

James Simons Montessori School



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025



Welcome to James Simons Montessori School

James Simons Montessori School is a safe, inclusive, and supportive public Montessori community. We inspire students to become confident, motivated, and successful life-long learners.

The information contained in this Parent Handbook will introduce you to the philosophy and organization of James Simons. It will serve as a quick reference to the daily operating policies and procedures. Your familiarity with these processes will help make your child's day a most rewarding experience.

The staff at James Simons works daily to meet the needs of every child who walks through the doors regardless of ethnicity, background, gender, etc. The staff truly loves and cares for children. We look forward to working with you to provide a secure foundation for your child so that together we can realize successful growth and learning.

Not all policies and procedures can be listed here.

We will be happy to answer any questions you may have, so please feel free to contact the school.

Your James Simons Family

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Superintendent of Schools, Charleston County School District

Anita Huggins

CCSD Superintendent of Schools Anita Huggins has served the district for over 25 years. During her time in the role, Anita is committed to three priorities:

- Building upon the success of her predecessors, she will continue to improve student outcomes for all students while working intentionally to close the achievement and opportunity gaps.
- Anita is focused on supporting classrooms and teachers. She strongly believes the classroom teacher is the most important factor in a student's success.
- She's committed to streamlining school-based support for teachers and students.

Huggins is a beloved educator whose relentless commitment and deep sense of service have been instrumental to Charleston County School District over the last two decades. As Superintendent of Schools, her passion for closing the achievement gap for students of color has been demonstrated through district-wide efforts in planning literacy and mathematics educational opportunities that serve all students, including her involvement in key ESSER funding initiatives in the D20 (downtown), D4 (North Charleston) and D23 (Hollywood/Ravenel) constituent areas. Ms. Huggins was charged with designing, executing, and measuring the success of programs that support Vision 2027, which aspires to have all students reading at grade level by fifth grade by the Spring of 2027. She was also a key architect of the work that led CCSD to its highest-ever SC Ready achievement scores.

Prior to being named Deputy Superintendent as the Interim Chief Transformation Officer, Ms. Huggins was responsible for working with the Superintendent, senior leaders, and other stakeholders to establish the district's vision and develop strategies to meet the needs of all students. Huggins has ensured the use of effective systems coupled with accountability and support structures to serve schools, students, and communities.

Huggins' professional accomplishments include serving as a Riley Institute Diversity Leaders Initiative fellow, English teacher, master teacher, principal, director, and executive director. She has served in various CCSD schools and communities during her tenure, including Simmons-Pinckney Middle School, Burke High School, Edmund A. Burns Elementary School, and Fort Johnson Middle School. As the Executive Director of Educator Effectiveness for over 12 years, Huggins impacted classrooms throughout CCSD by training hundreds of teachers and administrators; she focused on planning for instruction effectively, instructional delivery, and developing conducive environments for learners. In that role, Huggins was instrumental in creating district-wide systems for teacher development, support, and recognition while leading a team that designed and executed An Evening with Stars gala event to recognize teachers and principals. Proceeds from that event supported the Charleston Educator Symposium, a locally-recognized, multi-day professional development event for educators.

Throughout her career, Huggins has presented at numerous conferences, served as a guest lecturer, facilitated and served on various panels, and co-authored journal articles to help grow and support aspiring, novice, and veteran educators. Chair McKinney said of Huggins, “Ms. Huggins’ breadth of experience in Charleston and diverse skill set uniquely positions her for this role. A respected educator with a heart for kids, her enthusiasm and passion for ensuring all students achieve at very high levels will serve students and schools well.”

Huggins holds bachelor’s degrees in both English and Secondary Education and a master’s degree in Secondary Administration.



About Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), music and other creative and performing arts, career and technical preparation programs, and military.

Charleston County School District Mission

The mission of CCSD is to educate and support every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness.

Charleston County School District Vision

CCSD is a premier school system in which:

- every child is supported in and out of school,
- every child succeeds academically,
- every child will graduate from high school prepared for employment in the modern workforce or credential completion or postsecondary degree, and
- every student, teacher, principal, and staff member is valued and respected with the opportunity to learn every day.

James Simons Montessori School Historical Markers



2013 - Charleston Historical Preservation Society Honors James Simons Elementary

In 2013, the Alliance commemorated five places integral to the Civil Rights movement in Charleston by sponsoring South Carolina Department of Archives and History historical markers at each site.



This school, **James Simons Elementary School**, built in 1919 and designed by local architects Benson & Barbot, was the fifth public elementary school in the city. It opened for the 1919-1920 school year with an enrollment of 600. In 1955 the Charleston Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) petitioned the Charleston school board to desegregate all public city schools including this one. In 1960 nine parents, with support from the NAACP, applied for their children's transfer to four white schools, including James Simons Elementary School. Denied by the board and on appeal, they sued in federal court in 1962 and won their case the next year. On September 3, 1963, eleven black students entered this school and Memminger Elementary School and Charleston and Rivers High Schools. Read more about the history [here](#).



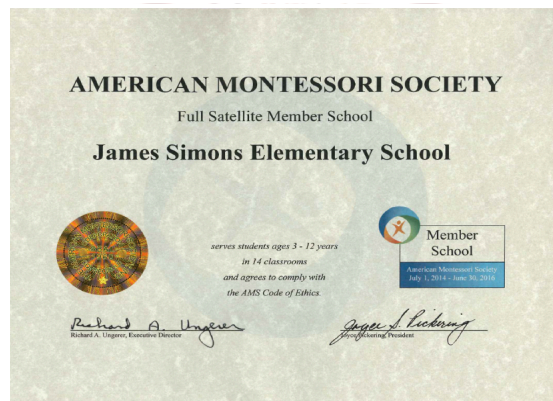
In 1963 James Simons Elementary was one of four elementary schools to desegregate in the city of Charleston. The Charleston Historical Preservation Society has named our school as one of "Seven to Save" sites because of its importance in the Civil Rights era. Read more @ [the Preservation Society's webpage](#).

2014 - James Simons Elementary School Building Officially Dedicated



Pictured here are Barbara Ford Morrison and Oveta Glover, two women who were the first to desegregate James Simons in 1963. They and other honored guests were invited to an official dedication ceremony for the new building on April 30, 2014.

