



JAMES SIMONS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Family Handbook

2026–2027



PEACE



PASSION



PURPOSE

*Together, we inspire lifelong learners
and shape a better tomorrow.*

Welcome to James Simons Montessori School

Dear James Simons Montessori Families,

Welcome to James Simons Montessori School! We are honored that you have chosen to partner with us in your child's educational journey.

At James Simons Montessori, we believe every child possesses unique gifts, limitless potential, and a natural curiosity about the world. Our role is to provide a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children are empowered to explore, discover, and grow into confident, compassionate, and capable individuals.

Our Montessori approach encourages independence, responsibility, critical thinking, and a lifelong love of learning. Through meaningful work, respectful relationships, and authentic experiences, students develop the skills and character needed to thrive both in school and beyond.

This handbook serves as a guide to the programs, procedures, and expectations that help our school community operate successfully. While it cannot answer every question, we hope it provides a helpful reference throughout the school year. We encourage you to stay connected, communicate openly, and actively participate in our school community.

Together, we will create a year filled with learning, growth, and joyful discovery. Thank you for entrusting us with the privilege of educating your child.

With gratitude,

Elizabeth Dillenkoffer
Principal



JAMES SIMONS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

QUICK REFERENCE

for Families

PEACE • PASSION • PURPOSE



IMPORTANT REMINDERS



School Begins 7:40 AM



Arrival Begins 7:20 AM



Transportation Changes Due 1:30 PM



Early Checkout Ends 2:00 PM



Dismissal Begins 2:40 PM

SCHOOL INFORMATION



School Hours 7:40 AM – 2:40 PM



Breakfast 7:20 – 7:35 AM



Students Tardy After 7:40 AM



Transportation Changes Due by 1:30 PM



Early Checkout Ends at 2:00 PM



Dismissal Begins 2:40 PM



Dismissal Ends 2:55 PM



Main Office 843-724-7763



Fax 843-720-3129



Address 741 King Street
Charleston, SC 29403



Website <https://simons.ccsdschools.com/>



OUR MISSION

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



OUR VISION

Our vision is for all children to become conscientious, peaceful citizens who are self-disciplined, collaborative, and equipped with the knowledge, skills, and character needed to lead productive and meaningful lives.



OUR MOTTO

Peace. Passion. Purpose.



OUR MASCOT

The Jaguar

KEY CONTACTS



Principal Elizabeth Dillenkoffer
("Ms. Beth")



Assistant Principal Amelia Conroy Cummings
("Ms. Amy")



Secretary / Bookkeeper JaNel Dunmyer



Student Data Specialist Scott Fitzpatrick



School Counselor Cassandra Kerrigan



School Nurse Caroline Riveria

*Together, we inspire lifelong learners
and shape a better tomorrow.*



Charleston County SCHOOL DISTRICT

Vacation Planner

Please plan family travel during scheduled school breaks to maximize instructional time and support student attendance.

Labor Day Weekend

September 4-7, 2026

Early Release: Friday, Sept. 4

Students return Tuesday, Sept. 8

Extended Weekend

October 9-12, 2026

Half Day: Friday, Oct. 9

Students return Tuesday, Oct. 13

Thanksgiving Break

November 23-27, 2026

No School: Nov. 23-27

Students return Monday, Nov. 30

Winter Break

Dec. 18, 2026 – Jan. 4, 2027

Half Day: Friday, Dec. 18

Students return Tuesday, Jan. 5

MLK Weekend

January 16-18, 2027

No School: January 18

Students return Tuesday, Jan. 19

Presidents' Day Weekend

February 12-15, 2027

Early Release: Friday, Feb. 12

Students return Tuesday, Feb. 16

Extended Weekend

March 12-15, 2027

Early Release: Friday, March 12

Students return Tuesday, March 16

Spring Break

March 29-April 2, 2027

No School: March 29-April 2

Students return Monday, April 5

EVERY DAY COUNTS

Regular attendance supports student success.

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This handbook is intended to serve as a helpful guide for James Simons Montessori families. While it includes many important policies, procedures, and resources, it may not address every situation. School and district policies are subject to change. Families are encouraged to contact the school office whenever questions arise.

