making several payments until the full cost per student is paid.
- 3) Participate in classroom/campus fundraising.

All students have access to field trips regardless of ability to pay; however, a teacher may need to cancel a field trip if there are not enough funds generated by parental contributions and fundraising. If you would like to participate in fundraising efforts, please contact campus administration.

Student behavior may be a factor in deciding if a child is to participate in a field trip. Parents will be contacted in advance to discuss any issues and to determine other options.

Parents who do not wish for their child to attend a particular trip should discuss their reasons with the teacher, as the purpose of the field trip is to expand on the students' academic experience. Any child not participating in a field trip must attend school that day. The teacher will arrange for your child to do their work in another classroom.

### **Permission Forms:**

Due dates for permission slips are to be strictly enforced, and a child will not be permitted to attend the outing without a signed form. Parent/guardians are required to provide an appropriate car seat if their child is eight (8) years of age or younger, and/or smaller than 4'9" according to California State law.

Please note:

- Car Seats: Per California State Law, no driver shall transport a student without an appropriate car seat if that student is eight (8) years of age or younger, and/or smaller than 4'9"

- K-6<sup>th</sup> grade children will be properly secured in rear seat in an appropriate child passenger restraint system, per California State Law, Vehicle Code 27360

The educational experience of the field trip is always to be emphasized over a commercial one. However, in some instances, bringing spending money will be appropriate and will be stated as such on the permission/ information sheet.

### **Parent Participation Requirements on Field Trips:**

Parent involvement is essential to allow these field trips to occur as drivers and/or chaperones. To ensure the safety of the students, parents volunteering to drive/chaperone must have the following clearances at the time the field trip permission form is returned.

#### **Driver and Chaperone Age Requirement**

Drivers for field trips must be 25 years of age, and chaperones are to be 21 years of age.

#### **Proof of Insurance**

CMP requires \$100,000 liability per person/\$300,000 liability per occurrence. Individuals without this level of insurance may request from their insurance company the increase for a day. A parent who is driving their child only must show proof of insurance at the California legal amount. The Proof of Insurance paperwork needs to show the company, name of driver, and the amount of coverage.

#### **DMV Driver History Report**

CMP requires at the beginning of each school year a 3-year driver's history report from the DMV. Infringements that could prohibit a parent to drive on a field trip include seatbelt violations, speeding tickets and other moving violations, failure to appear, and the like. An equipment violation, as long as it has been taken care of, will not be an issue. This report must be turned in 30 days prior to driving on a field trip.

#### **Copy of Driver's License and Auto Registration**

At the beginning of each school year, a copy of the driver's license and auto registration for each vehicle being driven on a field trip must be turned into the campus office.

#### **Cleared Live Scan**

This clearance is only required once. Live Scan clearances from other organizations do not meet the requirement by the Justice Department.

#### **Cleared TB test**

A cleared TB skin test or chest x-ray is required every 4 years in order to volunteer and attend field trips. If an individual has not been out of the country, then a doctor or nurse's signature on a waiver is acceptable.

#### **Participation in Parent Volunteer Presentation**

This parent education presentation is only required once.

Drivers will be given a Field Trip Packet with student information, directions and other pertinent information for the trip, and a list of all field trip policies and procedures. **We ask that drivers read this packet carefully to avoid any misunderstandings.** Note: Student information is confidential and should only be accessed only in the event of an emergency. These forms are to be returned to the campus office at the end of the field trip.

**Teachers are responsible for oversight of the entire group and for facilitating the excursion.**

Adults participating in the field trip are asked to assist wherever needed and are expected to chaperone the group of students they have driven, as well as be aware of safety concerns for all students. Drivers must drive directly to and from the field trip destination. Stops for food, gasoline (except in the instance of a long distance trip), and other activities outside of the trip itinerary are not permitted. Personal errands are not permitted at any time.

CMP policy states that only movies rated “G” may be shown without parental permission. Parents with DVD players in their vehicles are therefore asked to follow this policy when driving on a field trip.

As per the CMP Code of Conduct, parents are asked to avoid discussing students with others. Discipline issues should be brought to the teachers’ attention for appropriate follow-through. Other concerns regarding the field trip should be brought to the teacher or campus principal.

### **Siblings:**

As stated previously, field trips are an important part of the educational experience. Field trips are grade level and curriculum specific, and children anxiously await their opportunity to attend these special events. For this reason, we ask that siblings attending CMP not be included in their sister or brother’s field trip experience. Although it may be enjoyable to attend an extra field trip, attendance in their own class is of utmost importance. Prior approval may be granted by the campus principal for extenuating circumstances two weeks or more before the occasion.

Siblings not attending CMP may be granted permission by the campus principal to attend based on the appropriateness of the event. Please keep in mind when deciding to participate in a field trip that handling a younger child may be a detriment to proper supervision of the students, therefore you will not be considered a chaperone on the field trip.



# Appendix 3: Assessments and Grading Policy

## Assessments and Grading Policy

Governing Board Approved 2/10/20

California Montessori Project (CMP) utilizes a variety of assessments to provide information to parents/guardians, students, teachers and administrators regarding each student's academic progress and in what areas the student requires support to improve their learning. This information is also utilized by the school to make informed decisions on changes or additions to the curriculum.

All students take in-class assessments to provide the teacher with information for their lesson planning and what is needed to support each student. These results are shared with parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Conferences.

As a public charter school, CMP students participate in required state and federal assessments. These results are provided to parents/guardians when received by the school. Student results also provide information to the school for evaluation and curriculum planning. These assessments also indicate the charter school's effectiveness in carrying out its educational goals.

Whenever required assessments are administered, the principal of the school or their designee will give parents/guardians notice of the test, when it will be given, as well as the purpose of the tests. All required assessments are given according to the law and on the directed dates.

Special Education students participate in state and federal examinations according to their Individualized Education Program.

State and federal laws require the monitoring of a school's participation rate in state or federal testing. If a parent has any questions in regards to their child's participation in testing, please speak with the principal. Students identified as English language learners are assessed each year to determine their level. This information is accessed by the teachers to ensure the additional supports required are provided to these students. Parents/guardians are informed in advance of their child being tested, and parents/guardians will receive the results from the school.

### Academic and Social Development Grading

Student progress provides information on student learning and where the student needs improvement. Parents/guardians will receive report cards three times per year, two of which are at Parent/Teacher Conferences, indicating their child's academic and social developmental progress. Whenever possible, parents/guardians will be notified of concerns for the student by the teacher prior to report cards being distributed.

At parent/teacher conferences, parents/guardians, and students in the higher grade levels, will discuss the objectives of the class and set goals for the remainder of the school year.

Teachers are responsible for assigning grades to their students. If a student or parent/guardian believes a grade on the most recent report card is inappropriate, the student or parent/guardian may appeal to the teacher. If the issue cannot be resolved with the teacher, the student or parent/guardian may request a meeting with the campus principal. Any meeting with the principal must include the teacher who assigned the grade in dispute, and documentation of student work will be reviewed in order for a decision to be made.

## **Appendix 4: Student Health and Safety Policy**

# Student Health and Safety Policy

Governing Board Approved 04/20/20

## Health Examinations, Immunizations and Oral Health Assessments

The California Montessori Project (CMP) Governing Board recognizes that periodic vision and hearing examinations of students may lead to the detection and treatment of conditions that impact learning. These examinations also may help in determining whether special adaptations of our program are necessary for the student's success.

Each CMP campus will conduct vision and hearing examinations of students annually at certain grade levels, as indicated by law. Dates and results of all screenings will be recorded in the students' health record. An annual report of the school's assessment program is provided to the State Department of Health Services.

To protect the health of all students and staff, and to curtail the spread of infectious diseases, the CMP Governing Board cooperates with state and local health agencies to require immunization of all students against preventable diseases.

### Vision Appraisals

During the kindergarten year, or upon first enrollment in CMP, if it is the student's first entry in a California school, and in grades second, fifth, and eighth, CMP will appraise the student's vision. The school need not appraise a student's vision in the year immediately following the student's first enrollment, or entry if the student's first enrollment or entry occurs in grade fourth or seventh. The screening will include tests for visual acuity, including near and distance vision, and color vision (done once for male students).

Classroom teachers are responsible for the observation of the student's visual performance or other behaviors that might indicate vision difficulties.

The vision evaluation may be waived by the parents/guardians if they present a certificate from a physician or an optometrist with the results of a student's vision, including visual acuity and color vision.

CMP will provide parents/guardians written notification for the children who fail the vision screenings.

### Hearing Screenings

CMP will provide hearing assessments of each student enrolled in the school in kindergarten or first grade, and again in second, fifth, and eighth, or at the time of the student's first entry into the California public school system.

Each student enrolled in a special education program, other than those enrolled for a hearing problem, will be given a hearing test when enrolled in the special education program and every

third year thereafter. Hearing tests may be given more frequently based on the individual education program team's evaluation of each individual student.

CMP will provide parents/guardians reports for the children who fail the hearing tests with a written notification of the test results and recommend that a medical and/or audiological evaluation be obtained.

### **Immunizations**

Prior to admission to CMP, a student's immunization record must be presented to the campus office which indicates the month and year of each immunization as required by law. A student may be conditionally admitted in accordance with the Department of Health regulations; however, if the parent/guardian of the student fails to fulfill the conditions of admission, CMP will prohibit the student from further attendance until that student has been fully immunized.

### **Exemptions from Requirements**

Students who, prior to January 1, 2016, submitted a letter or affidavit on file stating beliefs opposed to immunization, will be allowed to unconditionally enroll in the CMP. However, at the next grade level span (Tk-Kindergarten to sixth grade / seventh to twelfth grade), the student must be immunized according to the law.

A student will be exempted from the immunization requirements if the campus receives a written statement by a licensed physician stating the immunization is not considered safe due to the student's medical condition. The statement should include the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition. However, whenever there is cause to believe that the child has been exposed to a communicable disease for which immunization is required, the student may be temporarily excluded from attending school until such time it is determined the child is no longer at risk.

When a child completes one grade span and seeks to enroll in the next, parents must submit a new medical exemption.

CMP will file a written report on the immunization status of newly enrolled students with the Department of Health Services as required by law.

### **Oral Health**

Within the school year, students entering kindergarten or the first grade (who did not attend kindergarten) must present proof to the school of having received an oral health assessment by a licensed dentist or other licensed dental health professional. The oral health assessment must have been performed no earlier than 12 months prior to the date of initial enrollment. Upon initial enrollment in kindergarten or first grade, the school will notify parent/guardians of the required oral health assessment on the California Department of Education approved form.

CMP will provide resources in the community to families who do not have access to a dental health professional or would experience a financial hardship to obtain the dental assessment.

*A student may be excused from this requirement if his/her parent or guardian indicates on the approved form provided by the school one or more of the following reasons apply:*

- *The oral health assessment poses an undue financial burden on the parent/guardian;*
- *The parent/guardian lacks access to a licensed dentist or other licensed or registered dental health professional; or*
- *The parent/guardian does not consent to the assessment.*

By July 1 of each year, CMP must submit a report to the County Office of Education containing the number of students received dental health examinations.

### **Contagious Diseases**

If there is good reason to believe a student is suffering from an infectious disease, the student will be sent home and not be permitted to return to school until the campus office receives clearance from the student's physician.

The campus office will alert those families whose child may have been exposed to the contagious disease as soon as possible indicating the symptoms of the illness.

### **Head Lice**

CMP has a no nit policy due to the nature of the Montessori classroom environment. When it is determined that a student has head lice, the student will be sent home. The families of all possibly exposed students will receive notification indicating treatments, the process to examine their child for eggs or nits, and how to clear the home environment of head lice. All students returning to school following a lice infection will be examined by a school staff person to determine the student no longer has nits.

## **Appendix 5: Administration of Medications, Anti-Seizure Medication, Emergencies Policy**

## **Administration of Medications, Anti-Seizure Medication, Emergencies Policy**

Governing Board Approved 4/20/20

California Montessori Project (CMP) is responsible for the administration of, or assisting in the administration of, medications to students attending school during regular school hours, including before- or after-school programs, and field trips, including those that involve overnight stays away from home. In some instances, parents/guardians of students requiring assistance in taking medications may be encouraged to attend the overnight field trip to assist their child.

All CMP staff are certified in first aid, CPR, and the use of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and are re-certified every other year. Every classroom has a First Aid Kit containing appropriate supplies. First aid will be administered whenever necessary by trained staff members. When necessary, the appropriate emergency personnel will be called to assist.

A designated staff member who will administer or assist the students with medication is to be legally able to and has consented to do so.

In some instances, where immediate administration of a medication is required, the lead teacher will secure said medication in the classroom, including the written authorizations. A staff member will also be responsible for the medication on field trips and other school activities when the student is off campus.

School employees are trained and expected to respond to emergency situations without discrimination. If any student needs resuscitation, trained staff are to make every effort to resuscitate them. CMP does not accept or follow any parental or medical “do not resuscitate” orders. School staff should not be placed in the position of determining whether such orders should be followed. The principal will ensure that all parents/guardians are informed of this policy.

For the protection of a student’s health and welfare, CMP requires emergency information be kept current to include the home address and telephone number, business address and telephone number of the parent/guardian(s), and the name, address and telephone number of a relative or friend who is authorized to care for the student in any emergency situation if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Staff providing specialized physical health care services for students with exceptional needs must be competent in basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid, as well as access to emergency medical resources in the community. Specialized health care for students with exceptional needs that requires medically related training will be provided.