2015 - Member of the American Montessori Society



Members of the AMS support the following goals: ensuring high standards for Montessori schools and teacher education programs; providing professional development for Montessori teachers; raising public awareness and understanding of Montessori education.

Maria Montessori



Maria Montessori was an Italian physician, educator, and innovator, acclaimed for her educational method that builds on the way children learn naturally. She opened the first Montessori school—the Casa dei Bambini, or Children’s House—in Rome on January 6, 1907. Subsequently, she traveled the world and wrote extensively about her approach to education, attracting many devotees. There are now thousands of Montessori schools in countries worldwide.

Maria Montessori was born on August 31, 1870, in the provincial town of Chiaravalle, Italy. Her father was a financial manager for a state-run industry. Her mother, raised in a family that prized education, was well schooled and an avid reader—unusual for Italian women of that time. The same thirst for knowledge took root in young Maria, and she immersed herself in many fields of study before creating the educational method that bears her name.

Beginning in early childhood, Maria lived in Rome, growing up in a paradise of libraries, museums, and fine schools. Maria was a sterling student, confident, ambitious, and unwilling to be limited by traditional expectations for women. At age 13 she entered an all-boys technical institute to prepare for a career in engineering. In time, however, she changed her mind, deciding to become a doctor instead. She applied to the University of Rome’s medical program, but was rejected. Maria took additional courses to better prepare her for entrance to the medical school and persevered. With great effort she gained admittance, opening the door a bit wider for future women in the field.

When she graduated from medical school in 1896, Maria was among Italy’s first female physicians. Though she was not the first female medical school graduate, as reported by many of her biographers, it does not detract from her accomplishment. Defying conventions, norms, and expectations to successfully make her way in this rigorous, male-dominated field required tremendous strength, dedication, and perseverance.

Maria’s early medical practice focused on psychiatry. She later developed an interest in education, attending classes on pedagogy and immersing herself in educational theory. Her studies led her to observe, and call into question, the prevailing methods of teaching children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The opportunity to improve on these methods came in 1900, when she was appointed co-director of a new training institute for special education teachers. Maria approached the task scientifically, carefully observing and experimenting to learn which teaching methods worked best. Many of the children made unexpected gains, and the program was proclaimed a success.

In 1907, Maria accepted a challenge to open a full-day childcare center in San Lorenzo, a poor inner-city district of Rome. The students were under-served youngsters, ages 3 – 7, who were left to their own devices while their parents went out to work. This center, the first of its kind in the nation, and a high-quality learning environment, became the first Casa dei Bambini. The children were unruly at first, but soon showed great interest in working with puzzles, learning to prepare meals, and manipulating learning materials Maria had designed. She observed how the children absorbed knowledge from their surroundings, essentially teaching themselves.

Using scientific observation and experience gained from her earlier work with young children, Maria designed learning materials and a classroom environment that fostered the children's natural desire to learn and provided freedom for them to choose their own materials. To the surprise of many, the children in Maria's programs thrived, exhibiting concentration, attention, and spontaneous self-discipline. The "Montessori Method" began to attract the attention of prominent educators, journalists, and public figures. By 1910, Montessori schools could be found throughout Western Europe and were being established around the world, including in the United States where the first Montessori school opened in Tarrytown, NY, in 1911.

In the years following, and for the rest of her life, Maria dedicated herself to advancing her child-centered approach to education. She lectured widely, wrote articles and books, and developed a program to prepare teachers in the Montessori Method. Through her efforts and the work of her followers, Montessori education was adopted worldwide.

As a public figure, Maria also campaigned vigorously on behalf of women's rights. She wrote and spoke frequently on the need for greater opportunities for women, and was recognized in Italy and beyond as a leading feminist voice.

Maria Montessori pursued her ideals in turbulent times. Living through war and political upheaval inspired her to add peace education to the Montessori curriculum. But she could do little to avoid being ensnared in world events. Traveling in India in 1940, when hostilities between Italy and Great Britain broke out, she was forced to live in exile for the remainder of the war. There she took the opportunity to train teachers in her method.

At war's end she returned to Europe, spending her final years in Amsterdam. She died peacefully, in a friend's garden, on May 6, 1952.

Photos: Courtesy of the Archives of the Association Montessori Internationale, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Text from: <https://amshq.org/About-Montessori/History-of-Montessori/Who-Was-Maria-Montessori>



Helpful Montessori Tips for Parents

Don't forget the basics

- Keep bedtime calm and consistent.
- Help your child learn to like nutritious foods by offering healthy options.
- Limit beverage options other than water.
- Invite your child to help with cooking and food preparation.

Let them help

- Involve your child with many of life's daily activities.
- Take the time to demonstrate how to successfully accomplish tasks.
- Remember Dr. Maria Montessori's words of wisdom, "Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed."

Provide the right tools

- Provide low shelves to allow your child to put away his/her own toys, books, etc.
- Ask your child to place items in the proper places.
 - Hang his/her own coat or place laundry in the hamper.
 - Provide a step stool.

Be consistently consistent

- Unrushed, regular routines provide comfort and security.
 - Allow adequate time.
 - Stick to schedules.
 - Be on time (to school, bed, etc.).
- When things are out of the "norm", prepare your child for what's to come.

Grace and courtesy

- Teach and model the way you want your child to act.
- Use polite manners and speak respectfully.
- Make eye contact, get down on the child's eye level.
- Talk about patience, kindness, honesty, sharing, helpfulness, etc.

Read, read, read!

- Read with your child every day.
- Take trips to the library or bookstore.
- Make reading a pleasant, enjoyable experience.
- Play board games or word games.
- Talk about words, explain unfamiliar vocabulary.

Give the gift of gab

- Children learn words and language through listening.

- Take every opportunity to talk to your children.
- When in the car, talk about what you are seeing.
- A trip to the grocery store provides opportunities for growth in sound and word recognition.

Writing with your Children

- Writing is the next integral step to reading; take advantage of these everyday opportunities:
 - Grocery lists
 - Notes to family members
 - Daily journaling
 - Create new stories together
 - Pen pal with a teacher or relative

Stop and smell the roses

- Spend time outside with your child.
- Take notice of the surroundings when outside and talk to your child about what you both see.
 - Help your child start a nature journal or collection.
- If possible, start a garden together.