About James Simons Montessori

James Simons Montessori School is Charleston County School District's only public Montessori school serving children from age three through eighth grade. Rooted in our commitment to Peace • Passion • Purpose, we provide an authentic Montessori education that inspires curiosity, independence, academic excellence, and a lifelong love of learning within a diverse and inclusive community.

Our Motto

Peace • Passion • Purpose

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

Our vision is for all children to become conscientious, peaceful citizens who are self-disciplined, collaborative, and equipped with the knowledge, skills, and character needed 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 Chorus



Our History & Civil Rights Legacy

Founded in 1919, James Simons School has served generations of Charleston families and holds a unique place in the city's educational and civil rights history.

Designed by local architects Benson & Barbot, the school opened for the 1919–1920 school year as Charleston's fifth public elementary school. Over the decades, it became an important part of the city's educational landscape and played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement.

In 1963, James Simons was one of the first schools in Charleston to desegregate following a landmark federal court decision. Today, the school is recognized for its historical significance and has been designated by the Preservation Society of Charleston as one of its "Seven to Save" sites.

As a public Montessori school, we honor this legacy by fostering an inclusive, peaceful, and supportive learning community where every child is valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

Families can learn more about our school's history by visiting our website and exploring our historic campus.



James Simons School Historical Marker, installed by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in recognition of the school's role in Charleston's educational and civil rights history.

Our Legacy Lives On

For more than a century, James Simons has been a place where children have learned, grown, and helped shape the future of Charleston.



Students enter James Simons School following the landmark 1963 desegregation decision that helped shape Charleston's Civil Rights history.

Today, every child who walks through our doors becomes part of a story more than 100 years in the making. Together, we continue a legacy of courage, inclusion, curiosity, and hope. We honor our past while preparing students to shape the future.

Daily Procedures

At James Simons Montessori School, consistency, independence, and community are important parts of each day. The procedures below help ensure a safe, orderly, and successful learning environment for all students.

Attendance

Consistent attendance supports the continuity of the Montessori work cycle and helps children fully participate in their classroom community. Regular attendance is essential to student success and is required by South Carolina law. Families should submit a written excuse or doctor's note following an absence and notify the school when a child will be absent. Charleston County School District attendance procedures and South Carolina truancy laws will be followed. Additional attendance information can be found in the CCSD Code of Conduct.

Arrival & Dismissal

Daily Schedule	
Time	What Happens
7:20 AM	Doors open & breakfast begins
7:30 AM	Students transition to classrooms
7:35 AM	Students should be on campus by this time
7:40 AM	Instruction begins (Students arriving after 7:40 must check in through the front office with a parent/guardian)
2:40 PM	Dismissal

2:55 PM	Dismissal Ends
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A smooth start to the day helps children transition successfully into the Montessori work cycle. The information below will help ensure your child arrives safely, on time, and ready to learn.

Students may arrive beginning at **7:20 AM**, when breakfast is served in the cafeteria until **7:35 AM**. Students who choose not to eat breakfast will remain in the cafeteria until classrooms open at **7:30 AM**.

To ensure a timely start to instruction, we ask that all students arrive and enter the building by **7:35 AM**. Students arriving at **7:35 AM or later** will pick up breakfast in the cafeteria and eat in their classrooms.

Students arriving after **7:40 AM** must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to the front office to receive a pass before reporting to class. This district procedure helps ensure student safety as staff transition to their assigned supervision locations.

Please Help Us Start the Day Strong

- Arrive between **7:20–7:35 AM** whenever possible.
- Transportation changes must be made by **1:30 PM**.
- Students arriving after **7:40 AM** must check in through the front office with a parent or guardian.

Dismissal Changes & Updates

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.

To protect instructional time, parents are asked not to check students out **after 2:00 PM** except in emergencies. 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.

Transportation

Safe and efficient arrival and dismissal depend on everyone's cooperation. Please review these procedures with anyone who may transport your child during the school year, including grandparents, babysitters, and family friends. Thank you for helping us keep students safe by following the procedures below.



Transportation Quick Reminders

- **Car riders** enter and exit through the **Shand Street** car loop.
- **Walkers** use the **Moultrie Street** gate.
- **Bus riders** load and unload on **Moultrie Street**.
- **No parking/drop off** on King or Moultrie Street.
- **Transportation changes** must be received by **1:30 PM**.
- **Student checkout ends at 2:00 PM**, except in emergencies.

