



# PARENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

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Savoy, IL 61874

(217) 356-1818

[www.montessorischoolofcu.org](http://www.montessorischoolofcu.org)



## Our Values and Mission

**Our Vision:** A thriving community who is passionate about learning, discovery, and making a positive impact in the world.

**Our Mission:** The Montessori School of Champaign Urbana stimulates the natural curiosity of children through hands-on prepared environments to be self-directed, compassionate, innovative thinkers.

The Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana was founded in 1962 and uses the child-focused and child-led educational philosophy developed by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). The Montessori method draws on the natural curiosity of children and promotes personal and self-directed learning in a prepared environment.

MSCU is committed to providing a comprehensive Montessori education with a highly trained staff that guides students toward becoming confident, creative, empathetic, culturally aware, and responsible children who are nurtured toward having a lifelong love of learning.

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This Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana Policy and Practice book contains general guidelines and information. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described herein. For that reason, if you have any questions concerning eligibility for or the applicability of a policy or practice to your family, please address your specific questions to the Head of School.

Some of the subjects described in this handbook are covered in more detail in the appendices. You should refer to these appendices for specific information, since this book only briefly summarizes those policies. Please note that the terms of the written insurance policies are controlling.

The procedures, practices, policies, and benefits described here may be modified or discontinued from time to time. Every attempt will be made to inform you of any changes as they occur. However, it is your responsibility to keep current of all MSCU policies and procedures. It is your responsibility to review MSCU policies and procedures in detail and to request any clarification needed. Violation of MSCU policies or procedures may result in legal action, including termination of enrollment.

# Message from the Head of School

Dear MSCU Families,

Greetings! We are thrilled to welcome you to the Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana. It is families like yours that have built our long history of excellence in the community since 1962!

Whether this is your first year with us or you are a returning family, this handbook will be a wonderful reference for you on the day-to-day policies and procedures here at MSCU that will help your child be successful from his or her first day of enrollment. Please keep it close at hand throughout the year and refer to it as questions arise.

Our school offers a variety of different programs for families such as our Toddler program, Preschool program, Kindergarten program, and Elementary Grades 1-6. Our directresses and directors have an average of 20 years of experience and love helping our students develop physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually!

We here at MSCU believe strongly that we are partnering with you as we provide the best education for your child and co-create a supportive, caring community of joyful exploration and learning. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we found creative ways to connect, thrive, and stay healthy all at the same time. We invite you to become a vital part of our community in order to make it a successful year for all our children! Seek opportunities to volunteer and support our students, staff, and school. We as a staff are here to support you and your family as well through this incredibly special time in your child's development and education.



**Kerry Rossow**

Head of School  
hos@montessorischoolofcu.org

If you have any questions or thoughts to share, please do not hesitate to let us know. We are very much looking forward to continuing the magic of the learning journey with your family in the coming year.

Sincerely,

*Kerry Rossow*

## Introduction to MSCU

### Our History

The Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana was founded in 1962 as an outgrowth of a parent study group. The first site of the Montessori School was a small building on what is now the site of the University of Illinois State Farm Center. Subsequently the school rented space in churches and an old school building in Champaign. At one time, the school operated at three different sites.

In 1970, the Montessori Society purchased the Perkins School from Nellie Perkins at 1112 Broadmoor Drive in Champaign. In 1977, all classes were consolidated at the Broadmoor site.

In 1984, the Montessori Society purchased property at our present site in Savoy and an eight thousand-square-foot metal building with brick facade was constructed. The new school opened in August 1984 with four primary classes, a kindergarten, first and second grade classes and a full day care program. An afternoon preschool class was added the following year. In 1987 the first and second grade classes were discontinued and replaced by additional primary rooms.

In 1994, the building was expanded with the construction of a 2,000-square-foot, multipurpose room. By 2000, MSCU offered six primary classes, two kindergarten enrichment classes, two extended day programs and a wrap-around childcare program.

In 2012, the school celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A Parent-Toddler Community was added and the extended day program expanded.

In 2014, MSCU purchased the building at 303 Burwash, remodeling it to accommodate a full elementary program consisting of an inaugural first through third grade class, with plans to expand grade levels as the students grew. In 2019, MSCU expanded to offering elementary programs for Grades 1-6. In 2020, MSCU expanded to offering a secondary program for Grades 7-8.

In 2019, when the covid pandemic hit us, we pivoted and scaled back our wrap-around childcare program, focusing instead on continuing our extended day program (afterschool care) within the classroom cohorts/pods.

In 2023, we enjoyed getting back to safely mixing age groups and classrooms again and finally having a mask-optional campus. We discontinued our secondary program for Grades 7-8, to expand and strengthen our elementary programs more. The Montessori Society purchased the Christine Rich Dance Studio from Christine Rich at 1402 Regency West in Savoy. We have grown to split the lower elementary program, Grades 1-3 into two multi-age classrooms, to be held in the Studio building. 303 Burwash now



holds Grades 4-6 exclusively. We celebrated our 60th anniversary last year. We also affirmed Kerry Rossow as our Permanent Head of School.