Safety first!

- Teach your child what he/she needs to know to be safe when away from home.
 - Teach the dangers of electric sockets, matches, water, etc. and what to do in the case of an emergency.
- Make sure your child knows his/her address, your phone number(s) and the numbers of trusted adults.

These tips and many others like them can be found online at <http://ageofmontessori.org>

Montessori Levels at JSM

Primary – Ages 3 years to 5 years:

As a public Montessori school our Primary students follow Dr. Montessori's three year cycle in the content areas of Practical Life, Sensorial, Numeracy, Geometry, Language, and Cultural. In addition, our Primary teachers ensure our PreK-4 year olds have been taught and mastered the guidelines from the state for preschool students. We use the state mandated MyIGDIs (Individual Growth and Development Index) to guide our reading and math lessons. Our K-5 students will follow the Montessori guidelines, but will also practice and master the state standards in Reading, Writing, Math, Science and Social Studies. We use the Fastbridge earlyReading and earlyMath progress monitoring and screenings to ensure our students have mastered the state standards for Kindergarten.

Lower Elementary – 1st through 3rd grades:

The Montessori Lower Elementary classroom consists of first, second, and third grade students. Children freely choose their daily work with guidance set by the teacher. Intrinsic motivation is the guiding principle which fuels Montessori learning at each level. Lessons presented are differentiated based on skills, grade, and the needs of each student. Children develop time management and independence by planning out their daily works, peacefully working alongside peers, and maintaining a productive classroom environment.

Upper Elementary – 4th through 6th grades:

In the Upper Elementary classroom (fourth through sixth grade, or ages nine to 12), content is not presented in "course subject" form; instead, ideas and concepts are explored across the breadth and to the depth demanded by the child. For example, flowers are not just observed in books or through the window. The flower (possibly cultivated by the child) is brought into the environment, touched, named, identified by parts, compared and contrasted with other plants (temporally and historically), reviewed within its life cycle, located in the world, etc. Thus, education is more about experiencing and relationships than dissemination of isolated facts from a pre-selected course of study. The senses are engaged whenever possible, aiding in the child's natural capacity to learn.

In the natural order of development, the child is now more capable of understanding the abstract and visionary elements of life. Thus, in the upper elementary, the child is further transitioning from concrete to abstract appreciation of life. The educational process continues to follow the child through its inherent flexibility and adaptability. The teacher remains the facilitator or guide, assessing and then challenging the child's natural curiosity.

Social development takes on a more prominent development at this age. Individual morals and values are further established, particularly within the framework of peers. The sense of self is

expanded beyond personal experience. Abstract experiencing through literature, arts, etc. further develops and can modify the child's sense of self. Decision-making skills and problem-solving skills are self-tested, and success is qualified as learning from both the positive and negative experiences of life.

Adolescent/Middle School Program – 7th & 8th grades:

The Montessori Secondary Program design is an integration of the current research in human development, the trends and issues in education, and the Montessori philosophy. The mission of the program is to provide opportunities for adolescents to be self-confident and gain self-knowledge, to belong to a community, to learn to be adaptable, to be academically competent and challenged, and to create a vision for their personal future; thus, to empower early adolescents.

Academic Overview

Academic Lessons: Monday-Thursday mornings students receive academic lessons in ELA/Social Studies and Science/Math.

Individual Work Time (IWT): Monday-Thursday afternoons students will have the opportunity to complete their work during independent work time. Students are expected to stay on task during IWT. If students cannot work independently, they will be moved to a guided IWT table for adult supervision.

On Thursday afternoons all work for the given week is due. It is the student's responsibility to complete all assignments and to obtain signatures for the week's work.

Mastery Learning

Mastery learning is a form of personalized learning that gives students the necessary time to master particular skills before progressing to the next level of work. The student takes on the responsibility of learning a skill versus merely accepting a low grade and never really learning the information.

Experiential Learning/ Mini Courses

As in all levels of Montessori education, there are opportunities for discovery and experiential learning in which participation is the goal. In the secondary program we have mini courses every Friday where students can apply academic concepts experientially in their choice of a semester long mini course. This year we will offer Culinary & Art, Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM), and Entrepreneurship.

Daily Schedule

Regular attendance is essential for a student's success in school and is required by South Carolina law. **Ten or more unexcused absences may result in retention.** A note from a parent concerning each absence is required when a child returns to school or an unexcused absence will be assigned. When visiting a doctor, it is important to ask for a doctor's excuse. All state truancy guidelines will be followed to include: parent letter, truancy meetings (virtual or in person), and truancy hearings. Further guidelines will be provided to parents once received from the State Department of Education.

James Simons Montessori School day begins at **7:40 A.M.** and concludes at **2:40 P.M.** Students may arrive on campus at 7:20 A.M. at which time they will proceed to the cafeteria for breakfast. Breakfast is from 7:20 A.M. until 7:35 A.M. Students will transition to their classrooms when they have finished breakfast. Students who do not wish to eat breakfast at school will wait in the cafeteria until it is time to be released for classes. To ensure a timely start to the school day, it is imperative that students are in their classrooms no later than 7:40 A.M. **For this reason, we ask you to have your child on campus and in the building no later than 7:35 A.M.**

When students arrive for the day between at 7:35 A.M. (or later), they will be directed to the cafeteria to pick up breakfast which will be eaten in their classrooms. **Students arriving after 7:40 A.M. must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the front office for a pass to class.** This is a district requirement and in place for the safety of your children as supervising adults will transition to their classrooms at 7:40 A.M.

Transportation

Parents who transport their children to and/or from school in an automobile will drop off/pick up at the car loop entrance (off Shand Street). Please display your child's name placard in the front windshield. Staff members will direct traffic to guarantee the safety of all children. Parents who wish to park and walk their children into the school will park in the main lot at the back of the school. **Students may not be dropped off or picked up on King Street or Moultrie Street.**

Parents who transport their children via automobile will be given a special James Simons Montessori School placard/sign on which will be printed their student's name. These signs are to be displayed on the passenger side dashboard every time a child is picked up. Parents/guardians/relatives who pick up children in automobiles in which the placard is not displayed will be required to park and show their identification to the front office staff before retrieving the child.