Car Riders

Car riders should use the Shand Street car loop for arrival and dismissal. Please display your child's James Simons placard in the front windshield each day. If a placard is not displayed, you will be asked to park and present identification in the front office before your child is released. Please remain in your vehicle while in the car line unless directed otherwise by a staff member.

Walkers

Students who walk with a parent or guardian should enter and exit through the Moultrie Street gate.

Bus Riders

Buses load and unload on Moultrie Street. During arrival and dismissal, Moultrie Street is closed to regular traffic except for school buses. Families with questions about routes or stops should contact First Student Bus Service.

Bus Transportation Quick Links

- 2026-2027 Bell Schedule
- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Bus Stop Information](#) - Bus stops will be available on July 14, 2026
- [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.

Inclement Weather

James Simons Montessori School will close for inclement weather any time Charleston County School District cancels classes. School closing information will be shared through the CCSD website, district mobile app, Parent Link system, and local media outlets. The Charleston County School District website 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.

Meals & Snacks

School Meals

At James Simons Montessori School, **every student receives FREE breakfast and lunch** each school day through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Families are also welcome to send a packed lunch from home if they prefer. Parents are always welcome to join their child for lunch at the current CCSD adult meal price.

Meal	Cost
Student Breakfast	FREE
Student Lunch	FREE
Milk	\$0.50

Parents are always welcome to join their child for lunch. Adult lunches may be purchased at the current CCSD meal price.

Packed Lunches

Students may bring a lunch from home. We encourage families to pack nutritious foods that support a full day of learning.

Snacks

Snack routines vary by classroom and grade level. Some classrooms provide a community snack, while others ask students to bring an individual snack from home each day. Your child's teacher will communicate classroom-specific snack expectations before the start of the school year. When possible, we encourage families to choose wholesome, nutritious snacks that help children stay focused and energized for learning.

If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions, please notify your child's teacher and the school nurse in writing. Families are welcome to provide an alternative snack if needed.

Healthy snack donations are always appreciated in classrooms that offer a shared snack. Please check with your child's teacher for current classroom needs.

For current breakfast and lunch menus, please visit the **CCSD Nutrition Services** website.

Lost & Found

Please label your child's jackets, lunch boxes, water bottles, backpacks, and other personal belongings with their name whenever possible. Labeling items greatly increases the chances they will be returned.

Lost and Found is located in the front foyer. Unclaimed clothing will be donated to a local charity twice each year—once before Winter Break and again at the end of the school year.

Items of value, including eyeglasses, watches, jewelry, house keys, and electronic devices, will be secured in the front office.

Personal Belongings

To minimize distractions and protect valuable items, students should leave toys, gifts, trading cards, expensive jewelry, collectibles, and other personal belongings at home unless requested by the classroom teacher as part of a classroom activity or special event.

Teachers will communicate in advance when students are invited to bring special items to school.

While we make every effort to help students locate missing belongings, **James Simons Montessori School is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items**, including jewelry, electronic devices, or other valuables.

Families are encouraged to leave valuables at home whenever possible.

Montessori at JSM

Why Public Montessori?

The Best of Both Worlds

James Simons Montessori School combines the child-centered philosophy of Montessori education with the opportunities and resources of a public school.

As a public Montessori school, we provide an authentic Montessori learning experience while ensuring students master South Carolina academic standards and are prepared for future success.

What Makes Montessori Different?

Multi-Age Classrooms

Children learn alongside peers of different ages, creating opportunities for leadership, collaboration, mentoring, and community building.

Hands-On Learning

Students learn through engaging Montessori materials and real-world experiences that make learning meaningful, concrete, and memorable.

Independence & Responsibility

Children are encouraged to make choices, manage their work, solve problems, and develop confidence in their abilities.

Individualized Learning

Teachers carefully observe each child and provide lessons that meet students where they are while challenging them to grow.

Deep Concentration

Extended work cycles allow students to focus for longer periods of time, develop perseverance, and experience the satisfaction of meaningful work.