### Affiliations

MSCU holds an active membership with the American Montessori Society (AMS). As a member school, MSCU has access to a high-quality professional development library and stays current with the latest in Montessori education and research. MSCU strives to provide a high-fidelity Montessori education by implementing:

Trained Montessori teachers

Multi-age classrooms

Using Montessori materials

Child-directed work

Uninterrupted work periods

Additionally, our Toddler Program is fully certified by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to offer services for children 24-36 months.

MSCU is also a registered non-public school with the Illinois State Board of Education.

MSCU works with local school districts, USD116 and CUSD 4, to provide funding and other resources for the school community.

### Governance

The Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, founded in 1962, is owned by the Montessori Society of Champaign-Urbana. The Society is a not-for-profit corporation composed primarily of the parents whose children are enrolled in the school. The Society is non-discriminatory in its membership and the school is non-discriminatory in its enrollment and hiring practices.

The Board of Directors of the Montessori Society, is the governing and policy-making body of the school. It is composed of at least 8 volunteer members. Each year, new board members are elected/appointed to fulfill the board duties as required. The treasurer is appointed by the Board. Board members serve three-year terms.

The Head of School is hired by the Board of Directors and handles the day-to-day operations of the school. The Head of School is responsible for hiring directresses, assistant teachers, full-day program teachers and all support staff of the school.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- The fee you pay upon enrollment goes in part to paying your family's dues to become part of the Montessori Society of Champaign-Urbana. As official members of the Society, you have the right to vote for Board members.
- Quarterly, there is a Board meeting in which school matters are discussed.
- Every family, as members of the Society, is welcome and encouraged to attend and get involved with the governance of the school!
- Board meeting dates and locations will be announced to families.
- Board meeting minutes are posted online on our website and available upon request
- Copies of the By-Laws of the Society are available upon request in the School office.

## Non-discrimination policy

MSCU is committed to a diverse and inclusive environment, and welcomes all students and families regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ability, socio-economic class, or spirituality.

MSCU provides equal opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran's status, or any factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law.

MSCU does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs, or employment based on any factor outlined above or prohibited under applicable law. Students, faculty, and staff are assured of participation in all programming and in the use of facilities without such discrimination.

Should a discrimination concern arise, families and/or staff should reach out to the Head of School to raise the concern for resolution. Should the Head of School be the person of concern, families/staff may reach out to the Board Executive Committee members to raise the concern. Prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation of complaints will be made and corrective/preventative action taken as necessary, as outlined in the "Anti-Bullying/Harassment/Sexual Misconduct/Discrimination Policy" in the "Community Expectations for Behavior" section of this handbook.

## Student records policy

All families must submit all required documents for your child's school file by their requisite deadlines in order for your child to attend school. Upon enrollment or re-enrollment, all required documents are due at least 5 business days prior to your child's expected start date; delay may result in a delayed start date for your child.

It is the family's responsibility to maintain current documentation for their child's file. Per Illinois School Code, if at any point certain documentation in a child's file is missing or expired, the child may be asked to stay at home or progress reports may be withheld until the documentation can be provided.

Document requirements differ between grade levels and specific circumstances; please review which

documents are needed for your child's upcoming grade and specific circumstances here: [Required Documents for Your Child's File](#)

MSCU will be destroying old student records every 10 years. If you would like a copy, please request it from the office. This serves as notation to all parents moving forward that we will destroy written student records after a certain amount of time.

## Our Programs

### Toddler

Our Toddler Program offers a DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services) licensed Montessori Toddler (8:30-2:30) and Toddler Aftercare (2:30-5:30) program for children ages 24 to 36 months, who are comfortably walking. Each toddler class is composed of a maximum of 15 multi-age children (24-36 mos) with a Montessori Directress and two assistants. Our staff to toddler ratio is 1:8, as required by DCFS.

The program offers toddlers support for their need to develop independence, concentration, language, order and movement in a safe and loving prepared environment. The classroom provides real experiences and wonderful language opportunities for toddlers by using wood materials, real dishes and utensils and following the child's innate desire to experience the natural world around them. Caring for self, peers and the classroom environment is a part of the toddlers' daily life at the school. The school strives to create an environment that allows the freedom for the toddler to become independent and develop coordination and self-awareness. Once they turn 3 years old, toddlers have the opportunity to move into a Primary classroom.

### Primary

Each Primary Montessori class is composed of approximately twenty-one children in a multi-age group of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds with a Montessori directress and an assistant teacher.

