

MONTESSORI MAGNET SCHOOL



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026-2027



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Welcome to CREC Montessori Magnet School!

This handbook explains how our school operates and outlines our official policies and procedures. It also provides guidelines, suggestions, and answers to questions that may arise throughout the school year.

At CREC Montessori Magnet School, families are essential partners in our mission to provide the highest quality public Montessori education while ensuring equity, excellence, and success for all through a high-quality, Montessori-based learning experience. We rely on your commitment and partnership to help us create the unique and vibrant community that is CREC Montessori Magnet School. We value your participation in every aspect of your child's education and invite you to join us on this exciting educational journey.

We are Connecticut's oldest public Montessori school, proudly serving students from more than 40 towns and cities across the state. As public Montessori continues to expand throughout the country, our school has become a model for districts seeking to implement authentic Montessori practices in public education.

We are especially proud to be accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the world's most respected and esteemed Montessori organization. Even more remarkably, CREC Montessori Magnet School is one of only a handful of public Montessori schools in the United States to earn AMI accreditation in both Primary and Elementary. This distinction reflects our unwavering commitment to authentic Montessori principles, high-quality instruction, and continuous excellence in serving our students and families.

We recognize that a family handbook can feel lengthy and, at times, overwhelming. To make it easier for families to stay informed, we will once again share highlights from the handbook throughout the year, just as we did last year. Our "Montessori Policy Peek of the Week" was a favorite among families, providing brief, easy-to-read reminders of important policies, procedures, and helpful information. We look forward to continuing this tradition to help keep everyone informed and connected.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. We look forward to partnering with you to ensure a joyful, engaging, and successful school year.

Warmest wishes for a wonderful and successful 2026–2027 school year!

Antonio Napoleone

Dr. Antonio Napoleone
Principal

Jessica Leon

Mrs. Jessica Leon
Assistant Principal

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission

The mission of the CREC Montessori Magnet School is to provide a quality public Montessori program in a culturally, racially and economically diverse school community.

CREC Montessori Magnet School History

The CREC Montessori Magnet School is in its 31st year, but comes from simple beginnings as a cooperative town program between Hartford and West Hartford, it has grown to be a state public inter-district magnet school serving students ages 3-12 from 40 districts. As a public magnet school there is no tuition charge to parents. The CREC Montessori Magnet School was reconstituted in 1999 and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) assumed management of the school. The school relocated to the Learning Corridor campus in August 2000. In 2003 the Montessori Training Center of New England was opened on campus with the purpose of training future Montessori teachers. In 2006 and again in 2008 CREC Montessori Magnet School was recognized as a School of Excellence by Magnet Schools of America. In 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 CREC Montessori Magnet School was recognized as a School of Distinction, by Magnet Schools of America.

Leadership

Principal, Assistant Principal and Staff

The school staff brings a wealth of training and experience to the school under the leadership of Principal, Dr. Antonio Napoleone, and Assistant Principal, Mrs. Jessica Leon. Each classroom has both a teacher and classroom assistant. Quality support staff is also available to serve students with special needs.

In the case of teacher absence, the assistant teacher assumes the role of Lead Teacher, and an appropriate substitute is assigned to assist in the classroom. In the case of a long-term absence, administration will assign a long-term substitute.

To communicate with any staff member, please consult the school directory. The directory lists phone numbers and email addresses or you can call the main school number at (860) 757-6100.

CREC Background:

CREC began as a grassroots organization of local school districts working together to solve common problems. It is one of six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) established under Connecticut General Statute 10-66 a-n, which permits local boards of education to establish a RESC as a "public educational authority" for the purpose of "cooperative action to furnish programs and services."

Such intermediate units – that are smaller than state departments of education, yet larger than local school districts – are used to deliver services in about 40 states.

Vision: To become our member districts' primary resource to facilitate collaborative efforts that create equitable and sustainable educational opportunities, assist in maximizing district and regional resources, and advance successful educational practices for all learners at all ages.

Mission: Equity, excellence, and success for all through high-quality educational services.

Core Values

- Expect Excellence
- Act with Courage
- Demand Equity
- Embrace Collaboration

CREC Montessori Magnet School is managed by the Capitol Region Education Council. Through the legislation, Connecticut permits local boards of education to establish a RESC as a “public educational authority” for the purpose of “cooperative action to furnish programs and services”. Such intermediate units – that are smaller than a State Educational Agency (SEA), but larger than a local Educational Agency (LEA) –are used as service delivery mechanisms in more than 75 percent of the state. For more than four decades, the Capitol Region Education Council, working with and for its member districts, has developed a wide array of programs and services to meet the educational needs of children and adults in the Capitol Region.

For further information about CREC, the Capitol Region Education Council, see the web site at www.crec.org or ask for a CREC brochure in our school office. For further information about CREC Magnet schools, see the website at www.crecschools.org

Early Dismissal Days / Holidays and Vacations

Early dismissal days, holidays and vacations are indicated on the school calendar. Dismissal time for all early releases is 12:10 p.m. Aftercare will be available on most half days. Please note on the calendar the early dismissal dates in which aftercare is not available.

Transportation

Adults picking up students must be listed on the emergency form or a note from the parent/guardian must be sent in. Please make sure this important information is kept up-to-date. Hartford Board of Education is responsible for transporting all of our Hartford children. CREC transportation coordinates the transportation of our suburban children. Should you have questions regarding a Hartford bus please contact HBOE transportation department at (860) 695-8000. Concerns regarding a suburban bus should be directed to the CREC transportation department at 524-4077. Bus transportation is a privilege and proper bus behavior is expected from all students. Safety on the bus is our primary concern. ***When a child receives 3 bus discipline notices, a one-week suspension from the bus will occur. Further problems could result in denial of bus services to the student for the remainder of the school year.***

Transportation Safety Complaints/Procedures

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator/District Business Manager. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Transportation Changes

Any changes to your child’s normal dismissal routine must be reported to the front office with a phone call at least 24 hours in advance of the change. All telephone requests must be followed up by an email to ysolvervelez@crec.org (Yomarie Soler-Velez) or jfigueroa@crec.org (Jeserika Figueroa). Students are not permitted to ride a different bus other than the one to which they are assigned.

School Day Schedule/Arrival and Dismissal

7:30am	Before Care drop off – Parents must sign children in (registration required).
8:40 am – 9:00 am	Car Pool and all buses drop in back of building
9:00am	Instructional day begins, doors are locked. Late arrivals are to enter through the front door only. All late arrivals must report to the office and be signed in by Parent/Guardian
After 9:00 am	Students are considered late if dropped off and must be signed in
3:35pm	End of the instructional day, student pick up is at the back door. If you would like to park and pick up your child, please do so through the front door. No cars should be in the front driveway, Hartford buses only.
3:35 – 5:30	Aftercare and clubs pick up at the front door.

Half Day Schedule

7:30am	Before Care drop off – Parents must sign children in (registration required).
8:40 am – 9:00 am	Car Pool and all buses drop in back of building
9:00am	Instructional day begins, doors are locked. Late arrivals are to enter through the front door only. All late arrivals must report to the office and be signed in by Parent/Guardian
After 9:00 am	Students are considered late if dropped off and must be signed in
12:30pm	End of the instructional day, student pick up is at the back door. If you would like to park and pick up your child, please do so through the front door. No cars should be in the front driveway, Hartford buses only.

Drop off/pick up/parking

Before Care drop off is between 7:30am – 8:00am only; use the bus lane in the front of the building to drop off students. **The front doors remain locked until 7:30 am.** There is a \$7.00 per child per day fee for every child arriving any time prior to 8:30 am. You will be billed at the end of each month.

Students not in before care will enter the school at 8:40. Buses will drop off students in the back of the building between 8:25 am – 8:40am.

Parents dropping off students at 8:40 a.m, must enter the driveway on Brownell Avenue near the parking garage. Proceed around the big loop that circles the green. Buses will line up along the roadway along the Green to the back entrance of the school where staff will unload the students. Front drop-off/pick-up is ONLY for neighborhood walkers/special education needs. **Parking on Brownell or Broad Street is not advisable as it poses extreme safety hazards and disrupts the flow of traffic. We are actively working with Hartford PD. They will be assessing pick-up/dismissal procedures to see if we qualify for a crossing guard.**

By the first week of October all Prek-3 and Prek-4 students are expected to walk to their class independently.

After 9:00 am students are considered tardy. All students, parents and visitors must enter the building through the front entrance. If a student is late, he/she must report to the office before they go to the classroom to sign in and order lunch. After 9:15, students will receive a cold lunch.

All visitors must use the front entrance and check in with security and the office staff to receive a visitor pass and be entered into our secure Raptor System. Visitors should use the parking garage.

Any student being picked up during the school day must have an **authorized** adult sign them out through the main office. The bus lane in front can be used for quick student drop off or pick up after 9:00 am and before 3:15pm. **Students will be called to the office for such pick up when the parent/guardian arrives, not prior to.**

Buses for pick up at the end of the day will begin to arrive between 3:05 – 3:35. Parking in the bus lane in the front of the building & across the street on Broad Street (before and during dismissal) is PROHIBITED. Broad Street is not a safe street to be crossing with your child/children because it is a very busy street.

Neighborhood and special needs students are approved by Dr. Napoleone and Mrs. Leon to get picked up in the front at 3:35pm.

All other car pick ups will follow the morning/afternoon drop off procedures.

Parents picking up students from aftercare may use the front entrance after 3:55pm.

Late pick-up policy

In the event you are late picking up your child, your child will be sent to aftercare and you will be charged an aftercare fee of \$13.00.

Attendance

****Please refer to our condensed version of our attendance policy**

Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education. Time lost from class is a lost instructional opportunity. The CREC Council requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent. Guidelines for addressing absences and tardiness are contained below. These laws and regulations are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

“A student is considered to be ‘in attendance’ if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered absent.”(CT State Board of Education)

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the sending school district offices.

Families with attendance issues can contact our Family and Community Engagement Coordinator to seek help with any out of the ordinary situations. Our family coordinator will be doing home visits to the families with the highest absenteeism to communicate and help families.

Our Montessori Attendance Committee that is composed of Principal, Assistant Principal, School Nurse and Family Engagement Specialist meets weekly to discuss attendance.

Excused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered “excused” if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials. Such documentation includes a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.
- B. Students receive an excused absence for the tenth absences and all absences thereafter, when they are absent from school for the following reasons:
 - 1. Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.
 - 2. Student observance of a religious holiday.
 - 3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
 - 4. Court appearances which are mandated. (Documentation required)
 - 5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends.
 - 6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.

Other

- 1. Per guidance provided by the CT State Department of Education in May 2013, “absences that result from a student not receiving transportation from one school district to attend school in

another district must be deemed as an excused absence.” (i.e.: in the case of an inclement weather situation.) No parental note is needed in the circumstance.

2. Per guidance provided by the CT State Department of Education in May 2013, Extraordinary Educational Opportunities may now be considered excused absences if the established criteria are met. Approvals for Extraordinary Educational Opportunities will be submitted by parent/guardian to the CREC Superintendent’s office 10 days prior to the trip.

Unexcused Absences

A student’s absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. The absence meets the definition for an excused absence (see above) or
- B. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

Definition of chronic absenteeism: Missing 10 percent of school of the school year for any reason including excused and unexcused absences. Suspensions are included.

Truancy

A student aged five to eighteen inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant. A Family with Service Needs petition may be filed by the magnet school in compliance with state regulations.

The Capitol Region Education Council believes that regular school attendance is essential to the academic success of students. The Executive Director is authorized to establish procedures for monitoring school attendance so as to identify students ages 5-18 inclusive who are truant and to enlist the cooperation of the LEA, of parents and, when necessary, the juvenile justice system, in order to address the problem when it arises.