Educating the Whole Child

Montessori education nurtures academic, social, emotional, physical, and character development, helping children become capable, compassionate, and responsible citizens.

What Makes Public Montessori Unique?

At James Simons Montessori School, students benefit from:

- Certified public school educators
 - Authentic Montessori instruction and materials
 - Access to special education, intervention, counseling, and support services
 - Music, art, physical education, and enrichment opportunities
 - State standards-based instruction and assessment
 - A diverse and inclusive learning community
 - Opportunities for leadership, service, and civic engagement
-

Peace • Passion • Purpose

Our goal is not simply to help children achieve academically. We strive to help every child discover who they are, develop a love of learning, contribute positively to their community, and find their unique purpose in the world. Together, we are preparing students not only for the next grade level—but for a lifetime of learning, leadership, and meaningful contribution.

Maria Montessori

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870–1952) was an Italian physician, educator, and pioneer in child development. Through careful observation of children, she developed an educational approach that recognizes each child's natural curiosity, independence, and desire to learn.

The first Montessori school, Casa dei Bambini (Children's House), opened in Rome in 1907. Today, Montessori schools can be found around the world, serving children from infancy through adolescence.

Dr. Montessori believed that children learn best through hands-on experiences, purposeful work, freedom within limits, and a carefully prepared environment. Her philosophy continues to influence educators worldwide and serves as the foundation for our work at James Simons Montessori School.

"The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'"

— Maria Montessori

Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori philosophy is based on the belief that every child is naturally curious, capable, and eager to learn. Developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, this approach nurtures the whole child—academically, socially, emotionally, and physically—through meaningful, hands-on experiences.

In Montessori classrooms, students learn at their own pace within a carefully prepared environment designed to foster independence, responsibility, concentration, and a lifelong love of learning. Teachers serve as guides, observing each child's development and providing lessons and opportunities that meet individual needs and interests.

At James Simons Montessori School, we honor each child's unique potential while cultivating peaceful citizenship, respect for others, and a strong sense of purpose.

Through exploration, collaboration, and self-directed learning, students develop the confidence and skills needed to thrive both in school and beyond.

Montessori Levels at JSM

Primary Program (Ages 3–Kindergarten)

The Primary Program nurtures children's natural curiosity during one of the most important periods of development. Through carefully prepared environments and hands-on Montessori materials, children develop independence, concentration, confidence, and a genuine love of learning.

Students build strong foundations in early literacy, mathematics, practical life, sensorial exploration, science, geography, art, and grace and courtesy. Multi-age classrooms encourage younger children to learn from older peers while older students develop leadership skills by serving as role models. The goal is to cultivate capable, confident learners who are eager to explore the world around them.

Lower Elementary Program (Grades 1–3)

The Lower Elementary years are a time of wonder, imagination, and expanding curiosity. Students move beyond learning basic skills to asking deeper questions, making connections across subjects, and exploring big ideas.

Through individualized lessons, collaborative learning, and uninterrupted work cycles, students continue building strong academic foundations while developing independence, responsibility, and problem-solving skills. As children grow in confidence, they become active participants in their own learning and contributors to their classroom community.

Upper Elementary Program (Grades 4–5)

Upper Elementary students are ready for increasing independence, intellectual challenge, and meaningful responsibility. Learning becomes more research-based,

collaborative, and interdisciplinary as students investigate complex concepts and apply their knowledge in authentic ways.

Students strengthen executive functioning, leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills while taking greater ownership of their academic growth. Community service, collaboration, and real-world application help prepare students for the transition into adolescence and future learning experiences.

Early Adolescent Program (Grade 6)

The Early Adolescent Program serves as a purposeful bridge between Upper Elementary and middle school. During this important transitional year, students experience increased independence and responsibility while continuing to learn within a Montessori environment that emphasizes collaboration, inquiry, and meaningful work.

Sixth grade is intentionally designed to support the unique developmental needs of early adolescence. Students strengthen executive functioning skills, deepen academic thinking, and develop a strong sense of belonging within their classroom community. Through authentic learning experiences, leadership opportunities, and increased personal responsibility, students become self-directed learners who are prepared for the expectations of the middle school years ahead.