The Primary Montessori program is designed as a three-year program to achieve full benefits. During that critical third year, when a child is about five years old, the transition from the physical world where the child can develop motor skills and senses with self-teaching and self-correcting materials, into the abstract world of ideas and concepts usually happens. Many Montessori educators call this the "explosion into learning" when all the learning absorbed by the child during the previous years of training suddenly fits together, makes sense, and the child begins reading, writing, doing math, and showing other spurts of intellectual growth.

## Elementary

Our Elementary program serves grades 1 – 6. Students devise a plan, agreeing to complete specific work each day and throughout the week. They choose the order of their work and whether to complete them alone, with a partner, or in a small group. This allows the student to exercise choice while the teacher can monitor progress.

Creative writing and research skills become especially important in the elementary level. Reading is integrated into the curriculum, as children are introduced to poetry, folk tales, non-fiction, and classic literature. Word study also occurs, including grammar principles such as antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, as well as the parts of speech.

The Montessori math materials quickly move students to an abstraction of math concepts, including problem solving, fractions, graphing, measurement, long division, and algebraic equations. Experimentation with the geometric materials leads students to their own discoveries of spatial relationships, including congruence, symmetry, and equivalency.

Students will explore the life and physical sciences through experimentation and independent research. History of world civilizations and geographic concepts will be explored through reading and hands-on activities. With this pedagogy, students will seamlessly be able to reach above their grade level as well as firm up foundations in the subject areas in which they are not yet as strong.

## Afterschool Care

The MSCU Aftercare Program is designed to provide a childcare option, allowing families to pick up their children as late as 5:30 p.m. with the reassurance that their children will be engaged in fun, positive, healthy developmental activities the entire time. Afterschool Care is available for Toddler, Primary, and Elementary programs when demand and staffing availability allows.

## Access to Special Education Services

Montessori philosophy and pedagogy offers accommodations and flexibility for many student needs. Special education services are not provided by the school, but arrangements can be made to work with a specialist or consultant at no cost to the parent, provided that the child has been evaluated and given a US government-identified diagnosis of special education need. We do not currently manage IEP or 504 plans, nor do we have in-house related services. We appreciate you as we partner to teach your children.

## Daily Schedules

### School Hours

School hours vary by level and program. Class officially begins at the end of your child's drop off time as detailed in your orientation materials. In unusual circumstances, such as severe weather or other emergencies, school schedules may be altered to accommodate various protocols needed to keep children safe and healthy.

### DAILY SCHEDULE FOR MSCU PROGRAMS

Please see your class placement and other orientation materials for your child's specific schedule. **Doors to all buildings will close at 8:30 sharp each morning.** If your child will be arriving late you must notify the office by 9am (24 hours notice is preferred) and call again upon arrival. **Students arriving after 10am without prior notification of valid cause may not be accepted into the building for that day.** See "Attendance and Late Arrivals" under "Campus Arrivals and Departures" section for more details.

### Early/Late Charges

Please respect our staff by not dropping off your children earlier than their program's start time or picking them up later than when their program ends. We will not accept early drop-offs; families who arrive earlier than their drop-off window will be asked to pull over and wait until their scheduled time for drop-off. If a tardy arrival occurs more than three times per semester **there will be a \$25.00 charge for every subsequent late arrival.** There are also late charges for children who are picked up later than their scheduled program times. Late charges begin five minutes after your scheduled time window ends. If your car is already in the car line during your pickup window, you do not need to worry about late charges. The charge is a flat rate of **\$10.00. For each additional minute there will be a \$5.00 per minute charge.** If a tardy issue persists, further action will be taken.

In case of emergency, the office must be notified to avoid the late charges.

If a child remains at the school after closing, a staff member will attempt to reach all parties listed on your child's emergency contact list. Keep your emergency numbers current by informing the office.

## Campus Arrival and Departures

### Daily Arrival

All Montessori classes begin promptly on time. **To avoid disrupting the class, please be sure your child is on time for class.** A very important part of the day is the "line time" activity, which often occurs at the beginning of the Montessori class. Please remember that we are not able to accommodate children earlier than their assigned start time.

During school hours, teaching staff must be attentive to the children, so please limit your conversations with on-duty teaching staff to urgent information. You may make arrangements for further discussion at a later time through contacting the office.

### Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

There are late pickup charges as mentioned earlier in this handbook. We do not charge late pickup fees if your car is in the car line before the line is done for the day.

