Sands Montessori School

2026-27

Family Handbook

www.SandsMontessori.cps-k12.org

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This handbook is designed to provide important information and serve as a guide to our school. It is to be used in conjunction with The Cincinnati Public Schools Code of Conduct as well as the policies of Cincinnati Public Schools Board of Education.

Sands Montessori Vision Statement

Sands Montessori is a community of empowered, responsible, and lifelong learners.

Sands Montessori Mission Statement

Sands Montessori, a Cincinnati Public School, educates the whole child to be a lifelong learner and a responsible contributor to our global community. We do this through culturally integrated education that nurtures the relationship between child, parent, school and community.

Montessori Environment

The Montessori environment focuses on the whole child. Students are grouped into multiage classrooms of different developmental levels: 3-6 year olds, 6-9 year olds, and 9-12 year olds. At the 9-12 level, students remain with their class of 4th, 5th, and 6th graders for the entire day and rotate between two classrooms for instruction. One teacher teaches language arts and the other teaches math. Each teacher also teaches social studies or science.

Students develop strong leadership skills, learn from each other, and create a caring community. Classroom design, materials and daily routines support each child's emerging independence and self-regulation. Learning is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, and self-discipline. Students engage in hands-on learning experience in the early developmental stages and then later progress to explore and think critically in a more abstract manner.

Teachers help students maximize their individual potential by accommodating all learning styles and helping students learn at their own pace through individualized work plans. Children in the public school setting are expected to complete the grade level curriculum each year and teachers provide interventions and enrichment in order to help all children thrive. Please visit the Ohio Department of Education website for information about state initiatives such as the Ohio Academic Standards, 3rd Grade Reading Guarantee and Ohio State Tests for grades 3-6. at http://education.ohio.gov.

The 3-6 Community

"The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence; the full totality of his psychic powers…At no other age has the child greater need of intelligent help, and any obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection."
~ Dr. Maria Montessori*, The Absorbent Mind*

At Sands Montessori, we value the early years of a child's life. At this age, the Montessori classroom is a child's world, geared to the size, pace and interests of boys and girls between the ages of three and six. Classrooms are designed to enable children to have the freedom to choose materials. The materials are arranged on low shelves within easy reach of the smallest child.

Each classroom has preschool and kindergarten students. Having children ages three through six together, permits the younger children an opportunity to observe a graded series of models for imitation, and the older ones an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge and leadership skills by helping the younger ones.

Classrooms at this age level are filled with activity and a busy "hum". The materials invite the child to participate in a variety of motions – walking, pouring, carrying, speaking, as well as the constant use of the hands. *While the classrooms are filled with activity, children are taught and expected to behave by showing respect for the teacher and others, respect for the work of others, and a respect for the materials and environment.* In addition, we teach children to be problem solvers by using positive and peaceful language when resolving conflict.

All classrooms are divided into several common areas. They are: practical life, sensorial, art, cultural (science and geography), math, and language.

Practical Life

Children enjoy the tasks that many adults consider ordinary. They are exciting to the child because they allow him/her to imitate adults. The practical life area allows children to perform tasks that are similar to those an adult would perform. For these activities children use familiar, real objects such as buttons, brushes, pitchers, dishes, water, beads, sponges, soap, etc. They use these objects to complete activities such as pouring, food preparation, scrubbing, washing, buttoning, etc. Each of these tasks seeks to satisfy the child's need for meaningful activity while developing the child's concentration and coordination.

Sensorial

A young child meets the world around him/her through the constant use of all the senses. Dr. Montessori believed that since the child naturally uses the powers of observation during the early years, this was an ideal time to sharpen the senses and enable the child to understand the many impressions he/she receives through them. In this area of the classroom, children have an opportunity to become aware of details of

objects. Each of the sensorial materials isolates one defining quality such as color, weight, shape, texture, size, sound, smell, etc. These materials help the child to distinguish, categorize, and to relate new information to what he/she already knows.

Language

Children have a natural sensitivity to language development. Children between the ages of three and six have a unique fascination for words, both printed and spoken. Montessori materials in the language area allow for individual language growth for each child. Language instruction encompasses writing (proper pencil grip, hand strengthening exercises, handwriting), phonetic awareness (rhyming, syllabication, isolating beginning sounds in words), and phonics (matching sound to symbol, reading short vowel words, spelling).

Mathematics

In the 3-6 environment, children are taught math in a sequential, concrete way. Hands-on materials are presented to the child as the child is ready. Each child moves through the materials at their own pace. Concepts that are covered include: counting to 100, writing and recognizing numerals (0-10, 11-20, 1-100, 1-1,000), addition and subtraction, ordering numbers, comparing numbers, geometry, place value to 100.

Cultural

Each Montessori classroom offers many opportunities for young children to expand their knowledge about the world around them. In this classroom area, children discover the geographical world and cultures as well as the natural world. Children have an opportunity to study the 7 continents. They get to perform simple experiments that expand upon their scientific learning. They explore, classify, and analyze. In addition, classrooms participate in learning opportunities outside of the classroom (ie – field trips, garden exploration, etc.).

Art

The creative art activities are carefully planned exercises through which young children can discover and explore their creative potential. The art shelves in each classroom allow the child to explore various art forms – cutting, free drawing, painting, folding, gluing, stamping, color and line, etc. The materials allow the child freedom of creation and self expression. Art is woven into all content areas and classroom studies.

A Parent's Role

- At Sands Montessori we strive to meet each child where they are and develop them according to their needs. It is important for parents to monitor their child's work and to keep in close contact with each child's teacher. We invite parents to work together with teachers to ensure that the child will continue the love of learning acquired in Montessori. Please contact your child's teacher directly, if you have any concerns or questions.

Although the materials may be similar in each classroom, no two Montessori classrooms are exactly alike. Each classroom reflects the individual characteristics of the teacher and children. In addition to the traditional

Montessori materials, each teacher develops activities that implement the Montessori principles of learning. It is our hope that the habits and skills a child develops in the 3-6 environment help each child work more efficiently, observe more carefully, and concentrate more effectively. This strong foundation will prepare the child for long term academic success.

We welcome you to Sands Montessori and look forward to working with you and your children.

The 6-9 Community

The children in a 6-9 Montessori classroom range in age from 6 years old to 9 years old and span grades 1, 2, and 3. There are differences and similarities from a 3-6 Montessori environment and a traditional 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade classroom. Understanding the differences and similarities will enable you to understand your child's classroom environment during their time in 6-9.

- A partnership is established with the family. The child is in the center of the triangle with the parents, Montessori materials and teacher at the three corners working together to prepare the child and meet the needs of the individual.
- The children work in multi-aged, heterogeneous groups as well as small group, grade and ability leveled groups.
- The children work from a weekly "contract, workplan, or planner" to help them develop independence and organization.
- Each classroom expects students to complete their weekly work in the time allotted by the teacher.
- Projects and presentations are also a part of the 6-9 classroom.
- In addition to classroom projects, 6-9 students are responsible for completing at-home projects as well and preparing presentations for these projects when turned in at school.
- The classroom atmosphere is one that encourages peaceful social interactions in order to contribute to cooperative learning, community building, peer teaching and emotional development.
- Students in the 6-9 classroom are taught leadership and work towards a leadership role by 3rd grade.
- Our goal in a 6-9 environment is for the child to move toward independence.
- The transition to a 6-9 community from a 3-6 community or another kindergarten environment takes time and patience. Your child will adjust to their new environment in time.

The 9-12 Community

Moving from the 6-9 to the 9-12 environment is a time of great change for Montessori students and families. This change can come with feelings of excitement as well as worry, as students move away from a familiar, comfortable environment, and enter a brand new community.