Montessori Magnet School Attendance Procedures:

1. Tardy Arrivals
 - a. School begins promptly at 8:40 am. Any student arriving after 9:00 am will be marked “tardy” and caregivers **MUST** sign-in their child upon arrival.
 - b. Students who arrive after 9:00 am due to a late bus will not be marked tardy.
2. Early Dismissals

School dismisses promptly at 3:35 pm. Any student who is dismissed prior to 3:15 pm will be marked “dismissed early”. All early dismissals must report to the office and be signed out by Parent/Guardian. Please try to schedule doctor’s appointments after the school day so that it does not interfere with instructional time.
3. Absences
 - a. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school if a student will be absent on a given day. **Please call the school’s attendance office at (860) 757-6111 to report an absence and provide the following information:**
 - the student’s name
 - the teacher’s name
 - the reason for the absence
 - a number where a parent/guardian can be reached with any questions during the school day
 - b. The school nurse or designee will make reasonable efforts to contact parents/guardians of students who are marked absent (unexcused) by telephone if prior notification of the absence has not been received.

It is critical that the school has current, working phone numbers for all parents/guardians, as well as reliable emergency contact numbers. Please notify the school of any changes to your phone numbers or email addresses.

- c. The school will keep parents/guardians informed of student attendance records in the following ways:
- Attendance data will be included in student progress reports, which are sent home to parents/guardians in December, March and June.
 - Teachers will review attendance records and will discuss concerns with parents/guardians at Parent-Teacher Conferences in December and March.
 - In addition, we want to ensure our students are here at school so they have every possible opportunity to learn and achieve to their fullest potential as we may periodically call to see if we can be of assistance.
- d. If the school has concerns about a student's attendance record (excessive absences, tardies, and/or early dismissals), the teacher will refer the student to the school's Early Intervention Process (EIP). The EIP team will review the student's attendance data and will develop an action plan with specific strategies to address the attendance issue. The parent/guardian will be notified of the referral to EIP and of the specific attendance concerns. The school will seek the parent/guardian's input in the creation of the action plan.
- e. Per CT state law, if Montessori Magnet School has concerns about a child's irregular attendance record, the school will notify the parent/guardian of this concern by telephone and by mail.
- f. If the school is concerned about irregular attendance or truancy, the school will schedule meetings with parents/guardians to discuss the attendance concerns. A collaborative working plan to address the student attendance concern will be developed as part of the meeting. The school social worker and/or school nurse may be in attendance to support the creation of the plan.
- g. If the parent/guardian of the truant child fails to attend the mandatory school meeting required under law, or otherwise fails to cooperate in solving the truancy problem, the CREC superintendent of schools will file, within 15 calendar days of such parent/guardian's failure to cooperate, a written complaint to the Superior Court pursuant to existing state law. The parent/guardian, LEA (sending school district), and CREC Assistant Director of Student Services will be notified of the attendance concerns. Depending upon the circumstances of the truancy, the school may also be

required to file an educational neglect petition to the state Department of Children and Families.

- h. If a student has **20 or more unexcused absences in a school year**, the student is considered **Habitually Truant** and the CREC Superintendent or designee will file a Family with Service Needs (FWSN) referral to the CT Superior Court, Juvenile Matters division. The student's parent/guardian, LEA (sending school district), and CREC Assistant Director of Student Services will be notified about this referral.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO CONFINE NECESSARY APPOINTMENTS TO AFTER SCHOOL, WEEKENDS AND VACATION PERIODS. IN ADDITION, PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO PLAN FAMILY VACATIONS FOR TIMES WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION.

Tardiness

Instruction begins at 8:40 am. All children arriving after 9:00 are considered late. Our doors open at 8:40 to allow enough time for students to be in the classroom by 8:45. Coming late to school is not only disruptive to the child but also to the classroom. Please make every effort to be on time every day. The parent/guardian is required to sign their child in if he/she is entering the school after 8:40am. The sign-in book is located on the security desk in the main lobby.

- Optimal learning occurs when disruptions to the classroom routine are limited so that we can protect the children's concentration and sense of order. **In order to protect the uninterrupted work cycle and minimize disruptions, late arrivals after the posted arrival times are not permitted, except in the following instances: essential medical and dental appointments, Strong Start/Early Stages services or other therapy/services appointments, special family occasions, unexpected emergencies, school interviews, or other essential appointments.**
- We understand that occasionally circumstances arise that delay your child's arrival. If you are running late due to traffic, a difficult morning, etc., please call the main office so that we are aware and can prepare for the late arrival.

Before School Program

The school provides Before Care services for families. You must register ahead of time in order to attend Before Care which begins at 7:30 am and parents must accompany their child into the main lobby to sign him/her in at the security desk. Classroom assistants are in each classroom to greet students at 8:40 am. **Payments for before care are to be made payable to CREC and given to the office staff monthly and in advance on the 25th of each month.** Children will not be permitted to continue in the before care program unless accounts are current and balances are paid fully in advance. The office staff can work with you to arrange a payment plan for before care if needed. You can contact our staff directly at 757-6111.

After School Program

The After School Program is handled through an application process. The After School Program is provided from 3:35 to 5:30 p.m. Primary students join together for outside play, arts and crafts, music, cooking, sports and social play. Elementary age students are provided choices for enrichment activities such as art, dance, sports, Zumba or Tech Quest/Computer

exploration. Snack and free play is part of each age group's daily schedule. **Payments for the Montessori After School Enrichment Program are to be done online through MYSCHOOLBUCKS. We are not able to accept cash/check or other forms of payment. It is all done through the my schoolbucks app. This program is fee based.**

Children will not be permitted to continue in the After School Program unless accounts are current and balances are paid fully in advance. Applications for the After School Program can be secured by contacting the Director of the After School Program, Marcus Harris, at maharris@crec.org or (860)757-6127. Mr. Harris will gladly work with families to arrange a payment plan if needed.

GSA (Gay, Straight, Alliance) Club

Each CREC school offers students in grades 3-6 to participate in GSA during the school day.

School Dress

Although we do not have uniforms, we expect our students to dress appropriately for school. We are fortunate to be in an air conditioned environment so remember that children (depending on rooms) may actually get cold in their rooms if they do not have sleeves. We recommend that your child keep a sweater or sweatshirt in his/her cubby at all times.

The following items are not acceptable to wear in school: Hats, flip flops, sneakers with wheels, crop tops, shirts or pants that leave skin exposed in anyway, short skirts or dresses that are too long (that may cause child to fall and get hurt), thin strap or strapless tops, t-shirts with inappropriate sayings, belts with chains, and shoes with lights on them. Students should always have sneakers available for recess time and physical education class as it is a safety risk to wear open-toed shoes on the playground. Finally, pants must always be worn in an appropriate manner, and may not be below the waist.

****Unless we have school spirit week/days (at which time students may be permitted to wear hats and specific attire).**

Students may wear sweatshirts with hoods, but **may NOT wear the hoods in school.**

The decision to implement school uniforms shall be made by the Executive Director or his/her designee, with input from administration, staff, and parents/guardians. In schools where a school-wide uniform is implemented, the Principal with input from staff, and parents/guardians of the individual school shall select the specific uniform to be worn. Once selection has been made, the school uniform shall be mandatory for all students.

Toys/Belongings from Home

Toys of any kind, costume jewelry/watches that can be used to play with, playing cards, and games are not allowed at school as they can become a distraction in the classroom. Thank you in advance for your help with this. Staff members are not responsible for lost or stolen items. Toys will be confiscated and caregivers will need to pick them up.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy

Parents and students should be aware that bringing valuable items to school increases the risk that the item could be lost or stolen. Students should leave valuable items at home. We are not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices.

Students are **NOT** permitted to use electronic devices in school. If a student is found using electronic devices during the school day, the electronic device will be confiscated and the parent/guardian will be notified.

Students and caregivers should always use our main office phone 860-757-6111.

Lost and Found

A lost and found container is located in the school front lobby. Please check this area first when clothing or other items are lost. Valuable articles may also be held in the school office. Articles not claimed by December or June are donated to charity.

The Learning Corridor

The Learning Corridor is a 16-acre campus consisting of five buildings with a total of 516,000 square feet. Of that total, 350,000 square feet are devoted to the CREC Montessori Magnet School, Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy, and CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. There is a parking garage with 430 spaces and the Theater of Performing Arts. Operational offices for the Learning Corridor are located in the Commons Building. The Learning Corridor Café is also located in the Commons building and is available to staff and visitors during the school year from 10:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A map of the Learning Corridor campus is included in the Appendix.

Visitors

Observations

Parents and guardians are encouraged to observe in their child's classroom. Parents of primary students are requested to wait until October to allow adjustment time for our new 2.5- to 3-year-olds. Observation prior to each parent-teacher conference is most helpful. Observers are expected to call the classroom teacher for an appointment at least one day in advance and follow observation guidelines that are provided upon their visit and in the Appendix. Observation times are limited to 30 minutes. If a teacher is absent on the day of a scheduled observation, observers will be asked to reschedule.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Application Process

The 2026-2027 lottery application process opens in November. Applications will be available on the Regional School Choice Office website at <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/School-Choice/RSCO/Regional-School-Choice-Office-Home-Page>

All eligible applications must be received on or by the deadline date, which is usually set for January or February; the student lottery is held in the spring. Applications received after the deadline will not be eligible for the spring lottery drawing. If you have any questions about the RSCO Lottery, please call 860-713-6990 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Sibling Applications

Siblings who qualify for the lottery may be given a seat provided sufficient space is available and an application has been received. A lottery application must be completed through the Regional School Choice Office. Families must also inform our main office once the application

is completed. The spirit of the sibling admission policy is to provide cohesiveness for all children in the same family while providing an equal opportunity for all students who desire to attend the school to obtain admission. With that in mind, a sibling is defined as a younger child, whose older sibling currently attends the CREC Montessori Magnet School, and within the week, resides in the same household as the older sibling. When a younger sibling is enrolled, the older sibling must remain at the school for the entire school year. If the older child is withdrawn from CREC Montessori Magnet School before the end of the year, the younger child will also need to withdraw. Should there be more sibling applications than space available, the sibling applications will be subject to a lottery.

Tours

Families wishing to tour our school are requested to make arrangements to attend a scheduled tour. Tours in 2026-2027 are TBD and will be announced and advertised on our website.

There are also opportunities to tour the school during Meet and Greet, Open House and special school events. These events are also TBD and will be announced and advertised.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

ALL COMPLAINTS CONCERNING CREC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ARE TO BE MADE TO THE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR. A WRITTEN RECORD OF ALL COMPLAINTS WILL BE MAINTAINED AND AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ALLEGATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE. COMPLAINTS CAN BE FILED TO THE APPROPRIATE CONTACT INFORMATION BELOW:

COMPANY	PHONE NUMBER/CONTACT
HARTFORD SPECIALTY TRANSPORTATION SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS RESIDING IN HARTFORD	860-695-8547 BILL MASON
SUBURBAN TRANSPORTATION	860-509-3731 QUIANA JACKSON-ASHE
RSCO TRANSPORTATION NON-HARTFORD RESIDENTS	860-509-3741 SHAWNETTE TAYLOR

Montessori Education

In the early 1900's, Dr. Maria Montessori, one of Italy's first female physicians, developed educational materials and methods based on the understanding that children learn best through active engagement with their world. Dr. Montessori developed her method over the course of more than fifty years of experimentation and observation of real children in real classrooms. Based on those experiments, she concluded that optimal learning is based on three major elements. First is an environment specially prepared to meet the needs of learners at various stages of development. Second is a teacher whose main role is to foster the child's development. Third is a deep and abiding respect for the child.

More than a century after the first Montessori classroom opened as part of an urban renewal project in Rome, Italy, Montessori education continues to thrive. Montessori schools exist in six continents with more than 5,000 in the United States alone, making Montessori one of the largest and most enduring approaches to schooling ever to exist. In recent years, key precepts of Montessori education — multi-age grouping, individualized instruction, interdisciplinary study, intrinsic motivation — have been validated by experimental psychology and more and more researchers and policymakers are turning to Montessori classrooms as examples of exemplary learning environments.

Central to its success is Montessori's focus on the natural development of the child. The first level of development occurs from birth to age 6. At this stage, children are sensorial explorers, constructing their intellects by absorbing every aspect of their environment, their language and their culture. From age 6 to 12, children become conceptual explorers. They develop their powers of abstraction and imagination, and apply their knowledge to discover and expand their worlds further. Schools are organized to reflect these stages; Primary classrooms 3-6 year olds, Lower Elementary 6-9 and Upper Elementary 9-12.