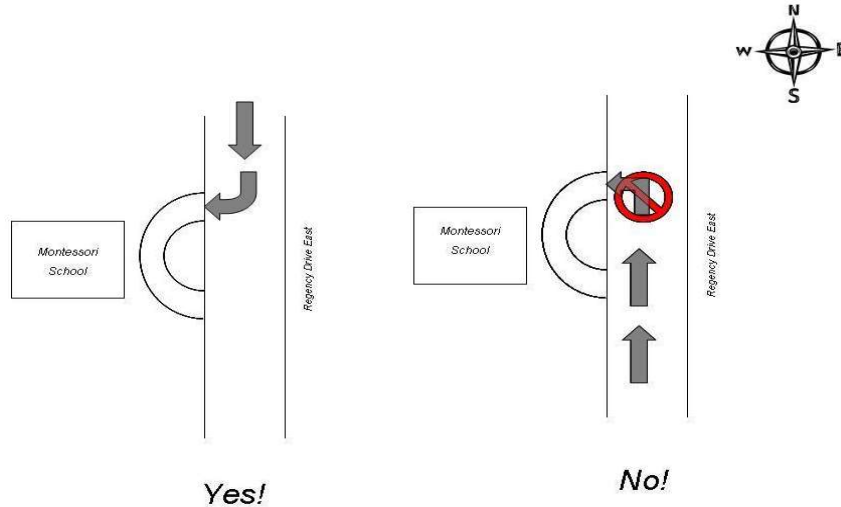
If you need to pick up your child early for any reason please let the office know ahead of time so that we can have your child ready to go when you arrive. 24 hours advance notice is preferred.

If you are not arriving during a staffed car line window, please follow these guidelines:

- Call the office at (217) 356-1818 when you arrive so that we know you are here and can get your child ready to go.
- Lower Elementary Families: Please follow guidelines provided to you by Ms. Lancaster or Ms. Hanneken for the Studio Building.
- Upper Elementary Families: Please follow guidelines provided to you by Ms. Day and the rest of the team at the Burwash Building.
- Toddler/Primary Families: Pull up through the Primary Building Circle Drive and exit your car to receive your child and help them into the car as soon as they exit the building. As a courtesy to walking families of small children, **DO NOT block the crosswalk.**

### Procedures for Primary and Toddler Program [Ages 2-6]

1. **Please do not block the crosswalk** while you are waiting in the circle drive, as a courtesy to walking families.
2. **Do not park and leave your car in the circle drive** at any time during the school day. Parking and leaving your car in a circle drive prevents other cars from moving through. The circle drives are fire lanes.
3. All drivers should approach the school and enter the circle drive from the **NORTH**, as shown in the diagram below.



Approaching from the south and making a left turn into the circle drive or parking lot creates congestion that is dangerous for children. It may also disrupt local residents, which causes problems for the school. **Please only enter** the circle drive or parking lot **from the NORTH.**

4. **If you arrive prior to the start of the drop off window** for the car line, **please wait on the street until 8:15.** Our circle drives are fire lanes and waiting in a circle drive prevents emergency vehicles from pulling up, if needed.
5. **ALL cell phone use is prohibited in a School Zone.**

Please call or email the office if you have any questions about these procedures. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. You will need to drop your child off at school **between 8:15am and 8:30am** in our circle drive. Please arrive on time to help your child get acclimated to the day with the rest of their peers.

#### Procedures for Lower Elementary Program [Grades 1-3]

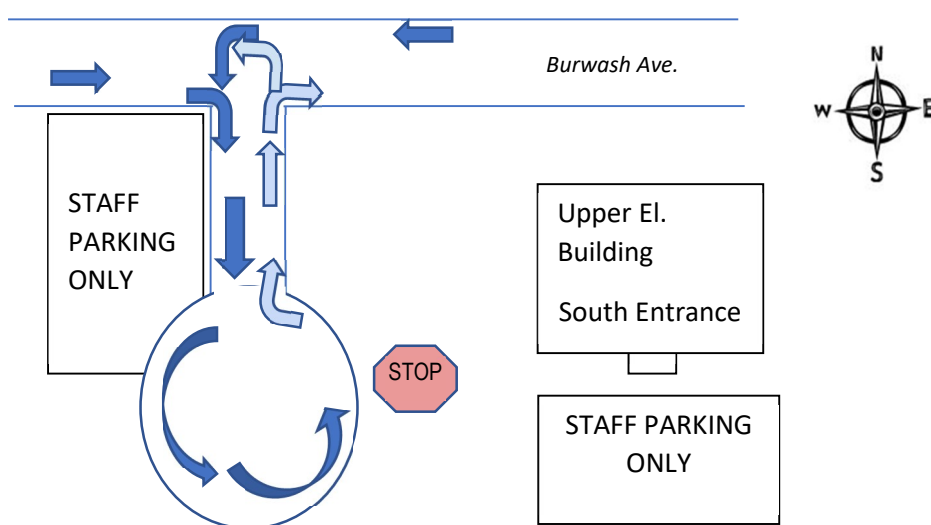
Our Lower Elementary Program is now fully housed in our newly purchased building, 1402 Regency Drive West in Savoy (what was once the Christine Rich Dance Studio)! See your orientation materials from Ms. Day, Ms. Lancaster, and Ms. Hanneken for specific instructions on drop-off and pick-up procedures. Please drop your child off at school **between 8:00am and 8:30am** in our circle drive off Regency Drive West. Arrive on time to help your child get acclimated to the day with the rest of their peers.