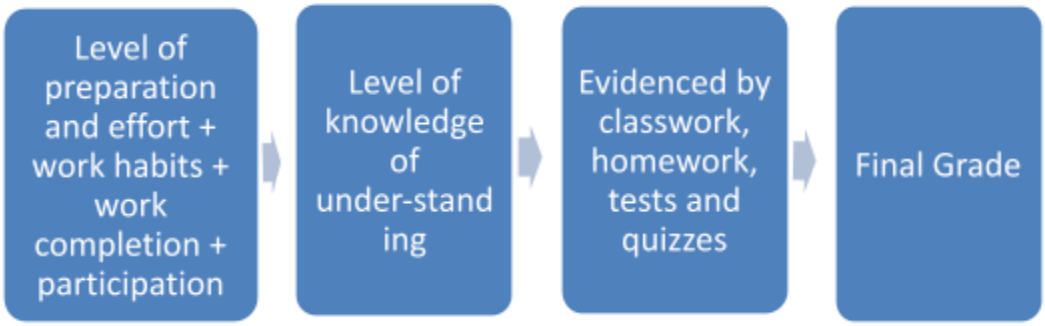
Maria Montessori described students ages 9-12 as transitioning away from the concrete toward abstraction. Students in this grade band become more socially aware and are ready to take steps toward greater

independence. Thus, there is an emphasis on independence and personal responsibility for meeting academic and behavior expectations.

The 9-12 environment consists of 8 multi-age classrooms of 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. Teachers are paired and share the responsibility of teaching language arts, math, science and social studies.

Grades

- The instruction, modeling, and practice a child receives in lessons, his level of preparation and effort, and his work completion leads to a level of knowledge and understanding. This knowledge base is evidenced by his work. The evidence is reported in the form of a grade.



- Grades are based on the grade level Ohio Learning Standards Standards. Graded work may include tests, quizzes, projects, class work and homework. Recorded grades are non-negotiable. Grades may be affected by timeliness, quality, accuracy and completeness. It is the responsibility of the student to carry graded papers home to share with parents.
- Grades are recorded in Focus. Missing assignments are marked with an *M* in Focus and are worth 0%. Late assignments are marked with an *L* and may have points deducted.
- Per CPS District Guidelines the final grade means this:

A = 90 - 100	**exceptional** progress; mastery of **ALL** standards taught
B = 80 – 89	**very good** progress; mastery of **almost all** standards taught
C = 70 – 79	**satisfactory/average** progress; mastery of **some** standards taught
D = 60 - 69	**less than satisfactory** progress; **little** mastery of standards taught
F = 59 and	**no** progress; **no** mastery of standards taught below

- Parents are encouraged to monitor grades and to do weekly "check ins' with their child on assignments. If your child is struggling please reach out to your child's teacher so we can offer appropriate support.

Focus

- Focus Parent Portal gives parents and students access to attendance and grades. Everyone stays connected: Students stay on top of assignments and parents are able to participate more fully in their student's progress.
- To sign in to the Focus Parent Portal, visit https://focus.cps-k12.org. You will need your username and your password. If you do not have this information or have questions, contact at the Sands office 363-5000.

Homework

- Your child may have daily or weekly homework.
- The work should be turned in on the date it is due. Questions about long-range projects or assignments should be asked prior to the due date. Students are responsible for communicating concerns with homework to their teacher.
- Homework may impact quarterly grades.

Student Planners

- Sands Montessori provides all 9-12 students with an academic planner. This organizational tool replaces the goal books, work plans, or contracts of the earlier grades, and allows students to practice their own planning, time-management, and self-regulation. In each content area and specials, students themselves will record their work responsibilities.
- The academic planner is the most important tool in home-school communication. Parents are encouraged to check work plans on a daily basis, and see a record of classwork and assigned homework.
- Students may receive daily or long-term assignments, and are expected to complete and return all homework by the assigned due date. Student grades are a reflection of student work including homework, classwork, tests, quizzes, and projects.
- Planners are to be brought back and forth daily.

Intervention Specialist Support

In the 9-12 community, there is an Intervention Specialist assigned to each home community. This allows us to provide a continuum of services to meet the individual needs of all students. We provide in-class support and pullout for skill groupings. The pullout group instruction may address remediation, extended time on concepts, additional practice, or more intensive accommodations and modifications to the general education curriculum.

Gifted Education

Identification:

The State of Ohio recognizes academic giftedness in superior cognitive ability and specific academic ability. Between kindergarten and sixth grade, CPS students are assessed twice for superior cognitive ability, once in the second and then again in the sixth grade. Students in grades 3-6 qualify for specific academic gifted identification in math or reading if they score at or above the 95th percentile on a nationally normed, standardized assessment in that subject. Students are given

regular opportunities to qualify for gifted identification. Currently, CPS is using the I-ready diagnostic assessment to screen for giftedness in math and reading. Students take the diagnostic in the fall and winter of each academic year.

Enrichment Programming

All students are given opportunities for enrichment in their classrooms. Our Montessori teachers do a beautiful job of meeting the children's needs, and the Montessori methods allow students to move through material at a varying pace. By definition, the Montessori environment is rich with opportunities for extension and enrichment.

Third grade students who are identified as gifted in academic or superior cognitive ability will have regular sessions with a Gifted Intervention Specialist. During these enrichment classes, students will participate in the Primary Education Thinking Skills (P.E.T.S.) curriculum. This engaging program helps students strengthen their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted students who meet qualifying criteria will work with a Gifted Intervention Specialist for regular sessions in math and/or reading. Activities in these sessions extend skills being taught in the classroom, allow students to complete projects and independent research, and expose students to academic content not covered in the classroom curriculum. Projects aim to integrate several content areas, allowing students to explore connections across disciplines.

Math Acceleration

Acceleration in a single subject occurs when a student is placed above chronological age in one subject while remaining at grade level in other subjects. In the spring of 5th grade, students at Sands will be evaluated for participation in the Math 7 acceleration program. Candidates are evaluated using this district developed, board approved rubric which identifies students who demonstrated high achievement over the past 12 months, earned advanced or accelerated on the OST math assessment, consistently completes work on time, and has a reading proficiency at or above the 65th percentile over the past 12 months. The assessment rubric can be found here: Math Acceleration Form

Once Candidates are identified, parents and students will be given the opportunity to opt in to the program. Qualifying students who opt to participate in the Accelerated Math 7 program will be enrolled in Math 7AA in their sixth grade year. This program curriculum integrates 7th and 8th grade academic standards in math, and is taught daily by the gifted intervention specialist.

ART

What will my child learn?

In the art room, students explore a variety of materials and techniques—from clay and paint to digital technology—while diving into art history and contemporary works. Our curriculum follows the National and Ohio State Visual Art Standards, ensuring a developmentally appropriate experience. Every lesson encourages creativity and personal expression, often

connecting with other subject areas to help students visualize complex or abstract ideas.

How is my child's artwork assessed?

Every child is an artist in their own way. To ensure objective and fair evaluation, I use the CPS Visual Art Rubric as the basis for grading all projects. This rubric evaluates work based on effort, understanding of techniques, creativity, craftsmanship, originality, complexity, and the ability to follow directions.

Grading is not based on "natural talent" or drawing ability; instead, value is placed on growth, engagement, and the student's mastery of the specific criteria outlined in the rubric.

Understanding Art Grades

- A or E (Exceeds Expectations): The student went above and beyond the basic requirements, demonstrating exceptional risk-taking, complexity, or unique personal expression.
- B or S (Satisfactory): This is a strong, positive grade indicating the student has fully met all lesson goals and demonstrated solid effort and technique.
- C or P (Progressing): The student is still developing the necessary skills or submitted an incomplete assignment; they may require more time or support to master concepts.
- D or U (Unsatisfactory): The student shows minimal effort or a significant lack of understanding; the work may be largely incomplete or fail to meet the rubric criteria.
- F: The assignment was not turned in.

Art: Deadlines & Late Work

Meeting deadlines is an important part of the artistic process and time management.

- Late work is accepted but will be marked down by at least one letter grade, more if very late.
- 9–12 Students: Deadlines are critical as a life skill. Students are expected to use their planners to track necessary due dates of any homework. If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to check in with the teacher to find out what was missed.
- End-of-Quarter Cutoff: To ensure grades are processed and submitted on time, late work cannot be accepted during the final week of the quarter. Please check Focus regularly to ensure all assignments are turned in well before the grading period ends.

Communication & Progress

Please use Focus to monitor grades, due dates, and missing assignments. This is my primary platform for communication. Ensure the office has your current email on file, as I send regular updates through the system. For specific questions or concerns, email is the most efficient way to reach me.