Middle School Program (Grades 7–8)

During seventh and eighth grade, students transition into a more traditional middle school structure while continuing to benefit from the Montessori philosophy and James Simons Montessori's commitment to educating the whole child. Students rotate among content-area teachers, experience increased academic rigor, and are challenged to think critically, collaborate effectively, and take greater ownership of their learning.

As students prepare for high school, the program emphasizes academic excellence, leadership, organization, responsible decision-making, and service to others. While the instructional model becomes more departmentalized, our commitment to curiosity,

independence, respect, and community remains at the heart of the middle school experience.

At every stage, our goal remains the same: to nurture curious minds, compassionate hearts, and confident learners who embody James Simons Montessori's commitment to Peace • Passion • Purpose.

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.

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.

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 their 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.

WHY WE PROTECT THE MONTESSORI WORK CYCLE

Where independence, concentration, and joyful learning come together.



DURING THE WORK CYCLE, STUDENTS LEARN TO...

- Make responsible choices
- Solve problems independently
- Manage their time
- Persist through challenges
- Care for materials
- Collaborate respectfully
- Complete meaningful work



CHOOSE

Choose meaningful work that inspires curiosity.



LEARN

Receive individual lessons at the right time and level.



PRACTICE

Practice and explore concepts through hands-on experiences.



COLLABORATE

Collaborate and learn from one another in a respectful community.



REFLECT

Reflect, refine, and complete meaningful work.



GROW

Build confidence, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

WHAT IS THE WORK CYCLE?

The uninterrupted Montessori work cycle is the heart of our school day. Rather than changing subjects every 30–45 minutes, students have extended blocks of time to choose meaningful work, receive individualized lessons, collaborate with classmates, and practice new skills at their own pace.

This protected time allows children to experience deep concentration, independence, and the joy of meaningful learning.

FAMILIES CAN HELP BY...

- Arriving on time each morning
- Scheduling appointments outside of school hours whenever possible
- Limiting early checkouts
- Encouraging daily attendance
- Supporting reading and math practice at home
- Celebrating independence

“

When children are given uninterrupted time to concentrate, they discover something remarkable—they become capable, confident, and joyful learners.

“The first essential for the child's development is concentration.”

— MARIA MONTESSORI



DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that it often takes 10–20 minutes for children to become deeply engaged in a task. Frequent interruptions reset that concentration, making meaningful learning more difficult. Montessori classrooms intentionally protect long, uninterrupted work periods so children can experience deep focus, persistence, and the satisfaction of completing meaningful work.



PEACE ♦ PASSION ♦ PURPOSE



Observation Guidelines and Etiquette

Families are encouraged to observe our Montessori classrooms beginning in October, after students have completed the orientation and normalization period. Classroom observations provide a wonderful opportunity to see Montessori learning in action while respecting the concentration and independence that are essential to the Montessori work cycle.

To schedule an observation, please contact the front office or your child's teacher. While we understand that unexpected opportunities may arise, we ask that observations be scheduled whenever possible and limited to approximately 30 minutes. Teachers and assistants remain focused on supporting students during observation visits but will be happy to answer questions afterward or schedule a follow-up conversation.

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.

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.

Talk Together Every Day

- 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

Explore the World Together

- 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.

The JSM Family Partnership

Working Together for Every Child

At James Simons Montessori School, we believe children thrive when school and home work together. We ask every family to partner with us by committing to these shared expectations:

Support Regular Attendance

Help your child arrive on time each day ready to learn and participate in the Montessori work cycle.

Read Every Day

Make reading together a daily habit and encourage regular math fact practice to build lifelong learning habits.

Foster Independence

Allow your child opportunities to solve problems, take responsibility, and complete age-appropriate tasks at home.

Communicate Early and Respectfully

Partner with teachers when questions or concerns arise so we can work together to support your child.

Live Our Motto

Encourage your child to demonstrate **Peace • Passion • Purpose** both at school and in the community.

Together, we create a learning community where every child is known, challenged, supported, and inspired to thrive.

School Procedures and Expectations

Daily Clothing & Dress Code Information

Montessori classrooms include movement, outdoor learning, and hands-on materials. Comfortable, practical clothing helps children fully participate in daily learning experiences.

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.
- Please do not send students to school with expensive or heirloom jewelry. The school is not responsible for missing, lost, or misplaced jewelry.