If no staff member is at the door to greet you, you might be late or early—we recommend ringing the doorbell and being patient. If there is still no one there, try calling the office at 217- 356-1818. Before leaving your child, you must call the office to let us know you are here and wait until a staff member comes out to escort your child to class; **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM ON THEIR OWN.** This is for your child's safety.

## Procedures for Upper Elementary Program [Grades 4-6]

You will need to drop your child off at school **between 8:00am and 8:30am** in our circle drive off Burwash Avenue. Please arrive on time to help your child get acclimated to the day with the rest of their peers.

When using the Burwash Circle Drive to drop off your child in the morning and pick up in the afternoon, please pull up to the sidewalk that leads to our front door before letting your child out. Elementary children have arrived at the age where they should be able to exit and enter their vehicles without help from an adult. For safety reasons, we ask that adults do their best to remain in the driver's seat while the child enters and exits the vehicle on their own. Please practice this at home before school begins if your child has not done this before.



A staff member will be standing outside to greet students as they arrive. If there is no staff member present, you may be early or late, or staff may be attending to an urgent matter. Call the office at (217-356-1818). You must call the office to let us know you are here and wait until a staff member comes out to escort your child to class; **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD DIRECTLY TO THE CLASSROOM ON THEIR OWN.** This is for your child's safety.

### Parking

Parking lots are reserved for staff only. The curved driveways by the Primary, Burwash, and Studio Buildings are **NO PARKING** areas and **MUST** remain clear in case of an emergency.

### Pick-Up Authorization

Children will only be released to a parent or guardian, or those persons authorized in writing by the parent or guardian. If you need to make special arrangements for someone to pick up your child who is not already authorized in their file, please contact the school that day, stating the name of the person who will pick up your child. The school will request photo identification. **We will not release your child to someone new if that person is unable to provide a photo I.D.** If you have a change in the person designated to pick up your child you are required to inform the office.

### Attendance and Late Arrivals

**TODDLER TO PRE-KINDERGARTEN:** Children are encouraged to attend class regularly so that they can obtain the full benefit of the Montessori method. When possible, the office should be notified if a family will be out of town or if a child will be absent for a long period of time. **Please notify the school office when your child is absent because of illness or for other reasons.**

**KINDERGARTEN THROUGH ELEMENTARY:** Daily attendance during the entire regular school term is **required** for all school-age children (K-8). It is the responsibility of a parent or guardian to ensure his/her child attends school regularly in order to obtain maximum benefits from the educational program. The school is required to maintain attendance records on all children. A child may not be absent without valid cause for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days (equivalent to 9 school days). **Valid cause for absence is defined as illness, medical appointment, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and such other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the School, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student (105 ILCS 5/26-2a; from Ch. 122, par. 26-2a).** In the event that a child is absent for the purpose of observing a religious holiday, the absence will be considered excused and the student will be given an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement. Excessive health-related absences without a doctor's notes are not valid causes for absence. **The School considers absence due to the need for COVID-testing or self-isolation, with or without symptoms, to be valid cause for absence during the 2023-24 school year and encourages families who suspect they have had a COVID exposure to take such measures as needed to protect the health of the school community.**

Please note that absences are based on the previous 180 regular attendance days, and not the current school year. The most recent 180 school days need to be attended more than 95% of the time.

The Illinois State Board of Education has established guidelines for half-day and full-day attendance. The guidelines are based on instructional time with the following general parameters:

	Kindergarten and First Grade	Grades 2-6
<b>Full Day Credits</b>	4 hours (240 mins)	5 hours (300 mins)
<b>Half Day Credits</b>	2 hours (120 mins)	2.5 hours (150 mins)



For a student to be counted present for the entire day, they must be there for at least the minimum time listed in the chart above for their age level; our school day for Kindergarten is 260 minutes and for Elementary it is 390 minutes.

**Families are strongly urged to coordinate travel plans and other such activities with school vacations.** It must be realized that some classroom experiences cannot be repeated for students who are absent.

**TARDINESS:** K-6 students arriving at school after the official school start time are marked as “tardy.” 6-year-olds are due to class by 8:30 am latest. 1st-6th graders are due to class by 8:15 am latest. If this late arrival results in a student failing to meet the minimum attendance credit times as listed above, then the student will be marked as absent for that part of the school day.