CMP will provide emergency epinephrine auto-injectors training to school staff. Trained staff may immediately administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a person suffering, or reasonably believed to be suffering, from an anaphylaxis reaction when a physician is not immediately available.



Anaphylaxis refers to a potentially life-threatening hypersensitivity to a substance. Symptoms of anaphylaxis may include shortness of breath, wheezing, difficulty breathing, difficulty talking or swallowing, hives, itching, swelling, shock or asthma. Causes of anaphylaxis may include, but are not limited to, an insect sting, food allergy, and drug reaction.

The campus office will properly secure and store the medications with written statements by the student's parent/guardian authorizing the school to medication administered to the student. In addition, a written statement from the student's health care provider must be included stating the medication and dosage.

Over the counter medications (OTC), such as throat drops, Ibuprofen, antihistamines, must be brought to the office by a parent. The OTC medication must be in the original packaging, and the parent is to fill out and sign the permission form. Students are not to carry OTC or prescription medications in their personal belongings.

New statements by the parent/guardian and the authorized health care provider are required annually, as well as when there is a change in the student's authorized health care provider or a change in the medication and dosage. If there is not a current written statement by the student's parent/guardian and authorized health care provider, the school personnel will not administer or assist in administration of medication.

If stored medication is unused, discontinued or outdated, the medication will be returned to the parent/guardian at the end of the school year. If the school staff is unable to return the medication, the school will dispose of it in accordance with applicable law. Parents will be provided with a reminder at the beginning of each school year that they are required to provide the proper written statements along with the medication.

Confidentiality regarding the student's medical condition shall be kept at all times. All medication records or other documentation relating to a student's medication needs are to be maintained in a location where access is restricted to administrators or designated school staff.

The campus office is to maintain a medication log for each student to whom medication is administered or when given assistance. The medication log will contain the student's name, the name of the medication and the dosage given, and the time and date the medication was taken. The staff member providing the medication will initial the log and is responsible to secure the medication after use.

The log in addition to the parent and physician authorizations and instructions are to be kept together with the medication. Should the student also have a Health Plan created by the school, parent, and school nurse, this Plan will also be kept as a part of the student's health record. All staff who need to be aware of the student's health issue will be provided with a copy of the Health Plan. The Health Plan and other information pertaining to the student is to be kept in a secure, confidential area.

# Appendix 6: Student Admissions Policy and Procedures

# Student Admissions Policy and Procedures

Governing Board Approved 02/10/20

*Governing Law: Admission Requirements, if Applicable-Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(H)*

California Montessori Project (CMP) will admit all pupils who wish to attend the School up to capacity that allows for the optimal learning environment and student support. No test or assessment shall be administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into the school. CMP will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, and all other operations, and will not charge tuition. CMP will comply with all laws establishing minimum and maximum age for public school attendance in charter schools. Admission, except in the case of a public random drawing, shall not be determined by the place of residence of the pupil or his or her parent or legal guardian within the state.

Pupils will be considered for admissions without regard to the characteristics listed in Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

The application process is comprised of the following:

- Completion of a student enrollment form
- Proof of Immunization
- Home Language Survey
- Completion of Emergency Medical Information Form
- Proof of minimum age requirements, e.g. birth certificate

Applications will be accepted during a publicly advertised open enrollment period each Winter - Spring for enrollment in the following school year. Following the open enrollment period each year, applications shall be counted to determine whether any grade level has received more applications than availability. In the event that this happens, the School will hold a public random drawing to determine enrollment for the impacted grade level, with the exception of existing students who are guaranteed enrollment in the following school year.<sup>1</sup>

Enrollment preferences in the case of a public random drawing shall be allowed in the following order:

- 1) Children of staff<sup>2</sup>
- 2) Siblings<sup>3</sup> with Montessori experience of existing students or CMP graduates<sup>4</sup>
- 3) Siblings of existing students or CMP graduates
- 4) Inter-campus transfers
- 5) Children who have at least one-year prior Montessori experience (public or private)
- 6) District residents
- 7) All other applicants

A Wait List will be maintained through a public random drawing for students who were not randomly selected for enrollment due to capacity. Students who submit applications after open enrollment and subsequent to the public random drawing will be added to the Wait List and given

weight according to the enrollment preferences. The Wait List will allow students the option of enrollment in the case of an opening during the school year.

In no circumstance will a Wait List carry over to the following school year.

### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Education Code Section 47605(d) states that all students in the state of California who wish to attend the School must be admitted, subject only to capacity. In the case that there are more applicants than space, 47605(d) mandates that enrollment be determined by public random drawing. However, Education Code Section 47605(d) states that in the case of a public random drawing, preference must be given to existing students of the school and to district residents. 47605(d) also states that other preferences in the lottery are also allowed if legal (i.e. non-discriminatory), and approved by the granting school district (presumably within the charter). In practice, the applications will be collected during an open enrollment period. If, in any grade level, there are more applications than available space, a public random drawing will be held in stages in the order of the preferences listed in the charter. Any application meeting more than one “preference” will be placed in the highest preference category for which they qualify.

<sup>2</sup> “Children of Staff” will be limited to children, wards or step-children of employees.

<sup>3</sup> “Siblings” for purposes of this document, will be defined as either 1) a brother or a sister (any person who shares at least one of the same parents); or 2) step-siblings or blood relatives living in the same household at least 50% of the time.

<sup>4</sup> “Graduate” for purposes of this document, will be limited to students who completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade from CMP within a five-year band of the projected date of the applicant’s enrollment.

## **Appendix 7: Education for Homeless Children Policy**

# Education for Homeless Children Policy

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19

## Education for Homeless Children

California Montessori Project (CMP) will ensure that homeless students will have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education provided to all other students enrolled within our network. CMP will provide homeless students the same challenging academic standards and will not segregate on the basis of the student's homeless status nor will homeless students be stigmatized in any way.

## Educational Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act, the term "homeless children and youths" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- living in emergency or transitional shelters (includes transitional housing programs)
- abandoned in hospitals or are awaiting foster care placement
- staying in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- runaways or unaccompanied youth (not in the physical custody of the parent or guardian)
- migratory who qualify as homeless because of living in circumstances described above

## Enrollment

CMP holds a public random draw for enrollment with the exception of existing students who are guaranteed enrollment in the following school year. When enrolling, if the parent/guardian is unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment, the principal or designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the principal or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the CMP Homeless

Liaison. The liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student.

For students already enrolled, CMP will consider the best interests of the student with parental involvement in determining whether the student will continue enrollment at the CMP campus or if the Homeless Liaison will assist the family to transfer the homeless student to an alternate educational institution where the homeless student is living near or eligible to attend. To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, the student shall continue their education at the CMP campus, except when contrary to the wishes of the parent/guardian.

### **Services**

Each homeless student will be provided with services comparable with all CMP students. This includes educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, such as education programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency.

### **Transportation**

CMP does not offer a transportation program. In the event the student needs transportation assistance to the CMP school campus, CMP reserves the right to review transportation requests on a case by case basis and will look for opportunities to assist the student with means of transportation to school.

### **Homeless Liaison**

CMP's Governing Board designates the Student Services Coordinator to act as the network's Homeless Liaison to ensure that services are provided to our homeless students.

# Appendix 8: Attendance Policy



## **Attendance Policy**

### **Absence, Tardiness/Late Arrivals, and Early Departures**

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19

At CMP, attendance is a priority and is crucial to your child's academic success. CMP is a school of choice. Families who actively choose to enroll their children in the California Montessori Project charter school have opted for an educational program, with all of its rich researched-based Montessori materials, lesson presentations, and experiential learning. This cannot be duplicated outside the classroom environment, which makes your child's daily attendance even more critical for success.

Absence from school hurts not only the student but also the class. The success of the Montessori environment relies partly upon the strength of the learning community that is developed. When the student is not in school, they are missing out on critical classroom experiences, and the student's classmates are missing out on their contributions to the classroom community. A student's absence also impacts the lesson schedule that is carefully planned out by the teacher. Groups for lessons are determined by the teacher based on the students' levels. An absent student then requires the teacher to give that student an individual lesson, which takes away the teacher's time from the rest of the class.

As illustrated in the Academic Overview portion of the CMP Family Handbook, *all portions of the school day are equally important to the student's growth and mastery of learning*. When students are late to school, they create classroom interruptions which in turn result in an unsettling experience and loss of learning for the student and their classmates. Early departures can also adversely impact the student's success and ability to be a contributing member of the learning community.

Finally, California is a compulsory education state. State law requires parents/guardians of children ages 6 to 18 to send their children to school. Parents/guardians who fail to meet this obligation may cause their child to be classified as truant, and the parents/guardians and student may be required to meet with CMP's Student Attendance Review Team (SART). Please note that all trancies are reported to the California Department of Education. In extreme cases of truancy, the school may request intervention through the District Attorney's Office, as well as possible involvement of Child Protective Services.

CMP acknowledges the need for family time and for times of rest and rejuvenation. The administrative team has taken this into account in planning the school calendar and has included break times throughout the year. *Please refer to the school calendar as a planning guide so that your child is able to be in school each day and receive the maximum benefits of regular participation in their Montessori classroom.*

If a family circumstance arises which impacts your child's ability to be at school, please let the school know as soon as possible so your child's absence can be appropriately recorded.

Whether the absence is excused or unexcused, the state only provides daily funding to the school if a student is actually at school. Below are CMP's procedures regarding absences, tardies, and early departures from school:

- All absences and late arrivals must be reported by a parent/guardian prior to the start of the instructional day. Methods of communication include, but are not limited to: phone call, email, written note, or in-person. The communication should include the following:
  - Notification date
  - Student's full name
  - Teacher's name and grade
  - Date(s) of absence/tardy
  - Reason for absence/tardy
  - Name, relationship of the person notifying the school and signature if sending a written note
- When arriving late, the parent/guardian is expected to sign in through the school office and obtain a tardy slip to admit the child to class. This practice supports student safety.
- When departing early, the parent/guardian must come to the office to sign their child out. To limit classroom disruption, once a child has been signed out, an office staff member will send for the student to come to the office.

Please note that CMP maintains a closed campus. Students *must* be signed in and out by a parent/guardian or by a responsible adult who has been pre-designated by the student's parent/guardian. CMP cannot allow children the liberty to leave campus during the instructional day without a properly designated adult.

### **Absences Allowed by Education Code Law (Ed. Code § 46010, 48205)**

Under California law, excused absences are only designated for:

- Pupil illness
- Quarantine under the direction of county or city health officer
- Medical, dental, or chiropractic services rendered
- Attending the funeral service of a member of the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California, and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside of California.
- Other justifiable reasons, such as, an appearance in court, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, attendance at religious retreats (shall not exceed four hours per semester), attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent/guardian and approved by the principal or designee.
- The purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family, who is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined in section 49701, and has been called to duty, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent or designee.
- The purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.

Excused tardies are only designated for illness and/or medical/dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. To be an excused tardy, a note from the doctor/dentist is required recording the date and time of the appointment.

*All other absences or late arrivals are classified as unexcused, even if the parent notifies the school.*

Whenever possible, parents are encouraged to schedule medical/dental appointments and family business during intersession periods, school holidays, and other non-instructional times. In the event an absence from school cannot be avoided, the best course of action is to stay in close communication with your child's teachers to provide an opportunity for the child to make up any missed assignments.

### **Illness**

A child is too ill to attend school if he or she has a contagious condition, a temperature of over 100 degrees, symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea, or written orders from a doctor to stay at home. If a student is ill 3 days or more, the school will require a note from a physician documenting the child's illness and indicating the child is released to return to school. Illness of *other* family members does not result in an excused absence for the student.

### **Chronic Illness**

Illness which reoccurs on a frequent basis will require a doctor's certification.

If your child has a diagnosed chronic illness, you must provide a physician's authorization in order for these recurrent absences to be excused. Such authorization requires the treating physician to verify the diagnosis and list symptoms that would require the child to stay home from school but not necessitate an office visit. With this authorization, the parent may send a note when the child returns to school listing one or more of the symptoms identified by the physician's report. These absences will be considered verified. Please contact a campus administrator or attendance clerk for additional assistance.

### **Missed Assignments and Tests**

A student who is absent from class or scheduled instructional activities may request to complete missed assignments or tests that can be reasonably provided. The student will not have their grade reduced or lose academic credit if the assignments or tests are satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time. In some cases, the teacher shall determine a reasonable equivalency in the tests and assignments provided, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the absence.

### **Excessive Absence/Truancy Notification**

While CMP maintains high expectations for student attendance, we also recognize that students may miss a few days/hours during the school year due to illness or family emergencies. For this

reason, CMP has established guidelines for satisfactory student attendance. In the event that students fall short of these guidelines, written attendance letters will be sent to the student's parent/guardian.

These letters are to reinforce the parent/guardian's awareness of potential attendance problems and represent the first steps in the attendance review process. Subsequent portions of this process may include mandatory parent/teacher/administrator conferences, development of an attendance action plan, and attendance agreements. If these remedies remain unsuccessful, the parent/guardian may be scheduled to meet with CMP's Superintendent or designee and/or appear before the school's Student Attendance Review Team (SART), consisting of the superintendent or designee, a CMP principal, and a credentialed teacher. A law enforcement representative may be included at the discretion of the superintendent.