Erin Dean deaneri@cpsboe.k12.oh.us

Library Media Center

Students visit the library media center once a week. Book checkout occurs every other week. Throughout the year, students in all grade levels will work to develop literacy skills that correlate with Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts as well as the National School Library Standards. They will complete a variety of reading and writing activities as follows:

- Discuss and analyze fiction and nonfiction literature to develop comprehension skills
- Respond to literature through project based activities
- Librarian book talks that expose students to a wide variety of literature
- Special reading related events such as author visits, guest speakers, family reading night, read-a thon, and book fairs
- Silent reading time during book check out weeks
- Exposure to digital media including databases, online encyclopedias, high quality informational websites, ebooks, and iPads with high quality picture book apps and audiobooks

Information literacy skills will be taught at all grade levels with an emphasis in grades 4-6.
Students will:

- Locate reliable resources found within the library and on the web such as research databases and web based encyclopedias like those found on INFOhio.org
- Learn how materials are organized in a library and how to locate them using DESTINY, our district's online public access card catalog
- Develop search strategies for research databases and search engines to locate reliable resources on the world wide web
- Utilize a wide range of digital tools to demonstrate learning and to collaborate with others such as Google Apps, screencasting, podcasts, digital bulletin boards, and video
- Practice using information responsibly by creating citations and understanding the consequences of plagiarism and copyright infringement

Thanks to the support of our parent organization, our media center houses a makerspace. In a makerspace, students gather to create, invent, tinker, explore, and discover using a variety of tools and materials. Our makerspace is an extension of the self-directed learning and discovery already occurring in the classrooms at Sands Montessori. The activities will help students develop skills in communication, collaboration, curiosity, and critical thinking. These are known as the 4 C's of 21st century learners.

Examples of activities include:

- Build and create with circuitry
- 3D pens
- Stop animation
- K'nex
- Hot Wheels Speedometry
- Keva planks
- Sewing machine
- Craft supplies
- Computer programming skills through the use of Code.org, Scratch.mit.edu, OSMO, and OzoBot
- Creating video by using video cameras and a green screen

- Electronic die cutting machine, digital cameras, and a photo printer will enable students to create professional looking presentation aids such as posters, banners, scrapbooks, and portfolios.

BOOK CHECK-OUT POLICIES

Kindergarten

Kindergartners will check out one book every other week. **Their books will remain in the classroom,** as history has shown that kindergarteners have difficulty returning books once they have been taken home. Their teachers will give them opportunities to enjoy their books during the school day.

6-9 and 9-12

First through sixth grade students will check out books every other week. They are allowed to have two books out at a time. They are due back **14 days** after check out. Books may be brought back in and renewed. Notices will be emailed each week and sent home quarterly notifying families of any missing books. Charges for lost books will be assigned into Focus.

GRADING POLICY and BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Library Media Center

Students will be graded on classroom participation as well as projects and written assignments. Rubrics will be used to assess student work. Participation will be assessed through documentation of each student's behavior such as raising hand to speak, speaking in an acceptable volume, showing respect for others, being engaged in large group lessons, cooperating during small group work, and respecting the learning environment.

Communication

Please make sure your Focus email is up to date. Email is the best way to contact me.
Library Media Specialist: Kathryn Brewer - breweka@cpsboe.k12.oh.us

Volunteer Opportunities

I welcome volunteers in the library. Please contact me if you are interested in shelving, repairing, or covering books.

Technology
Preparing for the digital future!

Students will come to the computer lab two times a month. They should bring their own CPS issued devices when they come. Lessons will be created based on Ohio's Learning Standards for Technology. The following are examples of topics that will be covered during the school year.

Kindergarten:

- Develop skills to use an iPad

- Complete lessons that teaches a wide range of technology skills, including Digital Citizenship
- Locating age appropriate resources on the web, learning mathematics and literacy
- Demonstrate learning by creating
- Develop small motor skills -Legos

Early Elementary 6-9:

- Develop keyboarding skills and utilize software such as Google Docs and other web-based apps to demonstrate learning and collaborate with teachers and peers
- Locate age appropriate resources related to curricular topics and personal interests
- Learn how to be responsible users of technology through digital citizenship lessons
- Coding through a variety of online programs such as Code.org
- An introduction to 3D Printers and using 3D Pens
- Learn to utilize a variety of digital tools to create products that demonstrate learning across the curriculum. Examples include Google Slides.
- Complete cross-curricular projects

Upper Elementary 9-12:

- Continue to practice keyboarding
- Learn how to be responsible users of technology through digital citizenship lessons
- Locate age appropriate resources related to curricular topics and personal interests
- Learn to utilize a variety of digital tools to create products that demonstrate learning across the curriculum. Examples include Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets and other online tools.
- Coding through a variety of online programs
- Learn Adobe for technology design
- Designing and using the 3D printer and the 3D Pens
- Complete cross-curricular projects

Band

Students who are in band will miss specials for one quarter (as the specials schedule rotates each quarter) and will not receive a grade during that time.

Music

Welcome to music! I have been asked by students "Why do we need to learn music?" The best answer I ever heard came from a conversation between two kindergarten students:

> Student 1 – "Why do we need to learn music?"
>
> Student 2 – "For the same reason we have PE, and art, and math. They all exercise different parts of our brain and body!"

I hope that your student(s) have a wonderful time as we exercise their minds and bodies as we study music.

What will they learn?

Kindergarten – During this very important year, the focus is to create tuneful, beautiful, and artful mini humans. We will work on finding their singing voice, developing their inner steady beat and exploring how to express music through movement.

6-9 – We will build upon what was learned in Kindergarten, adding note reading and writing, learning about various musical genres, playing instruments, and cooperative work though in-class performances.

9-12 – During the final three years at Sands, the students will have a more in-depth understanding of music genres, music history and be given the opportunity to work in groups to create new and amazing compositions.

What will they need to bring to class?

Kindergarten – They only need their wonderful selves!

6-9 – At times, the students will need to bring their devices. I will always let the students and their teacher know the week before if the devices are needed.

9-12 – A folder with two pockets/three-ring clasps, pencils, and usually their devices.

How are they expected to behave?

We have three basic rules in the music classroom:

1. Show Respect (to people, instruments and the learning environment)
2. Participate (to the best of your ability)
3. Don't touch the instruments without permission

How will they be graded?

- Daily grade (participation, behavior)
- Assignments (6-9: usually completed in class; 9-12 can be both in and outside of class)

"Music is the universal language of mankind." ~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Physical Education

Physical Education is where students learn to be active for a lifetime. In PE, students learn how to move their bodies fluently and develop the knowledge, fitness levels, physical skills and personal and social skills necessary for a lifetime of health and physical activity. Physical Education is an integral part of the education program for all students. Appropriate clothes and shoes give your child the opportunity to fully participate in PE activities safely. If your child does not wear shoes that are appropriate and safe for the PE activities, they will be asked to participate in an alternate activity that is safe for them. If your child chooses not to participate in the alternate activity, they will lose participation points for the day.

Expectations in Physical Education and Health

1. Students will demonstrate the motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of movement concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.
3. Students will assess and maintain a level of physical fitness to improve health and performance.
4. Students will demonstrate knowledge of physical fitness concepts, principles, and strategies to improve health and performance.
5. Students will demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity.

Class Rules in Physical Education
1. Safety at all times!
2. Courtesy and respect for teachers, other students, and school equipment.
3. Practice good sportsmanship and behavior at all times. Winning everything is not our goal.
4. Participate to the best of your ability with a positive attitude. All students are expected to participate in class activities unless they have a note from home stating otherwise.
5. Follow all game/activity rules given by the teacher.

Consequences for Students
1st incident- Student is reminded of correct behavior.
2nd incident- Student sits out to think about their behavior and observe correct behavior. They will be allowed to return to the activity. Students will lose 2 of their daily points.
3rd. incident- Student sits out for the remainder of P.E. Student loses 5 of their daily points.

* Students with a total of 4 or more behavior incidents, missing written assignments and lack of participation during the grading period will receive a referral.
* Students involved in physical fights will be sent to the principal immediately with a referral.
* Please remind your child to dress appropriately for physical activity. For comfort and safety purposes, he/she should wear sneakers and clothes suitable for activity.

Grading
Students will earn 10 points for each PE class they attend. Points are based on effort and participation. If a student is absent from PE they cannot earn the 10 points. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at toebbej@cpsboe.k12.oh.us or contact the school to set up a time to meet.

PLEASE NOTE: SMOKING AND USE OF ALCOHOL IS PROHIBITED AROUND CHILDREN, EITHER AT SCHOOL FUNCTIONS, OR ON SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS.