The Montessori teacher creates an atmosphere of calm and order in the classroom and is there to help and encourage the children in their efforts, allowing them to develop self-confidence and inner discipline. With the younger students at each level, the teacher is more active, demonstrating the use of materials and presenting lessons in all content areas. Knowing how to observe constructively and when to intervene with explicit instruction is one of the most important talents the Montessori teacher acquires through education, Professional Development and experience.

Please refer to additional Montessori information in the Appendix – Montessori Glossary, Montessori at a Glance, Freedom and Responsibility; A Montessori Approach.

Accreditation

In the 2024-2025 school year, we received AMI accreditation for Primary. The Montessori Magnet School is an associated public school recognized by AMI-USA (Association Montessori Internationale). This past 2025-2026 school year we received elementary accreditation for lower and upper elementary. We are proud to say that we are one of the only public Montessori Schools that is AMI accredited! This year our Early Learning Program/Primary program will be going through NAEYC Accreditation.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Your Child's Day at School

Because we are a developmental program focused on helping each child reach his/her full potential, the structure of your child's day and the manner of interacting with adults and peers is of paramount importance. While each program level (Primary, Elementary) responds to the unique developmental needs of children at these stages, our entire program shares these core characteristics:

- The teachers' intense focus on the children. Successful Montessori teaching is based on detailed and ongoing observation of the children, both individually and as a group. Once the school day begins, teachers are immersed in the work of the classroom, which means they are not able to give parents or other visitors attention. We support this element of the program by limiting interruption during the school day. Teachers are available during their planning period for conferences or telephone conversations. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule an appointment.
- Consistency in routines and order in the physical environment. Children are sensitive to routines and order and they respond positively to consistency in their daily lives. An orderly classroom environment (everything has its place and everything is in its place) fosters independence as children are given lessons in caring for their environment and sharing responsibility for its maintenance.
- Meticulous attention to grace and courtesy. At all times we aspire to model good manners and sociable interactions. You should expect to be greeted with a cheerful "good morning" or "good afternoon" during arrivals and departures and the children will become accustomed to similar greetings. Mealtimes are an opportunity to practice table manners, and lessons in making an introduction, offering refreshments, and solving problems peacefully are a regular part of the program.

The Primary Program

Serving children ages 2 ½ to six years, each of our Primary classrooms is designed to meet the emerging developmental needs of preschool age children. While each of the classrooms has a unique character, all are governed by the core goals of concentration, coordination, independence, and order. Sometimes known as "children's houses" (after the original *casa dei bambini* in Rome), each classroom is a home for children. Here a child will find a peaceful, orderly environment, rich in hands-on materials, where he or she can grow among his or her peers. Teachers observe the child and meet each one where he or she is to ensure they are receiving the lessons required to be successful in literacy and numeracy, as well as in practical life and grace and courtesy. Parents can support this work by attending Parent Education Evenings, actively reading to and with your child daily and modeling grace and courtesy in the home.

These bright, beautiful environments allow free movement and exploration during an extended morning work cycle. Older children experience mid-day special instruction in art, library arts/technology, music, physical education, and Spanish, while also taking part in an afternoon work cycle and outside time.

The Elementary Program

The MMS Elementary program is designed to meet the unique needs of children between the ages of six and twelve. This "plane" of development is subdivided into two multi-age communities: Lower Elementary (ages 6-9) and Upper Elementary (ages 9-12). The classroom environments are places where the values of independence, cooperation and self-discipline are emphasized. Education is seen as the ability to concentrate fully, to think

critically, to express oneself articulately both verbally and through written expression, and to work purposefully, both individually, in groups and as part of a peaceful, cohesive community. The teacher carefully observes each child and makes sure that he or she is receiving the lessons required for success in literacy and numeracy as well as guiding deep exploration of culture and science.

Children also research topics of great interest to them and present this information in a variety of modalities. Children use both fiction and nonfiction text to foster their learning and parents can support this work by knowing their child's reading level, actively reading at home with their child, making sure that each child has access to his or her public library and communicating with the classroom teacher frequently to discuss the development of the child.

Please note that current research suggests that elementary students should be reading 4-6 books per WEEK.

Homework

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school.

We value your child's participation in family life, which is why we are careful in our assignment of homework. However all students in grades K-6 should expect homework on a regular basis. Students who need additional practice and or enrichment in essential subjects **will** receive work to be completed at home. Your child's teacher will discuss this work with you and your support is needed to make the experience worthwhile. In addition, all children should read or be read to each night and **participation in the Read At Home Program is expected.** Students in grades K-6 will have a **Literacy Log** that includes a reflection and goal-setting page. The logs present an excellent way for families to partner with teachers around literacy. Parents will be expected to sign the reflection page each month. Students are expected to read a MINIMUM of 30 minutes outside of school each day and on weekends.

Field Trips

Exploration of areas of study to community resources, such as a planetarium, science center, Hartford Stage, museum, factory, hospital, etc., provides an inclusive approach to education that fosters a feeling of connectedness in the child's world. The elementary students are developmentally prepared for this type of learning. "Going out" experiences are a vital component of the Elementary Program. Primary children experience the classroom as their world and going out experiences are not a common occurrence in a primary classroom. Going out activities for this age group are encouraged as family activities.

Permission slips are going to be located in the PowerSchool Parent Portal. The student's permission slip must be completed in the PS Portal. Some going out experiences may incur an extra cost. However, no student will be denied participation due to financial/special needs.

Evaluation and Assessment

CREC Assessments-

Every child is assessed in literacy and math throughout the year. Scores from these assessments will be shared at conferences and the data will be used to inform instruction, intervention and enrichment. At Montessori, we administer the Literacy Profile Card (LPC) in students in PK 4-1st grade. In grades 1-6, the Quick Phonics Screener (QPS), MCLASS DIBELS, F & P Literacy Assessment (only if needed and at the discretion of the Literacy Coach) and the Math diagnostic. Students in grade 3-6 take the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC). In addition, our K-6th grade multilingual learner students take the state LASLINKS assessment in January.

Promotion, Retention and Placement

CREC encourages and insists on the highest quality of academic performance from all students. It expects excellence from its faculty and supports vigorously the teachers' demands for serious, substantial scholarship from students commensurate with their individual abilities. Instruction and instructional programs must provide maximum opportunity for students to progress through school according to their needs. The intent of this policy is to ensure that all promoted students can benefit from the next level of instruction. Students normally will progress annually from grade to grade. Decisions regarding the promotion/retention and placement of students will be made on the basis of documented academic achievement in relation to the intellectual ability and overall physical, emotional, and social well-being of the student. All teachers must evaluate students' educational progress during the school year. This progress, or lack of progress, is communicated to the parent, through written progress reports and parent-teacher conferences. Parents must be notified by March 15 if retention or acceleration is being considered. ***The final decision regarding placement or retention will be made by the principal.***

Early Intervention Process (EIP)

"In a Scientifically Research Based Intervention (SRBI framework), students who are not performing adequately based on grade level standards receive interventions at the time of need...It eliminates waiting and continuing to get further behind...Data is used to determine appropriate instruction and monitor students' progress."

Montessori Magnet School utilizes an Early Intervention Process (EIP) to help students who are demonstrating that they are behind on grade level standards. This model is based on the federally mandated Response to Intervention (SRBI in CT) that public schools are required to have. Montessori has an EIP team that consists of classroom teachers, administrators, and specialists in their field who look at each child's data to decide if extra time in a subject area could boost that child in an area where they may be struggling.

The MMS EIP model employs a "tiered" approach to exploring and addressing student concerns, which is guided by the State of Connecticut's framework regarding Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI). The EIP model consists of a continuum of support to meet the individual needs of our students. The following is a brief description of each tier within the MMS EIP model:

- **Tier One** – The classroom teacher collects and presents data that reflects the student's strengths as well as his/her areas of difficulty. The teacher shares his/her concerns about

the student, along with the various differentiated strategies that he/she has already tried within the classroom setting. The team selects one specific and measurable goal for the student related to his/her area of difficulty. The teacher will continue to collect data related to the student's progress around that goal and will then report back to the EIP team in approximately 4-8 weeks with the data in hand. This act of collecting specific, measurable data is called "progress monitoring" and is a very important component of EIP at all three tiers. Depending upon the student's progress at the time of the review meeting, the EIP team will recommend one of the following: 1) student continue with the classroom differentiated strategies being used or 2) student be moved to Tier Two because he/she has not made expected gains and requires more intensive interventions.

- **Tier Two** – Tier Two action plans and interventions are developed when a child needs further intervention. The classroom teacher presents student data from the classroom and shares his/her concerns with the EIP team. The EIP team agrees upon a specific, measurable goal(s) for the student and then works together to create a Tier Two Action Plan to address these goals. The student is usually pulled out from class to meet in a group around their specific goals where their progress will be tracked over time. Student progress is tracked and monitored using agreed upon data collection methods over a period of 6-8 weeks after which time the student's growth is reviewed again with the EIP team. After reviewing the data, the EIP team will recommend one of the following: 1) given significant progress, the student will be exited from pull out intervention and will continue with classroom differentiated strategies. 2) the student is recommended to remain at a Tier Two level of intervention and his/her goals may be revised according to his/her progress; more time may be added or 3) the student be moved to Tier Three due to the fact that he/she has not made adequate gains given the level of intervention that he/she has received over the past 6-8 weeks.
- **Tier Three** – The classroom teacher and interventionists working with the student share out data on how the child was doing with their specific goals over the last 6-8 weeks. At this time, the team may recommend "screens" to be completed by a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, or a physical therapist if the child is not making progress with their interventions. The Tier Three EIP team may also recommend referral to a special education Planning and Placement Team (PPT) to determine if further evaluation(s) is/are warranted.

EIP interventions are always tailored specifically to address individual student needs. It is important to note that, while the EIP team may recommend a referral to special education, MMS EIP does not replace the special education process. Parents may contact their child's classroom teacher or the school at any time to request a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting to share concerns about their student's academic progress or learning difficulties and to request a formal evaluation be done.

Special Services

Vision Statement

We believe every child is entitled to a safe, nurturing environment that includes services that maximize academic, social and emotional success.

Mission Statement

To provide and facilitate a comprehensive delivery of professional and appropriate services to students, in collaboration with school staff, parents and community in order to maximize each student's potential within a diverse society.

Social Worker

The purpose of the school Social Worker is to assist the school in identifying children who present social or emotional difficulties which hinder learning or school adjustment and to provide help for these youngsters who cannot constructively use the group situation of the classroom.

The School Social Worker serves as a consultant to teachers and other personnel, observes and identifies children with emotional problems, adjustment situations, communication with the school, and serves as a liaison for community social agencies and refers children to them.

The School Social Worker is a contact person for the following areas:

- Home District Special Education or 504 Liaison
- Families with Service Needs
- Child and Family Welfare

Cornerstone Counseling Services

Cornerstone Counseling Center and CREC Elementary Schools work together to offer a school-based mental health program to support children in an effort to maximize their academic, emotional, and social development.

TESOL/Bilingual Services

English language learners are a diverse group of students, with different language, academic, and social-emotional needs. Students who speak the same language or have similar levels of language proficiency may need very different kinds of support to succeed in the classroom. Once students are identified as multilingual learners, they will receive Bilingual/English as a Second Language services from a certified Bilingual or TESOL teacher. The program of techniques, methodology, and special curriculum designed to teach ELs explicitly about the English language, including the academic vocabulary needed to access content instruction, and to develop their English language proficiency in all four language domains (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

Special Education Resource

Special education is the design and delivery of specific individualized instruction when regular curriculum requires modification or supplementation to meet a child's academic needs.

Special education requires knowledge of curriculum and potential modifications, learning/instructional styles, assessment, and an understanding of state and federal laws and procedures related to academic services. Training in special education allows the resource teacher to modify curriculum, provide supplementary aids, materials and services and make accommodations in the classroom and elsewhere to ensure the student's success.