While only K-6 students have tardies actually marked in their school records, ALL students are expected to arrive on time. Doors will close at 8:30 sharp. If a tardy arrival occurs more than three times per semester **there will be a \$25.00 charge for every subsequent late arrival.**

**In addition, students arriving after 10am without prior notice of valid cause to the office may not be accepted into the building after that time due to the significant disruption it causes to the classroom.**

**NOTIFYING THE SCHOOL OF ABSENCES OR LATE ARRIVALS:** The primary responsibility for notifying the school when a child is to be absent or tardy lies with the child’s parent/guardian. Therefore, it is the expectation of the School that a parent/guardian will notify the School by 9:00 am if a child is to be absent or arrive late to school on any given day. Any parent/guardian failing to notify the school of an absence or late arrival might be contacted by telephone at home or work to verify attendance. Parents may not leave the premises until the late-arriving child is completely inside the building under the care of MSCU staff. **Please refrain from entering any classrooms during school hours** without a planned visit agreed upon by the directress. Feel free to enjoy our observation windows at any time.

**TRUANCY:** A truant is defined as any child subjected to compulsory schooling and who is absent from school unexcused. Absences that are excused are determined by the school as defined above. A chronic or habitual truant is a school-age child who is absent without valid cause for 5% out of 180 consecutive days (9 days). If a child misses 9 days of school, the school is required to send a notice that the child must attend school without missing a day for the remainder of the school year. If after 3 notices, a student still misses days of school without valid cause, the family may be subject to penalties and possibly criminal charges imposed by the State of Illinois.

### School Closings

School closing will be announced via email and social media. An effort will be made to announce the closure through the school answering machine and MSCU website. We will strive to make this decision between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. at the latest.

If it should be necessary to close the school during the day, the announcement will be made through email and phone calls. Please be sure the school office has your correct contact information, as well as backup contact information for pick-up. During severe weather watches, when requested to, please pick up your child within 30 minutes. If there is a severe weather warning, we will shelter-in-place. Each classroom contains a bathroom without windows or exterior walls which can be used to take cover from storms or tornadoes.

## Your Child's First Days at School

### Adjustment to School

Adjustment is a gradual process. To help each child transition into a school environment, parents and teachers should consider factors like the child's age and previous experience away from family. We recommend a consistent daily schedule throughout the year and on-time arrival so that your child can participate in the beginning of class with classmates. This settling-in time promotes community spirit and provides for a more positive start to the day for your child and his/her classmates.

### Arriving On-Time

All MSCU classes start promptly. To avoid disrupting the class, please be sure your child is on time. By arriving late, your child is not only missing critical learning experiences, but will be taking away from the learning experience of others.

### Appropriate Attire

Children should wear clothing that they can easily manage by themselves. Clothing should not restrict movement or be overly elaborate because the children participate in art, water activities, and large motor activities every day. Please avoid sending your child wearing jewelry that can catch on equipment while engaged in various activities. Hair should be kept back out of eyes so that children always have a clear field of vision.

For safety, appropriate shoes include tennis shoes, buckle shoes or closed-toed shoes with a hard sole and heel strap. Slippers, flip-flops, clogs, heels, and crocs are not safe footwear indoors or outdoors. We have a ground made of wood chips on the playground to soften their falls, but pieces can get stuck in shoes with holes. Inappropriate footwear will be sent home with a note. These rules are also for sanitary reasons.

For elementary students in particular, please pack a pair of closed-toe, indoor shoes that they can easily take on and off independently. Please follow the guidelines above regarding appropriate footwear.

**Children need to be dressed appropriately for the weather.** If we find a child is not dressed appropriately to be safe outside, parents may be contacted and requested to bring a change of clothing, or the child may not be allowed to participate in certain activities. Children will need hats, snow boots, snow pants and waterproof gloves or mittens in the winter. Snow boots are not worn in the classroom; please send shoes for your child to wear on the days that boots are worn to school. In the summer, please refrain from sending children in clothing that will be too hot. Please look for clothing items that are easy for your child to take off and put on by himself or herself.

All children, including Elementary students, must have a complete change of clothing on hand. This clothing is for emergencies such as bathroom or other unforeseen accidents/learning experiences. Toddler and Primary students typically keep this clothing at school; Elementary students keep this clothing stored at school. Please be sure to replenish your child's extra clothing supply when items are

brought home for laundering. All clothing must be labeled, especially all outer garments.

Head coverings, except for religious and medical purposes, must not be worn inside by children or adults. Please confirm with a staff member whether the children have permission to wear a specific head covering. If a child comes to school with an unapproved head covering, MSCU staff may confiscate it until the end of the day and send a note home.

### Toileting

All Primary children and up must be toilet-trained before starting at the school. Wearing pull-ups, training pants or diapers will not be allowed. We understand that children may have occasional accidents, especially during nap time. However, children are not considered toilet-trained if they repeatedly have accidents several times per week. We provide child-sized toilets and sinks to promote independence. Children of Primary age and older who are enrolled in the school must be able to use the toilet independently. As noted above, we encourage you to choose clothing that is easy for your child to remove to facilitate this independence.

Children in the Toddler Program do not have to be toilet-trained prior to enrolling at the school. Toilet-training is part of the Toddler Program, and they will work on toilet training in their class along with other important life skills.