I. Building Security

It is our job to keep your children safe while in school. In order to do this we require all parents, visitors, and guests to sign-in and out in the office before and after entering the school. Once signed in, you will be asked to provide a driver's license and sign into the Lobby Guard machine that will print a badge for you to wear while in the building. These badges let all staff members know that you have signed in at the office and/or **have an appointment to visit a classroom**. Please do not be insulted if a teacher or other staff member asks you to return to the office for a badge. They are required to do this as part of our safety plan. If you plan to volunteer on a frequent basis or attend a field trip, you will need to obtain a badge through the Cincinnati Public Schools Security Office. This will require a background check through the Justice Center.

II. Student Attendance

Regular daily attendance is crucial for student success. If your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, please email the teacher and call the front office.

House Bill (HB) 410 was passed by the Ohio general assembly. The purpose of this bill is to encourage and support a preventative approach to absences at school. It is important to note that following this legislation is not just school policy, but it is a state mandated initiative. The below thresholds are defined by the state.

1 School day = 6 hours
38 hours missed in a month OR 65 hours in the year= "Excessively Absent."
30 Hours missed in a row (5 days) OR 42/month OR 72 total = "Habitually Truant"

Please note: Family vacations, even with advanced notice are considered unexcused absences per district policy.

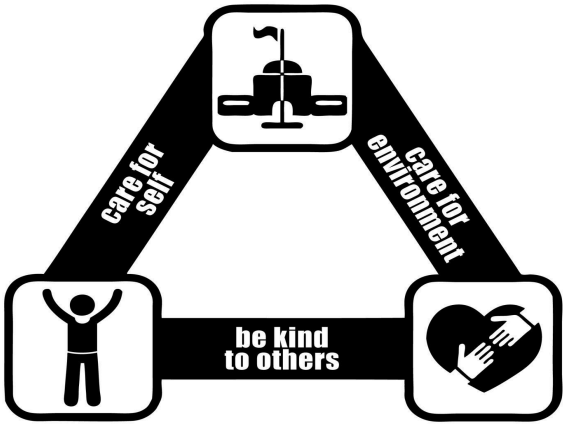
What happens if your student is Excessively Absent ?
A letter from the school social worker is mailed to the home to alert families that their student is Excessively Absent. It is important to note that both excused and unexcused missed hours count towards this total (unless a medical note from a provider is provided to the school).

What Happens if your student is Habitually Truant?
An Absence Intervention Plan (AIP) meeting is scheduled with the family and the school. This meeting is a team based approach and designed to help address barriers to attendance and how the school and family can work together for the child to attend school successfully.

III. School Expectations and Cincinnati Public School's Code of Conduct

A. Building wide expectations:

1. Care for Self
2. Care for Environment
3. Be Kind to Others



Setting	Care for Self	Care for Environment	Be Kind to Others
Cafetorium	● Stay focused on eating ● Eat only your food ● Walk quietly ● Raise hand for help	● Keep eating area clean ● Trash on tray then throw away ● Report messes	● Talk quietly with neighbors only ● Keep hands, feet, and food to self ● Use polite manners such as "please" and "thank you"
Playground	● Dress for weather ● Be alert ● Play in designated areas	● Use equipment the right way ● Pick up and return all equipment ● Respect nature	● Include others ● Take turns ● Play safely ● Follow appropriate "touch rules"
Hallway/ELA	● Walk silently ● Keep your hands and feet to yourself ● Walk on the green line ● Listen for directions ● Politely raise your hand to ask a question	● Keep hallways neat and clean ● Look at walls, windows, and doors with eyes only	● Silently walk directly to your location without disrupting learning ● Keep eyes forward ● Follow the line

Bus	● Enter and exit peacefully ● Remain seated ● Face forward	● Food and drink stay in backpack ● Pick up trash ● Report problems to the bus driver	● Speak quietly with neighbor ● Report concerns to the bus driver ● Wait your turn to enter and exit
Restroom	● Walk safely ● Flush toilet ● Wash hands with soap ● Return to expected location promptly	● Clean up after yourself ● Use what you need ● Report problems to an adult	● Respect the privacy of others
Assemblies	● Enter silently ● Exit silently ● Be a model for other students	● Sit peacefully	● Keep hands and feet to self ● Be attentive to the program ● Clap as praise
Remote Learning	● Choose a distraction free space ● Use equipment as intended ● Follow directions about the chat box ● Be on time and ready to learn ● Start class with device charged and/or plugged in ● Have materials ready ● Ask questions (voice or chat) when you have them ● Be present - avoid doing other activities during instruction ● Try your best	● Choose a distraction free space ● Charge and turn on district assigned device ● Answer questions out loud when requested ● One speaker at a time ● Have materials ready ● Eat/drink during designated snack/break/lunch times (have a bin accessible near your device for easy access) ● Stay on approved websites ● Keep conversations on topic	● Use kind words and faces during all online interactions ● Encourage others to participate, stay on task, and keep conversations on topic ● Follow your teacher's directions regarding camera on/off ● Microphones off when entering and during nonactive participation ● Microphones on during participation and when requested ● Listen when others are speaking ● One speaker at a time - wait or use chat to respond when others are talking ● Respect others' cultures, opinions, and viewpoints ● Complete work together

B. Daily Student Expectations:

- Arrive at school between 8:50 a.m. and 9:10 a.m.
- **Be in classrooms, ready to learn by 9:10 a.m.**

- Walk on the right side of the hallway and use quiet indoor voices
- Have permission and a hall pass to be in the hallways
- Show respect to all people and materials
- Interact positively with each other
- Follow the directions of all school personnel
- Allow others to learn by being quiet and orderly in our school
- Leave all toys, gum, candy, make-up, electronic devices and all other non-learning materials at home
- Be prepared for class and complete all classwork and homework on time
- Follow the school dress code

C. Code of Conduct

A District-wide Code of Conduct is available on the CPS website. It outlines clear expectations for behavior as well as a range of services in order to maintain an atmosphere of trust and respect among all students and staff. Parents are asked to discuss the information contained in the booklet with their children. Sands Montessori school-wide expectations are outlined above. Our team uses a proactive approach to prevent behavior problems before they occur with the goal of teaching students desired behaviors for common areas, classrooms and large group settings. Culturally responsive and trauma informed approaches are used to respond to challenging behaviors and violations of the Code of Conduct.

These strategies, in combination with other district priorities and protocols, promote equity, increase academic achievement, and decrease disciplinary removals. When behavior concerns arise, Sands Montessori first seeks to understand what happened, repair harm, restore relationships, and teach replacement behaviors. When needed, restorative responses and progressive consequences will be implemented consistent with the CPS Student Support Guide. Restorative disciplinary consequences are used including, but not limited to: alternative learning centers and restorative re-entry meetings.

D. The Code of Conduct applies to all CPS students in PreK through 12th grade:

- Students must follow the districtwide Code of Conduct before, during and after school as well as to and from school.
- The Code is in effect inside school buildings, on school grounds and at school-related activities.
- Students also must follow these rules on the yellow buses or vans, or Metro buses, that bring them to school, take them home and transport them to school-related activities.
- Student discipline rules noted in CPS' Code of Conduct apply during extended school closures.
- This Code of Conduct and CPS' discipline procedures are based on Ohio law and CPS Board policies.

E. Code of Conduct Parent/ Guardian Acknowledgement Form:

- Students and parents/guardians should read and understand this Code of Conduct to help model positive behavior for their children and prevent behavioral problems that could lead to disciplinary action. Questions or concerns about this Code of Conduct? Contact the school's principal or the CPS Customer Care Center: (513) 363-0123.
- Click here as a parent/ guardian to acknowledge the Code of Conduct.

IV. Emergency Information

Every student must have TWO yearly updated emergency cards on file with the school. The Emergency Cards are included in the Back-to-School folder. Please fill out **both** of the cards, return them to school, as one will be kept in the classroom and one in the office (Two completed emergency cards are required prior to students attending field trips). By far, these cards hold the most important information regarding your child's safe care. In the event that you or a designated emergency contact person cannot be reached during an emergency, these cards give us the consent to seek medical attention for your child. **Parents MUST provide at least (3) working telephone numbers on the Emergency Cards and ensure that contact information remains up-to-date should any changes occur during the year.**

V. Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

A. Morning Arrival

Student safety is of the utmost priority. The following procedures are to ensure the safety of all students. Students may enter the building at 8:50 a.m. and report to either the Gym or breakfast.