The purpose of a resource teacher is to assist the school in identifying children who present academic or learning difficulties that inhibit success in school. The resource teacher is available to teachers and parents as a consultant who may informally assess and evaluate areas of concern. The resource teacher may work individually or in a small group with

students either inside or outside the classroom. The resource teacher may consult with or team-teach with classroom teachers to best meet the child's needs.

During the Parent Planning Team (PPT) process, the special education teacher contributes important information and experience about how to educate children with special needs. The resource teacher acts as a liaison to related services including speech and language, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Each of these is available at CREC Montessori Magnet School to students who qualify.

Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Process

The purpose of conducting a PPT meeting is to determine if a child is eligible for direct services through special education resources, school social work or other related services.

Procedure:

- Child is identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services.
- Child is evaluated in all areas related to his/her areas of concern.
- Eligibility is decided by a group of qualified professionals and the parents. Parents may ask for a hearing to challenge the decision made by the team. *
- If a child is found to be eligible for services the team will write an Individualized Education Program (IEP). **The child's local school board of education is responsible for the PPT and any costs of services that may be recommended.**
- Services are provided. The school makes sure that the child's IEP is being carried out as it was written. Parents are provided with a copy of the IEP. Each of the child's teachers and service providers has access to the IEP and knows his or her specific responsibilities as related to the IEP. This includes accommodations, modifications, and support that must be provided to the child.
- Progress is measured and reported to parents. These reports are given to parents three times a year along with regular classroom progress reports.
- The child's IEP is reviewed by the team including parents at least once a year, or more often if the parents or school feel it is warranted. If necessary the IEP may be revised more than once a year at these meetings.
- At least every three years a child who receives services must be reevaluated. This is often called a triennial. Its purpose is to determine if the child continues to be eligible for services.

* For a complete list of Parental Safeguards go to: www.state.ct.us/sde

English Language Learner Students

For those students for whom English is a second language, all CREC Magnet Schools have a program to assist in the development of speaking skills and literacy in English and in mastering the same academic content required of all other students, e.g. language arts, literature, mathematics, science and social studies. If you believe your child needs assistance with English as a second language, please contact Saray Solet or Sharon Benitez, our TESOL and Bilingual teachers, at 806-757-6132 or sbenitez@crec.org and ssolet@crec.org. You may also contact CREC's Multilingual Language Coordinator, Vanessa Sosa-Brialess, at vsosabrialess@crec.org

Crisis Intervention

A crisis situation is defined as an event of such emotional and/or physical impact that it interrupts, either on an individual or group basis, the daily educational program.

The Montessori Crisis Intervention Team is composed of the school principal, assistant principal, school social worker, school nurse, office supervisor and security coordinator.

Resources:

- CREC Crisis Team
- Community Agencies

Behavioral Expectations, Conduct and Discipline

CREC Magnet Schools cultivate the mind, body and heart of each student. We have a shared vision and coordinated plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate. Each member of the faculty and staff understand their individual role while applying a systematic approach to developing an environment that fosters optimal academic

engagement for all students. At CREC Montessori we use a restorative practice approach. It is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all of the parties involved.

CREC Magnet School *parents and staff* work together to:

- Promote a positive and successful educational experience for every child
- Embrace diversity
- Ensure students are college and career ready
- Foster self-confidence and self-discipline in our students
- Connect success in school to future successes in life
- Develop global awareness
- Guide students through conflicts, encourage them to restore trust and rebuild relationships
- Value and support students through disciplinary issues

CREC Magnet School *students* will:

- Demonstrate honor, respect and responsibility in their actions and decisions
- Embrace diversity
- Develop self-confidence and self-discipline
- Connect success in school to future successes in life
- Develop global awareness
- Reflect on conflict and seek ways to restore trust
- Work with teachers, administrators and parents when school rules are violated to restore environment and relationships

At Montessori Magnet School, we have high expectations for our students' behavior. Our goal is for the school to be a place where each child feels welcome, respected, nurtured, and inspired to grow and learn. We encourage students to develop academically, socially, and emotionally during their years at MMS. We place great importance on the teaching of grace and courtesy lessons, which give explicit instruction on social behavior. These lessons assist the child in understanding how to politely navigate not only in the classroom and amongst his peers, but also out in the world. In keeping with the Montessori method, the ultimate goal for our students is self-discipline. The achievement of self-discipline and increased self-awareness are critical to the MMS program and our approach to student learning.

When discipline issues arise in the school, we will be working with students to better understand the causes of their feelings and related behaviors and to work through solutions and consequences in a meaningful way. Central to our discipline policies and procedures is the belief that students who are self-aware and able to articulate their feelings and the feelings of those around them are more successfully engaged in their learning process.

MMS has adopted Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as part of our Grace and Courtesies. Grace and Courtesies is a systems approach to discipline that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to

create positive school environments. Discipline issues at MMS are addressed on a case-by-case basis using the following procedural guidelines. The vast majority of discipline situations are managed within the classroom setting; however, more significant behaviors require more intensive interventions. As part of our participation in (PBIS) Grace and Courtesies, we have created Discipline Referral Forms that cover the following infractions:

- **“Minor Problem Behaviors”** are day-to-day infractions that occur within the school or classroom environment. These minor issues and interpersonal conflicts are most often handled within the settings in which they occur by the supervising adult who is present at the time. Typically, these issues are addressed with verbal reminders of expectations, verbal redirection, a conversation with the student(s) involved, and/or minor consequence(s) within the classroom.
- **“Major Problem Behaviors”** are considered more serious and require a Behavior Data Tracking Form to be sent home. Examples of Major Problem Behaviors include physical aggression, inappropriate language, property damage, repeated insubordination and continued disruption of the learning environment. The resulting interventions and/or consequences are handled by the classroom teacher in coordination with administration. If there is a Major Problem Behavior, the student’s parent/guardian is contacted by the classroom teacher and/or administration. Interventions and consequences for these infractions vary, but may include In-School Suspensions or Out-of-School Suspensions, depending upon the severity of the incident.

****In an effort to best serve our students; all behavioral incidents are documented.**

MMS supports students to better understand and learn from behavior issues and/or conflicts with others using a tool called the “Blueprint”. The “Blueprint” is an approach that asks students to self-reflect about a particular situation (ie, *“What happened?”*, *“How did I feel?”*, *“How did the other person feel?”*, *“How did I express my feelings?”*, *“What could I have done better?”*, *“What can I do now?”*). There are different “Blueprint” forms to reflect varying developmental levels and abilities to process through situations. Lower Elementary students will most likely require adult assistance to complete the “Blueprint” forms, while most Upper Elementary students will be capable of doing this task independently. The “Blueprint” is a valuable tool to process with students regarding a variety of issues to promote self-awareness, self-discipline, and empathy toward others.

It is important for all adults to work together to address discipline issues and to promote a positive school climate for our students. MMS recognizes the importance of a strong home-school collaboration and we strive to create a partnership with parents/guardians in addressing discipline issues in the school setting.

CREC schools serve a common purpose: to create learning environments that are uniquely designed to encourage innovation, exploration and excitement of knowledge. We believe that strong academics are positively linked with appropriate learning behaviors while students are in school. We expect school rules to be followed and will work in partnership with students and families should an issue arise. We expect school rules to be followed and will work in partnership with students and families should an issue arise, adhering to CREC Policy 5144

included below.

The CREC Council believes that good student behavior in a school is extremely important in creating the kind of educational environment in which students will be able to realize their greatest opportunities for growth. Good discipline habits assume consideration for the rights and privileges of others, cooperation with all personnel in the school community, basic self-respect as well as respect for real and personal property, pride in one's work and achievement within one's ability.

The purpose of this Discipline Policy is to encourage accountability for students' behavior and to assist them to recognize and learn proper decisions so they can become independent and productive members of our democratic society.

Discipline

All disciplinary incidents, including removal from the classroom for over 90 minutes, are properly entered into our EDHUB reporting system.

Restorative Practices: At CREC Montessori Magnet School, we believe in the power of Restorative Practices to build and maintain a positive and inclusive school community. This approach is rooted in the understanding that nurturing relationships and fostering a sense of community are essential to creating a safe and supportive environment for our students. Restorative Practices are a set of principles and methods used to promote positive interactions and address conflicts in a way that strengthens relationships within our school community. Unlike traditional disciplinary methods, which often focus on punishment, Restorative Practices prioritize understanding, healing, and growth. This approach aligns with our commitment to creating a positive school climate and culture where every individual feels valued and connected.

Core Principles of Restorative Practices:

- 1. Relationship**
- 2. Respect**
- 3. Responsibility**
- 4. Repair**
- 5. Reintegration**

How Restorative Practices Are Implemented:

At MMS, Restorative Practices are integrated into our daily routines and disciplinary procedures. Some of the ways we implement these practices include:

- **Circles:** Facilitated discussions that allow students to share their thoughts and feelings, build empathy, and resolve conflicts collectively.
- **Mediation and Dialogue:** Structured conversations between individuals involved in a conflict, guided by trained staff, to address issues and find mutually agreeable solutions.

- **Community-Building Activities:** Regular activities and events designed to strengthen relationships and promote a sense of belonging among all members of our school community.

Article I - Disciplinary Procedures

Overview

All students have the right to learn in safe and orderly environments in which teaching and learning can take place within a climate of mutual respect, without disruptive behavior by any student infringing upon the rights of others.

Student discipline includes a continuum of incremental interventions, supports, and consequences that are clear and developmentally appropriate; and include learning opportunities for students to reinforce positive behaviors and help them make good choices. Such continuum may include restorative practices, including but not limited to:

- Discussion with a teacher, member of the support staff, or school administration
- Parental contact and involvement in applying an appropriate remedy
- Reflection sheet
- Peer mediation
- Conflict resolution
- Individual or group counseling
- Referral to community-based organizations
- Mentoring
- Restitution for damaged or stolen property
- Loss of privilege to participate in specified school activities
- Detention
- Attendance/performance/behavior contracts

When inappropriate behavior occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive, but at the same time recognizes that there are circumstances under which suspension or expulsion may be the required response.

Unless an emergency situation requiring immediate exclusion exists, no student shall be excluded or restricted from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline or punishment, except:

1) when the student poses a danger to the health or safety of other students or staff; or

2) during the shortest period devoted to physical exercise if there are two or more such periods in the school day and the student is still able to participate in at least twenty minutes of physical exercise during the regular school day, and only once during the school week.

Such discipline or punishment may be imposed before and/or during the period of physical exercise, and appropriate interventions to redirect the student's behavior shall be used during the time of exclusion or restriction.

No student shall be excluded or restricted from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline or punishment for not completing work on time or for academic performance.

No student shall be required to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline or punishment.

A classroom teacher may request a behavior intervention meeting with the crisis intervention team of the school/program for any student whose behavior has caused a serious disruption to the instruction of other students; or caused self-harm or physical harm to the teacher or another student or staff member in the classroom. Upon the teacher's request, the crisis intervention team shall convene a behavior intervention meeting for the student and shall identify resources and supports to address the student's social, emotional, and instructional needs. The crisis intervention team shall solicit the classroom teacher's input and shall keep the teacher informed of the results of such meeting and/or the resources and supports identified.

Article II - Removal

Removal - means an exclusion from a classroom for all or part of a single class period, provided such exclusion does not extend beyond ninety minutes.

2.1 The Council authorizes teachers, with the approval of the school principal or designee, to remove a student from class when such student deliberately causes a serious disruption of the educational process within the classroom.

2.2 Whenever any teacher removes a student from the classroom, the teacher shall send the student to an area designated by the school principal or designee. The teacher should also advise the school principal or designee of the name of the student against whom such disciplinary action was taken and the reason therefore.

2.3 Each school or program shall maintain an individual student log of disciplinary action. If removal from a classroom does not result in the disposition of the disciplinary case within ninety minutes, the school principal/ program director or designee must consider the case an in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension and follow the procedures set forth in

Articles III or IV, whichever is applicable.

2.4 Any student who is removed from class shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work including, but not limited to, examinations, that such student missed during the period of the removal. In addition, a processing procedure with the student will occur, in order to identify the harm done to the victim(s) and/or community and to establish a method of restitution.

