

James Simons Montessori School



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025-2026

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.

Accomplishments

During Huggins's short time in the Superintendency, she has made bold decisions that have fortified schools and led to student achievement, including:

- Initiating a first-of-its-kind Weighted Student Funding Formula that sent an additional \$32M to schools to support students who are persons in poverty, multilingual learners, and special education students.
- Increasing teacher pay by \$8,000, making CCSD teachers the highest paid in the state.
- Leading efforts that have resulted in all-time high literacy and math achievement for students in CCSD.
- Expanding early childhood offerings, which include slots for employee daycare.
- Ensuring that 100% of classrooms were filled with a certified educator to start the school year, a first in recent CCSD history.
- Leading the work of realizing high school, college, and career readiness to record CCSD levels.
- Launching a joint commission between the City of North Charleston and CCSD to ensure a focus on and commitment to high quality educational opportunities for the students in North Charleston.

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, working in partnership with students, families, the workplace, and the community, is to ensure that all students receive a high quality education that prepares them to succeed in a complex and competitive world.

Charleston County School District Vision

Together we shall create a high-performance culture to support delivery of education excellence to each and every student. As a district, we shall enable students to continuously achieve higher levels of performance excellence.

Together, we shall create our future.

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

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](#).



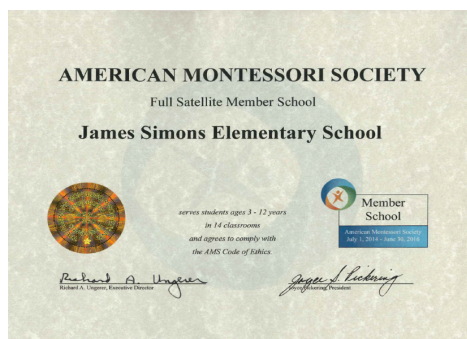
In 1963 James Simons Elementary was one of four elementary schools to desegregate in the city of Charleston. The Charleston Historical Preservation Society has named our school as one of "Seven to Save" sites because of its importance in the Civil Rights era. Read more @ [the Preservation Society's webpage](#).

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 - 2018 - 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>

About JSM

Our Motto

Peace, Passion, & Purpose

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

Our vision is for all children to be conscientious peaceful citizens who are self-disciplined and collaborative, and who possess the necessary college and career readiness skills to enable them to lead productive and meaningful lives.

Our Mascot

Our school mascot is the jaguar.

Our School Song - James Simons School Song By: Lauren Martin

Verse 1:

Curious, motivated,
Learning grace and
courtesy.
Showing peace, passion,
purpose,
This will be our legacy.

Bridge:

Day by day, year by year,
We will change our world.

Chorus:

James Simons Montessori,
We're a part of history,
And we'll forever be
A James Simons family.

Verse 2:

Working hard,
problem-solving,
With collaboration.
Becoming lifelong learners
With a strong foundation.

Bridge

Chorus

Verse 3:

Through the years, we'll
think back on
Memories we hold so dear.
We'll keep learning,
growing, leading-
Knowing it all started here.

Bridge

Chor

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 and 5th grades) & Early Adolescent Program (6th grade)

In the Upper Elementary classroom (Fourth and Fifth Grade, or ages 9 to 11) and the Early Adolescent Program (6th Grade, or 12 years old) 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 handwritten 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. Full guidelines regarding attendance expectations can be found here in the CCSD Code of Conduct.

James Simons Montessori School day begins at **7:40 AM** and concludes at **2:40 PM**. Students may arrive on campus at 7:20 AM at which time they will proceed to the cafeteria for breakfast. Breakfast is from 7:20 AM until 7:35 AM. 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 AM. **For this reason, we ask you to have your child on campus and in the building no later than 7:35 AM**

When students arrive for the day between at 7:35 AM (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 AM 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 AM.

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) ONLY. 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. Please note that Moultrie St. will be closed to traffic during arrival and dismissal with the exception of our school buses. Do NOT plan to drive down Moultrie St. between 7:20 - 7:40 and 2:40 - 2:55. Questions and concerns about bus stop locations and times are to be directed to First Student Bus Service at 843-823-3928.