If you wish to walk your child into the building, please park in the lot. No parking will be permitted in either of the car line circles. Please say goodbye in the lobby or outside of the building. Parents are not permitted to walk students to their classrooms. Students are not allowed to enter the building prior to 8:50 a.m. without an adult who has checked into the office. Supervision is not provided prior to this time; students cannot wait in the office. At 9:00 a.m., students may report to their classrooms. School begins promptly at 9:10 a.m. and students are expected to be in class and ready to learn.

Parents of students who are consistently late to school will be held accountable for their attendance. Our school social worker will investigate excessive tardiness or absenteeism as defined by state and local laws, as well as school district policies for attendance.

1. Car Line

Drop-off: *PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY WHILE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY*.

The doors will open for drop-off at 8:50 a.m. If you arrive earlier, please remain with your child until the doors are opened; students are not permitted to wait in the school office.

Preschoolers, Kindergartners, their siblings, and anyone needing assistance in exiting their car will enter through the side door (side circle next to the nurses office). Please proceed into the circle and pull into the designated spaces where a staff member is standing. A staff member will open the door and assist your child in exiting the car and proceeding onto the sidewalk to enter the building through the side doors. Please do not pull around parked cars unless a staff member signals you to do so. Please be sure that your child is ready to exit the car upon arrival in order to keep the car line flowing.

Students who are independent and able to exit their car without assistance (6-9 and 9-12) may enter through the gym doors (front circle). Please proceed into the circle, stop and allow your child to exit the car. Staff members will be available to offer assistance should it be needed. Please do not pull around parked cars unless a staff member signals you to do so. Please be sure that your child is ready to exit the car upon arrival in order to keep the car line flowing. Students will enter quietly and go to breakfast or to the gym where they will sit quietly on the floor until 9:05 a.m. when they will be allowed to walk quietly to their classrooms.

*Students are expected to be in their classrooms, ready to learn by 9:10 a.m. If they are not in their classrooms by 9:10, they will be marked tardy. Please have your child at school by **9:05 a.m.** when car line ends. Punctuality ensures that your child's day will begin on a positive note. Parents who want to come into the building are free to park their cars and come into the office.

2. Bus Riders

Paraprofessionals will greet children who arrive by bus. Children are to exit the bus in an orderly fashion and proceed to the cafeteria for breakfast or to the Gym. Once students have passed through the breakfast line and eaten, they will then wait in the Gym until they are dismissed to their classroom at 9:05 a.m.

a) Bus Rules

- Remain seated at all times
- Use "inside voices" while riding on the bus
- Always obey the bus driver
- All body parts must remain inside of the bus at all times
- Do not throw objects in or out of the bus
- Inappropriate language is prohibited; use only appropriate, positive words at all times
- No littering
- No eating or drinking while on the bus

b) Consequences for Bus Misconduct

- 1st Referral: Warning phone call made to family or letter sent home with the student to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school.
- 2nd Referral: Bus riding privileges suspended for three (3) days. Suspension letter is sent home and parent contact is made by a school administrator.

- 3rd Referral: Bus riding privileges suspended for five (5) days. Suspension letter is sent home and parent contact is made by a school administrator.
- 4th Referral: Bus riding privileges suspended for five (5) or more days. Suspension letter is sent home and parent contact is made by a school administrator.
- 5th Referral: Bus riding privileges suspended for ten (10) days. Suspension letter is sent home and parent contact is made by a school administrator.
- 6th Referral: Meeting with parent/guardian, administration, Bus Company for possible permanent removal from bus transportation.

c) Bus Transportation Questions

If you have questions regarding your child's bus route or wish to change their bus stop, please call the **Transportation Department at 513-363-RIDE.**

3. Walkers

The doors will open for the school day at 8:50 a.m. Students who arrive earlier are not permitted enter the building until the doors are opened; students are not permitted to wait in the school office.

a) If students arrive prior to 8:50 a.m. please remain in your car with your child until a staff member arrives to supervise.

b) During poor weather conditions, please do not allow your student to arrive prior to 8:50a.m.

B. Afternoon Dismissal

Student safety is of the utmost priority. The following procedures are to ensure the safety of all students.

For **ANY** afternoon car pick-up transportation changes, the student **must have a note** from a parent or guardian. This note must be presented to the teacher upon their arrival that morning. If there is no note from a parent or guardian, the student will be sent home via their typical mode of transportation. There is no guarantee that teachers will have the opportunity to respond to email during the school day. Therefore, ***emergency*** changes in dismissal **must be called into the office prior to 2:00 p.m**. Please recognize that changes in dismissal and calls to the classroom disrupt the learning environment and should only be made in emergency situations.

1. Car Pick-Up

All cars in car line are required to have the last name of the child displayed on a large sign in block letters on the windshield passenger side visor in order to expedite the pick-up process.

The preschool day is 9:10.a.m.-12:10.p.m.

Morning preschool drop off begins at 8:50.a.m. Pick-up begins at 12:10 .p.m. Please pull into the Sands driveway next to the church, turn left at the stop sign, and proceed to the **front circle**. Please pull forward to the designated spot where a staff member will assist your child in

entering your car. If your child cannot quickly and independently buckle the car seat, please pull forward to the parking spots in the circle marked in yellow and park to assist your child. Please watch carefully before reentering the car line flow to exit the lot.

Afternoon Pick up for Full Day Preschool begins at 3:30 p.m. Please enter the Sands driveway next to the church, turn left at the stop sign and proceed straight to the left of the front circle to the designated preschool spots along the sidewalk (at Music Room). It is critical that your child's name sign is displayed to indicate that you are to proceed to full day preschool pick up. Staff members will assist in directing you to the proper location (as cars picking up older children will proceed to wind through the parking lot). A staff member will assist your child in safely exiting the building and entering the car. A staff member will provide you with a clipboard for you to sign the dismissal sheet. Please carefully watch traffic as you merge with the L-Z pick up line to exit the lot at the lower driveway (nearest to Clough Avenue). Staff members will direct merging traffic.

Afternoon pick-up for Grades K-6 3:35 p.m. - 3:50 p.m. Please be considerate to our staff by arriving for pick up on time.

Students whose last names begin with A-K will be dismissed in the side circle by the preschool playground. Please pull into the Sands driveway next to the church and proceed straight through the stop sign to the side circle. Please pull forward to the designated spot where a staff member is standing and he/she will assist your child in entering your car. Please do not pull around parked cars unless a staff member signals you to do so. If your child cannot quickly and independently buckle the car seat, please pull forward to the parking spots in the circle marked in yellow and park to assist your child. Please watch carefully before reentering the car line flow to exit the lot.

Students whose last names begin with L-Z will be picked up in the front circle. Students will be seated and wait quietly in the gym until their names are called. Please pull into the Sands driveway next to the church and turn left at the stop sign to proceed into the front circle. Please pull forward to the designated spot where a staff member is standing and he/she will assist your child in entering your car. Please do not pull around parked cars unless a staff member signals you to do so.

a) Students who have not been picked up by 3:50 p.m. will be brought to the parent center by the staff member on duty, to wait for their parents/guardians. If a child is waiting and we are unable to locate a parent/guardian or emergency contact by the time the office closes, 241-KIDS will be called and a social worker will see that the child's parent/guardian is located. Please be sure that your child is informed about dismissal procedures and that emergency contacts and all phone numbers are always current to prevent this from occurring.

2. **Bus Riders**

Dismissal will occur at 3:40 p.m. Teachers will walk students to their buses. Students are expected to be in an orderly and quiet line.

a) Students must have a note from their parent/guardian if their transportation changes and should give the note to their teacher upon arrival that morning.

b) In order to ensure timely bus departures and student drop offs, parents **are not** permitted to pull students off the bus once they have been loaded by school staff.

c) Parents may not drive behind the school building to pick up students.

d) No parent/student can change a student's bus route or stop on any given day without prior district paperwork being completed and approved. Please contact the office for the appropriate forms.

e) <u>If the need arises to change your student from a bus rider to a walker, or to car pick-up, please notify the office by 2:00 p.m. to ensure your student getting the change in dismissal information prior to dismissal.</u>

3. **Walkers**

Dismissal will occur at 3:30 p.m. <u>Students must be given written permission to walk home</u>. In order to promote a safe dismissal environment, students must leave the school grounds once they are dismissed. Students will sign out daily. Parents may meet their children at the side preschool door and should wait for them to be dismissed by a staff member.

a) Students in grades K-3 must be escorted by an older sibling, parent, or have written permission to walk home with a neighbor or other family members.