Article III - In-School Suspension

In-School Suspension - means an exclusion from regular classroom activities for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days. In-school suspension does not involve exclusion from school. An in school suspension shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the in-school suspension was imposed. Except as provided in Article IV, below, all suspensions of students shall be in-school suspensions.

3.1 During an In-School Suspension:

- a. The student must report on time to the in-school suspension room. Students who do not complete their assignments during their in-school suspension will be given additional time of in-school suspension up to an aggregate of ten (10) consecutive school days.
- b. Special assignments must be completed by the student and returned to the assistant principal's office, or the school principal's designee.
- c. Except for lunch, no student is allowed to leave the in-school suspension room unless either an emergency exists or the student is granted permission by the

teacher in charge of in-school suspension.

d. Uncooperative students are to be reported to the office immediately.

e. Additional classroom work may be assigned by the teacher in charge of inschool suspension when appropriate.

3.2 Students not complying with the in-school suspension rules may be suspended out-of-school after an informal hearing with the school principal or designee, as set forth in Article V.

Article IV – Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspension - means exclusion from school privileges and/or from transportation services for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year. An out-of-school suspension shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the suspension was imposed. For purposes of reporting, partial day removals are to be included when determining the number of days a student has been suspended.

4.1 A student in grades preschool to two may be given an out-of-school suspension if, during the hearing held pursuant to Article V, below, it is determined that such suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the student conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

A student in grades three to twelve may be given an out-of-school suspension if, during the hearing held pursuant to Article V, below, it is determined that a) the student poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that (s)he shall be excluded from school; or b) an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence of (i) previous disciplinary problems that have led to suspension or expulsion, and (ii) efforts to address such disciplinary problems through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive behavioral support strategies.

4.2 Unless an emergency situation requiring the student's immediate exclusion exists, the school principal or designee shall observe the procedures set forth in Articles V and VI in all actions which may lead to out-of-school suspension. In the event of an emergency, the procedures must be initiated as soon after the cessation of the emergency as possible, but no later than seventy-two (72) hours after the exclusion.

Article V - Informal Hearing Process

The following procedures shall be followed in the event that the school determines an out-of-school suspension may be warranted:

5.1 Prior to an out-of-school suspension, the student shall be informed of the charges which have been posed.

5.2 The student shall meet with the school principal or designee to review the incident.

5.3 The student shall be granted an opportunity to refute the charges against him/her.

5.4 Based on the information provided, the school principal or designee shall make a decision. The school principal or designee, if he/she deems it necessary, shall investigate the matter further, and, upon completion of the investigation, shall make a decision.

5.5 The school principal or designee shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the disciplinary action imposed within a reasonable period of time.

Article VI - General Procedure Governing In-School Suspensions and Out-of-School Suspensions

After an in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension, the following procedure shall be followed:

6.1 The school principal or designee shall make every effort to immediately notify the parents and/or guardians at the last phone number(s) provided by them to the school about the student's action and state the cause(s) leading to the school action.

6.2 Whether or not telephone contact is made with the parents or guardians, the school principal or designee shall notify the parents or guardians in writing at the most recent address reported on school records within one school day of the action and shall offer them an opportunity for a conference to discuss the matter.

6.3 If a student is eighteen years of age or older, any notice required by this regulation shall also be given to the student.

6.4 Any student who is given an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work, including, but not limited to, examinations, which such student missed during the period of suspension.

Article VII - Expulsion

Expulsion - means an exclusion from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days and shall be deemed to include, but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which the student was assigned at the time the disciplinary action was taken, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond a period of one (1) calendar year. All expulsions are handled by the home school district.

7.1 The CREC Superintendent of Schools or designee shall recommend expulsion proceedings to sending districts in all cases involving any of the following students:

- 1) a preschool student was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, on or off school grounds or at a preschool program-sponsored event; or
- 2) a student in grades Kindergarten to twelve on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity, (a) was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, as defined in C.G.S 53a-3; or (b) off school grounds, possessed a firearm or possessed and used such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or (c) on or off school grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as defined in C.G.S 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering, or administering is subject to criminal penalties under C.G.S. 21a-277 and 21a-278.

The CREC Superintendent of Schools or designee may recommend expulsion proceedings to sending districts in all cases involving any of the following students:

- 1) a student in grades three to twelve, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity whose conduct is violative of a publicized school policy and either endangers persons or property; or is seriously disruptive of the educational process; or off school grounds has engaged in conduct that is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is violative of a publicized school policy.

7.2 If, after completing investigation, a school principal or designee determines that grounds for expulsion exist, he/she shall forward a recommendation for expulsion to the Superintendent

of CREC Schools.

7.3 The CREC Superintendent of Schools shall forward the recommendation to the sending LEA, if determined to be necessary and appropriate.

7.4 If the sending LEA declines to conduct an expulsion hearing per the CREC Superintendent of Schools recommendation, CREC shall do so, in accordance with C.G.S. 10-233d and any procedures adopted pursuant thereto.

Article VIII - Actions Leading to Suspension or Recommendation for Expulsion

8.1 Any student whose conduct on school grounds, school transportation, or at a school sponsored activity is violative of a publicized school policy and either endangers persons or property, or is seriously disruptive of the educational process; or whose conduct off school grounds is violative of a publicized school policy and is seriously disruptive of the educational process shall be subject to discipline up to and including recommendation for expulsion.

The following acts may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including, recommendation for expulsion:

- a. Striking or assaulting a student or any member of the school staff.
- b. Theft or knowingly possessing stolen goods.
- c. Using obscene gestures, discriminatory or abusive language directed at a member of the school staff or other students.
- d. Attempts at extortion or intimidating school staff or other students.
- e. Unauthorized possession, sale or consumption of illegal drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages.
- f. Possession of drug paraphernalia.
- g. Use of cigarettes and/or other types of tobacco or tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) or vapor products.
- h. Destruction of school property or personal property.
- i. Misbehavior on a school bus.
- j. Class truancy.
- k. Unauthorized use or misuse of computers or other technological equipment.
- l. Sexual harassment, bullying, harassment and/or hazing.
- m. Leaving school without permission.
- n. Misconduct of a nature that threatens the safety of school property or the welfare of the persons who work or study therein.
- o. Gambling.
- p. Accumulation of minor offenses.

8.2 The above noted list is not exhaustive and students may be disciplined, up to and including being recommended for expulsion, for other forms of conduct, on school grounds, school transportation, or at a school-sponsored activity, that endangers person or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process and/or or violates a publicized school policy; or conduct, off school grounds, that violates a publicized school policy and is seriously disruptive of the educational process.

8.3 The CREC Council considers conduct which is “seriously disruptive of the educational process” to mean conduct that “markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operations of a school”, in addition to being violative of publicized school policy. Such

conduct includes, but is not limited to, phoning in a bomb threat, or making a threat, off school grounds, to kill or harm a teacher or student.

8.4 In determining whether off-school grounds conduct is “seriously disruptive of the educational process,” the administration may consider, but such consideration shall not be limited to, (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; (2) whether other students from the school were involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in Section 29-38 and whether any injuries occurred; (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol; and (5) whether inappropriate use of social media was involved.

8.5 Discipline may result when: 1) the incident was initiated in the school or on school grounds, or 2) the incident occurred or was initiated off-school grounds and non-school time; if after the occurrence there was a reasonable likelihood that return of the student would have a disruptive effect on the school’s educational process by threatening:

1. The school's orderly operations;
2. The safety of the school property;
3. The welfare of the persons who work or study there.

Off-school grounds misconduct that may result in discipline includes, but is not limited to:

1. Use, possession, sale, or distribution of dangerous weapons; (as defined C.G.S. 53a-3, 53-206, and 29-35)
2. Use, possession, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs
3. Violent conduct
4. Making of a bomb threat
5. Threatening to harm or kill another student or member of the staff.
6. Engaging in activity that has the reasonable likelihood of threatening the health, safety or welfare of individuals at the school, endangering school property, and/or disrupting the educational process.

For example, if it is determined that a student's use or possession of drugs in the community has a strong likelihood of endangering the safety of students or employees because of the possibility of such sales in the school; or if violent conduct in the community presents a reasonable likelihood of repeating itself in the school environment; or if any similar type of misconduct in the community has a reasonable likelihood of being continued or repeated in school or of bringing retaliation or revenge into the school, discipline up to and including suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion may be imposed. The standard to be applied in considering disciplinary action is whether the off-school grounds conduct will markedly interrupt or severely impede the day-to-day operation of a school.

Article IX - Special Education/Section 504 Students

9.1 Students requiring special education and related services may be disciplined in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

9.2 If removals from school are to be utilized with special education or Section 504 students as part of a comprehensive behavior management system, they must be reflected in a Behavior Intervention Plan and discussed at a PPT or Section 504 meeting.

9.3 Prior to recommending expulsion for a student requiring special education and related services or with a Section 504 Plan, a PPT or Section 504 team shall convene to determine

whether the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. A student may be suspended for up to 10 days pending the PPT or Section 504 team determination.

9.4 If, in the case of a student requiring special education and related services or having a Section 504 Plan, it is determined that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student shall not be recommended for expulsion. Rather, the PPT or Section 504 Team shall consider the student's misconduct and modify the student's individualized education program (IEP) or 504 Plan to address the misconduct and to prevent a recurrence of such conduct and to ensure the safety of other students and staff in the school.

9.5 If it is determined that the misconduct was not caused by the student's disability, the student may be recommended for expulsion in accordance with the provisions set forth in Article VII.

9.6 Whenever a student requiring special education and related services is expelled, an alternative educational opportunity, consistent with the student's educational needs, as determined by the PPT chaired by the LEA in light of such expulsion and the student's IEP, will be provided by the sending LEA during the period of expulsion. The services must continue to the extent determined necessary to enable the disabled student to appropriately advance in the general curriculum and to advance toward achieving the goals of his/her IEP.

9.7 Should a parent of a student with disabilities who is eligible for services under the IDEA (or the student himself/herself if eighteen years of age or older) file a request for a due process hearing under C.G.S. 10-76h to contest a recommendation for expulsion under 9.5 above, or a proposed change in placement under Section 9.4, above, unless the parents (or student if eighteen years of age or older) and the district otherwise agree, the student shall stay in his/her then current placement pending decision in said due process hearing and any subsequent judicial review proceedings. This "stay put" requirement shall not apply when modified by a court order or by the decision of a hearing officer.

Article X - Cumulative Records

10.1 Whenever a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record which is the responsibility of the sending LEA. The notice, except in the case of an expulsion based on possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, shall be expunged from the cumulative educational record if a student graduates from high school.

Article XI - Withdrawal From School

11.1 Whenever a student against whom an expulsion hearing is pending withdraws from school after notification of such hearing but before the hearing is completed and a decision is rendered:

- a. Notice of the pending expulsion hearing shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record; and
- b. The sending LEA shall complete the expulsion hearing and render a decision.

Article XII – Notification

12.1 The CREC Council shall, at the beginning of each school year, notify the parent or guardian of minor students registered in the district of district rules pertaining to student discipline.

12.2 The Principal of each school/program shall take steps to ensure that all rules pertaining to

the discipline of students are communicated to students at the beginning of each school year, and to newly-enrolled students at the time of their enrollment in the school/program.

MONTESSORI IS A BULLY-FREE ZONE!

Bullying:

School Climate Policy

The CREC Council believes that all schools/programs must support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success. This policy is adopted pursuant to the Connecticut School Climate Standards, and sets forth the framework for an effective and informed school climate improvement process, which includes a continuous cycle of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, and (iv) implementation. Further, this policy will support and promote the development of restorative action plans that will create and sustain safe and equitable learning environments.

Consistent with the Connecticut School Climate Standards, CREC has:

1. A shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behavior.
2. Policies that promote:
 - a. a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and
 - b. a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally re-engaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community
3. Practices that are identified, prioritized, and supported to:
 - a. promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students;
 - b. enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities;
 - c. address barriers to teaching and learning; and
 - d. develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.
4. Created a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities.
5. Created a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

School Climate Plan

Definitions:

“Bullying” means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to

twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

“Challenging behavior” means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

 Form 1_Bullying-Challenging Behavior_Reporting.docx

Form 1) Challenging Behavior Reporting Form – To be used by students, parents or guardians, and school employees to report any alleged incidents of Challenging Behavior or Bullying.