### Personal Belongings

Each child is provided with a coat hook in the classroom for personal belongings and a drawer for work papers. A backpack labeled with the child's name is needed for carrying things to and from school for the primary and toddler programs. At times, they might bring books, nature specimens, artifacts, or other educational items. Please confirm with the teacher whether a child has permission to have one of these items.

Children may not bring electronics, toys, notebooks, writing utensils, art supplies, etc. from home without the permission of their classroom's lead teacher. If they do not, the item may be confiscated until the end of the day and a note sent home. **These types of personal items should not be brought to school; the school is not responsible for lost items brought from home.**

## Montessori Materials

Learning materials should be treated with respect. They should not be misused or abused.

The Montessori materials in the classrooms are designed to be attractive to the children. Many works include small items such as tiny objects used in phonics, small pink cubes, counting stones, etc. Please check your child's pockets and backpacks for school materials that your child might take home. Some of these items are one-of-a-kind objects and cannot be replaced. If a child has taken something home by mistake, please send it back to School with your child as soon as possible. The child will **not be** scolded or embarrassed for the mistake.



## Nutrition

### *Primary and Toddler Programs*

Snacks are provided in the morning and in the afternoon in the Primary Building. **Please do not send snacks to school with your primary or toddler child.** Water and snack foods such as crackers and fresh fruit are provided. Parents may furnish simple fruit and/or vegetable snacks that come directly from the store for the entire class at any time, if arrangements are made ahead of time with the teacher. Our morning snack is not a substitute for a good breakfast. Learning occurs best when children are not hungry, so please provide your child with an appropriate breakfast at home each day.

Hot well-balanced lunches are provided for all children in the Toddler and Primary childcare programs. Lunch menus are posted on the foyer bulletin board and are available on the school's website.

### *Elementary Program*

Elementary families are invited to either purchase their students' lunches from the school or to bring their own lunches from home. Changing this decision during the year incurs a small fee, as the caterer requires numbers in advance. **Snacks are not provided for the elementary program, so each elementary student must bring a morning snack in a separate container with their name on it. Full day elementary students (enrolled until 5:30 pm each day) should bring two snacks each day, one for the morning and one for the late afternoon.** All snacks must be nut free.

Please remember that **NO TREE NUTS / PEANUTS OR TREE NUT/PEANUT PRODUCTS ARE ALLOWED IN PACKED SNACKS AND LUNCHES!** This includes, but is not limited to, snacks with peanuts, almonds, coconuts, filberts, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts, nut granola bars, noodle sauces that may contain peanuts, nut butters/spreads (Nutella, peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, etc.), almond milk, peanut flour, peanut oil, etc.

Help your student make healthy and balanced choices when packing their snacks and lunches. We do not allow chips, cookies, candy, or any other overly-sweet treats at school. Please have ongoing discussions at home about fresh produce, protein, and whole grains to help them feel full and give their body energy to last through the day.

All Elementary snacks and lunches brought from home must be nut-free and must not require any outside refrigeration or heating. Snacks should not require silverware.

### *General Considerations*

The school's food vendors offer several alternative diets for lunches, including the following: regular diet (allows meat, dairy, egg); vegetarian (allows dairy and egg); vegan (no animal products or by-products). All diets offer fresh fruit, vegetables, and whole grains appropriate for the diet.

Due to the challenges of keeping a safe environment for our younger children with severe food allergies, we do not allow Toddler or Primary children to bring their own snacks or lunches unless for medically documented reasons or for religious reasons. If your child has a medical or religious need to bring their own snacks/lunch you must get approval from the office first. Any snacks and lunches provided from home under special approval must be **completely tree nut, peanut, and fish/seafood-free**. We have students in many of our classes with severe food allergies, who have anaphylactic reactions to some of these common allergens.

Toddler/Primary families who receive special approval to bring lunches due to medical/religious need are responsible for ensuring that there is no potential cross-contamination with tree nuts, peanuts, or fish/seafood when preparing lunches as even trace residues can cause anaphylactic reactions for other students in the class. If these guidelines are neglected, MSCU does reserve the right to request an alternate lunch arrangement from the family, for the safety of our other young students.

With regard to snacks, if your Toddler/Primary child has a special diet that we cannot accommodate then the school policy is to have the family bring in a container of the non-perishable snack of their choice, to be stored in the classroom. These foods must be labeled with the child's name and the date that they are brought to School. This works out best because families can be assured that the snack given to the child is appropriate for his/her diet and staff do not have the stress of worrying about potential errors. We want to make sure we honor each family's needs to the extent possible. **If the item must be refrigerated, we are currently unable to store and provide it to your child.** For students who do not consume cow's milk, **soy milk can be provided.**

No gum, candy, cough drops, or throat lozenges are allowed at school.