Parents who walk their children to and/or from school will drop off/pick up at the Moultrie gate/door.

Buses will drop off/pick up students on Moultrie Street. Questions and concerns about bus stop locations and times are to be directed to First Student Bus Service at 843-823-3928.

Parents are responsible for their children's safety to and from the bus stop. All students are asked to be at the bus stop **fifteen minutes** before the scheduled pickup times. Drivers are allowed to make stops listed on the route sheets only. Parents or students should not ask drivers to pick up or drop off at unauthorized stops.

When requesting a pick up for special needs students, parents/guardians must complete the required paperwork at school.

Riding the bus is a privilege. In order to ensure the safety of all students, the following expectations have been established. Students will:

- Wear a mask when instructed to do so.
- Greet and thank the bus driver upon entering and exiting the bus.
- Maintain voice level 0-1.
- Keep hands, feet and objects to themselves.
- Place book bags in their laps.
- Sit in the assigned seat.
- Remain seated throughout the ride and follow the bus driver's directions.
- Never use inappropriate or profane language or gestures.
- Never throw anything on or from the bus.

Occasionally it may be necessary for parents to make changes in transportation. Any changes to transportation must be made in writing the day the change is to occur, or the front office must be notified by phone **no later than 1:30 P.M.** The changes in transportation will then be announced during the afternoon announcements in order to inform the staff and students of the changes.

Signing Students Out

Students must stay at school until 11:10 A.M. to get credit for the day's attendance. Signing a student out before 11:10 A.M. will result in an absence. Parents/guardians must show a picture ID before signing out a student. Students are not allowed to sign themselves out.

It is requested that parents **NOT** check students out of school after **2:10 P.M.** unless there is an emergency. This part of the instructional day is busy with activities and instructions for the next day. You will be asked to wait until dismissal and retrieve your child from the walkers' door or car loop. Your cooperation with this request is appreciated.

Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome to visit and observe in their child's classroom. We do ask that you please wait until we feel the children are adjusted to their setting and comfortable in the classroom prior to visiting for an extended time. The first six weeks of school are crucial for building the classroom routines, procedures, and cultures, so we respectfully ask that you wait until the first week of October before scheduling a visit.

The beginning of the school year for our youngest children may be somewhat tearful as they adjust to their new surroundings. This is a natural response. We ask that you smile assuredly, say goodbye and leave quickly during the morning drop-off from the car or when you walk your child to the walkers' door. Prolonged good-byes can often increase, rather than alleviate, a child's anxiety. We assure you that your child will become accustomed to the morning routine and the classroom as he/she begins to know his/her school.

Orientation Period

During the orientation period, your child will be introduced to the classroom/prepared environment. Children will be introduced to the location of the bathroom, find their own cubbies, and learn the classroom norms and procedures. If you have concerns about your child's adjustment after a few weeks, please call to schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

Observation Guidelines and Etiquette

We welcome you to our classrooms. We are happy that you are part of our school family and want to visit. We do ask that you call the front office or notify your child's classroom teacher if you would like to visit a classroom. We understand, too, that there are those times that you would like to stop in and visit because you have unanticipated free time to do so. Regardless, please limit your visits to approximately 30 minutes. The children are our primary responsibility, and the teachers/assistants are not available to talk with visitors during observation time. You will be provided a *Parent Classroom Visit Form* on which you can take notes and jot questions to be addressed at a later time. We will be happy to talk with you during a break, or you can call or email us.

Please follow these guidelines while observing the children:

- Sit quietly in the observation area. There is a specific area in each classroom for visitors to sit comfortably while observing. If you must move around, please do so quietly.
- As you observe the children's work, do not interrupt them or ask questions. If a child comes to you to ask a question or initiates a conversation, you may respond but please politely conclude the conversation to allow the child to return to his/her work.
- You will notice the "quiet voices" of everyone in the room. Please speak softly as well.
- Please make sure your electronic devices are silent. Electronic devices may not be used during the visit. If you must take a call, step outside of the classroom.

Normalization

When children are concentrating and blissfully working on their own as members of a respectful and peaceful community, normalization has occurred. E. M. Standing, in his book *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* states, "The crowning characteristic of a group of normalized children is joy. It pervades the little community like a perfume, and it is as hard to describe as it is easy to perceive." Simply put, during normalization, the child is becoming his best possible self and doing so with little effort and with complete joy. Dr. Montessori's observations revealed

that certain characteristics develop and are refined within the child – love of work, concentration, self-discipline, and sociability.

Communication

We will host regularly scheduled parent conferences, one first semester as noted on the Charleston County School District (CCSD) School Calendar. Should you have a specific concern, you may call the school to request a conference with your child's teacher. If you call during the school day to arrange a meeting with the teacher, the front office will take your contact information, and the teacher will return your call during his/her planning period or after school.

Teachers will send electronic parent newsletters to keep you informed of classroom activities, and the principal will send a monthly school newsletter/calendar. The CCSD Parent Link call-out system will be used to inform you of upcoming events or emergencies, as necessary. The school's web page <https://www.ccsdschools.com/simons> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JamesSimonsMontessori> will be used to keep you updated, as well.

A communication folder, the Thursday folder, is used school-wide to send home important information and upcoming events, as well as student work.

Please keep the school's office informed of any telephone number and/or address changes. It is imperative that we have current contact and related information in the database for all students. Please contact our data clerk to make changes.

Occasionally, parents/guardians acquire information or encounter challenges that result in questions and/or confusion. The faculty and staff are always willing to clarify information and pleased to clear up misconceptions or challenges. When such circumstances arise, please use the following problem solving hierarchy: **First** notify your child's teacher. If he/she is unable to assist you within a reasonable time frame (48 hours), **next** contact either the principal or assistant principal. **Finally**, in the event that an administrator is unable to rectify the problem or provide relevant information, contact the director for the learning community. Following this chain of communication is a respectful way to ensure all parties are well informed.