“Connecticut school climate policy” means the school climate policy developed, updated and approved by an association in the state that represents boards of education and adopted by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended, that provides a framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process that serves to implement Connecticut school climate standards, and includes a continuous cycle of (A) planning and preparation, (B) evaluation, (C) action planning, and (D) implementation.

“Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

“Effective School Climate Improvement” is a restorative process that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:

- A. Promoting decision-making that is collaborative and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;
- B. Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., school climate survey, discipline data) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive and intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;
- C. Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students, educators, and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;
- D. Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity building among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;
- E. Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning and adult barriers to teaching; and

- F. Strengthening policies and procedures related to:
- a. climate and restorative informed teaching and learning environments;
 - b. infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning;
 - c. implementation of school climate improvement plans with the goal of becoming restorative;
 - d. evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and
 - e. sustainability of school climate and restorative improvement efforts.

"Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system.

"Emotional intelligence" means the ability to (A) perceive, recognize and understand emotions in oneself or others, (B) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem solving and interpersonal communication, (C) understand and identify emotions, and (D) manage emotions in oneself and others.

"Evidence Based Practices" in education refers to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.

"Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted.

"Positive sustained school climate" is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:

- (A) Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.
- (B) People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected and solve problems restoratively.
- (C) A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.
- (D) Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and, and
- (E) A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

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"Restorative practices" means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on:

- (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

"School climate" means the quality and character of school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, based on people's experiences of school

life, and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures within the school community.

"School climate improvement plan" means a building-specific plan developed by the school climate committee, in collaboration with the school climate specialist, using school climate survey data and any other relevant information, through a process that engages all members of the school community and involves such members in a series of overlapping systemic improvements, schoolwide instructional practices and relational practices that prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to alleged bullying and harassment in the school environment.

"School climate survey" means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant languages of the members of the school community, that (A) measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan; and (B) (i) meets the school climate survey standards developed by the social and emotional learning and school climate advisory collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the Connecticut General Statutes, or (ii) is the state-wide school climate survey developed by said collaborative.

"School Climate Specialist": The principal/director of each school/program or a school employee who holds professional certification pursuant to section 10-145 of the general statutes, is trained in school climate improvement or restorative practices, and is designated by the school principal, shall serve as the school climate specialist for the school. The school climate specialist shall be responsible for: 1. leading in the prevention, identification, and response to challenging behavior, including, but not limited to, reports of alleged bullying and harassment; 2. implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices; 3. scheduling meetings for and leading the school climate committee; and 4. leading the implementation of the school climate improvement plan.

"School Climate Committee": Each school climate specialist shall appoint members to the school climate committee who are diverse, including members who are racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse and representative of various roles in the school community. The school climate committee shall consist of:

1. the school climate specialist;
2. a teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b of the general statutes;
3. a demographically representative group of students enrolled at the school, as developmentally appropriate;
4. families of students enrolled at the school; and
5. at least two members of the school community, as determined by the school climate specialist.

Membership of the school climate committee shall be annually reviewed and approved by the school climate specialist, in coordination with the school climate coordinator. The school climate committee shall be responsible for:

1. assisting in the development, annual scheduling, and administration of the school climate survey, and reviewing of the school climate survey data;
2. using the school climate survey data to identify strengths and challenges to improve school climate, and to create or propose revisions to the school climate improvement plan;
3. assisting in the implementation of the school climate improvement plan and recommending any improvements or revisions to the plan;
4. advising on strategies to improve school climate and implementing evidence and research-based interventions, including, but not limited to, restorative practices, in the school community;
5. annually providing notice of the uniform challenging behavior and/or bullying complaint form, or similar complaint form used by the school, to the school community; and
6. engaging the school community, at community meetings held at least twice during the school year, in the implementation of the school climate improvement plan.

"School community" means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school and school employees.

"School employee" means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, superintendent, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, paraeducator or coach employed by CREC or working in a CREC school or program; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of their duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a CREC school or program.

"School environment" means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions or programs that occur outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions or programs negatively impacts the school environment.

"School-Sponsored Activity" shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by CREC.

"Social and emotional learning"

means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Montessori Magnet School acts in accordance with all State of CT laws concerning bullying and bullying prevention programs within the school setting. MMS policies and procedures will be modified as necessary to comply with state standards.

MMS encourages parents/guardians to talk with their children about bullying and what to do if they feel that they are being bullied by another child. Parents/guardians should inform the school of any concerns about peer conflicts and/or incidents that they believe may involve bullying.

Hazing

No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor or other employee of the school district shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing.

No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate hazing.

Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

Hazing activities are seriously disruptive of the educational process in that they involve students and violence or threats of violence. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and/or after school hours.

A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to initiate another person or to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.

The school district will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency Procedures

Policies regarding weapons, kidnapping, bomb threats, intruders or fire, etc., are covered in the Learning Corridor Policies and Procedures Manual located in the school Director's office and are available for parent review upon request.

Emergency School Closings

Full Day School Closing

If the Hartford Public Schools are closed, then the CREC Montessori Magnet School is also closed. Tune in to the local TV channels or radio stations for school closing information. Montessori Magnet School will be listed as CREC Montessori. Any closings or delays are also communicated to families through email and automated telephone calls made as soon as a decision is made. Generally this information is available by 6:30am.

Delayed School Opening

Most late openings are a 90-minute delay. Should this occur, school will begin at 10:10, Before School at 9:25. If there is a 2-hour delay, school begins at 10:40. Before School will be open pending the weather. A robo message will go out in the morning informing the community. Primary students in our half-day program are excused on these days and are not required to attend.

Early Dismissal

In the case of early dismissals due to emergency school closings, families will want to have a plan in place for the child to be picked up from school or from the bus stop. If a parent/guardian suspects an early dismissal may occur, the parent should listen to a local TV or radio station for a possible announcement for CREC Montessori Magnet School. All families will also be notified through email and an automated telephone call. **Please do not call the main office as this will tie up the phone lines.** If you think that there may be a change in dismissal time, please log onto any of the TV station websites. The closings are posted as they are received so check often.

HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (a more detailed handbook will be shared separately. Look out for it in one of our Montessori Policy Peeks of the Weeks.

Contacting your School Nurse:

Wanda Miller (wmiller@crec.org), (860) 757-6109

CREC Montessori Magnet School promotes good health for all members of our community. It is strongly suggested that we all comply with the following to keep our students healthy and fit.

Administration of Medication in School:

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the school nurse. All medication must be in the original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's, dentist's or advanced practice registered nurse's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an epipen or similar device in school at all times if they are under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or epipen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the practitioner and parent/guardian is required.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a “qualified school employee” may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to their child.

A student with diabetes may test their own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from their parents/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glucagon injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect them from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physician are required. The district does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Communicable Disease Policy If your child has a fever (100° or higher), you must keep them at home until they have been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (such as Tylenol, Advil or Motrin). If your child has been vomiting and or has been having diarrhea, kindly keep them home until 24 hours after their last episode.

The following illnesses will require students to be sent home by the nurse:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea – student may return 24 hours after last episode
- Fever (100° or higher) – student may return after 24 fever free hours
- Severe or continuous cough
- Rash on body or face
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) – student may return after 24 hours on medication and a note from the physician
- Impetigo (bacterial skin infection) – student may return after 24 hours on medication and a note from the physician
- Strep – student may return after 24 hours on medication and a note from the physician
- Scabies – student may return after 24 hours of treatment and a note from the physician.
- Ringworm on the body – student may be at school while being treated for ringworm at the discretion of the nurse. Antifungal treatment must be in place and the area must be covered while at school.
- Ringworm of the scalp – student may return to school after 24 hours on prescribed medication and a note from the physician.
- Fifth’s Disease – student will be allowed in school unless has temperature is 100° or higher.
- Chickenpox and other childhood illnesses – school attendance will be determined in collaboration with the student’s medical provider.

If your child has any other illness, please report it to the school nurse.

Emergency Medical Treatment:

Parents are required to complete the emergency contact forms on a yearly basis. This form gives details of contact information as well as physician, hospital of preference, medical conditions and insurance company and numbers. It is important that a parent contacts the school if there are any changes to any of the information on the forms.

This form is of utmost importance for your child's safety.

Health Registration Requirements

Immunizations & Physicals

State of CT Department of Education Health Assessment Record (Students in K – 12)

In order to provide the best educational experience, school personnel must understand your child's health needs. School health forms request information from you (Part I) which will also be helpful to the health care provider when he or she completes the medical evaluation form (part II).

State law requires complete primary immunizations and a health assessment by a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a registered nurse licensed pursuant to chapter 378, a physician assistant licensed pursuant to chapter 370, a school medical advisor or a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a physician assistant stationed at any military base prior to school entrance in Connecticut (C.G.S. Secs. 10-204a and 10-206).

State of CT Department of Education Early Childhood Health Assessment Record(Pre-K only)

In order to provide the best experience, early childhood providers must understand your child's health needs. The health form requires information from you (Part I) which will be helpful to the health care provider when he or she completes the health evaluation (Part II). State law requires complete primary immunizations and a health assessment by a physician, an advanced practice registered nurse, a physician assistant, or a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a physician assistant stationed at any military base prior to entering an early childhood program in Connecticut.

Please note: all preK students are required to have an updated flu vaccine. This needs to be administered prior to January 1. PreK students who are not vaccinated by this date will not be able to attend school.

Parents of students attending Montessori Magnet School for the first time will need to present:

- A certificate of immunization;
- Proof of medical examination in the past 12 months (State of CT Health Assessment Record form).

Physical Examinations

Under state regulations, a student must have a physical examination prior to entrance into Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten or if the student is entering school from out-of-state or country. This physical examination must be within one year prior to entrance. The school must receive a physician's signed State of Connecticut medical form complete with immunizations prior to entrance into the school. If immunizations were denied due to medical or religious reasons, please submit a legal waiver form. Vision, hearing and scoliosis screenings are conducted per state regulations for students in kindergarten through grade five. Results of these examinations are noted on the child's cumulative health record. The nurse will notify the parent if a child has not passed any of the screenings. The parent is always welcome to request additional vision and hearing screenings. Psychotropic Drug Use School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she/they may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

Absences

Please call the nurse's office at to report your child's absence. To ensure all students absent from school are accounted for, student absences not reported are first checked by a call home or to the parent's workplace and to the other numbers listed on your student's school verification form.

Injuries

Please report any injury that might affect a student's normal day to the school nurse. The school nurse will be able to support the staff in accommodating the student as well as prepare proper treatments.

Injury or Illness During School Hours

If a student is injured or becomes ill during school hours, the school nurse will contact the parent or guardian if the situation warrants or if the student needs to be taken home.

Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact Wanda Miller, the school nurse, at 860-757-6109. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the (school nurse). All medication must be in original container with proper labels.

A student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parents/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may

require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physical are required.

The District does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Screenings

The school nurse will do vision and hearing screenings for students ages 5 and older. Second and third year Upper Elementary students will be screened for scoliosis (curvature of the spine.) Referrals will be sent to parents for any student that does not pass the various screenings.

Food Allergies

MMS is not a peanut-free school. We are very aware that there are many children with peanut allergies. We work with families to ensure the safety of students with known allergies. Please follow the snack list guidelines that were provided to you. Only the snacks on that list are allowed to be brought to school.