### **Attendance guidelines have been established as follows:**

#### **Unexcused Absences:**

- If a student incurs three unexcused absences, the parent/guardian will receive a letter documenting the child's attendance. An appointment with the child's teacher will be requested to identify the cause of such absences and to discuss how the school can work with the family to support the child's success in school, including regular attendance. California classifies three unexcused absences as truant.
- Upon incurring the fifth unexcused absence, the parent/guardian will receive a second letter documenting the child's attendance and will request an appointment with the child's administrator to discuss the child's continued absence and develop an attendance action plan for the student.
- Upon incurring the 7<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, the parent/guardian will receive a third letter documenting the child's attendance. Upon recommendation of the principal, CMP's Superintendent or designee will become involved in the review of student attendance, which may include a meeting with the student's parents/guardians.

#### **Total Absences (excused or unexcused):**

- Once a student incurs 10 total absences, an initial letter will be sent to parents/guardians alerting them to their child's attendance record. The letter will request the parents/guardians contact the campus administrator to discuss the reason for these absences and to develop a plan for attendance improvement.
- After incurring 15 total absences, a second letter will be sent to parents/guardians requiring a meeting with an administrator. A plan will be established to improve the student's attendance, and any subsequent absences for illness will require a doctor's verification.
- After incurring 18 total absences, a third letter will be sent to parents/guardians notifying them of their student's status as a chronic absentee, which is defined by the state as missing 10% or more of the days they were enrolled during the school year.

The principal can, at any time, request consultation and intervention by the superintendent or designee for habitual absence or truancy issues.

The superintendent or designee has jurisdiction to refer subsequent attendance issues to CMP's Student Attendance Review Team (SART) as described under "Students Classified as Truant".

### **Excessive Late Arrivals or Early Departures**

As indicated throughout this section, attendance is an issue CMP takes very seriously. Students who are regularly arriving late to school or leaving early are also at risk of poor academic performance. For students who are habitually missing a portion of the instructional day, notification letters will be sent following the thresholds outlined below:

- Students incurring 6 tardies will receive a letter requesting a meeting with the child's teacher.
- Students incurring 9 tardies will receive a letter requesting a meeting with the school's administrator.
- Students incurring the 12<sup>th</sup> tardy will generate the need for a review of parents' attempts to implement the attendance action plan as outlined by parents, teacher and principal. Upon recommendation of the principal, CMP's Superintendent or designee will become involved in the review of student attendance, which may include a meeting with the student's parents/guardians.
- Subsequent attendance issues may be referred to CMP's Student Attendance Review Team.

When a student leaves early, the student is missing out on learning experiences which adversely impact the student's success and their ability to be a contributing member of the learning community.

Accordingly, if a student develops patterns of early departure, parents may be required to meet with one or all of the following: teacher, principal, CMP Superintendent and/or SART to develop an attendance action plan.

Again, our goal is to have your child in school for each full day of instruction.

### **Students Classified as Truant**

In accordance with California Education Code Section 48260 (a) "Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, is truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the student's school district of residency."

Schools are required to report trancies to the California Department of Education, and CMP will inform parents/guardians of student trancies via attendance letters. Students who are habitually absent may be given a formal warning and referred to the Student Attendance Review Team, as described below.

### **Student Attendance Review Team**

CMP has implemented a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) process to address attendance issues. This team is designed to meet with parents/guardians of students who have exceeded the allowable amount of tardies, absences, and early departures. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the student's attendance record and develop a plan for the student's regular participation in school. The team shall include an administrator and a teacher from a different CMP campus than the student attends. All SART teams shall be chaired by CMP's Superintendent or designee.

### **Procedures for Excessive Absences**

#### **STEP 1: Formal Written Notice**

When a student's attendance exceeds seven (7) unexcused or fifteen (15) total absences, the parent/guardian will receive a Formal Written Notice alerting them to their student's attendance record and follow-up requirements.

These requirements include, but are not limited to:

- A meeting with the campus principal and/or CMP Superintendent or designee to review the student's attendance record and discuss next steps (e.g. SART referral). Note: The superintendent or designee will make the final determination of the appropriateness of a SART meeting.
- Develop/amend the Attendance Agreement as initiated during the attendance intervention process.

#### **STEP 2: Formal Written Notice – SART Meeting**

(Parent/Guardian and student attendance required)

When a student's attendance continues to decline or meets the criteria as defined in the Attendance Agreement, the parents/guardians will be sent a formal notice to attend a mandatory Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting.

Parents/Guardians and the student (as appropriate) will be required to attend the SART meeting during which time the SART will consider whether it is in the best interest for the student to remain enrolled in California Montessori Project. This meeting shall be held as soon as possible. The parents/guardians may request one postponement, for good cause, not to exceed five (5) school days from the date of the original SART meeting.

At the SART meeting, the parents/guardians and student shall be informed of the reason for the conference and presented with the evidence of the student's violations of this policy. If the

parents/guardians do not attend the SART meeting, the SART will review the relevant information and make a determination in their absence.

The parents/guardians shall be given the opportunity to present information and/or witnesses to the SART orally and/or in writing during the meeting. The SART shall consider any and all information presented by the parents/guardians and student when determining whether to recommend that the student be placed on an attendance contract and subject to disenrollment upon further violation of this policy. Additional factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- student's progress in the curriculum
- disruption to other students
- teacher observation/feedback
- student's grades at the time of the evaluation
- standardized testing data

The SART's decision shall be provided in writing to the parents/guardians within three (3) school days following the meeting.

The SART may:

- Place the student on probation and require that an attendance contract be signed by both the parents/guardians and the student acknowledging that any further unexcused absences or tardies shall be cause for another hearing in front of the SART which may result in disenrollment from CMP
- Place the student on attendance probation to be evaluated again at a later time if the student's truancy patterns continue
- Use other alternatives to improve attendance
- Dis-enroll the student from CMP
- Refer parents/guardians and student to the District Attorney

## **Appeal of Disenrollment**

If a student is dis-enrolled from CMP by the SART, the parents/guardians and student may appeal the SART decision to the CMP Governing Board.

The superintendent or designee shall schedule the appeal to be heard within thirty (30 school days). The superintendent or designee shall send out written notice of the date, time and location of the meeting to the parents/guardians.

The appeal shall proceed as follows:

- The Governing Board shall review the attendance records and any documents submitted by the parents/guardians. The Governing Board shall also review all records considered by the SART.
- The parents/guardians and student may address the Governing Board regarding the matter.
- The Principal or SART representative may address the Governing Board regarding the student's attendance.

The final decision with regard to continued enrollment at CMP shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the appeal hearing. The parents/guardians shall be informed in writing of the Governing Board's decision. The decision of the Governing Board is final.

## **Referral to the District Attorney**

If a student's attendance does not improve after the SART meeting, or if the parents/guardians fail to attend a required SART meeting, the parents/guardians and the student may be referred by CMP to the District Attorney's office for prosecution through the court system. Students 12 years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

## **Options for Students Unable to Attend School**

Students who are unable to attend school for an extended period of time due to serious injury or illness may be eligible to receive individualized academic assignments during the period of absence when approved in advance by both principal and/or the superintendent. Please note that attendance credit is not issued, and the sole focus of such assignments is to support the student to stay current on their academic studies. The principal may request verification of students' condition by a physician. Students with mental health conditions must present verification from a physician *and* a treatment plan from their therapist. In such cases of medically related extended absence, the principal and/or the superintendent will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine the appropriateness of long-term individualized assignments (5 days or more of foreseeable absence).

Children who are absent due to short-term illness should rest and recuperate so that they may return to school as soon as they are able. When reasonable, parents are encouraged to work with teachers to support the student's completion of missed work within a practical period of time.

Independent Study is not an option for replacing a student's attendance and participation at school. CMP has determined that a packet of measurable work does not adequately replicate the



Montessori classroom experience. Instead, the administration and teaching staff wish to emphasize to our students and parents the importance of being at school every day.

While families are asked to arrange for vacations and non-medical absences during school intersessions, holidays, and other non-instructional periods, if you know your child *must* be absent, please contact the teacher and principal in advance for assistance in obtaining make-up schoolwork for your child.

If your child is regularly unable to attend school or participate in scheduled classroom activities for reasons that are not health related, a conference should be scheduled between parent and principal to determine if CMP is the most appropriate academic placement for your child.

### **Beginning of Year Attendance**

Students who are absent the first four days of the school year, and have not had any communication with the school, will be dis-enrolled. CMP office staff will attempt to verify attendance for the first three days. If unsuccessful, on the fourth day of absence, a notification of disenrollment will be sent to the family and district of residence.

### **Multiple School Enrollments (Concurrent Enrollments)**

The state of California does not allow multiple primary enrollments. Parents/Guardians who report their CMP student as absent and simultaneously have them enrolled and attend another school is a violation of CMP's Admissions Policy and Wait List Procedure. This type of parent action will result in the student's disenrollment from CMP. Readmission to CMP is not guaranteed and is subject to CMP's Wait List Procedure.

### **Attendance Questions or Assistance**

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at any time to discuss any concerns or questions you may have about your child's attendance.

It is the goal of CMP to team with families to support each child's academic success. Daily attendance is a key component to this success and sends a message to your child that their education is a priority and is valued.

## **Appendix 9: Parent Communications and Dispute Resolution Policy**

## Parent Communications and Dispute Resolution

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19

### Do you have a Compliment or a Concern?

CMP has confidence in the competency and professionalism of its staff. However, if the campus your child attends is not measuring up to your expectations, we would like to know about it. CMP encourages open and respectful communication from individuals and groups within the community regarding compliments, suggestions, questions, and complaints about any part of the school program or any employee of CMP. CMP utilizes this information to effect improvement and positive change in our program whenever possible.

At CMP we use the communication style of first talking about what is working, and then discussing what needs improvement. We find that this style of communication is easier heard and received.

Additionally, we model this communication style for the children because we believe it helps people achieve positive outcomes. We invite you to join us in this style of communication.

### To express a compliment about school personnel:

If you would like to share a compliment, feel free to call the principal, send a note, and/or speak directly to the person you are complimenting.

### **To express a concern, the following dispute resolution process was adopted by the Governing Board of CMP:**

#### **Dispute Resolution Process**

Misunderstandings and problems arise from time to time in any situation. Differences of opinion will exist. CMP intends for the school environment to be a safe and supportive environment for students, teachers, staff, and parents. We are committed to creating an honest and open atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question will receive a timely and respectful response. It is requested that all parties conduct themselves in a congenial manner and communicate with each other with mutual respect at all times.

*Any grievance should be brought to the attention of the respective party as soon as possible with the intention to resolve the issue.* If it cannot be resolved at this level, then an appointment should be made with the principal to attempt further resolution.

If a parent disagrees with the established rules on conduct, policies, procedures, or practice, they can express this concern directly to the principal. No parent will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a grievance or complaint with CMP in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using this dispute resolution process.

The superintendent is the official representative between parents and the Governing Board. The superintendent, or any principal/designee is accessible and ready to hear suggestions, concerns, and complaints.

CMP cannot act on any problem unless it is aware of it, so we request that grievances be brought to the appropriate party as soon as possible.

While not every problem may be resolved to the complete satisfaction of all parties, effort will be made on the behalf of CMP, and its staff, to bring resolution to any problem. This will only be possible through both parties' willingness to listen, attempt toward understanding, and exploration of all aspects of the issue at hand. Through this process, parents, teachers, and administration will be able to develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the smooth, effective operation of CMP and will directly benefit the students. CMP will strive to provide such an atmosphere at all times. Parents are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism, and to take the following steps if they believe they have dissatisfaction, or believe that an injustice has occurred, or that a decision affecting them or their child is unjust or inequitable:

1. When a problem first arises, the grievant should discuss the matter with the respective party as soon as possible.
2. If they are unable to resolve the issue at this level, the grievant should then contact the principal to make an appointment to discuss the issue as soon as possible.
3. If the problem cannot be resolved informally through discussion or meeting, the grievance shall be reduced to writing by the grievant and submitted to the principal. The grievant should specify the problem to the fullest extent possible and any remedies sought.
4. Following any necessary investigation, the principal shall prepare a written response to the grievant no later than ten (10) working days from the date of receipt of the grievance, unless for good cause, additional time is required for the response.
5. If the matter is still unresolved at this level, the grievant may request a meeting with CMP's Superintendent. The request for this meeting will be written and will include any and all documentation related to the grievance along with any solutions that have been proposed by the grievant, the principal, and any other related parties. The request for the meeting is to be delivered to the superintendent who, unless sick or out of town, will meet with the grievant within (10) working days of receiving the written request.
6. After the meeting, the superintendent, or administrative designee, will conduct an investigation of the matter prior to making any decisions or recommendations. The Superintendent will provide the grievant with a response and outcome within a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed 30 days from the date of the meeting. This decision will serve as the final decision of CMP.

# **Appendix 10: Family/School Community Partnership, Parent Participation & Parent Education Procedures**

# **Family/School Community Partnership, Parent Participation & Parent Education Procedures**

Governing Board Approved 8/12/19

The California Montessori Project strives to partner with parents and guardians to best serve the needs of the children. This is accomplished through parent education and orientation, frequent and positive communication between staff and families, and regular parent involvement.