Parent Involvement

We welcome and appreciate parent involvement at James Simons Montessori School. There will be a variety of parent involvement opportunities, and we invite you to participate in ways that are meaningful for you. We also respect that you will stop by to see your child's progress and to observe him/her at work. Your contributions to the classroom, as requested by the teacher, are always appreciated. Parent conferences are required to inform you of your child's progress. Family nights and literacy opportunities are crucial in all educational learning environments. We encourage you to fully participate in these planned sessions. It is our hope that you will gain valuable ideas and strategies to use side-by-side while reading with your child at home. We appreciate your participation and support so together we grow strong readers and writers.

Volunteering is another form of parent involvement that can enrich our program and give you a deeper understanding of the systems that makes for a successful day. If you would like to volunteer at our school, please contact the front office and your child's teacher. There will be times when students are completing projects for which we could use parents to help with either the preparation of the materials or construction of the projects. We would also love to have you share cultural information or craft/art projects with the children at a scheduled time.

Snacks and Meals

Donations of healthy snacks, juices, and bottled water are always appreciated.

A nutritious breakfast and lunch will be offered daily at school. If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions, please inform the administration, nurse, and teacher in writing. Providing an alternative snack if your child is unable to eat the snack that we provide is certainly an option.

All James Simons students will receive **free breakfast and lunch** through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program ([Community Eligibility Provision](#)) throughout the 2024-2025 school year. Parents are always welcome to eat lunch with their child for the adult lunch price.

Meal Prices

Student Prices	
Student Breakfast	FREE
Student Lunch	FREE
Adult Breakfast	\$2.25
Adult Lunch	\$3.75

Daily Clothing & Uniform Expectations

A school uniform must be worn by all children. Belts are to be worn with pants or shorts. Children should wear socks and closed toe shoes. Crocs are not allowed.

On days of Physical Education, **students are expected to wear comfortable school uniforms appropriate for exercise** (such as shorts/pants) not skirts or dresses, and appropriate tennis shoes with laces (non-marking soles) for safety.

UNIFORMS

Tops - Light blue, navy blue, white, or burgundy polos. School t-shirts are also approved.

Bottoms - (pants, skirts, jumpers, shorts) - Navy blue or khaki. (No jeans or leggings)

[Hands of Christ is a Presbyterian Church program](#) provides free uniforms and school supplies to children in need. Each child in K-8 will receive 2 uniforms and a bag of grade-appropriate school supplies. For questions please call 843-755-8311.

Please dress your child in clothing appropriate for the weather. Outerwear (jackets, coats, hoodies, etc.) are not part of the school uniform but certainly should be worn to school when the weather necessitates this attire as we will spend part of each day outdoors. Please label your child's outerwear with his/her name on the inside neck or clothing tag.

Hats, Caps, Hoodies, and other headwear are to be removed upon entering the school building. Outerwear will be placed in cubbies or on hooks while the children are indoors. Coats, jackets, hoodies are not to be worn during the school day while children are indoors. Navy blue, light blue, burgundy, or white sweatshirts and sweaters may be worn indoors if needed for warmth. School sweatshirts may also be worn.

On Dress Down Days, students are allowed to pay \$1 to come to school out of uniform. Ripped/torn jeans, leggings, and crop tops are not permitted.

Any student who is out of uniform will be sent to the front office to contact parents/guardian to come to school with appropriate clothing/shoes.

Younger children often work with paint, glue, and other materials that can get on their clothes, so we ask that you send in a paint smock or an oversized shirt to cover their clean uniforms.

Each preschool child must have a complete change of clothes at school. Each item should be labeled and stored in a large Ziploc plastic bag marked with the child's name. When soiled/wet clothing is sent home, a clean complete change of clothes should be sent back to school the following day in a Ziploc plastic bag.

Clinic

A registered nurse will be on duty in the clinic during school hours. Every parent/guardian must complete an electronic emergency card with at least three valid telephone numbers for the health clinic. In the case of an accident, the school's nurse or member of the staff will render first aid and notify the parent/guardian.

All medications must be registered with the school's clinic or office. Law requires a physician's authorization form to be on file in the clinic before medicine can be administered. Students should not bring their personal non-prescribed medicine to school. In the event that we are unable to contact the parent/guardian for a sick child, the person listed on the child's emergency card will be notified. We will not release a child to anyone not listed on his/her emergency card unless we are notified by the parent or guardian. Parents are asked to make certain the information on the emergency card is complete and up-to-date.

State law requires that every child who is admitted to public school has a complete South Carolina immunization on file. Failure to provide such will result in exclusion from school. James Simons is fortunate to have the services of a MUSC nurse practitioner on campus once a week. Parents/guardians may grant permission to have their student seen by the nurse

practitioner. A form will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. The school nurse will also have forms available.

Homework

Homework and/or class assignments are district policy and reinforce skills studied during the day or study unit. Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary and Middle School teachers will assign a maximum of 50 minutes of homework Monday through Thursday. Additionally, all students must read at least 20/30 minutes per night. Please encourage your child to read every day and sign his/her reading log. It is helpful if your child has a set time and place to study while at home. It is very important to his/her success in school and as lifelong learners.

Virtual Learning

As we learned during the 2019-2020 school year, we may encounter some circumstances (weather or health related) where students are expected to participate in virtual learning. While we realize this is challenging to help manage from home, parental support is vital in students' success, especially when at home. We ask that you teach, review and reinforce the following Virtual Learning Etiquette and any other expectations that your child's teacher has shared with you.

1. All faces must be seen. No screen savers or blocking of your face of any kind.
2. All students must refrain from chatting unless: The teacher asks them to use the chat box for an answer OR the student needs to privately or publicly ask the teacher a question.
3. Participation in virtual learning sessions are mandatory unless otherwise said so by the teacher.
4. Mute microphones at all times unless called upon by the teacher.
5. Please remember you are on camera and the entire class can see what you are doing at all times.
6. Please use the restroom before your virtual learning class so you do not interrupt teaching time.
7. If you lose Wi-Fi connection, please rejoin the virtual learning class when you are able. Email your teacher so he/she knows what is going on, especially if you cannot get back into the class.
8. If the teacher loses Wi-Fi, please wait 5 minutes for him/her to try rejoining the meeting. If it takes longer than 5 minutes, you may leave the meeting. Your teacher will email you instructions.
9. Please dress appropriately for class. You should be wearing clothes that are acceptable in school.
10. Please find a place at a desk or table to sit and pay attention. Refrain from lying in your bed.
11. Please do not play musical instruments, dance, or talk to others in your family. It is important that you pay attention, just like you would in the classroom.