Bus Transportation Quick Links

- 2025-2026 Bell Schedule
 - [English](#) *(revised June 4, 2025)*
 - [Spanish](#)
 - [Portuguese](#)
- [Bus Stop Information](#)
- Bus Tracking and Notification Apps
- [Complaint / Feedback](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Parents and Schools](#)
- Utilize the [Bus Stop Lookup Tool](#) to locate your bus stop.
- To request a bus stop, complete the [School Bus Stop Request Form](#). All bus stop requests must be submitted on this form.
- To submit a Complaint/Feedback, complete the [Complaint/Feedback Form](#). All Complaints/Feedback must be submitted on this form. If it is an emergency, please call the transportation vendor directly.
- **First View Code: N6G3F**

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:

- 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 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 PM**. 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 AM to get credit for the day's attendance. Signing a student out before 11:10 AM 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 **2:00 PM** 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 weekly 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>

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. We will also share digital information/flyers via the school website for our Thursday folders [here](#). You will need to check Thursday folders for hard copies and check the electronic JSM School News page for news & events.

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 2025-2026 school year. Parents are always welcome to eat lunch with their child for the adult lunch price.

Meal Prices

Student Breakfast	FREE
Student Lunch	FREE
Adult Breakfast	\$3.10
Adult Lunch	\$5.30
Milk	\$0.50

Daily Clothing & Dress Code Information

Students are responsible for dressing in an appropriate manner at all times while on a school campus or while involved in a school or district sponsored event/activity. Wearing appropriate attire promotes a positive influence on the school climate. In addition to clothing, and shoes, student attire includes any jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, comment, or other items worn or displayed by an individual.

Guidelines for Attire

- Clothing is to be worn appropriately and in the manner for which it was designed. (No costumes).
- Pants shall be worn at waist level.
- Undergarments shall not be exposed at any time.
- Clothing shall not reveal bare skin between upper chest and mid thigh. (No crop tops/No ripped jeans exposing skin between waist and mid thigh).
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses shall be of adequate length to assure modesty.

- Hats shall not be worn in school (unless approved for health or religious reasons).
- Shoes shall be worn at all times.

Prohibited Attire

- Clothing or other attire with words or images depicting or relating to tobacco, drugs, or alcohol
- Clothing or other attire displaying inflammatory, suggestive, racial, or other inappropriate writing, advertisement, or artwork
- Clothing or other attire displaying profanity, obscenity, violence, weapons, symbols of hate, or offensive content
- Clothing, jewelry, accessories, and/or manner of grooming which indicates or implies gang membership or affiliation
- Clothing or attire that is body contouring such as, but not limited to, leggings, jeggings, tights, or yoga pants worn without shirt or top that reaches finger tip length
- Loungewear, pajamas, bedroom slippers, Crocs or flip flops
- Shirts, tops, or dresses that are backless, strapless, halter-style, cut-out, bare-shouldered, or spaghetti straps
- Extreme clothing or other attire that would interfere with the learning process, cause a disruption of the educational environment, or be a health or safety hazard

Please dress your child in clothing appropriate for the weather. Outerwear (jackets, coats, hoodies, etc.) are not part of the school dress code 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. Sweatshirts and sweaters may be worn indoors if needed for warmth. School sweatshirts may also be worn.

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 digitally every nine week grading period (45 days). Progress Reports will be sent home digitally at the halfway point of each nine week grading period.

Primary Students (3K & 4K)

3K - No progress reports, only 9-week report cards

Academic skills are marked as follows:

- C - Consistent Demonstration
- E - Emerging Demonstration
- N - Needs Improvement

Kinder - 2nd Grade

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 classroom lessons, as well as individual and small group counseling. If you would like for your child to receive individual counseling, JSM has partnerships with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), MUSC among others. Please reach out to your child's school counselor to obtain more information about individual 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 and follow the CCSD Facebook page. 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 24 hours will be provided for these excursions. 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. (i.e., but not limited to, Cyberbullying, Bullying, Intimidation, and Threat).

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 who willfully damage or deface school property may face disciplinary actions to include restitution, suspension, and/or student disciplinary hearing. Students will practice safe and appropriate online behavior including using professional etiquette while communicating online.

Improper use of district technology resources is prohibited including, but not limited to:

- using racist, profane, pornographic, sexually oriented, or obscene language or materials
- attempting to send or sending anonymous messages of any kind
- using the network to access inappropriate and/or harmful materials
- bypassing the district's security measures to access sites that are filtered on the district network
- encrypting communications so as to avoid security review or monitoring by the system administrator
- using the network to provide addresses or other personal information that others may use inappropriately
- purposely engaging in activity that may harass, threaten, defame, slander, libel, malign, or abuse another (individual or group)
- forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages; attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users or deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail
- using the network for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by district policy or guidelines
- Cell Phone Expectations: South Carolina Legislation 1.103-Anti-Bullying/School Safety, prohibits cell phone access during the school day. This is a new ruling still requiring the state board of education to write a policy for all districts to adopt. At this time, all parents and students should continue to adhere to the CCSD Progressive Discipline Plan (PDP) and each school's handbook to ensure adherence to current behavior expectations for the use of a cell phone. Students found in violation of the CCSD PDP/school-wide expectations are subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the PDP.