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, and 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.

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.

Student Support & Well-Being

At James Simons Montessori School, we believe children thrive when their academic, social, emotional, and physical needs are supported. Consistent with Montessori philosophy, we are committed to educating the whole child and creating a safe, nurturing environment where every student can learn, grow, and flourish.

Health Services

The health and safety of our students is a top priority. A registered nurse is on duty during school hours to provide care for students who become ill or injured and to support student health needs throughout the school year.

Every parent or guardian must complete an electronic emergency card and provide at least three current telephone numbers. In the event of an illness, injury, or emergency, school personnel will provide appropriate first aid and make every effort to contact a parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contacts

listed on the student's emergency card will be notified. Students will only be released to individuals authorized by the parent or guardian.

All medications must be registered with the school clinic. State law requires a physician's authorization form to be on file before medication can be administered at school. Students should not bring personal medications to school unless approved through the clinic.

South Carolina law requires that all students enrolled in public schools have a current South Carolina Certificate of Immunization on file. Failure to provide required immunization documentation may result in exclusion from school.

James Simons Montessori School is fortunate to partner with MUSC to provide access to a nurse practitioner on campus one day each week. Parents and guardians may grant permission for their child to be seen by the nurse practitioner. Information and consent forms are distributed at the beginning of each school year and are also available through the school nurse.

School Counseling

At James Simons Montessori School, we are committed to supporting the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of every child. Our school counseling program helps students develop positive relationships, self-awareness, problem-solving skills, and healthy coping strategies.

School counselors provide classroom guidance lessons, small-group support, and individual counseling services as appropriate. When additional support is needed, we partner with community agencies, including the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH), MUSC, and other service providers.

Families who are interested in counseling services or would like additional information are encouraged to contact the school counselor.

Communication

Strong Partnerships Begin with Strong Communication

At James Simons Montessori School, we believe that open, respectful communication between home and school is essential to every child's success. We are committed to keeping families informed, connected, and engaged throughout the school year through a variety of communication tools.

Stay Connected

Families can expect to receive information through the following resources:

- **Blackboard** – School-wide announcements, reminders, classroom communication, and emergency notifications.
- **Weekly Principal Newsletter** – “Sunday Message” School highlights, upcoming events, important reminders, and celebrations.
- **Classroom Communication** – Teachers will share classroom updates, learning experiences, and important information through their preferred communication method.
- **Thursday Folders** – Student work, flyers, permission slips, and other important paper communications sent home each week.
- **James Simons Montessori Website** – School calendars, forms, resources, and important information.
- **James Simons Montessori Facebook & Instagram Pages** – School celebrations, reminders, and highlights from around campus.

Questions or Concerns?

We value open communication and encourage families to partner with us whenever questions or concerns arise.

Whenever possible, **please begin by contacting your child's teacher.** Most questions can be resolved quickly through direct communication.

If additional support is needed, please follow this communication pathway:

Classroom Teacher



Assistant Principal or Principal



Learning Community Director (if needed)

Working together respectfully helps us provide the best possible support for every child.

Keep Your Information Current

Please notify the front office promptly if your phone number, email address, home address, emergency contacts, or custody information changes during the school year. Keeping your information current ensures we can reach you quickly when needed.

We Are Partners

Your involvement matters. Whether you are asking a question, sharing a celebration, volunteering, or supporting learning at home, we value the partnership we share with every James Simons family. Together, we continue to build a community rooted in Peace • Passion • Purpose.

Communication Tip

Our staff strive to respond to emails and messages as promptly as possible during the school week. Messages received during evenings, weekends, holidays, or school breaks will be returned as soon as staff members are back on campus.

Learning, Assessment, & Technology

Learning Beyond the School Day (Homework)

At James Simons Montessori School, meaningful learning extends beyond the classroom. We believe family time, reading, curiosity, and real-world experiences are valuable parts of a child's education. Homework is designed to reinforce learning, encourage responsibility, and support the development of lifelong habits—not simply provide additional work.

Students are encouraged to read independently each evening and practice math facts or flashcards to build fluency and confidence. These consistent habits support success across all subject areas and help develop lifelong learners.