## **Parent Education and Orientation**

CMP provides a variety of parent education opportunities and events throughout the year. Within the first few weeks of school, an orientation Back-to-School Night will take place. This is a very important evening to provide parents with information about the curriculum, classroom schedule, field trips, and other pertinent policies.

Within the first month or two of school, a parent information evening will be scheduled which focuses on preparing parents for their volunteer duties both in the classrooms and on field trips. This is especially important for new families, but does vary in content each year to encourage all parents to attend.

Later in the year, teachers may schedule curriculum informational evenings, as well as Watch Me Work evenings when children demonstrate to their parents the special materials they use each day in class.

Information about these events will be provided in the campus calendars and weekly newsletters. At times, CMP will also arrange for educational professionals to provide workshops or presentations for families and teachers. Parent participation hours will be credited for attendance at any of these Montessori classes and functions.

## **Parent Participation is a CMP Priority**

CMP recognizes that parents are the most important educators in their children's lives. Studies show that children whose parents are involved in their education perform better in school than children whose parents are not involved. This is why we encourage parents to be active with their children's school at all grade levels.

CMP encourages and welcomes parents to work with their school Campus Advisory Council and standing committees. These committees have been formed to support the students, school and staff. Information on how to sign up for these committees is available in the campus newsletters and from the office staff.

***All enrolled CMP families are encouraged to contribute at least 40 hours of service to the school (70 hours for two or more enrolled children) for the purpose of participating in their child's educational experience and campus community.***

A variety of service opportunities exist and include: working in the classroom with our Montessori staff, providing office help, chaperoning field trips, and serving on campus committees to enhance the learning community. There are opportunities for work to be done at home and/or outside of school hours for working parents as well. Preparing classroom materials, adopting a classroom pet or plant during school closures, parent education nights, fundraising, school events, and campus beautification days provide enough additional opportunities to assure a comfortable level of participation. CMP is grateful for the contribution volunteers make on behalf of the school and in the lives of all of our students.

### **Parents can offer Special Units of Study: an Important Part of our Montessori Curriculum**

If parents/guardians have special talents or training, please let us know so that we may schedule some time for you to participate in the appropriate curriculum unit. Students often enjoy the opportunity to share their special adults with their classmates.

### **Student Safety: Defining CMP Volunteers, Livescan, Fingerprinting, and TB Tests**

Adults who participate as a volunteer at CMP shall be a parent/guardian and/or an immediate family member such as a brother, sister, grandparent or any blood relative living in the same household of the student at least 50 percent of the time. Community members and/or business partners may serve as a volunteer at CMP upon campus administrative approval. All CMP volunteers serve under the supervision of CMP Administrators, teachers and staff. Volunteers must be registered and sign-in and out when they volunteer at each site. We also encourage our volunteers to keep track of hours to give CMP the opportunity to report volunteer hours to district and government agencies.

Student safety is a priority at CMP. In an effort to provide the highest level of safety for our students, all CMP staff, contractors and volunteers who interact with students are required to successfully complete an electronic fingerprinting process known as a “livescan” report through the Department of Justice. Under California Health and Safety Code 121545, volunteers who are in contact with students are required to have a tuberculosis clearance. These two requirements must be on file with the school office prior to commencing work at any CMP campus.

The livescan report by the Department of Justice (DOJ) looks for the same things all our employees are checked for – convictions for drug crimes, sexual crimes, violent felonies and DUI crimes. Livescan reports can be initiated at your local police station or directly at the Department of Justice and usually take 3 to 5 days to generate a report to the school.

Tuberculosis is an airborne disease, which means it can be passed from one person to another simply by sharing the same air. TB tests can be obtained through your medical doctor or through the county department of health. For those with a positive TB test, a chest x-ray is required prior to clearance.

***Because the Department of Justice has not yet developed a process for cross reporting, all parents must obtain a livescan clearance specifically for CMP regardless of whether the parent has previously received clearance through an employer or another organization.***

A clear livescan report and TB test result must be on file with the school office PRIOR TO the first time a parent volunteers in any role where he/she is in direct contact with students. This includes participation in school-sponsored field trips.

Working from home or serving on parent committees does not require these clearance checks.

### **Parent Participation on Field Trips**

Parent/guardian participation plays a key role in the success of field trips, and parents are asked to drive students and assist with chaperoning. All adults attending field trips must fulfill screenings to ensure the safety of the children. Please note that any adult without these clearances may not attend the field trip, including other adult family members. Please refer to the field trip policy for specific documents that are required to be on file at the school campus for approval to chaperone and/or drive on field trips.

### **The California Montessori Project Welcomes Parents to observe our Classrooms and Daily Activities**

Any time you would like to observe the daily activity at our school, please feel free to schedule a time with your child's teacher. While it is standard procedure to advocate an "Open Door Policy", we also want to be sure to limit the amount of potential interruptions and distractions each day. Contacting your child's teacher to schedule an observation in advance will help alleviate scheduling conflicts. We ask that parents refrain from visiting/observing classrooms during the normalization period. Contacting your child's teacher to schedule an observation in advance will help alleviate scheduling conflicts.

Parent observation is a time for you to observe your child's class and make any notes regarding questions that may arise. Observers should be courteous and quiet guests during the entire observation period. Observers must refrain from student interaction and must save discussions with the teacher until she/he is relieved of her/his student supervision duties. Additionally, parents should remain aware of the length of the observation period and keep it to a reasonable length of time, usually 60 minutes, or less. Parents who prefer to interact with the class should plan to complete the requirements for parent participation in the classroom and should submit a request to the teacher to provide such service.

While observing, parents must adhere to policies regarding student confidentiality. Parents shall not talk about any student to another student, parent or other third party. Breach of this policy is a breach of confidentiality and will jeopardize the parent's opportunities for further classroom observation or participation.

Policies for observations have been developed to assure a positive experience for all parties. Observers who chose to ignore these policies will be asked to end their observation immediately.



### **Child Custody**

CMP follows child custody decisions made by the courts. In order to do this, the family must provide copies of all relative legal documents to the school. It is not CMP's responsibility to obtain these documents. School staff cannot modify or make exception to any judge's ruling regarding the custody of a child. If a child custody arrangement has changed, a parent or guardian must provide copies of the applicable legal documents to the school. If any dispute arises at school regarding visitation or child custody, CMP staff will call the local authorities to resolve the situation. CMP requests that separating and divorced parents place their child's well-being as their number one consideration. When divorce occurs, families are still co-parenting and the child's welfare must come first. CMP wishes to support families as much as possible in achieving positive implementation of this goal.

### **Thank You for not Smoking**

CMP is a tobacco free environment. Smoking and use of any tobacco products are prohibited at all times at school campuses and surrounding areas, including outdoor areas. Smoking is also prohibited during school functions and field trips off site, regardless if smoking is permitted in that particular environment. Thank you for your cooperation.

## **Parent Communications at CMP**

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

CMP identifies parents and teachers as two integral parts of the student's academic success team. As such, CMP encourages parents and teachers to stay in close communication regarding each student's progress toward subject mastery. In addition to informal discussions and communications throughout the year, CMP offers two formal opportunities each school year for parents and teachers to meet individually to discuss the child's progress. These parent-teacher conference periods are scheduled at specific intermittent periods: In the Fall, after completion of the normalization period, to provide an overview of the goals and objectives of the child's academic plan for the year, and toward the end of the school year to provide a final update on the child's progress toward subject mastery before moving on to the next level.

### **Weekly Newsletters and Updates from Each Campus**

Each week, campuses will publish newsletter updates to include information regarding special projects and events, holiday activities, field trips, fundraising, and various other informational items of interest to our CMP families. Campus newsletters are posted on the web site and will be sent home with the students if families desire paper copies. Look for these updates and read them to keep informed of important school information.

## **Class Newsletters and Updates**

Each teacher composes her/his own lessons and newsletter information. This information will be published at regular intervals and is another way for you to stay informed about your child's education. As you read through the information, please let your child's teacher know if there are any areas you are knowledgeable in and wish to share. We also encourage you to share this newsletter with your child.

## **Parents are Vital to Every Child's Success: Developing a Plan of Support for your Child**

CMP recognizes that parents are vital to every child's academic success. The following points are offered to assist you in developing a plan of support for your child:

- Schedule an appointment to visit your child's school; you are a welcomed visitor!
- Make sure that your child gets enough sleep, eats a healthy breakfast every day, brings a healthy lunch and snacks for school, wears appropriate clothing for the weather, and arrives at school on time and ready to learn.
- Read to your child every day, or encourage your child to read independently.
- Insist that your child treat him/herself, other students, teachers and staff with respect and obey home and school rules.
- Call your child's teacher or the school office, write a note, or email the teacher at the classroom email address when you have a question, a compliment, or a concern.
- Volunteer your time. Many volunteer tasks can be done at home.
- Join the standing committees developed to support your child's school.
- Attend Campus Advisory Council/Board meetings at your child's school.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's progress and any challenges he/she may be encountering.
- Carefully review your child's report cards, school newsletters, and other information from school.
- Participate in school activities. Encourage your child to do the same. These activities and events have been planned to provide families with the opportunity to participate in the school community and enhance relationships between students, parents, and school staff.

## **School Evaluations**

Each year CMP will conduct surveys of parents and staff regarding their perception of the school/teachers and program. We invite you to provide us with feedback to help us continually improve. The results of these surveys will be shared with Principals, Governing Board, and staff, and will be used to effectively implement positive program change. Many of our best ideas have come from parents and staff!

**Appendix 11: CMP’s Focus on a Peaceful School Environment  
(a proactive approach to prevent bullying in our schools)**

**CMP’s Focus On**  
***A Peaceful School Environment***  
***(A proactive approach to prevent bullying in our schools)***

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19

The California Montessori Project recognizes that the role of the parent/guardian is paramount in developing civic values and ethical behavior in their children. Montessori curriculum is developed to encourage and support students in the further development of the civic values and ethical behaviors that support them to become responsible and caring citizens, family members, and workers within society. Character education is interwoven throughout the educational program and fosters qualities such as: honesty, respect for self, others and property, morality (understanding what is right, legal and ethical), responsibility, human dignity, empathy, justice, civility, courage, and concern for the common good. CMP encourages all students to participate in community service projects to learn the importance of giving back to their community.

The California Montessori Project believes in the dignity of all and that everyone, including students, families and staff, should be treated with dignity and respect. There is a great deal of diversity in the families we serve, and we strive to ensure that everyone feels welcome within our schools. Differences are celebrated! As a part of Cosmic Education (a study of each cosmic unit in relation to the whole), Maria Montessori was an advocate of Peace Education: the idea that the study and understanding of different cultures and societies would lead to acceptance and peace between nations. The breadth of the Montessori curriculum is designed to provide students with this exposure to a variety of cultures, societies, and beliefs, and to support students to be good citizens, as well as progressive and compassionate thinkers and high-level communicators.

In accordance with this aim, CMP will not tolerate behavior by students, families, staff or visitors which is insulting, degrading or stereotyping of any race, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability, physical characteristics, ethnic group, sexual preference, age, nationality, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

The Montessori philosophy and educational model emphasizes respect for all individuals which is a key component in building a strong school community. Adults serve as models in the way they address the children. Lessons of “Grace and Courtesy” begin at the earliest grades, and students have the opportunity to learn peaceful ways to work through their conflicts. When issues and misbehaviors do occur, a positive discipline approach, based on respectful, relevant and related consequences, is utilized.

The California Montessori Project staff is trained in positive discipline methods such as Love & Logic and Jane Nelsen’s “Positive Discipline.” The classroom curriculum includes Peace Education, with an emphasis on personal peace and tolerance of others’ differences. Conflict resolution tools, such as Peace Talks, assist the children in learning these important life skills.

A team from each CMP campus, comprised of administration, teachers, and parents, has been trained to implement a Positive Discipline Approach through the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program. . Each campus has created a slogan emphasizing Safety, Respect, and Responsibility. Students are presented with lessons, which include scenarios for all areas of the school, discussing the reasons for safety, respect, and responsibility in those locations. Positive reinforcement is stressed, and students are “caught” following the rules and guidelines.

When a student is observed not following a rule, the child is asked if they know the rule and is then redirected to show the appropriate behavior. Only when a child repeatedly misbehaves are they referred to the school office and parents contacted. Data is collected to determine if further training is necessary for all of the students when issues occur often and by numerous students. The emphasis is on training and positive reinforcement for the desired behavior, as opposed to a punitive approach. If unacceptable school behavior is observed, the student will be subject to CMP's Student Discipline Policy. CMP creates a peaceful community for our students and family through a layered approach. Here is a quick list of how we ensure a peaceful school environment for our students:

- *PBIS* program incorporating classroom lessons and school wide assemblies that focus on safety, respect, and responsibility
- Montessori Peace Education
- Assemblies from contracted agencies on bully prevention
- Low student to teacher ratios in the classroom and playground
- Multi-age classrooms which encourages peer mentoring
- Classroom morning meetings with opportunities for conflict resolution
- Jonathan Wolff's *Character Traits* program
- Computer based cyber-bully prevention lessons
- School Communication (voice dialer, web site, regular school/classroom newsletters)
- Annual Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Parent Education Workshops
- Parent Volunteer program
- Available administrators via phone, email, or appointment to discuss any safety concerns

Hazing, bullying, and harassment are degrading activities. To clarify, *hazing* is an activity by a group that is done to a person as a type of initiation into their "group". A *bully* is a person who is habitually cruel or overbearing, especially to a smaller or perceived weaker person. Bullying occurs both in person and/or through various forms of communication (Internet, notes, texting, social networking, etc.). *Sexual harassment* is when one student, staff member, or other individual makes sexually charged remarks at, about, or around another individual. These remarks may make others uncomfortable and are not acceptable. Other forms of *harassment* include, but are not limited to: name calling, throwing items at another person, taking someone else's possessions (i.e. backpacks, shoes, binder) and "hiding" or removing them from view, starting or facilitating rumors about individuals, physical intimidation, and making slurs or remarks intended to be insulting or derogatory. Any student suspected of or caught participating in hazing, bullying, or harassing another student or staff member will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the CMP Family Handbook.