Students will use the technology resources in a positive and responsible manner that promotes creativity, innovation, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving. Improper use of the district's technology resources is prohibited including, but not limited to:

- using the network for political activity, financial gain, or commercial activity
- attempting to harm or harming equipment, materials, or data
- changing any computer configurations and/or settings
- installing software, including freeware and file-sharing services, without permission from the Executive Director of technology or his/her designee
- streaming media, such as radio, games, video, etc., for non-educational purposes
- proxy sites – bypassing or attempting to bypass the filtering device by using sites such as, but not limited to, proxy sites on the district's electronic communications system
- running security programs or utilities that reveal or exploit weaknesses in the security of a system such as password cracking programs, packet sniffers, or

port scanners or any other non-approved programs on district technology resources

- otherwise engaging in acts against the aims and purposes of the district as specified in its governing documents or in rules, regulations, and procedures adopted from time to time.

Students will understand the negative impact of inappropriate technology use including online bullying and harassment, hacking, intentional virus setting, invasion of privacy, and piracy of materials such as software, music, video, and other media.

Students will log in to the district network using their own login credentials. Account information and passwords, or similar information used for identification and authorization purposes, must be kept private. Passwords should not be written down and left in a location others may find it. The individual in whose name a system account is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use. Students will use technology resources cautiously to prevent damage.

Artificial Intelligence

Please see our AI rubric below about how we are approaching the use of AI with our students this year at JSM. We will also follow CCSD for guidance as they share more information about AI usage in the classroom.

	Level of AI Use	Full Description	Disclosure Requirements
0	NO AI Use	This assessment is completed entirely without AI assistance. AI must not be used at any point during the assessment. This level ensures that student rely solely on their own knowledge, understanding, and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No AI disclosure required. • May require academic honesty pledge that AI was not used.
1	AI-Assisted Idea Generation and Structuring	No AI content is allowed in the final submission. AI can be used in the assessment for brainstorming, creating structures, and generating ideas for improving work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI disclosure statement must be included disclosing how AI was used. • Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.
2	AI-Assisted Editing	No new content can be used creating AI. AI can be used to make improvements to the clarity or quality of student created work to improve the final output.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI disclosure statement must be included disclosing how AI was used. • Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.
3	AI for specified task completion	AI is used to complete certain elements of the task, as specified by the teacher. This level requires critical engagement with AI generated content and evaluating its output. You are responsible for providing human oversight and evaluation of all AI generated content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any AI created content must be cited using proper MLA citation • Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.
4	Full AI Use with human oversight	You may use AI throughout your assessment to support your own work in any way you deem necessary. AI should be a 'co-pilot' to enhance human creativity. You are responsible for providing human oversight and evaluation of all AI generated content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must cite the use of AI using proper MLA or APA citation. • Link(s) to AI chat(s) must be submitted with final submission.

Academic Integrity Code

All students enrolled in CCSD schools, including CCSD Online Programs, or working virtually are held to the same standard when learning. Any dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, and/or providing false information is grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with the Progressive Discipline Plan (PDP).

The following acts are considered dishonest and a violation of the Academic Integrity Code:

- Plagiarism – using other people’s work, ideas, or information without giving credit to the source.
- Work submission through another student’s password – any assignments or projects posed while using another student’s username and password is considered cheating.
- Cheating – using unauthorized material including outside materials or study aides for work completion. Copying another person’s work and using it as your own is considered cheating.
- Performing work or taking a test for another student.
- False information or made up data – submission is considered misleading and dishonest.

CCSD Cellphone & Electronic Device Policy

[Prohibition of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day” \(Policy JICJ\)](#)

At the November 18, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting, a new policy, [Prohibition of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day” \(Policy JICJ\)](#), was adopted to create a phone-free school environment. This policy complies with the General Appropriations Bill, H. 5100 of 2024, Proviso 1.103, and applies to all kindergarteners through 12th graders.