The Montessori work cycle provides students with uninterrupted time during the school day to complete meaningful academic work. Students are expected to use this time responsibly. When classroom work is not completed due to lack of focus, time management, or effort, unfinished assignments may be sent home to be completed.

Occasionally, teachers may assign projects or additional practice to reinforce learning or prepare students for upcoming classroom experiences. Families who find homework is becoming overwhelming or consistently taking longer than expected are encouraged to contact their child's teacher so that we can work together to support student success.

Learning to manage time, sustain attention, and complete work independently during the school day is an important part of a Montessori education.

Virtual Learning

In the event of school closure, families will receive guidance regarding instructional continuity and learning expectations.

Report Cards

Families receive regular updates on student progress through conferences, classroom communication, and report cards issued by Charleston County School District. 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.)

Digital Citizenship

Technology is an important tool for learning, creativity, communication, and research. At James Simons Montessori School, we teach students to use technology responsibly, safely, respectfully, and ethically.

Students are expected to:

- Use school technology for educational purposes.
- Protect personal information and respect the privacy of others.
- Demonstrate kindness, respect, and good judgment when communicating online.
- Follow copyright laws and give credit when using the work or ideas of others.
- Care for school-issued devices and technology resources.
- Report inappropriate content, unsafe situations, or technology concerns to a trusted adult.

Students should never use technology to bully, harass, threaten, impersonate, or intentionally harm others.

Misuse of school technology may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of technology privileges in accordance with Charleston County School District policies and the CCSD Progressive Discipline Plan.

Families are encouraged to partner with the school in promoting safe, responsible, and balanced technology use both at school and at home.

For complete technology expectations and policies, please refer to Charleston County School District Board Policy JICJ and related district technology procedures.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly common tool in education and everyday life. At James Simons Montessori School, we believe AI should enhance learning—not replace thinking, creativity, or original work. At James Simons Montessori School, we believe students should learn to use emerging technologies responsibly, ethically, and thoughtfully. The rubric below outlines expectations for the appropriate use

of artificial intelligence (AI) in student learning and assignments. As district guidance evolves, our practices will continue to align with Charleston County School District expectations.

	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.	- 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.	- 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.	- 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.	- 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.	- 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

We value honesty, responsibility, and personal growth. Students are expected to complete their own work and demonstrate integrity in all academic activities. 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 Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy

Charleston County School District maintains a phone-free learning environment to support student learning, reduce distractions, and encourage meaningful interactions throughout the school day.

Personal electronic devices, including cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, gaming devices, earbuds, and headphones, must be powered off and securely stored during the school day. Devices may only be used when specifically authorized for instructional purposes or when required by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or documented medical accommodation.

Students who do not follow the district's electronic device policy may be subject to consequences outlined in the Charleston County School District Progressive Discipline Plan and Student Code of Conduct.

Parents and guardians who need to communicate with their child during the school day should contact the school office. In the event of illness or emergency, students may use the school clinic or front office to contact a parent or guardian.

For complete information regarding Policy JICJ: Prohibition of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day, approved classroom use of electronic devices, and frequently asked questions, please visit the Charleston County School District website.

School Culture & Community

ROSE Expectations & Matrix

At James Simons Montessori School, we believe that a positive school culture is built on mutual respect, personal responsibility, and care for our community. Our school-wide ROSE Expectations provide a common language for students, families, and staff to support a safe, peaceful, and productive learning environment.

ROSE stands for:

R – Respect

We treat others with kindness, courtesy, and empathy. We honor differences, listen thoughtfully, and work together peacefully.

O – Others

We recognize that our actions affect those around us. We demonstrate cooperation, helpfulness, and consideration for classmates, staff, families, and community members.

S – Self

We take responsibility for our choices, actions, and learning. We practice self-discipline, perseverance, honesty, and independence while striving to do our personal best.

E – Environment

We care for our classrooms, school grounds, materials, and the world around us. We help create spaces that are safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning.

The ROSE Expectations are taught, modeled, and reinforced throughout the school day using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Montessori practices. Students are encouraged to reflect on their choices, resolve conflicts peacefully, and contribute positively to our learning community.

Appendix B – ROSE Matrix (8 pages) - Families are encouraged to use this common language to support consistency between home and school.