If a student is being bullied, hazed or harassed in any manner, it is essential that they report the incident and/or behavior to a staff member to receive support and guidance. Many comments and bullying type behavior can go on undetected by staff. For the issues to be properly addressed, they must be identified. Children are empowered to share their experiences directly through their classroom/ community meetings.

As stated previously, the California Montessori Project believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The organization, school, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

The California Montessori Project will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

CMP will provide staff development training in peace education/ conflict resolution/ bullying prevention. This will help to cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to build each individual CMP campus' capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in an age appropriate manner and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

The California Montessori Project expects staff, students, and parent/guardians to immediately report incidents of bullying. Reports may be made to any school employee either verbally, in writing, or through electronic communications such as email. Reports may also be made by completing the CMP Suspected Bully Incident Form and submitting it to the campus principal or designee. Staff who witness such acts should take immediate steps to intervene when it is safe to do so and should also utilize the CMP Suspected Bully Incident Form to document the bullying behavior.

Each complaint of bullying will be investigated by the campus principal, or designee utilizing the CMP Bullying Response and Investigation Form. The campus principal or designee will begin investigation into the bullying complaint within one school day. This policy applies to students on school grounds and during a school sponsored activities.

In summary:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, per the CMP Suspension and Expulsion Policy.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to a school employee, principal, or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels the appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact a teacher or the campus principal and/or utilize the CMP Dispute Resolution Policy or the CMP Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedure, if applicable.

## **Appendix 12: Student Discipline Procedures**

## Student Discipline Procedures

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19

CMP staff will enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently. Discipline may include: the counseling of students; conferencing with parents; removal to an alternative learning environment, such as another classroom; suspension; or expulsion.

CMP follows a positive discipline approach. Each campus has created a slogan emphasizing Safety, Respect, and Responsibility. Students are presented with lessons, which include scenarios for all areas of the school, discussing the reasons for safety, respect, and responsibility in those locations. Positive reinforcement is stressed, and students are “caught” following the rules and guidelines.

When a student is observed not following a rule, the child is asked if they know the rule and is redirected to show the appropriate behavior. Only when a child repeatedly misbehaves are they referred to the school office and parents are contacted. The emphasis is on training and positive reinforcement for the desired behavior, as opposed to a punitive approach.

Any physical violence will result in an immediate office referral. Parents will receive a written notification (Incident Report), and a phone call made if it is deemed necessary. Students disrupting their classroom may be removed to do work in another classroom or in the office. Generally, once a child has completed a designated amount of work, they are invited to return to their own classroom.

Communicating with parents is an important element in building a team of staff and families. Phone calls and written notes or reports sent home are ways the school can keep parents informed about how their child is doing in the school environment. When necessary, parent/teacher conferences and meetings with the administrator will be scheduled to assist teachers and parents in finding the most beneficial ways to support a student’s success at school.

When unacceptable behavior occurs, the following steps will be taken:

- For minor incidents and with younger students, staff will provide opportunities for re-direction and a chance to “try again.”
- Repeated offenses will initiate a progressive system of RtI (Response to Intervention) meetings starting with a conference between the parents/guardians and teacher.
- Should the behavior(s) continue, a meeting will be scheduled with a campus administrator, the teacher(s), and the parents. Other school staff and family members may also be included if deemed appropriate. The team identifies concerns, works together on solutions, and creates an action plan. It is customary for follow-up meetings to take place to discuss progress or the need for additional interventions.

Serious incidents will lead to an immediate referral to a campus administrator. Parents will be notified by phone or in writing, and a suspension may be issued.

Corporal punishment will never be used as a disciplinary measure. Corporal punishment does not include the use of reasonable force to protect students, staff, or school property.



Parents/guardians will be notified in writing or by phone following any disciplinary action taken in response to a student's misconduct. A follow-up parent conference with the teacher or administrator may be required. Parents may also request a meeting to discuss the incident and disciplinary action.

CMP maintains a comprehensive suspension and expulsion policy in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students. A student may be suspended or expelled for misconduct, as specified in the Suspension and Expulsion Policy, while on the school grounds, coming and going to school, or at a school-related activity.

A principal may suspend students who fail to comply with CMP discipline policies at any time. Students who habitually fail to comply with these policies or who present an immediate threat to the health and/or safety of others may be suspended pending a recommendation for expulsion to the CMP Governing Board by the superintendent.

### **Weapons and Dangerous Substances**

Due to concerns for safety, weapons of any kind may not be brought to school; this includes the parking lots and surrounding areas of the school. We are required by law to take immediate and strong action should a child bring a weapon to school. This consists of, but is not limited to, all knives, including pocket knives, sharp kitchen knives, daggers and martial art weapons, air guns, replica guns, ammunition, incendiary devices, and fireworks. Parents are asked to discuss this with their children in an age-appropriate manner to help them understand the seriousness of these items.

Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for their child bringing such items to school and will be called immediately to pick up their child should he/she be discovered to have a dangerous object. School officials have the right to search student backpacks, lockers, or other containers if the possession of a weapon or dangerous substance is suspected.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The CMP Governing Board prohibits sexual harassment of or by any student, CMP staff, or volunteer. Teachers should discuss the policy with their students in age appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of sexual harassment.

The Board expects students and staff to immediately report incidents of sexual harassment to the principal or designee. Prohibited sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

## **Theft or Destruction of School, Student or Staff Property**

School staff, in consultation with a school administrator, may search a student's belongings if there is reason to believe the child has taken another's belongings. School administration may refer theft of property to law enforcement.

Students and parents/guardians may be held accountable for replacing or repairing any property damaged or loss due to student negligence.

## **Threat of Harm**

California Montessori Project is committed to providing a safe, civil, and secure school environment for students and staff. School districts are responsible for responding appropriately to a student expressing or exhibiting threatening behaviors, behaviors perceived as threatening, and homicidal thoughts or urges that may include mass casualties at school. School personnel are instrumental in helping to save lives by identifying students at risk and linking them to essential school and community mental health resources.

The purpose of this protocol is to outline administrative procedures for intervening with students who have made a threat or perceived threat. This protocol does not predict future violence nor is it a foolproof method of assessing an individual's or group's risk of harm to others. It is a guide designed to assist in the investigation of potential danger and to assist school staff in the development of a Supervision & Support Agreement that includes supervision and support strategies.

A "threat or perceived threat" is defined as: "any writing or action of a pupil that creates a reasonable suspicion that the pupil is preparing to commit a homicidal act related to school or a school activity." (Ed. Code, § 49390(e).) These writings or actions could be "possession, use, or depictions of firearms, ammunition, shootings, or targets in association with infliction of physical harm, destruction, or death in a social media post, journal, class note, or other media associated with the pupil." A threat or perceived threat may also be based on "a warning by a parent, pupil, or other individual." An expression of intent to harm someone is considered a threat regardless of whether it is communicated to the intended target(s) and regardless of whether the intended target is aware of the threat. If a student of concern is in grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, law enforcement will be immediately notified per California SB 906. If a student is in grades 5<sup>th</sup> or lower, law enforcement may be notified depending on circumstances.

## **Appendix 13: Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures**

## Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures

Governing Board Approved 9/14/20

Governing Law: *“The procedures by which pupils can be suspended or expelled from the charter school for disciplinary reasons or otherwise involuntarily removed from the charter school for any reason. These procedures, at a minimum, shall include an explanation of how the charter school will comply with federal and state constitutional procedural and substantive due process requirements that is consistent with all of the following:*

*(i) For suspensions of fewer than 10 days, provide oral or written notice of the charges against the pupil and, if the pupil denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence that supports the charges and an opportunity for the pupil to present the pupil’s side of the story.*

*(ii) For suspensions of 10 days or more and all other expulsions for disciplinary reasons, both of the following:*

*(I) Provide timely, written notice of the charges against the pupil and an explanation of the pupil’s basic rights.*

*(II) Provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the pupil has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate.*

*(iii) Contain a clear statement that no pupil shall be involuntarily removed by the charter school for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the pupil has been provided written notice of intent to remove the pupil no less than five school days before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the pupil or the pupil’s parent or guardian or, if the pupil is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the pupil’s educational rights holder, and shall inform the pupil, the pupil’s parent or guardian, or the pupil’s educational rights holder of the right to initiate the procedures specified in clause (ii) before the effective date of the action. If the pupil’s parent, guardian, or educational rights holder initiates the procedures specified in clause (ii), the pupil shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the charter school issues a final decision. For purposes of this clause, “involuntarily removed” includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions specified in clauses (i) and (ii).”*

*- Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J).*

## Policy

The Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures have been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students and staff at CMP. In creating this policy, the Charter School has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* which describes the offenses for which students at noncharter schools may be suspended or expelled and the procedures governing those suspensions and expulsions in order to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspension, expulsion, and involuntary removal. The language is largely consistent with the language of Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* The Charter School is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions, expulsions, and involuntary removals and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

Consistent with this policy, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This shall serve as Charter School's policy and procedures for student suspension, expulsion, and involuntary removal, and it may be amended from time to time without the need to seek a material revision of the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary policies and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This Policy and its Procedures will clearly describe discipline expectations, and it will be printed annually and distributed as part of the Student Handbook which is sent to each student at the beginning of the school year. The Charter School administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline and involuntary removal policies and procedures. The notice shall state that this Policy and its Procedures are available upon request at the Superintendent's office.

Discipline includes but is not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, use of alternative educational environments, suspension and expulsion.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education

students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. Charter School will follow all applicable federal and state laws including but not limited to the applicable provisions of the California Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom Charter School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in due process to such students.

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the Charter School for any reason unless the parent/guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student’s parent/guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student’s educational rights holder, and shall inform the student, the student’s parent/guardian, or educational rights holder of the basis for which the student is being involuntarily removed and the student’s parent/guardian, or educational rights holder right to request a hearing to challenge the involuntary removal. If a student’s parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the Charter School shall utilize the same hearing procedures specified below for expulsions, before the effective date of the action to involuntarily remove the student. If the student’s parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision. As used herein, “involuntarily removed” includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include removals for misconduct which may be grounds for suspension or expulsion as enumerated below.

## **Procedures**

### **A. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students**

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at any time, including, but not limited to:

- a) while on school grounds;
- b) while going to or coming from school;
- c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; or
- d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

### **B. Enumerated Offenses**

1. Discretionary Suspension Offenses. Students may be suspended when it is determined the student:
  - a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
  - b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.

- c) Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of a student's own prescription products by a student.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this policy, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a student organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective student. For purposes of this policy, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.

- p) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this policy, “terroristic threat” shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for their own safety or for their immediate family’s safety, or for the protection of school property which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or their immediate family.
- q) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this policy, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual’s academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- r) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in Education Code Section 233(e). This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- s) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- t) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
  - 1) “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
    - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of their age, or for a person



- of their age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
- ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health.
  - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance.
  - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
2. "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
- i. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
  - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
    - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
    - (b) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
    - (c) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
  - iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
    - a) For purposes of this policy, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit

photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

- b) For purposes of this policy, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

3. Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

- u) A student who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a student who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).
- v) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee’s concurrence.

2. Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses: Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion when it is determined the student:

- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other destructive device unless, in the case of possession of any device of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee’s concurrence.
- b) Brandished a knife at another person.
- c) Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in chapter 2 (commencing with section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code.
- d) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289 or former Section 288a of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.

3. Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students may be recommended for expulsion when it is determined the student:

- a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
- b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.

- c) Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of a student's own prescription products by a student.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this policy, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a student organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective student. For purposes of this section, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.

- p) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this policy, “terroristic threat” shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for their own safety or for their immediate family’s safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases or the personal property of the person threatened or their immediate family.
- q) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this policy, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual’s academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- r) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- s) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 8, inclusive.
- t) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
  - 1) “Bullying” means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
    - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of their age, or for a person of their age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student’s or those students’ person or property.

- ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health.
  - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance.
  - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
- 2) “Electronic Act” means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
- i. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
  - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
    1. Posting to or creating a burn page. A “burn page” means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
    2. Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “Credible impersonation” means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.
    3. Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “False profile” means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.
  - iii. An act of cyber bullying.
    - (a) For purposes of this policy, “cyber sexual bullying” means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall

include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

(b) For purposes of this policy, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

3) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

u) A student who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a student who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).

v) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee’s concurrence.

4. Non-Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students must be recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined pursuant to the procedures below that the student:

a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other destructive device unless, in the case of possession of any device of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee’s concurrence.

b) Brandished a knife at another person.

c) Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in chapter 2 (commencing with section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code.

d) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289 or former Section 288a of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.