C. Early Dismissal

Student safety is of the utmost priority. The following procedures are to ensure the safety of all students.

Please make every effort to avoid taking your child out of school before 3:40 p.m. It is important for your student to be in school all day and to avoid unnecessary classroom interruptions.

1. **Early Dismissal Procedure**

Please send a note or an email to your child's teacher explaining the need for the early dismissal so that proper arrangements can be made to assist you and your student. **Changes in your child's dismissal procedures cannot be made after 2:00 p.m.** as we cannot assure that a message can be delivered before dismissal. Without written notification of a change, students will be sent home by the usual arrangements. If an <u>emergency</u> arises, please contact the office as soon as possible.

a) Upon parent/guardian arrival to the school office, student must be signed out by the authorized adult who is picking the student up.

b) Students will not be released for pick-up without the proper authorization and identification (name must be listed on the Emergency Card and ID is to be made available to the office staff).

c) Students will only be called to the office upon the physical presence of the authorized adult. **Please do not call and ask for your student to be waiting for you in the office**; often this

leads to the student waiting for some time and missing valuable classroom instruction.

VI. Daily Breakfast/Lunch Procedures

The Community Eligibility Program (CEP) ensures that all students have access to nutritious meals while at school. Breakfast and lunch will be available for all students at no cost.

A. Breakfast

The main doors will open at 8:50 a.m. for all students who arrive for breakfast. Students are to proceed directly to the cafeteria for breakfast and will be dismissed at 9:05 a.m. to their classrooms.

B. Lunch

Menus can be found on the district's website.

1. Lunchroom Rules

- Stand in line; no talking please
- When in the cafeteria, walk at all times
- Stay seated and talk quietly while eating
- Use good table manners and be sure to clean your area
- Raise hand to be dismissed by an adult
- When the bell rings, students must be silent (5 minutes of silence)

VII. School Dress Code

Students at Sands Montessori are expected to dress in a manner that is not distracting to the learning process.

We ask that all parents review the following rules with their children and ensure that they come to school properly dressed for the weather.

A. Dress Code Rules

- Hats, bandanas, kerchiefs, or other headgear is **not** to be worn in the building.
- Tube tops, tops with spaghetti straps, or any shirts that expose the midriff are prohibited.
- Shorts that are of an appropriate length (not to be shorter than half of the distance from upper leg and knee) can be worn during warm weather. Skirts must follow the same length guidelines.
- Pants must fit at the waist or be held up with a belt at the waist. Underwear **cannot** be showing.
- Items that are distracting to learning are prohibited.
- **Any** clothing with profanity or violent messages is prohibited.
- Shoes should be comfortable and enable the student to walk safely about school grounds.
- **No Pajamas** are to be worn to school unless it is a special event designated by the school.

VIII. Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior

To maintain an environment conducive to learning and that protects the health and safety of the school community, all reported incidents of bullying and other aggressive behavior will be investigated.

A. Reporting

Students and staff who see acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall promptly notify the building administrator of the event(s) and submit an online bullying complaint form which can be found at https://slg.cps-k12.org/onlinebullyreport/?source=fc. A complaint should be specific: identification of person(s) participating in the bullying, as well as the person(s) being bullied, names of witnesses, location, date, time, and the bullying behaviors that were observed. Students who make complaints may request that their names be maintained in confidence by staff. Students deliberately making false reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is strictly prohibited and shall be disciplined.

B. Investigation

Under the direction of the building principal, all complaints shall be investigated promptly. In evaluating conduct of harassment, intimidation or bullying, special attention should be directed to the words chosen and/or the actions taken, whether such conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the harasser interacted with the person being harassed, and the motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred.

C. Consequences

Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall result in intervention by the building administrator to ensure that the prohibition against harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior is enforced and prohibited behavior ceases. When verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying are identified early and/or when verified acts do not require a disciplinary response, students should be counseled. A suspension to the CPS Promise Center may be imposed only after informing the student of reasons for the proposed suspension and giving the individual an opportunity to respond. When acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying are verified and a disciplinary response is warranted, students are subject to the disciplinary consequences as stated in the district's Code of Conduct.

Complaints received by students who request anonymity shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the conduct. When discipline is warranted, action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the district's Code of Conduct.

D. Education

The school shall educate students about harassment, intimidation and bullying. The school shall strive to eliminate prohibited behaviors through class discussions, counseling and reinforcement of socially appropriate behavior. Students will participate in *Say Something* week and will learn the importance of telling a trusted adult if they are someone they know is in danger. Students learn the value of being "upstanders" and how to take responsibility for having a safe, positive school culture. Teachers and other school staff shall address promptly whenever observing student conduct that has the purpose or effect of harassment, intimidation, or bullying other students or school personnel.

IX. Health Rules and Procedures

There will be times when we may have to exclude a child from school until medical attention is

received. The law is very specific regarding these exclusions. You will be required to send a note from your physician or clinic stating that your child is permitted to return to school.

A. When NOT to Send your Child to School

Please do not send a child to school who has a fever, severe cold, sore throat, inflamed eyes, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. It is unfair to other children to expose them to illness. Students must not vomit, have diarrhea and be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

B. Head Lice

It is very common for a few cases of head lice to surface during the school year. Head lice are passed by direct contact and we appreciate your help in preventing the spread of lice. Children who are sent home with lice should be treated for the condition before they can return to school.

C. Inability to Participate

If for any reason your child cannot take part in any regular play or physical activities, including physical education class and recess, a note of explanation from the parents is required.

D. Medications at School

Cincinnati Board of Education policy (5141.3) requires signatures of the parent or guardian and physician before medication can be given to a child by school personnel. A special form for this purpose is available in the Health Room. No medication will be given unless we receive complete instructions from the parent and physician in writing. This policy includes all over-the-counter medicines and inhalers. Inhalers can be kept with the classroom teacher. All other medicine is kept and administered by the School Nurse.

E. Food Allergies

Please visit www.cps-k12.org, click on Food Services for food descriptions and ingredients.

X. <u>Student Fees and Fines</u>

Each family, with children in a Cincinnati Public School (grades K - 12), is asked to pay a student Instructional Fee to help pay for consumable classroom materials. The fee is based on a sliding scale which considers family income, the number of children in a CPS school, and their grade levels. Parents will receive a letter explaining this policy in the Back-to-School packet at the beginning of the year. **Payment must be made via cash (exact change only), money order payable to Sands Montessori, or online payment through PayForIt.net; the district cannot accept personal checks.**
All payments must include the Student Fee form for each individual child. Please place all payments in a sealed envelope with your child's name, room number and purpose of payment.

A. Student Fees

At the end of the first quarter, all families will receive a letter reminding them of their student fee obligation(s). Beginning second quarter, student progress reports/report cards, will be withheld for nonpayment. Fees that go unpaid over years will continue to be charged to students throughout their entire school career (grades K-12). Records/report cards will not be released until all fees are paid in full.

B. Book Fines: Fines are charged when a student loses or damages any library or textbook that is assigned to him/her. The amount varies according to the original cost of the book, the condition, age, and extent of the damage. Book fines will be posted in Focus for parent viewing.

All fees must be paid with cash (exact change only), credit card or money order payable to Sands Montessori; the district does not accept personal checks. Please send payment to the office in a sealed envelope with your child's name, room number and the purpose of the payment. A receipt will be sent home with your child.

XI. Classroom Management Plans

Every classroom has a working discipline plan in place to help promote a peaceful classroom and support students in meeting school expectations. This plan is developed with students and reviewed on a regular basis. Teachers use positive discipline strategies in the classrooms to proactively address potential discipline concerns. We strive to help students consistently make good choices and learn from the situation when they make a poor choice or misbehave. Consequences for misbehavior will be applied individually to students; group consequences will not be used to correct one or two misbehaving students.