Peace Table

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.

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.

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 & Code of Conduct

Click [here](#) for 2026-2027 Progressive Discipline Plans (PDPs)

Click [here](#) for the 2026 - 2027 Parent Resource Manual & Student Code of Conduct

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.

Classroom Materials Fees

To help support classroom materials, activities, and student experiences throughout the year, James Simons Montessori requests a **\$25 annual classroom materials fee** per student. Payment may be made through RevTrak at the beginning of the school year.

In addition to the annual fee, we gratefully welcome donations of classroom materials throughout the year. These generous contributions help enrich our learning environments and provide meaningful experiences for our students. Families interested

in donating classroom items are encouraged to contact their child's teacher for current classroom needs.

Get Involved at JSM

Parent Involvement

Families are an essential part of the James Simons Montessori community. Whether you have one hour each year or one hour each week, your time, talents, and support help strengthen our school and enrich the experiences of every child. We encourage every family to find meaningful ways to become involved throughout the school year.

Parents and guardians are invited to attend conferences, family events, literacy nights, classroom activities, and school celebrations throughout the year. We also encourage classroom observations and volunteer opportunities that help families better understand the Montessori environment and their child's educational experience.

Together, we create a supportive community where children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

School Improvement Council (SIC)

The School Improvement Council (SIC) is an advisory group composed of parents, staff, and community members who work collaboratively to support continuous school improvement.

The SIC provides feedback on school goals, improvement planning, and initiatives designed to enhance student achievement and strengthen the school community.

A current list of SIC members and meeting information can be found on the James Simons Montessori School website.

Whether you have one hour a year or one hour a week, your involvement makes a difference in the life of our school.

Friends of James Simons

Friends of James Simons (FOJS) is our parent-led nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting students, teachers, and the continued growth of our school community. Through fundraising, volunteerism, school events, and community partnerships, FOJS helps provide opportunities and resources that enhance the Montessori experience for every child.

Families are encouraged to attend meetings, volunteer at events, support fundraising efforts, and share their talents throughout the school year. Whether you have a little time or a lot, there is a place for everyone to get involved.

Together, we strengthen our school and invest in the success of every James Simons student.

Thank You to Our Community Supporters

James Simons Montessori School is grateful for the businesses, organizations, families, and community members whose generosity helps enrich the educational experience of our students.

Their support strengthens our Montessori program, enhances learning opportunities, and helps us continue our mission of cultivating Peace • Passion • Purpose in every chi

Thank You for Partnering With Us

Thank you for choosing James Simons Montessori School and for trusting us with your child's education. We are honored to partner with your family as we nurture curious minds, compassionate hearts, and confident learners.

Together, we will create a school community where children are challenged, supported, and inspired to reach their fullest potential. We look forward to a wonderful year of learning, growth, and joyful discovery.

Welcome to the James Simons Montessori family.

Peace • Passion • Purpose

Appendix A - Frequently Used QR Codes



JSM FAMILY Quick Links

Save this page for easy access throughout the school year!



SCHOOL INFORMATION

				
School Website	Bus Stop Lookup	Lunch Menus	School Calendar	Parent Portal (PowerSchool)
				
Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗

STUDENT SERVICES

		
KidsWell Health Services	Kaleidoscope After School Program	Health Forms & Nurse Information
		
Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗

STAY CONNECTED

				
Friends of James Simons	Instagram	Facebook	JSM Storefront	Principal Newsletter
				
Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗	Scan me! ↗



Questions? We're here to help!

If you have questions before school begins or can't find the information you're looking for, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for being part of our JSM family!



PEACE • PASSION • PURPOSE

Appendix B - ROSE Behavior Expectations

James Simons Montessori ROSE Matrix				PBIS
R	O	S	E	
RESPECT	OTHERS	SELF	ENVIRONMENT	
	RESPECT OTHER'S FEELINGS, PERSONAL SPACE, PROPERTY, AND LET OTHERS LEARN.	RESPECT YOURSELF, YOUR WORK, YOUR FEELINGS, ASSERT YOURSELF, AND STAY SAFE.	RESPECT SCHOOL PROPERTY, KEEP YOUR SCHOOL SAFE & CLEAN, AND PROTECT THE EARTH.	