This new policy is designed to remove distractions from personal devices during the school day so students can focus better, learn more, and build strong relationships with their classmates and teachers. Our policy also aligns with the [Profile of the South Carolina Graduate](#), emphasizing essential college and career-ready skills, collaboration, and meaningful interpersonal interactions. Implementation will begin on January 6, 2025. [State Cell Phone Policy Memorandum](#)

Key Definitions

- *Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs)*: These include cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, gaming devices, and accessories like earbuds and headphones.
- *School Day*: Defined as the time students are on school premises from arrival until dismissal, including field trips unless otherwise directed by administration.

Overview of Policy Implementation

1. Devices must be powered off and securely stored throughout the instructional day. Teacher have secure storage for devices in classrooms. Usage is only

allowed when explicitly authorized for instructional purposes or required under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), medical plan, or Section 504 accommodation plan.

2. The CCSD Progressive Discipline Plan, updated August 21, 2024, outlines school response for any student cell phone violations and is found here:
 1. Elementary School [CCSD Student Code of Conduct \(page 5\)](#) | [Spanish](#)
 2. Middle School [CCSD Student Code of Conduct \(page 6\)](#) | [Spanish](#)

Communication Alternatives

Parents and guardians may reach their children during the school day for urgent or emergent issues by contacting the school's front office. Please understand that students will not be pulled from class for general messages. We suggest using a student's CCSD email as an alternative way to communicate with your child if needed (high school only). In cases of student illness or emergency, students should visit their school's Health Clinic to make necessary phone calls.

For the full text of CCSD's policy and further details, please visit [Policy JICJ: Prohibition of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day](#).

[CCSD Procedure for Approved Use of Electronic Devices in Classrooms and Activities](#)

[FAQ: Policy on Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day](#)

We know this change may take some time to adjust, but it is an important step to help students stay focused and make the most of their time at school. Thank you for partnering with us to ensure a focused, distraction-free school experience. For more details, visit the district's website and look out for additional updates from your principal.

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 and acknowledge the accompanying form digitally during registration.

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.

Progressive Discipline Plans and Code of Conduct

Click [here](#) for 2022-2026 Progressive Discipline Plans (PDPs)

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 everyday classroom materials, activities and events. 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.

PTA/SIC

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTA) 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 PTA meeting dates and times.

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

Staff Directory

Principal	Ms. Elizabeth (Beth) Dillenkoffer elizabeth_dillenkoff@charleston.k12.sc.us
Assistant Principal	Ms. Amelia (Amy) Conroy amelia_cummings@charleston.k12.sc.us
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. Abigail Konen (M-W)
Band/Strings Teacher	Ms. Elaina Windes
Computer Teacher/ CTE Teacher	Ms. Jillian Ostrander

Guidance Counselors	Ms. Nicole Singleton & Ms. Cassandra Kerrigan
School Librarian	Ms. Rosie Herold
Nurse	Ms. Caroline Rivera
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. Shannon Wischusen
Instructional Coach	Ms. Morgan Tomasello
Literacy Assistant	Ms. Saurikhane Konekeo
Literacy Interventionist	Ms. Gwendolyn Dillings
Primary Teachers / Teacher Assistants	Ms. Lindsay Chard / Ms. Kelly Curtis
	Ms. Alice Miller / Ms. Upasana Bhandary
	Ms. Michelle Ellis / Mr. Phillip Sisombath
	Ms. Rebecca Hyatt / TBD
	Ms. Mia Reichelt / Ms. Tiffany Thompson
	Ms. Polly Schultz / Ms. Katherine Keadle
Lower Elementary (LE) Teachers / Teacher Assistants	Ms. Cara Ernst / Ms. Cherie Troublefield
	Ms. Cecilia Menniti / Ms. Madison Edwards
	Ms. Theresa Ray / Ms. Mary Whitley
	Ms. Tracey Revells / Ms. Ilknur Cetin
	Ms. Jessica Wilson / Ms. Lindsay Angel
Upper Elementary (UE) Teachers / Teacher Assistants	Ms. Georgeanne Cheng / Ms. Helen McDaniel
	Ms. Lauren Howle / Ms. Michelle Jenkins

	Ms. Allie VanStone/ Ms. Devin Daughtry
Early Adolescent Program Teacher/Assistant - 6th Grade	Ms. Jennifer Holcomb / Ms. Jade Turner
Middle School Teachers / Teacher Assistants 7th and 8th Grades	Ms. Adrienne Jones - Math & Science Ms. Tyeka Grant - Assistant
	Ms. Julie Sivell – ELA & Social Studies Coach Kevin Bayer - Assistant

School Improvement Council (SIC)

School Improvement Council (SIC) is a broad-based body intended to advise the principal and school, and is focused on helping to achieve school improvement.