Group snacks that are intended to be shared with students must be on the list below. Some brands are listed specifically because they do not contain certain allergens. All snacks to be shared must be in the original, sealed container with the label intact (Health Services Division, David Cusick, BS, RN, EMT-P, Director)

******See next page for APPROVED SNACKS******

Pretzels: Pepperidge Farm, Rold Gold,

Animal Crackers: Keebler 1oz pouches only; Snackables 1.1oz packages

Fruit cups- Dole, individual, pre-packaged; Musselman's Squeezable unsweetened applesauce pouches

Fruit snacks/fruit roll-ups: Betty Crocker brand, Annies Organic Bunny Fruit snacks

Fruit Juice – Dole, Motts, Welch's (Apple, Orange, Fruit Punch, Concord Grape)

Raisins

Go-gurt yogurt

Goldfish crackers: Pepperidge Farm (.75oz individual pouch whole grain) – cheddar, colors, pretzels with whole grain, xtra cheddar

Cheez-its (whole grain only)

Teddy Grahams: Nabisco

Graham crackers: Nabisco, Kellogg's, Pepperidge Farm goldfish grahams

String cheese – Mozzarella or Light Mozzarella individually wrapped

Cereal bars: Kellogg's Nutri Grain (blueberry, strawberry, raspberry, apple cinnamon)

General Mills Cereal Bar (Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, Golden Grahams, Team Cheerios, Trix)

Pudding: Hunt's snack pack fat-free vanilla individual, pre-packaged

Chips and Puffed Snacks: Lay's Baked Potato Chips, original, bbq, sour cream & onion, individual bags

Hippeas Chickpea puffs, individual bags

Meals / Snacks

Breakfast

Breakfast is available for ALL students each morning at no cost.

Lunch

Lunch is served midday family style in each classroom at no cost. Lunch menus are sent home monthly and will be posted on the webpage.

Food Allergies

All allergies must be reported to the school nurse. Medical Alert Lists are created for staff and appropriate procedures will be enforced within the classroom setting to ensure the safety of all children. Alternatives are usually available from food services to accommodate special dietary needs. Students and families may want to opt to bring their own snack or lunch to also ensure safety.

In accordance with federal and state law, it is CREC's policy to provide students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require all meals served to meet or exceed the stricter of either the federal

nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the “Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools”.

In developing goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school based activities that promote student wellness, CREC will, as required, review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques.

School Information Verification Forms

Each student MUST have a form on file. These forms give the school important contact numbers in case of an emergency. Please make sure to notify the office with any changes to this information. This form includes a section that gives the school nurse permission to give a student Tylenol as needed. A parent signature is required for this.

Security

For the safety of the children, the doors of the school are locked each morning after supervised arrivals at 9:00 a.m. Visitors with a photo I.D. are required to enter through the front doors, sign in at the office and wear a visitor’s badge. There is a video camera system and a security guard stationed at the Montessori Magnet School during arrival and dismissal time. In addition to video surveillance, security guards regularly patrol the campus. The campus has security coverage Monday – Friday 7:00am-7:00pm.

Media Access to Students

School administrators shall be authorized to grant permission and set parameters for media access to students in their respective schools.

Other than activities attended by the general public (i.e. sporting events), media representatives shall be required to report to the administration for prior approval before accessing students.

Parental/guardian permission must be obtained for students to be interviewed, photographed or videotaped by the media other than for events attended by the general public.

Parents/guardians who do not want their student interviewed, photographed or videotaped by the media shall inform the school principal.

Security Guards

The security guards are screened and interviewed by the Director of Security and the Security Manager of the Learning Corridor. Each selected applicant is given a drug test, physical examination and a background check before a job offer is finalized.

Fire Drills/Lockdowns

Fire drills and lockdowns are held at regular intervals as required by state law. In the state of CT, we must have a total of 10 drills in a year. Students must follow the directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill may be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills every three months.

Legislative bills. 10-231 New Law: Prior to conducting a Crisis drill, not fire drill, staff, parents and children must be notified one week prior.

Environmental Issues

Asbestos

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the school office.

Pesticide Application

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact Douglas Henley. Note: If the district is implementing the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concept, similar requirements as above must be met.

Protection of Undocumented Students (Full policy/regulation: 5111.3)

Policy Summary: All students have the right to attend public school and enjoy access to equitable educational and programmatic services regardless of their immigration status or that of their family members. CREC personnel shall not take any steps that would deny students access to education based on their immigration status or that would impede the rights of any students to public education under the U.S. Supreme Court's 1982 ruling in Plyler v. Doe, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Connecticut General Statutes, and any other applicable state and federal law. If any member of the CREC community (including students, families, or staff) has questions about their immigration status, CREC employees shall not refer them to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office ("ICE") or any other government agency. Instead, employees shall refer them to state and/or local non-profit immigration law organizations. It is the general policy of CREC not to allow any individual or organization to enter a school site if the educational setting would be disrupted by that visit.

Non-discrimination

The CREC Council complies with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities because of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, pregnancy, disability, or on any other basis prohibited by federal or state law. The prohibition of discrimination in educational programs or activities extends to academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, including athletics.

CREC strives to provide a safe, positive learning climate for its students. Harassment, in any form, whether by students, staff members, board members, parents, vendors, contracted individuals, volunteers, employees or visitors - on CREC grounds or property or on property within CREC's jurisdiction; on buses operated by or for CREC; while attending or engaged in CREC activities - will not be tolerated.

Any incident or complaint of discrimination or harassment will given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources. Every student shall have a ready means of

resolving any complaint of discrimination or harassment. (See full policy for Incident Investigation Form.)

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment (Full Policy):

<https://www.crec.org/about/docs/policies/5000/5145.5PR%20Sexual%20Harassment.pdf>

Policy 5145.5 Summary:

- The CREC Council does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, including employment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is forbidden, whether engaged in by students, supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers subject to the control of the Council. The Council is committed to safeguarding the right of all students of the school district to a learning environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment will not be tolerated among students of the school district. It is the policy of CREC that any form of sexual harassment is forbidden whether by students, supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers subject to the control of the Board. Students are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful and courteous to employees, to fellow students and to the public.

Definition

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to, insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct; threats or suggestions that a student's submission to or rejection of unwelcome conduct will in any way influence a decision regarding that student, or conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with the student's learning, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment, such as the display in the educational setting of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Title IX Coordinator:

Name: Jessica Leon Email Address: jleon@crec.org

Phone Number: Office-860-310-7795

Procedure

It is the express policy of the CREC Council to encourage victims of sexual harassment to report such claims. Students are encouraged to promptly report complaints of sexual harassment to the Special Services or Executive Director. Complaints will be investigated promptly and corrective action will be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality will be maintained by all persons involved in the investigation and no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment.

CREC will provide staff development for district administrators and grievance committee members and will annually distribute its policy and grievance procedures to staff and students in an effort to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment.

The CREC Council does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, including employment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is forbidden, whether engaged in by students, supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers subject to the control of the Council. The Council is committed to safeguarding the right of all students of the school district to a learning environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment.

Child Abuse

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraeducators and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives yearly training in their use.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect is also considered child abuse.

Smoking

Students shall not smoke or use tobacco products on school property or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law.

Substance Abuse

The school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any adult/student in violation of this will be subject to disciplinary actions.

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interest of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students. However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Unauthorized possession, distribution, sale or consumption of dangerous drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages are considered grounds for expulsion.

Students are encouraged to consult with teachers, administrators and other professional staff on substance abuse problems. A staff member who is contacted by a student regarding a drug or alcohol problem may elect to keep that information confidential and not disclose it to any other person in accordance with state law. However, the student will be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from parents or guardians. In such cases, the decision to involve the parent/guardians will be arrived jointly by the student and the educator unless, in the judgment of the educator, the mental or physical health of the student is immediately and dangerously threatened by drug/alcohol use. If such danger is imminent, the parents/guardians and health officials will be notified so that appropriate action can be taken. Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems.

Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

When students commit drug and alcohol-related offenses, school-imposed discipline may also include completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program.

Reference: PA 96-244 amended C.G.S. 10-233d and requires a one year expulsion for students who offer illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds.

Due process is a set of procedures to ensure that the rights of students are protected. These rights include the opportunity to know the specific charges or allegations leveled against them, the student's right to present their version of the incident(s), and the opportunity at various levels to appeal the decision rendered at any level. The appeal process for suspensions ends with a review at the Executive Director's level.

Parent notification may occur at all levels in the "Range of Administrative Behavioral Consequences", but it will occur from "Parent Contact" through "Expulsion" levels. Throughout this process, students may be referred to other support services.

Any violations of the law will be promptly reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Psychotropic Drug Use

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

Physical Activity

All students enrolled in elementary school shall have included in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total. This requirement may be altered by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for a child requiring special education and related services.

This daily period of physical activity for elementary school students can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities.

Students may not be required by school employees to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day. This restriction does not apply to brief period of respite/time-outs, referrals to a building administrator, or for safety reasons.

Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program

Students in grades K-12 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

Family Life Education

Family life education shall help students acquire knowledge, attitudes and values which will contribute to the well-being of individuals, families and society. Students and parents or guardians shall be informed of their right to exempt the student from the family life program.

BEING A PARENT AT MMS

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communication and interaction. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of the educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged. Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs.

All CREC Magnet Schools now have a home school-compact, which will be made available to you. We encourage you to read this document thoroughly. Please contact our school's Parent Liaison for if you are in need of assistance.

A successful partnership between home and school is vital to the success of CREC Montessori Magnet School. To support that partnership we offer a variety of avenues aimed at both keeping you informed about what and how your child is learning and hearing your thoughts and ideas about how we can work together to best serve the interests of the children.

Communication

At MMS we strive to foster clear and robust communication between home and school. The chart below offers guidance regarding the proper channels to use for gaining information and solving problems.

MATTER RELATED TO	FIRST CONTACT
Child's Progress Classroom Activities Class Procedures Behavior and Discipline	Classroom teacher
School Policy General Questions and Concerns Facilities	Principal <i>Antonio Napoleone</i>
Parent Education Bus Behavior Issues	Principal <i>Antonio Napoleone</i> Assistant Principal <i>Jessica Leon</i>
Family and Community Issues Attendance Issues	Family and Community Coordinator <i>Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz</i>
After Care Issues	After School Director <i>Marcus Harris</i>
Daily Scheduling Admissions Student Records Bus Assignment	Office Manager <i>Yomarie Soler-Velez</i> Office Assistant <i>Jeserika Figueroa</i>

School Messenger – School Messenger is our automated outreach phone, email and text message system. In the event of an unexpected early release or an emergency situation, you will receive a recorded message from Dr. Napoleone. You can receive these messages by phone, email, text or all if you wish.

Room Parent -Each classroom has a Room Parent whose role is to help facilitate two-way communication between the classroom and the home. Room Parents organize classroom-based social gatherings and projects and serve as information resources. Room parents collaborate and work closely with Linoshka Santiago our Family and Community Coordinator

Communication Opportunities

Conferences

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice during the school year. The first parent-teacher conference is in December and the second conference is in March. These meetings are scheduled collaboratively between the parent and teacher for the weeks indicated on the school calendar. It is highly recommended that parents observe in their child's classroom prior to conferences. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference. A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued three times a year in December, March and June. The first two reports are given in conjunction with a parent/teacher conference and the final progress report is sent home with students on the last day of school.

Friday Bags

Primary students are provided a Friday Bag at the beginning of the school year. This bag is used to communicate information between school and home each week. The Friday Bag is to be returned by the student on Mondays. Use this method to return signed permission slips, and any other communication from home to school. A helpful hint: choose a designated spot at home for the Friday Bag, so that important communications aren't forgotten.

Parent Workshops

A variety of workshops designed to inform parents/guardians about the Montessori philosophy and parenting issues are offered. The parent evenings are posted on event calendars and notices are sent home to describe upcoming session. Please stay tuned!

Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

Parent Teacher Association

The school has a very active parent-teacher organization. All parents/guardians are welcome at PTA meetings and events and are encouraged to become members. PTA officers are

elected each spring at the final PTA meeting of the school year. PTA meeting dates and activities are included in a packet distributed at the beginning of each school year. The PTA has a phone extension at Montessori Magnet School. All questions or concerns should be directed to PTA officers. The PTA officers for the 2024-2025 school year are:

President – Christina Schatz

Vice President – Lavickie Soares

Treasurer – Dee Dee Huang

**Secretary – Katie Griffith & Emily
Lemiska**

PTA Meetings and Parent Workshops

The Parent Teacher Association meetings are held each month. In order to have a specific topic addressed at a meeting, contact a PTA board member. A series of PTA and school sponsored parent workshops are held throughout the year. Notices are sent home with students and via email.