If it is determined by the Administrative Panel and/or Board of Directors that a student has brought a fire arm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or destructive device on campus, the student shall be

expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. In such instances, the student shall be provided due process rights of notice and a hearing as required in this policy.

The Charter School shall use the following definitions:

The term “knife” means (A) any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed, sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (B) a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (C) a weapon with a blade longer than 3 ½ inches; (D) a folding knife with a blade that locks into place; or (E) a razor with an unguarded blade.

The term “firearm” means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such term does not include an antique firearm.

The term “destructive device” means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (A) bomb, (B) grenade, (C) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (D) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (E) mine, or (F) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses.

### C. Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

#### 1. Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Principal or designee with the student and the student’s parent/guardian and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Principal. The conference may be omitted if the Principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An “emergency situation” involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student’s right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the student shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against the student and shall be given the opportunity to present their version and evidence in their defense, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)(i).

This conference shall be held within two (2) school days, unless the student waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization.

No penalties may be imposed on a student for failure of the student’s parent or guardian to attend a conference with school officials. Reinstatement of the suspended student shall not be contingent upon attendance by the student’s parent or guardian at the conference.

## 2. Notice to Parents/Guardians

At the time of suspension, the Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense(s) committed by the student as well as the date the student may return to school following the suspension. In addition, the notice may also state the time when the student may return to school. If Charter School officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

## 3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Placement/Expulsion

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension.

Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the Principal or designee, the student and the student's guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the student should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. In such instances when the Charter School has determined a suspension period shall be extended, such extension shall be made only after a conference is held with the student or the student's parent/guardian, unless the student and the student's parent/guardian fail to attend the conference.

This determination will be made by the Principal or designee upon either of the following determinations: 1) the student's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the student poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the student's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

## 4. Homework Assignments During Suspension

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(a), upon the request of a parent, a legal guardian or other person holding the right to make education decisions for the student, or the affected student, a teacher shall provide to a student in any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, who has been suspended from school for two (2) or more school days, the homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(b), if a homework assignment that is requested pursuant to Section 47606.2(a) and turned into the teacher by the student either upon the student's return to school from suspension or within the timeframe originally prescribed by the teacher, whichever is later, is not graded before the end of the academic term, that assignment shall not be included in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class.



D. Authority to Expel

As required by Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)(ii), students recommended for expulsions are entitled to a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer to determine whether the student should be expelled. The procedures herein provide for such a hearing and the notice of said hearing, as required by law.

A student may be expelled either by the neutral and impartial CMP Board following a hearing before it or by the CMP Board upon the recommendation of a neutral and impartial Administrative Panel to be assigned by the CMP Board as needed. The Administrative Panel shall consist of at least three (3) members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the student nor a member of the CMP Board. Each entity shall be presided over by a designated neutral hearing chairperson. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense, and the Board of Directors shall make the final determination.

E. Expulsion Procedures

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Principal or designee determines that the student has committed an expellable offense and recommends the student for expulsion.

In the event an Administrative Panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the CMP Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session (complying with all student confidentiality rules under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) unless the student makes a written request for a public hearing in open session three (3) days prior to the date of the scheduled hearing.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the student. The notice shall include:

1. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of Charter School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
4. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the school to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student and/or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;

6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

F. Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

The Charter School may, upon finding a good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which shall be examined only by the Charter School or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the student.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of their right to (a) receive five (5) days' notice of their scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of their choosing present in the hearing at the time the complaining witness testifies, which may include a parent/guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. The Charter School must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the entity conducting the hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which the complaining witness may leave the hearing room.
4. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours the complaining witness is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the entity presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The entity conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany the complaining witness to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the Charter School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the Charter School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the

complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising their discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom they believe is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.

8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the student at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have their testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are not alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the entity conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

G. Record of Hearing

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

H. Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the CMP Board or

Administrative Panel determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the expelled student, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

## I Expulsion Decision

The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a written recommendation to the CMP Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The CMP Board shall make the final determination regarding the expulsion within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The decision of the CMP Board is final.

If the Administrative Panel decides not to recommend expulsion, or the Board of Directors ultimately decides not to expel, the student shall immediately be returned to their educational program.

The Board of Directors may also determine to suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order for a period of not more than one (1) calendar year from the date of the expulsion hearing and return the student to the student's previous educational program under a probationary status and rehabilitation plan to be determined by the Board. During the period of the suspension of the expulsion order, the student is deemed to be on probationary status. The Board of Directors may revoke the suspension of an expulsion order under this section if the student commits any of the enumerated offenses listed above or violates any of the Charter School's rules and regulations governing student conduct. If the Board revokes the suspension of an expulsion order, the student may be expelled under the terms of the original expulsion order. The Board of Directors shall apply the criteria for suspending the enforcement of the expulsion order equally to all students, including individuals with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code Section 56026. The Board of Directors shall further comply with the provisions set forth under Education Code Section 48917, except as otherwise expressly set forth herein.

## J. Written Notice to Expel

The Principal or designee, following a decision of the CMP Governing Board to expel, shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the CMP Governing Board's adopted findings of fact, to the student and the student's parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following:

1. Notice of the specific offense committed by the student
2. Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the Charter School.

The Principal or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the chartering authority. This notice shall include the following:

1. The student's name
2. The specific expellable offense committed by the student

**K. Disciplinary Records**

The Charter School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the Charter School. Such records shall be made available to the District upon request.

**L. No Right to Appeal**

The student shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Charter School as the Governing Board decision to expel shall be final.

**M. Expelled Students/Alternative Education**

Parents/guardians of students who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence. The Charter School shall work cooperatively with parents/guardians as requested by parents/guardians or by the school district of residence to assist with locating alternative placements during expulsion.

**N. Rehabilitation Plans**

Students who are expelled from the Charter School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the CMP Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the student may reapply to the Charter School for readmission.

**O. Readmission or Admission of Previously Expelled Student**

The decision to readmit a student after the end of the student's expulsion term or to admit a previously expelled student from another school, school district or charter school who has not been readmitted/admitted to another school or school district after the end of the

student's expulsion term, shall be in the sole discretion of the CMP Board following a meeting with the Principal and the student and student's parent/guardian or representative to determine whether the student has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the student poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Principal shall make a recommendation to the CMP Board following the meeting regarding the Principal's determination. The CMP Board shall then make a final decision regarding readmission or admission of the student during the closed session of a public meeting, reporting out any action taken during closed session consistent with the requirements of the Brown Act. The student's readmission is also contingent upon the Charter School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission or admission to the Charter School.

P. Notice to Teachers

The Charter School shall notify teachers of each student who has engaged in or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in any of the acts listed in Education Code Section 49079 and the corresponding enumerated offenses set forth above.

Q. Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion or Involuntary Removal of Students with Disabilities

1. Notification of SELPA

The Charter School shall immediately notify the SELPA and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the SELPA for the discipline of any student with a disability or student who the Charter School or SELPA would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability.

2. Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (which could constitute a change of placement and the student's IEP would reflect this change), and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504 Plan; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

3. Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a

code of student conduct, the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504 Plan, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b) If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the Charter School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP/504 Team shall:

- a) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the Charter School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;
- b) If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- c) Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent/guardian and the Charter School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the Charter School, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a direct result of the failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan, then the Charter School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

#### 4. Due Process Appeals

The parent/guardian of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of

Administrative Hearings or by utilizing the dispute provisions of the 504 Policy and Procedures.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent/guardian or the Charter school, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer in accordance with state and federal law, including 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k), until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting unless the parent/guardian and the Charter School agree otherwise.

In accordance with 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(3), if a parent/guardian disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or if the Charter School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, the parent/guardian or Charter School may request a hearing.

In such an appeal, a hearing officer may: (1) return a child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed; or (2) order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

## 5. Special Circumstances

Charter School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

The Principal or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- a) Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 U.S.C. Section 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- b) Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- c) Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

## 6. Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP/504 Team.



## 7. Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEA and who has violated the School's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the Charter School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

The Charter School shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- a) The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to Charter School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
- b) The parent/guardian has requested an evaluation of the child.
- c) The child's teacher, or other Charter School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other Charter School supervisory personnel.

If the Charter School knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If the Charter School had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. The Charter School shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however the student shall remain in the education placement determined by the Charter School pending the results of the evaluation.

The Charter School shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

# Appendix 14: Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement

# Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement 2020 – 2025

Governing Board Approved 12/9/19

Current technology is modifying the way in which information is accessed, communicated, and transferred. These changes may also alter instruction and student learning. The California Montessori Project (CMP) offers students in the classroom and staff access to technologies that may include electronic mail (through Internet access), Internet connections, and equipment, such as computers and multimedia hardware.

With access to computers comes the availability of materials that may not be considered appropriate in the classroom. On a global network it is nearly impossible to control all materials available. Ultimately, the school staff, parents, and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that students should follow when using these technology resources. CMP supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to allow their student access to any aspect of these technologies.

**The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA):** addresses concerns about access in schools and libraries to the Internet and other information resources. For any school or library that receives federal discounts for Internet access or for internal connections, CIPA imposes certain requirements. Therefore, as CMP does receive such funds, we are taking every effort to follow CIPA's guidelines to restrict:

- a) Access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web through the use of a Content Filter appliance;
- b) The safety and security of minors when using electronic mail and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- c) Unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- d) Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- e) Minors' access to inappropriate or harmful materials.

**The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA):** protects the privacy rights of children under the age of 13. CMP is pleased to offer individualized instruction to students through a variety of technological resources. In some instances, CMP will offer educational websites or applications that utilize personal information of students, such as name, screen name, user name, etc., in order to provide the individualized instruction. A list of such websites and applications may be found on CMP's website. Additionally, CMP tries to avoid websites and applications that market or sell student personal information. Should such a website or application be utilized for educational purposes, it will be identified on CMP's website and parents have the right to opt out of student use of such websites and applications. CMP's website is [www.cacmp.org](http://www.cacmp.org)

## **CMP CODE OF CONDUCT:**

The school code of conduct, as well as this document, governs access to and use of technology either owned by CMP or brought onto a CMP campus (i.e. smartphones/smartwatches). The technologies provided are for students and staff to conduct research, enrich educational

experiences, and communicate with others in relation to school work. CMP recognizes the importance of technology and the impact it has on education. As such, we provide devices for student use. Access to technological services is provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent/guardian permission is required. Therefore, based upon the acceptable use guidelines outlined in this document, the system administrator and or other staff, as assigned by the Superintendent, will deem what is inappropriate use, their decision is final. It is the belief of CMP that responsible use of computers and other technology can facilitate an incredible opportunity for learning.

The Internet is an unregulated, worldwide vehicle for communication; information available to staff and students is impossible to completely control. While CMP ensures there are software and policies put in place to protect students and teachers from inappropriate information on the internet, it is the responsibility of the staff and students to make positive choices that will lead to Internet safety.

CMP maintains a public Website. Intranet Web pages may be established and maintained by staff with secondary responsibilities given to students who have the skills necessary. All content will be approved by CMP staff before posting.

1. Smartphones/smartwatches are not to be taken into restrooms or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to other pupils, staff or visitors to the school.
2. Students must ensure that files stored on their smartphone/smartwatches do not contain violent, degrading or offensive images. Images must not be sent or shared with other students or staff.
3. If a student breaches any of these rules, the smartphone/smartwatch will be confiscated and given to the school office. The smartphone/smartwatch will be returned at the end of the day when the parent collects it.
4. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged smartphones/smartwatches before school, after school or during school hours.
5. Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable, and will be addressed by the Principal and/or Dean of Students. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.
6. Students are prohibited from victimizing another student and using their smartphone/smartwatch to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website or social media for public viewing. This also includes using smartphone/smartwatch to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent.
7. Staff members may not connect their cellular phones and other personal cellular or Bluetooth devices to the CMP network.

### **Exceptions Regarding Wearable Technology and Smartphones:**

Notwithstanding the above, students shall not be prohibited from using or possessing a smartphone/smartwatch on campus, while attending school-sponsored activities, or under the supervision or control of school employees under any of the following circumstances:

1. In the case of an emergency, or in response to a perceived threat of danger.
2. When a teacher or administrator of the school district, county office of education, or charter school grants permission to a pupil to possess or use a smartphone/smartwatch, subject to any reasonable limitation imposed by that teacher or administrator.
3. When a licensed physician or surgeon determines the possession or use of a smartphone/smartwatch is necessary for the health or well-being of the student.
4. When the possession, or use of, a smartphone/smartwatch is required by a student's individualized education program.