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home every nine week grading period (45 days). Parents may be required to pick up their student's report card. Progress Reports will be sent home with each child at the halfway point of each nine week grading period.

The CCSD Montessori Grading System for grades K-8 includes marks for social skills and academic targets.

- Lifelong Social Skills and Work Habits are marked as follows:
 - **M** - consistently meeting expected behavior
 - **P** - practicing expected behavior
 - **N** - not meeting expected behavior

- Academic skills are marked as follows:
 - **4** - Exceeding the grade level standard. Producing quality work consistently.
 - **3** - Meeting the grade level standard and producing quality work.
 - **2** - Progressing toward the standard. Producing the required grade level work with teacher direction and assistance.
 - **1** - Beginning to develop the standard. Not yet able to produce required grade level work.
 - ***** - Not assessed at this time.

- 3-8 School Grading Scale

A- 90-100

B- 80-89

C-70-79

D- 60-69

Incomplete = below 60

(The expectation is the student will complete the required assignments prior to the end of the new nine weeks.)

School Counseling

At James Simons, we take every opportunity to nurture a healthy self-concept in every child. It is our intent to partner with parents to support each child's academic, physical, social, and emotional growth. Our guidance program is a fundamental part of this effort. Our school counselors provide lessons, as well as individual and small group counseling.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located in the front foyer. Items found will be held until claimed by the owners. **Clothing items will be donated to a local charity in December (before Winter Break) and in May (the Last Day of school).** Please put your child's name on all clothing, lunch boxes, book bags, eyeglass cases, etc. Items of value such as watches, rings, house keys, cell phones, eyeglasses, etc. will be turned into and secured in the office. Items not essential for learning are **not** permitted at school. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Inclement Weather

James Simons Montessori School will close for inclement weather any time Charleston County School District cancels classes. Local television and radio stations will carry announcements of school closings. The Parent Link call-out system will also be used to inform parents of school closings. Finally, the Charleston County School District website www.ccsdschools.com will also include information about school closings. You can also download the free CCSD mobile app available in the online Apple App and Google Play app stores. The CCSD Mobile App offers an updated feed of district news and events with photos and links to the district website.

In some instances, a delayed opening of schools, area offices, and district offices may be necessary. When this is the case, the school district operates on a two-hour delay. The procedures to be followed are:

- Schools and offices will open two hours later than normal.
- Students should not be dropped off before 9:30.
- Buses will run two hours later than normal.

Field Trips

In the event that we choose to schedule a field trip into the larger community, a signed permission slip is required. At such times, we may request parent volunteers to accompany the classes.

We have two types of field trips in our program. Walking field trips include nature walks away from campus. For these trips, a blanket signed field trip form will be requested allowing teachers to take advantage of learning opportunities within walking distance of the school. When such opportunities are scheduled, parents will be notified by the teacher. Notice of at least two weeks will be provided for these excursions if volunteers are needed to allow parents/relatives time to alter their schedules. Field trips that require bus transportation will be scheduled well in advance to, again, allow parents/relatives ample time to alter their schedules in order to participate in the event.

There may be some costs associated with field trips for bus transportation, entrance fees, etc. Receipts for fees collected for excursions will be provided by classroom teachers.

Personal Belongings

Toys, gifts, and other personal items should be left at home. At times teachers may ask children to bring special items to school to share with the class or to enhance an area of classroom study. When these items are requested, written notification will be provided in the classroom newsletter, email, blog or in the Thursday folder.

Digital Citizenship

Proper behavior, as it relates to the use of technology, is no different than proper behavior in all other aspects of district activities. All users are expected to use the district technology resources in a legal, responsible, ethical, and polite manner. The digital citizenship guidelines are intended to clarify those expectations as they apply to computer and network usage and are consistent with CCSD Board Policy: JICJ - Electronic and Wireless Device.

A student who knowingly violates any portion of the digital citizenship expectations will be subject to suspension of access and/or revocation of privileges on the district's system and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the PDP.

Students will practice responsible use of digital information regarding intellectual property, including complying with software licenses, copyright laws, and all other state and federal laws governing intellectual property. Students will practice safe and appropriate online behavior including using professional etiquette while communicating online. CCSD Digital Citizenship Info [here](#).

Cell Phones

Students should not bring electronic devices, including cell phones, to school. Teachers will require students to turn in cell phones/smart watches when they arrive in the morning and return them at the end of the day. All electronic devices must be in the off position (earbuds, phones, watches, etc.) If a cell phone/electronic device is noticed by a staff member and the student does not put it away when requested, the device will be confiscated by the staff member and parents will be called to retrieve the item(s).

Discipline

We adhere to the Montessori Method of education and discipline at James Simons Montessori School. We use Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) to establish school-wide and classroom behavior expectations (Respect Others, Self, and Environment) as well as creative methods of discipline that are age and developmentally appropriate for the children. Teachers will work with parents to establish a positive discipline routine that is consistent between home and school.

Children may be asked to sit in a specified area, such as the Peace Table, when they have not made good choices. This activity is intended to last a short period of time in order to give children an opportunity to calm themselves and make better decisions. This is one intervention utilized by teachers and staff at James Simons and is a component of the progressive discipline system used to address minor behaviors.

Charleston County School District provides a Code of Conduct manual each year. It is expected that parents and students read the document, sign the accompanying form, and return the form to school when requested.

Behavior exhibited by children that injures another child, themselves or classroom materials is considered unsafe and unacceptable. Acts of aggression against children or teachers, either verbal or physical, will result in the student's removal from the classroom. We ask for your cooperation during these difficult times.

Fighting is strictly forbidden at James Simons and will result in an immediate and automatic removal followed by a mandatory parent conference. Off campus suspension may be necessary.

Birthdays

In our classrooms we acknowledge birthdays with a special ceremony called the “Celebration of Life”.

We request that you provide us with photographs representing each year of your child’s life, as well as a brief history of the milestones in his/her development. If you would like, this may be put into a timeline. These are shared with the class as your child walks around a symbolic sun to represent the earth’s orbit each year. You are invited to come and share in this ceremony, and you may bring a **healthy snack** to share with the class. Please do not bring a cake or cupcakes. If your child’s birthday is not on a school day, we will celebrate it on the school day before his/her birthday. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in May.