A. Consequences of Misbehavior

Consequences of a student's failure to meet the building and classroom expectations vary according to the nature, severity and frequency of the misbehavior. Consequences may include:

- A reminder or a warning
- Notation on a student's classroom contract/work plan
- Discussion with a mediator
- Denial of privileges
- Time-out
- Writing assignment
- Work in another classroom
- Conference between student and teacher
- Referral to administrator for support
- Team conference (administrator, teacher, parent and student)
- Suspension (Under circumstances described in the CPS Code of Conduct)
- Expulsion (Under circumstances described in the CPS Code of Conduct)

B. Playground Rules

- Always walk and wait your turn around the equipment
- One person at a time on slides; go feet first, sitting on bottom
- Always use bars for balancing, not standing
- When using monkey bars, always use hands (no feet and wait until the child in front of you has finished before taking your turn)
- Running games need to be played on the blacktop or grass, not around the equipment
- Jump ropes, balls, etc. need to be used on the blacktop, not around the equipment

- Refrain from tumbling, tackle football, punching and shoving type games
- When the bell rings or whistle is blown, quickly and silently line up by room number. Take equipment immediately to its designated container. Do not throw or bounce a ball after the whistle is blown.
- Lines will be straight and quiet

C. Consequences of Misbehavior on the Playground

- Student will be given a reminder or warning
- Student will be denied the privilege of certain playground activities
- Students will be placed in "time-out." The time-out may range from 3 to 10 minutes, depending on the age of the child and the nature of the misbehavior
- Student will remain next to an adult for a time of reflection
- Parent will be notified
- Student may be referred to the administrator for intervention

XII. General Student Information

A. Homework

Homework is a responsibility that Sands Montessori students must take seriously in order to be successful in their studies. The quantity of homework varies from level to level and from classroom to the classroom. Generally speaking, you can expect about five minutes of homework per year of life. A first year 6-9 student may have about 30 minutes of homework each night. A third year 9-12 students may have up to 60 minutes of homework each night including long term projects. If the homework demands seem inappropriate for your child, please contact the teacher so that modifications can be made. Students are responsible for completing and turning in the assigned tasks on time. Not all homework is in written form. Often students are asked to do research, read, or study without doing a written assignment. Parents can help children learn that this type of work is just as important as written assignments by monitoring the amount of time children spend on these types of tasks.

B. Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent home four times during the school year. These reports give important information regarding how your child is progressing. Any question or concerns about your student's progress should be directed to his/her teacher. Please remember to sign the bottom of each report and return it to school in the envelope provided.

C. Telephone Messages and Usage by Students

All classrooms are equipped with a telephone. The teachers will not be able to receive incoming calls during the school day. Calls made to the teacher during the school day will be sent to the teacher's voicemail. This system is especially helpful when calling in your child's absence. The teacher will return the telephone call as soon as it is convenient.

Messages for children may be given to the school office 363-5000. The message will be placed in the teacher's mailbox or directed to the teacher's voicemail. **Please remember that no classroom will be interrupted to deliver a message to a child except in an emergency situation.**

Students must have the teacher's permission before using the telephone.

D. Emails

Email is a great way to stay in contact with your child's teacher. Please keep in mind that although convenient, teachers may not be able to check their email more than once during the school day. Please allow for up to 48 hours for a teacher to respond.

E. Intervention Assistance Team

Throughout the year, teachers continually review data and monitor how well students are progressing through the Montessori curriculum and the state of Ohio Academic Standards. If a student is displaying academic or behavioral difficulty, the teacher or parent may consult with the Intervention Assistance Team. This team consists of the administration, school psychologist, social worker, and other specialists such as the occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech therapist, intervention specialists, and mental health partners. The team designs alternative strategies, for students who may be having difficulty meeting academic or behavioral school expectations, using a tiered approach to intervention. These supports begin in the classroom, at a consultative level, and may progress to direct support with appropriate team members, based on the child's needs.

F. Discipline and the Child with Special Needs

Our goal at Sands Montessori is to provide fair, consistent discipline for all children. For most children with special education needs, this simply means that the regular classroom management plan will be used with them as with typical students. However, some children with special needs may require a Behavior Support Plan in addition to their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Should a child display routine behaviors that impact general academic progress, the teacher(s) will document the evidence of that need and contact the Intervention Assistance Team to begin the tiered intervention process. If it is determined that a student needs the ongoing, formal support of a Behavior Support Plan, the teaching team, interventional specialists, and parents develop and implement the plan for the child across all school settings.

XIII. <u>Parent Information</u>

A. Communication

Communication with parents is extremely important to the staff at Sands Montessori. Staff communicate regularly with parents through scheduled conferences, phone calls, Focus, email, planners, and shared weekly student work contracts. Individual teachers will share preferred mode of communication.

1. Conferences

Families are invited to attend one conference in the Fall and one conference in the Spring. Additional conferences may be scheduled in partnership with the classroom teacher. "On the spot" conferences are not available. Your student's progress is important to us. Therefore, we want to schedule focused time for parent discussions.

2. Focus

We encourage all parents to sign-up for Focus, the district-wide, computer-accessed

information system which will allow you to view your student's grades. Parents are encouraged to keep track of assignments and progress by viewing Focus regularly. Parents can get a Focus username and password from the main office. Please visit https://focus.cps-k12.org// to view your student's grades, attendance, bus information, fee balances, etc.

3. **Focus**

Focus is an online integrated learning management and communication system that will help you keep up to date about important school and classroom information. Parents can create their parent accounts at https://focus.cps-k12.org/ or use the mobile App (free in your device App store).

You may contact the office to get your Focus parent access code(s), or you can call the CPS Help Desk at 513-363-0390 to request access information to be emailed. Like Focus, Canvas does have a unique code for each of your children, so please be sure to request each one. If you need step by step instructions, information can be obtained from the front office.

4. **School Office**

Some information regarding district materials, SMPO information, flyers, community events, etc., can be found in the office turnstyle and posted on the bulletin board.

5. **School Messenger**

You will receive school updates via phone or text through the School Messenger system. Please ensure that your contact information is always up to date in the school office to ensure you receive these important updates.

XIV. Parent Involvement

Sands Montessori School is a magnet program within the Cincinnati Public Schools. Parents who select Sands Montessori for their children have, by that choice, become members of the Sands community. All parents can show positive support of the program through volunteering, fundraising, participating in community events, and supporting the educational process by working at home with your child. By selecting Sands as your school of choice, you have made a commitment.

At Sands Montessori School we believe that family partnership is critical for student success. It is the essence of what makes our school great. All families are expected to volunteer 4 hours for single student families and 6 hours for families who have two or more students at Sands. The collective involvement of volunteers truly makes a difference in the lives of our students. Any combination of parents, grandparents, and even extended family members, is welcome to participate to meet your family's expected hours. Volunteer hours may be completed in the classroom or through the Sands Montessori Parent Organization.

The presence of active, caring family members in the building shows our students how much our program is valued and supported. There are many ways to become involved in our school and show your support. Volunteering in the classroom, shopping for classroom supplies, attending meetings, participating in fundraisers, paying student fees immediately, helping your child with homework, coaching, and participating in the Sands Montessori Parent Organization are just a few examples of ways to become involved. We hope that your participation will prove to be as pleasant for you as it is for the children whose lives you touch.

A. Classroom Volunteering/Observing

Visitors are always welcome at Sands Montessori. All volunteers will need to obtain a Security Badge in order to enter the building. These badges must be shown in the office and visible to school employees when in the building.

Parents/volunteers who will not be alone with students will need to obtain a $5 Local Background Check from the Hamilton County Justice Center. If parents/volunteers will be alone with a student, they must obtain a State BCII and a Federal FBI background check ($50). After background checks are obtained, parents/volunteers must MAKE AN APPOINTMENT with the Security office. NO WALK-INS will be accepted.

Upon entering the building, ALL visitors must report to the office, explain the purpose of their visit, and sign-in on Lobby Guard. We are proud to share our students' work. In order for the educational process to proceed smoothly, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Please make an appointment to observe or volunteer at least one day in advance. Too many observers can be disturbing to the children. Also, if you are volunteering or tutoring, the teacher will need time to prepare work for you that will be beneficial to the children and enjoyable for you.
- In the classroom, enter quietly and sit in the space designated for you by the teacher.
- Do not interrupt children and staff while they are working. Wait until an appropriate break to ask the teacher any question you might have.
- Remember that as an observer or volunteer, you are bound by the same code of ethics as any other adult at Sands Montessori. You are not free to discuss any child's behavioral or personal information with anyone. Please do not ask staff members questions about children other than your own.
- If you would like to discuss your observation or a classroom concern with the teacher, please request a conference time or a phone call. The teacher will not be able to engage in this type of discussion during the school day.
- If a volunteer suspects that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, it should be reported to the classroom teacher or school administrator as soon as possible. Volunteers are not allowed to share their observations with anyone other than school personnel.