### **Technology Rights, Responsibility and Rules of Etiquette (both Staff and Student):**

1. All use of CMP's technology resources are for the sole purpose of completing CMP assigned homework, facilitating discussion, completing research projects or for any other assignment that has been given by the student's teacher. Devices are not to be used for anything personal. Students who choose to research inappropriate content are responsible for this choice. While CMP makes every effort to block inappropriate content, it is impossible to block everything. If a student chooses to use a device on campus to search for inappropriate content, the student will be held responsible for their choice and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Minor infractions may result in the denial, revocation, or suspension of specific privileges by CMP administration or staff. Serious infractions may result in up to 5 days' suspension and may lead to expulsion.
2. Staff and students are expected to take care of the devices that will be assigned to and used by them. Any intentional damage caused to a CMP device will be the responsibility of the staff or student the device is assigned to. Continued misuse of CMP devices will result in the inability to use these devices. If a student is assigned a device, this will be the device that they use for the next few years and it should be treated as such.
3. If your child is assigned a specific device for school use, that does not create ownership of the device. Devices are not to be altered in anyway; this means no stickers, pens, paint or any other personalization shall be made to any device owned by CMP.
4. CMP computers, Chromebooks, tablets and other technology devices are to remain on the CMP campus to which the student is enrolled and shall not be permitted to go home with the student, student's parent or friend.
5. Any actions taken that disregards CMP's Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement will result in appropriate disciplinary action and technology use may be suspended. Please fully read and understand the Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement.
6. Use of the electronic media and software provided by CMP is a privilege that offers a wealth of information and resources for research. Where it is available, this resource is offered to staff and students at no cost. In order to maintain this privilege, users agree to learn and comply with all of the provisions of this policy.

7. CMP staff members, when assigned a device, are responsible for the care of the device. This includes returning them to the CMP Technology Dept. and/or the CMP Human Resources or Operations Dept. when requested. Regular maintenance is required and the CMP Technology Dept. may ask staff to return their CMP assigned device for annual or semi-annual maintenance.
8. CMP staff members, when assigned a CMP device, are responsible for the care and protection of their assigned device. If the device is lost, stolen, damaged or altered, either intentionally or unintentionally, the CMP staff member may be asked to pay for the replacement of the device. Determination of replacement will be at the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her assignee and the replacement device will be purchased through the CMP Technology Dept.
9. CMP staff members, when assigned a CMP device, may not use their assigned device for personal use. The assigned device is provided for the sole purpose of performing the job duties for which the CMP staff member has been assigned and hired to perform. The CMP assigned device is not to be shared with other staff members, students or non-CMP personnel and must be surrendered to CMP administration upon request or upon termination of employment.

**Responsible Use (both staff and student):**

1. All use of the Internet, by both staff and students must be in support of educational and research objectives consistent with the mission and objectives of the CMP.
2. Proper codes of conduct in electronic communication must be used. In news groups, giving out personal information is inappropriate. When using e-mail, extreme caution must always be taken in revealing any information of a personal nature. Email message recipients will be limited to CMP staff, teachers and other students. Email messages shall not be sent to any other recipient unless approved by the student's teacher or other CMP Admin. An exception will be made for students participating in PC Pals but will be limited to the corresponding Intel employee that each student has been assigned.
3. Network accounts are to be used only by the authorized owner of the account for the authorized purpose.
4. All communications and information downloaded via the network should be assumed to be the private property of CMP.
5. Users will be expected to exhibit exemplary behavior on the network as a representative of your school and community. Be polite!
6. From time to time, CMP will make determinations on whether specific uses of the network are consistent with the responsible use practice.

**Irresponsible Use of CMP Technology:**

1. Giving out personal information about yourself or another person, including home address and phone number, is strictly prohibited.
2. Any use of the network, by staff or student, for commercial or for-profit purposes is prohibited.
3. Use of the network for personal business shall be cause for disciplinary action.

4. Any use of the network for advertisement is prohibited.
5. Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the network.
6. No use of the network shall serve to disrupt the use of the network by others. Hardware and/or software shall not be destroyed, modified, or abused in any way.
7. Malicious use of the network to infiltrate a computer or software program and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited.
8. Hate mail, chain letters, harassment, discriminatory remarks, and other antisocial behaviors are prohibited on the network.
9. The unauthorized installation of any software, including shareware and freeware, for use on CMP's computers is prohibited.
10. Use of the network to access or view pornographic material, inappropriate text files (as determined by CMP administrators), or files dangerous to the integrity of the local area network is prohibited.
11. The CMP network may not be used by staff or student, for downloading entertainment software or other files not related to the mission and objectives of the CMP or for transfer to a user's home computer, personal computer, or other media. This prohibition pertains to freeware, shareware, copyrighted commercial and non-commercial software, and all other forms of software and files not directly related to the instructional and administrative purposes of CMP.
12. Downloading, copying, otherwise duplicating, and/or distributing copyrighted materials without the specific written permission of the copyright owner is prohibited, except that duplication and/or distribution of materials for educational purposes is permitted when such duplication and/or distribution would fall within the Fair Use Doctrine of the United States Copyright Law (Title 17, USC).
13. Use of the network by staff or student for any unlawful purpose is prohibited.
14. Use of profanity, obscenity, racist terms, or other language that may be offensive to another user is prohibited. Any behavior that would be considered bullying is strictly prohibited.
15. Playing games is prohibited unless specifically authorized by a teacher for instructional purposes.
16. Establishing network or Internet connections for live communications, including voice and/or video (relay chat), is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the system administrator.

### **Rules of Etiquette:**

1. Be polite. Do not write or send abusive messages. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
2. Altering the operating system, as well as general visual appearances of a computer is prohibited. Such changes may include but are not limited to screensavers, backgrounds, sounds, display settings, network settings, applying stickers, tape, and any other sticky substance to the outside of a computer is also prohibited.

3. Malicious attempts of vandalism to harm or destroy data or equipment will not be tolerated. Use of personal data or equipment will not be allowed without prior approval. Additionally, for staff who have Tech Dept. approval to use their personal device, they must provide proof of current and regular updates on Anti-virus protection, as well as regular disk scans.
4. Removal of the CMP Asset Tag on the back, side or top of any CMP device is prohibited.
5. Non-educational games are strictly prohibited.

Violation of any of the above Rules of Etiquette and Responsibilities may result in loss of access or other disciplinary actions as outlined above.

### **Parents,**

**Please read, fill out, sign and date a copy of the CMP Technology User Agreement and Parent Permission Form. If a copy is not attached to the bottom of this document, please ask your campus office staff to provide a copy to you. Once completed, please sign and return it to your campus office.**

**You will be required to read, fill out, sign and date a copy of the CMP Technology User Agreement and Parent Permission Form at the beginning of every school year for as long as your child is attending a CMP school.**

### **CMP Staff,**

**Please read, fill out, sign and date a copy of the CMP Technology User Agreement attached to the bottom of this Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement. By doing so, you are agreeing to the terms of the CMP Information Technology Responsible Use Agreement and understand the rules and regulations governing the use of your CMP assigned computer, tablet or other device and the use of our network. If a copy of the CMP User Agreement form is not attached to the bottom of this document, please ask your campus Administrative Assistant or the CMP Technology Dept. to provided one to you.**



## **Appendix 15: Student Policy for Promotion/Retention**

## Student Policy for Promotion/Retention

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19

Montessori instruction accommodates the varying interests and academic development of individual students. The Montessori classroom is structured to provide a multi-age community. The multi-age environment allows accelerated students the opportunity to work on advanced academics while continuing relationships with their classroom community. Each plane of development comes with the opportunity to be mentored at the younger age of the plane of development, and then to develop leadership and mentorship skills at the older age of the plane. Each plane of development considers the preparation needed to continue success at the next plane. Student's progress is noted each year through the completion of the Montessori and State Standard curriculum which is necessary to support the student's success at the next grade level.

### **The following are considered under exceptional circumstances only:**

When reviewing promotion (accelerating a student an additional grade level), the child's social and emotional growth is to be taken into account. Parents, teachers, and the principal will determine if this is the best course of action for the student by using criteria such as intellectual maturity, academic achievement, including standardized testing, physical, social, psychological, and emotional considerations.

Retention (remaining at the same grade level for a second year) is an action that may be taken to assist a student to be more successful in their learning. Risk for retention should be identified as early in a child's school career as possible. As soon as identified, the teachers and principal should begin interventions to assist the student in areas of concern. Parents should be included in this discussion as early in the school year as possible.

Students are to be identified for retention or promotion on the basis of:

- Academic achievement (Report Cards and Assessment Outcomes) and standardized testing
- Physical, social, psychological, and emotional considerations
- Information provided by teacher(s), parents, or guardians, and other staff who may be working with the student

The demonstration of individual student learning is to be measured by, but not limited to, the following:

1. Student grades in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one full grade level above / below)
2. Albanesi (Montessori) assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one full grade level above/below)
3. State testing scores in Language Arts and Math (not meeting standards/exceeding standards in all subject areas)
4. Writing Assessment (same as above)
5. The outcome of intervention goals determined by the Response to Intervention (RTI) process.

## **Special Education**

Students with disabilities which interfere with the major life activity of learning are provided protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Their educational opportunities will be addressed through the development of accommodation plans.

Students whose physical, mental, or learning disabilities are provided protection under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have their educational needs supported through Special Education (specially designed instruction) and related services (services which enable them to benefit from their Special Education program).

Modifications of curriculum and the grading rubric can be utilized for students on an IEP (Individual Education Plan). Accommodations put in place for students who have a 504 Plan or are in Special Education are not used when considering retention of the student.

Retention may be considered for students on a 504 Plan or IEP if the academic, social, and emotional needs of the student indicate that the student would not benefit from promotion to the next grade level.

## **Appeals Process**

When the recommendation for retention or promotion is not agreed upon by the parents/guardians, they have the right to appeal to the Promotion/Retention Panel. A meeting will be scheduled with the parent, campus administration, and panel to discuss the appeal and review any additional materials/information that may provide a compelling reason to change the original decision.

# Appendix 16: Student Freedom of Speech/Expression: Public Code Policy

# **Student Freedom of Speech/Expression: Publication Code Policy**

Governing Board Approved 10/14/19

Free inquiry and exchange of ideas are essential parts of a democratic education. Students attending the California Montessori Project (“School”) have the right to exercise free expression including, but not limited to the use of bulletin boards, distribution of printed materials or petitions, and wearing buttons, badges and other insignia. The Governing Board (“Board”) respects students’ rights to express ideas and opinions, take stands and support causes, whether controversial or not, through their speech, their writing, their clothing, and the printed materials they choose to post or distribute.

Student liberties of expression shall be limited only as allowed by law in order to maintain an orderly school environment and to protect the rights, health and safety of all members of the School community. Expression shall be prohibited which is obscene, libelous, or slanderous. Also prohibited shall be material that so incites pupils as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on school premises or the violation of lawful school regulations, or the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the School.

## **Freedom of Expression Procedures**

### **On Campus Expression:**

#### **Circulation of Petitions and Distribution of Other Printed Matter**

Students shall be allowed to circulate petitions and to distribute circulars, leaflets, newspapers, pictorial or other printed matter whether they are official or unofficial school publications. Writers and editors of unofficial student publications who violate any state or federal law may be disciplined after distribution. Students distributing or posting any materials which are obscene, libelous or slanderous, or which demonstrably incite students to commit unlawful acts on School premises, violate School rules, or substantially disrupt the School’s orderly operation will be subject to disciplinary action.

The following points apply to official or unofficial student publications:

- Schools may disassociate themselves from the material printed inasmuch as it is not an official publication of the School.
- Leaflets, pictorial and other printed matter to be distributed, as well as petitions for signature shall be submitted to the Principal, or designee, at least one school day prior to distribution or circulation.
- All printed matter and petitions distributed or circulated on school property shall bear the name and the address or contact location of the sponsoring organization or individual.
- The time of distribution or circulation shall be limited to the half hour before school begins, during the lunch period, and the half hour after school is dismissed.

- The location of distribution or circulation shall be limited to locations that do not obstruct the normal flow of traffic within school or at entrances.
- The manner of distribution shall be such that coercion is not used to induce students to accept the printed matter or to sign petitions. Materials are not to be left undistributed or stacked for pick-up while unattended at any place in the School or on School grounds.
- Pupil editors of official school publications shall be responsible for assigning and editing the news, editorial, and feature content of their publications subject to the limitations of the section. However, it shall be the responsibility of a journalism adviser or advisers of pupil publications within each School campus to supervise the production of the pupil staff, to maintain professional standards of English and journalism, and to maintain the provisions of this section.
- There shall be no prior restraint of material prepared for official school publications except insofar as it violates this policy. School officials shall have the burden of showing justification without undue delay prior to a limitation of pupil expression under this section.
- School administration may not ban the distribution of literature because it contains advertising.

### **Buttons, Badges and Other Insignia of Symbolic Expression**

Students will be permitted to wear buttons, badges, armbands, and other insignia as a form of expression.

Students will be subject to disciplinary action when expressive activities such as the distribution of materials, wearing of buttons or displays, or posting of notices or other materials:

1. Are obscene, libelous or slanderous;
2. Incite students so as to create a clear and present danger of the imminent commission of unlawful acts on school premises or of the violation of lawful School regulations or of the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the School;
3. Express or advocate racial, ethnic or religious prejudice so as to create a clear and present danger of imminent commission of unlawful acts on School premises or of the violation of lawful School regulations or of the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the School;
4. Are distributed in violation of the time, place and manner requirements;
5. Are in violation of current federal, state and local laws.

No teacher or administrator shall interfere with this practice on the grounds that the message may be unpopular with students or faculty.

### **Use of Bulletin Boards**

Students will be provided with bulletin boards, upon request, for use in posting student materials

on campus locations convenient to student use. Posted material must be in compliance with other sections of this Policy. School administration shall require that notices or other communications shall be officially dated before posting and that such material be removed after a reasonable time to assure full access to the bulletin boards.