Birthday Snack Policy: In keeping with the goals of promoting wellness and a healthy lifestyle for our students, James Simons Montessori School encourages parents to consider a “healthy snack option” such as fruit, crackers, Goldfish™, vegetables, etc. rather than food high in sugar such as cakes, cupcakes, and sugary drinks.

James Simons Wellness Statement is as follows: It is the Mission of James Simons Montessori School to promote the wellness of students, faculty, and staff through education and initiatives that:

- Encourage habits of wellness and provide opportunities to build a lifelong love of exercise and well-being.
- Increase awareness of factors/resources contributing to well-being.
- Inspire/empower individuals to take responsibility for their own health
- Support a sense of community.

Fees

The Montessori program will collect fees for practical life materials, cultural celebrations, and gardening consumable materials. The charge is \$25.00/year per child. Payment can be made in full at the beginning of the year. Each classroom is responsible for receiving the fees collected. Monetary donations, as well as donations of materials, are gladly accepted throughout the year.

PTO/SIC

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has several meetings during the school year. The meetings provide information for parents and give students the opportunity to perform and demonstrate some of their instructional accomplishments. Please refer to the attached calendar for PTO meeting dates and times. Please support our school and join the PTO. The membership fee is \$5.00.

The School Improvement Council (SIC) exists to address the needs of the community as it relates to our school. This is a decision-making group that participates in setting goals, identifying needs, and addressing concerns of the community.

Contact Information

Address	James Simons Montessori School 741 King Street, Charleston 29403
Phone	843-724-7763
Fax	843-720-3129
Principal	Ms. Elizabeth (Beth) Dillenkoffer elizabeth_dillenkoff@charleston.k12.sc.us

Directory

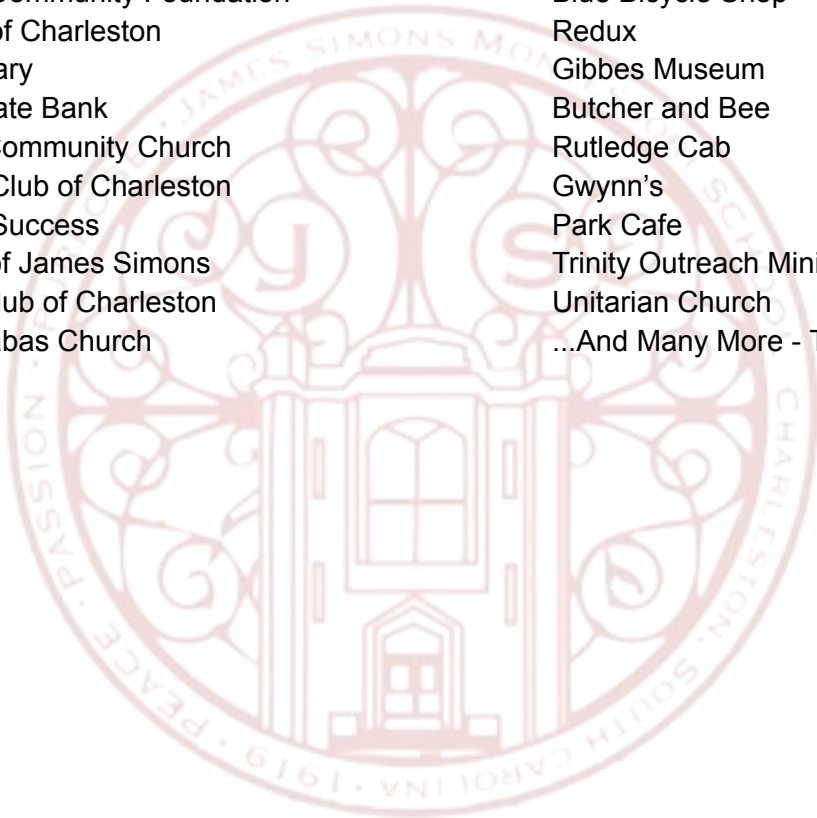
Assistant Principal	Ms. Amelia (Amy) Conroy
Secretary and Bookkeeper	Ms. Ja'Nel Dunmyer
Student Data Specialist	Ms. Elainor McNeil
Student Support	Ms. Gail Pinckney
PE Teacher	Ms. Majorie Levine
Art Teacher	Mr. Patrick Hayes
Spanish Teacher	Ms. Stephanie Daniels
Music Teacher	Ms. Lauren Martin
Band/Strings Teacher	Ms. Elaina Windes
Computer Teacher/ CTE Teacher	Ms. Jillian Ostrander
Guidance Counselors	Ms. Angie Greene & Ms. Cassandra Kerrigan
School Librarian	Ms. Rosie Herold
Nurse	Ms. Jennifer Tallarico
Special Education	Ms. Kiante Jefferson & Ms. DeAudre Frazier (Assistant)
Special Education	Ms. Anna Cantu & Ms. Shannon Barnes (Assistant)
Special Education	Ms. Naomi Hambleton
Instructional Coach	Ms. Jennifer Savage


Instructional Coach	Ms. Shannon Wischusen
Instructional Coach	Ms. LaDene Conroy
Literacy Assistant	Ms. Saurikhane Konekeo
Literacy Interventionist	Ms. Gwendolyn Dillings
Primary Teachers / Teacher Assistants	Ms. Lindsay Chard / Mr. Chris Goodall
	Ms. Alice Miller / Ms. Upasana Bhandary
	Ms. Michelle Ellis / TBD
	Ms. Milissa Stooks / Ms. Kamari Frost
	Ms. Rebecca Hyatt / Mr. Marc Carlson
	Ms. Mia Reichelt / Ms. Tiffany Thompson
Lower Elementary (LE) Teachers / Teacher Assistants	Ms. Cara Ernst / Ms. Cherie Troublefield
	Ms. Margaret Gary / Ms. Amari Valentine
	Ms. Cecilia Menniti / Ms. Madison Edwards
	Ms. Theresa Ray / Ms. Mary Whitley
	Ms. Jessica Wilson / Ms. Lindsay Angel
Upper Elementary (UE) Teachers / Teacher Assistants	Ms. Allie VanStone/ Ms. Devin Bolding
	Ms. Jennifer Holcomb / Ms. Jade Turner
	Ms. Lauren Howle / Ms. Michelle Jenkins
	Ms. Georgeanne Cheng / Ms. Shania Richardson-Brown
Middle School Teachers / Teacher Assistants 7th and 8th Grades	Ms. Adrienne Jones - Math & Science Ms. Mary Novak - Assistant
	Ms. Lindsay Adams – ELA & Social Studies Ms. Jennifer Lockridge - Assistant


Business Partners and Community Supporters

The James Simons Montessori School family wishes to thank the following business partners for their commitment, resources, and assistance provided throughout the year. They have been exceptionally supportive.