SIC duties focus primarily on the school improvement process. SICs:

- provide input and feedback during the development of the school's five-year renewal (improvement) plan and annual updates;
- assist in implementation of school improvement programs and activities;
- monitor and report on progress toward improvement goals in the annual *SIC Report to the Parents* and with the principal in the narrative to the *SC School Report Card*;
- provide other assistance as requested by the principal

James Simons School Improvement Council (SIC) Members

Anna Claire Day -- Chair

Joni Nelson

Julia Brandel

Eileen Quinn

Erin Ziegler

Jeno Ginyard

Gwendolyn Dillings

Chris Monoc

Kimberly Gleason

Saurikhane Konekeo

Beth Dillenkoffer

Amy Conroy

Friends of James Simons

In November of 2014 the Friends of James Simons Elementary was created to raise money to fund a shade canopy in the play yard of the James Simons School; something the PTA was ineligible to do. We were formed in response to a funding shortfall that exists in PTA—limits on how we can raise money and how we can spend it.

As a 501c3 non-profit organization with a board composed of a diverse group of Parents and James Simons Staff, and working closely with the Principal, School Improvement Council (SIC), we can make certain we are helping to address our school's most relevant and crucial needs. With extensive public school budget cuts across Charleston county the Friends of James Simons has helped fill the financial gap needed to support the James Simons' students, teachers, and staff.

With the help of volunteers, community donations, and our proud sponsors, we host an Annual Spring Fundraiser that brings the community together for a fun night of local food, drinks, and entertainment. Funds raised are used to support our Four Pillars Student Outreach, Student Enrichment, Teacher & Staff Appreciation, and Professional Development.

Board of Directors

Bethany Nemitz - Liaison Chair

Katie Monoc - Fundraising

Dominique Godfrey - Student Enrichment

Ginger Liner, Addie Spearman & Merritt Watts - Spring Fundraiser

Jessica Nackel - Community Support

Anna Claire Day & Danielle Ramos- Staff Appreciation

Anna Gruenloch - Special Events Chair

Nat Gunter - Treasurer

Erin Ziegler - Community Partnerships

Stacey Bailey - Communications

Learn more at friendsofjamessimons.org

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.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024-2025 SUPPORTERS!

FRIENDS
OF
JAMES SIMONS
MONTESSORI

Benefactors

The Gruenloh Family



The Ramos Family



CHARLESTON
TOURS & EVENTS

Stephen Ramos
Architect

The Bailey Family



Marshall Walker
FULL SERVICE REAL ESTATE



The Rohas Family

The Kendrick Family



Wagener
Terrace
Neighborhood
Association



CHRISMAN
STUDIOS



Caitlin and Nicholas Green

The Konstanty Rupp Family

Sponsors

The Monoc Family

The Butler Family

Gary & Stephanie Shahid



The Dabney Family

The Murphy Family

Lauren & Jonathan Sanchez

The Conway Family

The Uflacker Family

Martha Fowler



The Latham Family

The Carron Family


The Porto Family


The Turner-Watts Family

Friends

Thank you to
all who
supported as
a Friend!

PBIS ROSE Matrices for Home & School (See below)

<h1>RESPECT</h1> 	<h1>O_{thers}</h1> <p>~Honor other's feelings, personal space, property, and let others learn.</p>	<h1>S_{elf}</h1> <p>~Honor yourself, your work, and your feelings, assert yourself and keep safe.</p>	<h1>E_{nvironment}</h1> <p>~ Honor school property, keep your school safe & clean, and protect our earth.</p>
<h2>At School</h2>	<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. 	<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 staff 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive safely and politely in the parking lot, in 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 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 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, CCSF Code of Conduct, and CCSF Acceptable Use Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find your way to contribute to enrich your child's experience: volunteer, donate, join PTA and attend school and PTA events. • Remind your child about the value of their education and encourage your child to do their personal best in school.

R ESPECT 	O thers	S elf	E nvironment
	~Honor other's feelings, personal space, property, and let others learn.	~Honor yourself, your work, and your feelings, assert yourself and keep safe.	~ Honor school property, keep your school safe & clean, and protect our earth.
Technology	<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 	<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. 	<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