### **Other Forms of Student Expression**

Forms of student expression may include, but are not limited to speech, debate, assemblies, posters, bulletin board announcements, and the wearing of buttons, badges and armbands. In general, the laws pertaining to all forms of student expression are the same. The rights of students to express their opinions are recognized by law and are not limited to verbal expression. The basic guidelines listed above for publications apply to all forms of student expression. No teacher or administrator shall interfere with such expression on the grounds that the message may be unpopular with students or faculty.

In conforming to state and federal laws, student expression must obey copyright laws; for example, student posters cannot use nationally registered and copyrighted characters such as those from Walt Disney or “Peanuts” publications.

Conduct by a student in class which for any reason materially disrupts class work or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others is not immunized by the constitutional guarantee of free speech. The use of “fighting words” or epithets is not constitutionally protected where:

- The speech, considered objectively, is abusive and insulting rather than a communication of ideas, and
- The speech is actually used in an abusive manner in a situation that presents an actual danger that it will cause a breach of the peace.

### **Off-Campus Expression:**

A student shall be subject to discipline for off-campus expression, including expression on off-campus Internet web sites, when such expression poses a threat to the safety of students, staff, or school property, or substantially disrupts the educational program. The superintendent or designee shall document the impact the expression had or could be expected to have on the school program.

Conduct by a student outside of class which materially disrupts class work or involves substantial disorder or an invasion of the rights of others is not protected by the constitutional guarantee of free speech.

### **Appeals:**

The pupil and a School staff member shall attempt to resolve the problem before consulting the administrative staff. If the issue cannot be resolved between the staff member and the pupil, the pupil may appeal the decision to the site administrator, and then to the Charter School Superintendent or their designee. As a final step, the pupil may follow the School’s complaint procedures as outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook.

# **Appendix 17: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policy**



# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Policy

Governing Board Approved 2/10/20

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) and the California Education Code, including Sections 49060 et seq., provide that a parent has the right to inspect and confirm the accuracy of education records relating to his or her child. FERPA and the California Education Code also restrict the access of outside parties to education records.

## Definitions

### **Education Record**

An education record is any written or computerized document, file, entry, or record containing information directly relating to a student that is compiled and maintained by California Montessori Project (CMP / School). Such information includes but is not limited to:

1. Date and place of birth; parent and/or guardian’s address, and where the parties may be contacted for emergency purposes.
2. Grades, test scores, courses taken, academic specializations and school activities;
3. Special education records;
4. Disciplinary records;
5. Medical and health records;
6. Attendance records including attendance records from previous schools;
7. Personal information such as, but not limited to, student identification numbers, social security numbers, photographs, or any other type of information that aids in identification of a student. Please note CMP shall not collect or solicit social security numbers or the last four digits of social security numbers from students or their parents/guardians, unless otherwise required to do so by state or federal law.

CMP shall not use any school resources or data to create a registry based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or national origin.

An education record does not include any of the following:

1. Records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record;
2. Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the School that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement;
3. Records relating to a School employee that are made and maintained in the normal course of business, relate exclusively to the individual in that individual's capacity as an employee; and are not available for use for any other purpose;
4. Records that only contain information about an individual after they are no longer a student at CMP;

5. Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.

## **Parent**

Parent means a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian.

## **Annual Notification to Parents and Eligible Students**

At the beginning of each school year, CMP shall provide parents with a notice of their rights under FERPA. The notice shall inform the parents that they have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student’s education records;
- Seek amendment of the student’s education records that the parent believes to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights;
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA and the Code of Federal Regulations authorize disclosure without consent; and
- File with the Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by CMP to comply with the requirements of FERPA and its promulgated regulations.

The notice must also include the following:

- The procedure for exercising the right to inspect and review education records;
- The procedure for requesting amendment of records;
- Assurances CMP will not release information to third parties for immigration-enforcement purposes, except as required by law or court order;
- A description of the types of student records maintained by CMP;
- A list of the circumstances or conditions under which CMP might release student information to outside people or entities;
- A statement that, unless CMP is providing information for a legitimate educational purpose under FERPA and the California Education Code or directory information, the School shall notify parents, and receive their written consent, before it releases a student’s personally identifiable information.

## **Parental Requests Relating to Education Records**

Parents have the right to review the student's education records. In order to do so, parents shall submit a request to review education records in writing to the campus administration office. Within 30 days, CMP shall comply with the request. If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the education records, CMP will provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the requested records or make other arrangements for inspection and review of the requested records.

### **Copies of Education Records**

CMP will provide copies of requested documents within 10 working days of a request for copies. The School may charge reasonable fees for copies it provides to parents, unless it effectively prevents a parent from exercising the right to inspect and review the education records. The charge will not include a fee to search for or to retrieve the education records.

### **Request for Amendment to Education Records**

If upon review, a parent discovers any information or notation that is factually inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's right of privacy, they may request, in writing, that CMP amend the record. The request must be submitted within thirty (30) days of the discovery of the inaccurate or misleading information or a violation of the student's right of privacy. The School will respond within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the request to amend. CMP's response will be in writing, and if the request for amendment is denied, the School will set forth the reason for the denial and inform the parent of their right to a hearing challenging the content of the education record.

### **Hearing to Challenge Education Record**

If CMP denies a parent or eligible student's request to amend an education record, the parent may request in writing that they be given the opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the student's education records on the grounds that the information contained in the education records is inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the privacy rights of the student.

The hearing to challenge the education record shall be held within 30 days of the date of the request for a hearing. A notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing will be sent by CMP to the parent or eligible student no later than 20 days before the hearing.

The hearing will be conducted by the California Montessori Project Superintendent or their designee. The parent will be given a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues relating to the challenge to the education record. The parent may also, at their own expense, be assisted or represented by one or more individuals of their choice, including an attorney. The superintendent or designee's decision will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. Within 30 days of the conclusion of the hearing, the School's decision regarding the challenge will be made in writing and will include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it will amend the record accordingly and inform the parent of the amendment in writing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information in the education record is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall inform the parent of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record, or state why they disagree with the decision of the School, or both. If the School places a statement by the parent in the education records of a student, it will maintain the statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained, and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

### **Disclosure of Education Records**

CMP must have a signed and dated written permission from the parent before releasing any information from a student's education record with the exceptions listed below. With the exceptions listed below, the School will not release education records to any person or entity outside the School without the written consent of a parent. The written permission must specify the records that may be disclosed, the purpose of the disclosure, and the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. When disclosure is made pursuant to written permission, the parent may request a copy of the disclosed records. Signed and dated written consent may include a record and signature in electronic form if it identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic consent and indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent. CMP shall permanently keep the consent notice with the record file. A parent is not required to sign the consent form. If the parent refuses to provide written consent for the release of student information that is not otherwise subject to release, the School shall not release the information.

CMP shall avoid the disclosure of information that might indicate a student's or family's citizenship or immigration status if the disclosure is not authorized by FERPA. No student information shall be disclosed to immigration authorities for immigration-enforcement purposes without a court order or judicial subpoena. Immigration-enforcement agencies do not have a legitimate educational interest in a student's or family's citizenship or immigration status.

Except for investigations of child abuse, child neglect, or child dependency, or when the subpoena served on the School prohibits disclosure, CMP shall provide parental notification of any court orders, warrants, or subpoenas before responding to such requests.

CMP will only disclose personally identifiable information on the condition that the receiving party not disclose the information to any party without the prior consent of the parent and that the receiving party use it for the purposes for which the disclosure was made. This restriction does not apply to disclosures that fall within the disclosure exceptions listed below, and the School maintains the appropriate records, as described below. Except for disclosures pursuant to a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, to parents, the School will inform a receiving party of the requirement that the party not disclose the information to any other party without the prior writing

consent of the parent and that the receiving party use it for the purpose for which the disclosure was made.

If CMP receives an information request related to a student's or family's immigration or citizenship status, the School personnel shall take the following action steps:

- Notify the superintendent or their designee about the information request;
- Provide students and families with appropriate notice and a description of the immigration officer's request;
- Document any verbal or written request for information by immigration authorities;
- Unless prohibited, provide parents with any documents issued by the immigration-enforcement officer.

CMP will train its personnel regarding gathering and handling sensitive student information as identified in this policy.

CMP will disclose education records, without consent, to the following parties:

- a. School employees who have a legitimate educational interest as defined by 34 C.F.R. Part 99;
- b. Contractors, consultants, volunteers or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions may be considered a school official provided that the outside party performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use employees, is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of records, and is subject to the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 99.33(a) governing the use and redisclosure of personally identifiable information;
- c. Other schools to which a student seeks or intends to enroll;
- d. Certain government officials listed in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1) in order to carry out lawful functions;
- e. Appropriate parties in connection a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid to a student if it is necessary to determine eligibility, amount of aid, conditions for aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of the aid;
- f. Organizations conducting certain studies for the School in accordance with 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(F);
- g. Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
- h. Parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
- i. Individuals who have obtained lawful court orders or subpoenas, with prior notice to parents with some exceptions;

- j. Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies;
- k. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law;
- l. A victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense. The disclosure may only include final results of the disciplinary proceedings conducted by CMP with respect to that alleged crime or offense. The School may disclose the final results of the disciplinary proceeding, regardless of whether the School concluded a violation was committed;
- m. The Secretary of Agriculture, or authorized representative from the Food and Nutrition Service or contractors acting on behalf of the Food and Nutrition Service, for the purpose of conducting program monitoring, evaluations and performance measurements of the School, provided the data is reported in the appropriate form provided by law;
- n. An agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who has the right to access a student's case plan, when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State law, for the care and protection of the student, provided those records will not be disclosed by such agency or organization, except as required by law;
- o. Other disclosures as provided by applicable law.

### **Requirements in Specific Disclosure Situations**

If CMP education records pursuant to *Disclosure of Education Records, b*, above without consent to officials of another school, school system or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, CMP will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent at their last known address, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent. Additionally, the School will give the parent, upon request, a copy of the record that was disclosed and give the parent, upon request, an opportunity for hearing pursuant to *Disclosure of Education Records, c*.

### **Record Keeping Requirements**

CMP will maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records of each student for as long as the records are maintained. For each request, the record must include the following information: the parties who have requested or received the information and the legitimate interests the parties had in requesting or obtaining the information.

For disclosures of personally identifiable information to institutions that make disclosures of the information on behalf of CMP in accordance with 34 C.F.R. 99.33(b), the record must include the names of the additional parties to which the receiving party may disclose the information on behalf

of the School and the legitimate interests that each of the additional parties has in requesting or obtaining the information.

These record keeping requirements do not apply to requests from or disclosure to parents, School officials with a legitimate purpose of inspecting the records, a party with written consent from the parent, or a party seeking or receiving the records as directed by a court order or subpoena.

The records relating to disclosures of personally identifiable student information may be inspected by parents, School officials (or their assistants) responsible for the custody of the records, and parties authorized by regulations for the purpose of auditing the recordkeeping procedures of the School.

## **Complaints**

Parents have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

**Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202**

## **Appendix 18: Annual Notification of California Law Regarding Safe Storage of Firearms**



## MEMO

**To:** Parents and Guardians of Students at the California Montessori Project

**Subject:** California Law Regarding Safe Storage of Firearms

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The purpose of this memorandum is to inform and remind parents and legal guardians of all students at California Montessori Project of their responsibilities for keeping firearms out of the hands of children as required by California law.

To help everyone understand their legal responsibilities, this memorandum spells out California law regarding the storage of firearms. Please take some time to review this memorandum and evaluate your own personal practices to assure you and your family are in compliance with California law.

To help everyone understand their legal responsibilities, this memorandum spells out California law regarding the storage of firearms. Please take some time to review this memorandum and evaluate your own personal practices to assure that you and your family are in compliance with California law.

- With very limited exceptions, California makes a person criminally liable for keeping any firearm, loaded or unloaded, within any premises that are under their custody and control where that person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, and the child obtains access to the firearm and thereby (1) causes death or injury to the child or any other person; (2) carries the firearm off the premises or to a public place, including to any preschool or school grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, or to any school-sponsored event, activity, or performance; **or** (3) unlawfully brandishes the firearm to others.<sup>1</sup>
  - **Note:** The criminal penalty may be significantly greater if someone dies or suffers great bodily injury as a result of the child gaining access to the firearm.
- With very limited exceptions, California also makes it a crime for a person to negligently store or leave any firearm, loaded or unloaded, on their premises in a location where the person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to it without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, unless reasonable action is taken to secure the firearm against access by the child, even where a minor **never** actually accesses the firearm.<sup>2</sup>
- In addition to potential fines and terms of imprisonment, as of January 1, 2020, a gun owner found criminally liable under these California laws faces prohibitions from possessing, controlling, owning, receiving, or purchasing a firearm for 10 years.<sup>3</sup>
- Finally, a parent or guardian may also be civilly liable for damages resulting from the discharge of a firearm by that person's child or ward.<sup>4</sup>

**Note:** Your county or city may have additional restrictions regarding the safe storage of firearms.

Thank you for helping to keep our children and schools safe. Remember that the easiest and safest way to comply with the law is to keep firearms in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders the firearm inoperable.

Sincerely,

California Montessori Project

Date published: 07/01/2024

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<sup>1</sup> See California Penal Code sections 25100 through 25125 and 25200 through 25220.

<sup>2</sup> See California Penal Code section 25100(c).

<sup>3</sup> See California Civil Code Section 29805.

<sup>4</sup> See California Civil Code Section 1714.3.