Volunteers (e.g., parental involvement)

Volunteers are needed throughout our school program. Parent volunteers are generally not utilized in the classroom setting because of the adult/student ratio we try to maintain in a Montessori setting. The more adults, the less independent children tend to be. Also, the classroom space is to be the child's domain. Volunteers are utilized in the classroom for special events, field trips, cultural presentations and as guest speakers. The PTA offers a committee to organize volunteer efforts or parents may contact their classroom teacher or appropriate school personnel.

Family Involvement

Our school is based on the notion that family, working with the school, will provide the optimal support for each child. Parent involvement in school life ensures the development of this partnership. Involvement is defined at multiple levels and begins when a child's application is entered in the school lottery process. It cannot end there however.

The school has a Family and Community Engagement Coordinator who is the voice of the families and students, and works closely with the families/caregivers. Our PTA also reaches out to families for school wide events and activities.

Telephone/Fax/E-mail

To access the automated voice mail system, call 757-6100. Informational options include the staff directory. Our fax number is 860-757-6144. Telephone numbers are listed in the directory on page 2 of this handbook.

Parent Notification

There are a number of federal and state statutes which require school districts to provide parents, guardians and students with information pertaining to board policies which affect them. The No Child Left Behind legislation has significantly added to the list of required parental notifications.

The following CREC policies are available in the school office for parent review at any time. These policies provide the guidelines for how such incidents at Montessori Magnet School will be handled.

- Bullying
- Student Records
- Student Suspension/Expulsions
- Weapons & Dangerous Instruments
- Child Abuse
- Sexual Harassment

- Internet Safety/Filtering
- Youth Suicide
- Alcohol Drugs and Tobacco
- Non Discrimination/ Grievance Procedures

Directory Information

- Directory information or class lists of student names and/or addresses shall not be distributed without the knowledge or consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student or by the student who has attained majority status.
- Parents or students may choose to have their directory information removed from one or more the specific activities without jeopardizing other activities.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Birthdays

Parents/guardians are encouraged to speak to their child's teacher regarding birthday celebrations. This may take the form of bringing in a special treat (from the approved snack list) your child can serve to the class. All plans should be coordinated with the child's classroom teacher in advance. Birthday party invitations may **not** be distributed in school unless **all** children in the class are invited. The main office cannot give out any family information that is not listed in the directory.

Holidays

CREC schools welcome cultural celebrations as they help to strengthen bonds between school life, families and communities. Holidays of many cultures and religions are recognized in each class mainly from an educational point of view. Significant classroom time is generally not devoted to holidays, however, recognition of seasons and cultures from an educational point of view are integrated through our program. Parents/guardians are invited to make a presentation or lead an activity related to a particular holiday and its customs. Please contact your child's teacher if you are interested in leading the class in a holiday celebration. Additionally, the CREC calendar honors particular national holidays throughout the school year.

Special Events

Special events are initiated throughout the year by your child's classroom teacher, the PTA or the school administration. Your participation in these events is always welcome and may be requested. Notice of such events will be sent home with students.

Excluding your child from celebrations

Should you wish to exclude your child from an activity, notify your child's teacher at the beginning of the school year or in advance of the celebration. A written note to the teacher regarding the exclusion of your child's participation is required.

Student-Initiated Fundraisers

As part of the program at MMS, our students learn to care for themselves, their classroom, and our school. Process-focused work and student choice of activity from within a prescribed range of options is part of our school environment. As such, we encourage students to design and implement their own ideas when raising funds for particular classroom activities.

Students interested in raising funds must adhere to the following steps.

- Write a brief proposal stating:
 1. What will be sold (*any food items to be sold must be approved by the school nurse to ensure they meet the school's breakfast and/or lunch nutritional value standards.*).
 2. Dates, times and locations of where and when the items will be sold.
 3. What purpose the funds raised will serve.
 4. The name of a school staff person who will oversee the project.
- Submit the proposal to administration for approval.

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A MONTESSORI GLOSSARY

Montessori educators have been specially trained to work with your children. Sometimes Montessorians use a special language to describe how they interact with children and the educational environments they work in. Some of these key words and phrases will also become part of your child's vocabulary. To help with translation we provide the following definitions of commonly-used Montessori terms and expressions.

Control of Error: A key design feature of Montessori materials, allowing students to correct themselves if exercises are done correctly.

Follow the Child: What your child's teachers do. Based on careful observation, each child is allowed to pursue the monumental task of developing him or herself. By following the child, we are able to recognize "sensitive periods" (see below).

Grace & Courtesy: An important part of the curriculum at all levels and a key tool we use in cultivating a healthy community, resolving conflicts peacefully, and developing habits of care and respect.

Lower Elementary: 1st -3rd grades, usually children between the ages of six and nine who have made the transition into the "second plane of development" (see below).

Planes of Development: Maria Montessori based her concept of the four planes of development on observations of children throughout childhood and adolescence. These planes are in six-year groupings: 0-6, 6-12, 12-18, 18-24. The first three years of each grouping are characterized by the greatest change in that plane (physical, mental, emotional), with the last three years being characterized by a crystallization and extension of previous growth. For your child, that means the first three years of any developmental plane he or she will experience rapid and dramatic growth, followed by a time of stabilization and refinement. The balance between growth and stability is also visible across the four planes. 0-6 and 12-18 are periods of great physical and emotional transformation, while 6-12 and 18-24 are more stable. The four planes of development also guide our focus on three-year educational cycles.

Prepared Environment: An inviting and carefully organized learning environment (classroom) filled with meticulously-chosen "materials" for development. The environment encourages independence and concentration and enables the child to develop in optimal conditions.

Sensitive Periods: Another key concept of Montessori's developmental theory. Careful observation allows a Montessori educator to recognize the times with a child is ready for a new learning experience. The teacher can then "direct" the child toward the materials that will satisfy his or her developmental needs. Most sensitive periods occur in the first plane of development, and include movement, order, language, manners, writing, reading, music and so on.

Upper Elementary: Ages 9-12, 4th-6th grade.

Work: What your child does at school. Work, in a Montessori setting, is not the same as a job. It is not tedious or boring. Rather it is the way your child creates him or herself through purposeful activity. Work is engaging and joyful.

Freedom and Responsibility A Montessori Approach

Freedom

Choose daily work

Amount of time on an activity

Permission to be idle

Use of glass, knives, etc.

Eating snack when hungry

Use of bathroom

Resolve own conflicts

Teach other children

Movement in the classroom

Choose place to work

Work outside

Travel throughout building

Nap in classroom



Responsibility

Appropriate work choices and variety of presented materials that include daily literacy and math choices
Staying on task and interested

Watching, sitting or wandering without interruption

Proper care and handling

Proper food handling and fair share

Good hygiene and proper use of facility

State needs, not physical contact, seeks adult help when necessary

Appropriate interaction, key points

Walking, maneuvering between student work areas

Appropriate space for activity and not interfering with another's work space

Stay within sight of windows

Walk in hallways, know how to get to destination

Get enough sleep at night, know when rest is needed

Montessori Magnet School

Primary Student Blueprint

Complete this reflection sheet with your student(s) following a behavior incident or conflict.

Questions	Answers
What happened?	
How did I feel?	
Why made me feel this way?	
How did I express my feelings?	
How did the other person or people feel?	
What could I have done better?	
What can I do now?	

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Montessori Magnet School

Lower Elementary Student Blueprint

Complete this reflection sheet with your student(s) following a behavior incident or conflict.

Questions	Answers
What happened?	
How did I feel?	
What made me feel this way?	
How did I express my feelings?	
How did the other person or people feel?	
How did they express their feelings?	
What could I have done better?	
What can I do now?	

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Montessori Magnet School

Upper Elementary Student Blueprint

Students complete this reflection sheet following a behavior incident or conflict.

Me	Other Person (if applicable)
What happened from my perspective?	What happened from the other person's perspective?
How did I feel?	How did the other person feel?
What caused my feelings?	What caused the other person's feelings?
What could I have done to handle the situation better?	
What can I do now?	

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

D

Learning Corridor Campus



E

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice of Student Education Record Privacy

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students".

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive federal funds.

Under FERPA, parents and eligible students have the following rights:

To inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school within 45 days of the school's receipt of a written request. The request should identify the record(s) being inspected. The school is not required to provide copies of records and may charge a fee if copies are requested. You will be notified of the place and time the record(s) may be available for review.

To request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading, the request must be in writing and clearly specify: (a) the part of the record requested to be changed and (b) why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement in the record about the contested information. The school is not required to consider requests for grade or disciplinary decisions, opinions of school officials in the education record, or the child's special determination.

Educational records will be kept for each student and will reflect the physical, emotional, social and academic aspects of a student's development in the educational process. It is the policy of the CREC Council that staff will comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding confidentiality and access to all students' records. Procedures shall be implemented to ensure strict confidentiality of student records while providing proper parental and/or student access to records. Availability of these policies and procedures shall be made known annually to all parents/guardians of children within the district.

For request of records please contact:

Yomarie Soler-Velez
ysolervelez@crec.org

757-6112 – Phone
757-6144 – FAX

To control the disclosure of their child's personally identifiable information from his/her education record, parents may request that the school, with certain exceptions, obtain their written consent prior to the disclosure of student information. An exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school staff with legitimate education interests, such as a person employed by the district; a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a grievance or disciplinary committee or assisting another school official; and/or an official of another school district in which a student seeks to enroll. A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill a professional responsibility.

Please use the following address to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with requirements of FERPA:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Equal Opportunity

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law. Regina Terrell is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Education Rights for Homeless Children and Youth

Under the McKinney Vento Federal Act Homeless students are defined as those lacking a "fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence". Students meeting this definition are protected and have the right to maintain their educational placement, are eligible for free school meals and for Title 1A services. If you believe your family meets this definition, please contact the school Liaison For Homeless Students (Amy Duquette at 860-757-6140) or the CREC District Liaison, Carole Kerkin.

Military Families

In June 2008, a memorandum of agreement was established creating a partnership between the Department of Defense and the Department of Education to support the education of military students. CREC recognizes that for those active duty members, Department of Defense civilians and those activated or deployed National Guard and Reserve members the phases of pre-deployment, deployment, reunion or post-deployment can be challenging to families and children. We can help. Please contact your school's Parent Liaison, Amy Duquette, if we may be of assistance to you.

F

Observation Guide



[Observation Guide](#)

Welcome to our school!

We are pleased that you want to observe and hope that your visit will be enjoyable and educational. Please follow these guidelines during your visit:

- ☐ Check in the office so that you may be escorted to the appropriate classroom.
- ☐ Please enter the classroom quietly.
- ☐ Limit your observation time to about 30 minutes.
- ☐ Remain quietly in the chair provided for you or observe from behind the teacher's office window.
- ☐ If a child approaches you, answer any comment or question briefly. Please do not engage the children in conversation or ask them to demonstrate activities.
- ☐ If you are observing with another person, please refrain from chatting together during this time. Conversations can be distracting for the children and teachers.
- ☐ The teacher will not be able to take time to converse with you during or immediately after your observation. Make note of any questions that arise during your observation and arrange a time to meet with the teacher to discuss your observations.
- ☐ Please exit the classroom quietly and sign out at the lobby.



In order to make your visit more meaningful, here are some questions to consider as you observe your child:

- What kinds of activities is your child choosing?
- Does your child choose activities independently?
- Does your child use the materials with care?
- Does your child complete the activity and return it to the shelf properly?
- Is your child working with focus and concentration?
- Does your child work through difficulties or does he/she frustrate easily?
- Are your child's movements controlled and settled?
- Does your child seek help when needed?
- How does your child interact with the other children?
- Does your child respect the work of others?
- Does your child participate in group activities?

In addition to observing your child, take a few minutes to also observe the classroom community as a whole. Look for:

- the variety of activities that are in use
- the interactions between the adults and the children
- the balance of individual and small group activities
- instances of helpfulness, whether spontaneous or suggested by an adult
- examples of leadership – children helping other children

Enjoy your visit and thank you for your support!