B. Field Trips : Please note, all field trip fees are non-refundable.

Reminder: **Two** completed emergency cards are **<u>required</u>** prior to students attending field trips.

If your student's class will be taking a field trip that you would like to chaperone, please know that for the continued safety of our students, **Cincinnati Public Schools require <u>ALL</u> chaperones attending a school field trip to obtain a local background check and a volunteer badge from the district.**

1. **Local Background Check**
   Local background checks are performed at the Justice Center, 1000 Sycamore St., Cincinnati, OH 45202 Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The cost is $5.00, cash; identification is required.
2. **FBI and BCI Background Check (required for working with students when not directly accompanied by a CPS employee).**
   These background checks are performed at the Board of Education office, 2651 Burnet Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45219 in the Human Resources Department. The cost is $25 each, cash. Please call 363-0100 to make an appointment.

3. **Volunteer Badge**
   Volunteer badges can only be obtained at the Board of Education office, 2651 Burnet Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45219
   a) Please take the receipt from the local background check with you to the CPS Safety & Security Office.
   b) Prior to arriving at the Security office, please phone the school (363-5000) as we will need to submit a form on your behalf prior to the issuance of a Volunteer badge.

C. Sands Montessori Building Tours

Our school community is greatly assisted by current parents taking the time to share positive things about Sands. Please encourage any interested parents to inquire about our building tours.

1. Building tours are for any interested parent/guardian who would like to know more about the Montessori experience at Sands. Parents will have the opportunity to meet with members of our parent organization, an administrator, and observe in the classroom setting.
   a) Tours are held on select days October to March, and openings are available on a first come, first served basis. Please call 513-363-5000 for schedule information.
   b) **Tours are adult only** in order to protect our peaceful learning environment for students.

XV. <u>Addressing Student/Parent Concerns</u>

If your child comes to you with a complaint or concern with how an incident involving them directly has been handled, please follow these guidelines:

- Discuss the incident thoroughly and objectively with your child.
- If you have questions about the incident or are dissatisfied with how the situation was handled based upon your child's report, make an appointment to discuss the incident with your child's teacher.

- If the situation is still unresolved after meeting with the teacher, contact the office to make an appointment to discuss the incident with an administrator and teacher. Administration will collaborate with the parent and teacher to reach a resolution.
-

XVI. Class Placement, Promotion and Retention

Children are placed in a classroom on the basis of gender, race, ability, space and grade level. The school educational team will determine the class placement of students. Parents are asked to trust our educational team to advocate for **EVERY** child within this process. Every effort will be made to meet individual learning needs for **all** students.

Parents who have certain **aspects of their child's learning or preferred qualities within a learning environment** that they wish to be considered during the class placement process, must **complete this survey** at https://forms.gle/ici1dLRmkgSgfbwGA **by February 13, 2026. The survey will go directly to the principal.** Individual teacher names or teacher requests should NOT be included. To ensure a thoughtful and consistent placement process, this survey is the only form of placement recommendation that will be accepted.

Class placement change requests are not typically granted. If current placement concerns arise, parents are expected to follow the proper chain of command, starting with the current classroom teacher to brainstorm viable solutions.

Once placement assignments are complete, students will be invited to participate in a school wide transition day to meet their new teacher(s) and classmates. Changes to classroom assignments will not be granted once the placement process is complete. We kindly ask parents to "trust the process".

XVII. Cell Phones and Electronics

Cell phones, smart watches, and electronic devices are not necessary for school. Children bring devices at their own risk. All devices must be turned off and stored out of view at school during school hours and on the bus. Any electronic device seen after this time will be taken from the student. Parents or guardians will be asked to retrieve the devices at their earliest convenience. Infractions will be addressed and may result in disciplinary action.

XVIII. Sands Montessori Organizations

A. SMPO: Sands Montessori Parent Organization

The Sands Montessori Parent Organization is an organization made up of parents and teachers who work together for the benefit of the students of Sands Montessori School. One of the major goals of this organization is to provide activities and events that will enrich the lives of the Sands student body. The SMPO publishes a bi-weekly email update, organizes parent volunteers, arranges parent education nights, plans teacher appreciation week activities, coordinates work days, raises funds to purchase needed items for the classrooms and the school, and provides many other enriching

activities. All parents are welcome and encouraged to actively become involved in the SMPO. Visit sandsmontessori.cps-k12.org to link to SMPO for weekly updates.

1. **Fundraising**
   SMPO is the main fundraising source for our school. Please see SMPO information in the Back- to-School folder for more information about the School Carnival, Read-aThon and Educational Technology Fund Drive opportunities for your family to financially support our school, along with ways to be involved in these whole school fundraising efforts.

B. LSDMC: Local School Decision Making Committee

The Local School Decision Making Committee of Sands consists of parents, teachers administrators, paraprofessionals, and community representatives. The committee meets once a month and serves as the primary governing body of the school. Tasks of this group include developing a vision/mission for the school, setting and documenting goals regarding school improvement and monitoring progress toward those goals, as well as approving the district assigned school budget.

XIV. Office Etiquette

The school office will be open from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Our office staff is available to help answer any questions that you may have or any support needed regarding your child. The office is a very busy working environment. We appreciate your courtesy to our office staff as they have to answer phones and assist many people. Please keep small children with you and remind them to use quiet voices.

We thank you, in advance, for helping to protect our learning environment. Please take all cell phone and social conversations outside or to the parent center across the hall. Also, no one will be permitted to interrupt the classrooms without an appointment. If you would like to talk with a teacher, please schedule an appointment, by phone or email. If you have to bring something to school for your child, a staff member will deliver it.

XV. Emergency Procedures

In the event of a crisis in which staff and students must be evacuated from the building, students and staff will walk to Mt. Washington United Methodist Church that is located directly next to the school driveway. In the event of a lock-down situation within the building, the entire building will be secured and no one will be permitted to enter under any circumstances The Office of Communications for the Cincinnati Public Schools will provide all communication. In the event of a crisis, you can reach this department at 363-0020.

FAQ'S

(Frequently Asked Questions)

1. **How is recess handled on bad weather days?**

   When the "Feels Like" temperature (www.weather.com) is below 28 degrees F, there will be no outside recess. If there is active precipitation at the time of a grade level's scheduled recess, it will be considered an "In Day." On clear days when the "Feels Like" temperature is 28 degrees F or above, students will go outside for recess. Please make sure your child is dressed warmly; gloves, hats and appropriate footwear are required. Please clearly label all personal items.

2. **How do we know if school has been closed due to bad weather?**

   Cincinnati Public schools rarely close for weather. Should there be a closing or a yellow bus delay, families will receive a robocall and updates will be posted at www.cps-k12.org. Please do not call the school to ask about delays/closings.

   A (2) hour Yellow bus delay means that any students who ride a yellow bus to school will be picked up at their bus stop 2 hours later than their normal time. All other students who do not ride a yellow bus to school, are encouraged to arrive at school on time.

   Pre-school will not be canceled if there is a (2) hour yellow bus delay.

   Please do not call the school to ask about delays/closings.

3. **What if my student forgets his/her homework or lunch?**

   If you'd like to bring in a forgotten lunch or homework, stop in the office and staff will deliver it to your child. In order to protect the learning environment, parents are not permitted to deliver homework or lunches to classrooms.

4. **Is there a Lost & Found at school?**

   Lost and Found is located in the cafetorium by the stage. Please check there if your child has lost something. Small, valuable items such as eye glasses, cell phones, wallets, jewelry, etc., are turned in to the office and can be claimed there. All lost and found items are discarded at winter break, spring break and at the end of the school year. Please remember to label all of your child's personal items.

5. **How do I sign my 6th grade student up for High School?**

   As of January 2023, signing up for High School is an online process. Online registration can be found at www.cps-k12.org and click Register to Enroll on the front page of the website. **Please note:** You will need your student's most recent report card; please keep your student's 2nd Quarter report card. The office will not be able to print your student's report card until all fees have been paid.

Click here to sign that you have received and read the 2025-26 Sands Family Handbook.