Bright City Church	Citadel
Charleston Promise Neighborhood (CPN)	D'Allesandro's Pizza
Circular Congregational Church	Home Team BBQ
Coastal Community Foundation	Blue Bicycle Shop
College of Charleston	Redux
Dart Library	Gibbes Museum
South State Bank	Butcher and Bee
Gospel Community Church	Rutledge Cab
Kiwanis Club of Charleston	Gwynn's
Links to Success	Park Cafe
Friends of James Simons	Trinity Outreach Ministries
Rotary Club of Charleston	Unitarian Church
St. Barnabas Church	...And Many More - Thank You!



<h1>RESPECT</h1> 	<h1>O</h1> thers	<h1>S</h1> elf	<h1>E</h1> nvironment
<h2>At School</h2>	<p>~Honor other’s feelings, personal space, property, and let others learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that your child is on time, well rested and ready to learn each day. Always sign in and out at the office when you come to school and make sure you wear your visitor’s pass. • If you arrive at 7:40 or after you will sign your child in. • Pay your child’s magnet fee by the end of September. 	<p>~Honor yourself, your work, and your feelings, assert yourself and keep safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be supervised by parents until staff arrives to receive students outside. • In the AM, allow staff to help your young child out of the car. • Stay in the car until you arrive at the curb and a staff member brings your child to the car in the PM. • Make an appointment to meet with your child’s teacher when you have questions, concerns and for progress updates. 	<p>~ Honor school property, keep your school safe & clean, and protect our earth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive safely and politely in the parking lot, in the carline and on the surrounding streets. • Drive to the cone that staff directs you to. • Keep students in the car until teachers come out to let students in the building in the morning. • Do not pass automobiles waiting in the car line.
<h2>At Home</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read your child’s report card and attend all parent/teacher conferences. • Model kind words at home and encourage your child to use grace and courtesy. • Take precautions to secure medication and weapons so that your child does not have access to these items. • Make sure JSM always has your current contact information. • Make sure your child is in school by 7:30 and picked up starting at 2:40. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide your child with the items necessary to stay clean and healthy. • Monitor your child’s TV, video game, cell phone and Internet use. • Limit screen time during the week. • Make sure your child has a safe way to get home from school and communicate any transportation changes to the office by 1:30. • Check your child’s folder and read all notes from school. Folder should be returned Friday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to listen and follow directions. • Teach your child to resolve conflicts without using violence or putting others down. • Know and support the school-wide behavior expectations at JSM. • Walkers and bikers only at walkers’ door on Moultrie St. • Car riders use the car rider line off of Huger St. • Bus loading zone is for buses. Please do not park or drop off in this area.
<h2>In the Community</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proud and supportive of the efforts and initiatives at JSM and speak in a positive way about JSM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to educate yourself about what your child is doing in the classroom. • Read the Family Handbook, CCSD Code of Conduct, and CCSD Acceptable Use Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find your way to contribute to enrich your child’s experience: volunteer, donate, join PTO and attend school and PTO events. • Remind your child about the value of their education and encourage your child to do their personal best in school.

<h1>R</h1> ESPECT 	<h1>O</h1> thers	<h1>S</h1> elf	<h1>E</h1> nvironment
Technology	<p>~Honor other’s feelings, personal space, property, and let others learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work voices at 1 • Independent work voices at 0 • Ask before recording others • Only email and post for academics 	<p>~Honor yourself, your work, and your feelings, assert yourself and keep safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions to store & use devices • Recharge devices before dismissal • When working remotely, I will complete my work independently. 	<p>~ Honor school property, keep your school safe & clean, and protect our earth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise your hand for assistance • Visit only district approved sites
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice level 0 • Walk on the right • Walk in a single line • Honor personal space • Walk one tile from the wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep arms by your side • Use handrails • Face forward • Carry a hall pass • Stay on your route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise your hand for assistance • Place litter in trash cans • Silently wave and smile • Keep walls free of hands
Restroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice level 0 • Honor others’ privacy • Wait your turn • Knock gently at stalls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be timely with your visit • Wash and dry hands at sinks • Report problems to an adult • Only carry a hall pass inside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always leave the restroom clean • Conserve water, paper and soap • Keep walls free of marks or words
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak at voice level 1-2 • Use “please” & “thank you” • Say “excuse me” • Use proper table manners • Voice level 0 in the serving line • Eating comes before talking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep all food on your tray • Eat your own food • Gather all lunch items in line • Eat healthy, ask to eat snacks • Enter & exit at voice level 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask teachers before leaving seats • Raise your hand for assistance • Clean floor & table with permission • Sort waste and compost with care • Gently stack trays in window • Follow cafeteria route
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice level 2 • Include others in activities • Ask permission to borrow items • Use hands & feet to help, work and play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get permission to leave area • Stop and respond to teachers • Follow the game and equipment rules • Wear playground safe shoes • Use restrooms before recess 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up litter wherever it is found • Place litter in trash cans • Put all equipment away • Use equipment properly • Walk to line up
Entries and Exits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use voice level 0 • Greet bus driver when boarding • Immediately take your seat • Thank bus driver when exiting • Respect property of others • Walk with hands/feet to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use walking feet • Follow bus & walker safety rules • Stay seated while the bus is moving • Walk on sidewalks and crosswalks • Looks both ways before crossing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up litter wherever it is found • Place litter in trash cans • Drink & eat after exiting busses • Take all items when exiting the bus • Report dangers to adults/teachers