### **Outdoor Play**

Primary and Elementary children will spend time outdoors **unless the temperature or wind-chill is below 15°F (including wind chill) or above 100°F (including heat index). All students are expected to go outdoors.** All sunscreen needs to be applied before school. If your child is enrolled in a Full Day Primary or Toddler program until 5:30pm and will need an additional application in the afternoon, send a labeled

bottle of sunscreen inside a Ziploc bag in your child's backpack and let your child's Aftercare teacher(s) know. Please note, sunscreen is NOT provided by the school during the school year and will only be applied according to the directions on the bottle.

For Elementary and Secondary students, please apply sunscreen on them before they arrive at school and send them with a hat and a sunscreen "stick" to keep in their locker to apply independently as needed.

Toddler children will go outdoors when the "feels like" temperature is above 20°F (including wind chill) degrees or below 100°F (including heat index).

If, for any reason, your child should not go outside, you may pick your child up early. If he/she needs to have some special clothing on before going outside, please make sure the child's teacher is notified in writing.

## Health & Hygiene

Children may not share clothing, accessories/jewelry, hair accessories, masks or food.

Children should brush their teeth at home — no toothbrushes or toothpaste at school.

**Due to the presence of other students who have severe food and contact allergies, please make sure your child's hands and mouth are washed thoroughly before coming to school.** Food residue on your child's hands or mouth can easily get on class materials and become a potential risk for students who may have severe allergies to that food.

## Resting/Napping

### *Toddler Program*

- For all toddlers, a naptime will be provided with a cot where they can rest quietly.
- Your child will be provided with a cot and a fitted sheet.
- The cots and fitted sheets will be sanitized regularly, and cots will be spaced apart within the classroom.
- Your child will not wear a mask when sleeping, even if they came to school wearing one. This is for their safety.
- If your child does not wish to take a nap on certain days, they may have some quiet rest time to recharge on their cot.

All Toddlers are expected to nap and typically grow accustomed to doing so in their classroom. If you suspect that your child cannot do this, they may surprise you! You can discuss this with their teacher and make arrangements to get the child early. We will not have any prepared activities for them at this time of the day other than to rest.

### *Primary Program*

A naptime **can** be provided with a cot where they can rest quietly in a dark nap room. A certain number of primary-aged children **whose families have requested it** will be given access to the space. If so,

- Your child will be provided with a cot and a fitted sheet.
- The cots and sheets will be sanitized regularly, and cots will be spaced apart.
- Your child will not wear a mask when sleeping, even if they came to school wearing one. This is for their safety.
- If your child does not wish to take a nap on certain days, they may have some quiet rest time to recharge on their cot.

If this becomes a challenge for the primary-aged child, we may suggest that the child be no longer designated a napper. This would mean that they would stay with peers in their original classroom and join in restful activities. The nap rooms are meant for sleep and quiet resting.

### **Birthdays and Seasonal Celebrations**

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at school. Parents may provide nutritious snacks and party napkins for the class for their child's birthday celebration. Some examples include fresh cut fruit such as strawberries or watermelon. More examples include apples, oranges, popcorn or veggies. Invitations for parties at home may not be distributed at school; the student directory will provide family contact information. Please do not send party favors, piñatas, balloons or treat bags to the school; if sent, they will not be distributed and will be sent back home. The Montessori approach to celebrations reflects calmness and predictability.

As noted in other places in this handbook, candy, cake, cupcakes, brownies, and other snacks with high sugar content will not be served for any occasion. **Please refrain from sending such items as they may not be distributed.** Only snacks that have been individually packaged may be shared in the classroom.

### **Trial Period**

All children are enrolled in the school on a trial basis to determine compatibility of the child and the program. **The trial period lasts up to eight weeks from the date the child starts at the school.** The school will notify parents in a timely manner of concerns of the directresses, staff, and administration regarding the child's adjustment, behavior, or progress in a particular classroom or program. The school will work with the family to attempt to resolve problems before a decision to terminate the child's enrollment is made. Please see the "Acceptance/Dismissal of a Child from MSCU Programs" section for more details.



## Health Matters

### Student Health Information

Per State of Illinois requirements, the school must have certain health exam information on file for your child, as follows:

**HEALTH EXAM REQUIREMENT:** Students in the following age levels must have a recent (within 1 year prior to child's start date), complete physical exam with up-to-date immunizations on file with the office: Any student in any grade who is entering IL schools for the first time, as well as toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarteners, and students in Grade 6. **Students must be excluded from school by October 15th of the school year if requirements for health examinations and immunizations have not been met.** The health exam results must be submitted on the official State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination form, with the Health History section of the form completed and signed by a parent/guardian. **An immunization record alone or a sports physical is not sufficient.**

**EYE EXAM REQUIREMENT:** Students in the following age levels must have a recent (within 1 year prior to child's start date) eye exam on file with the office: Any student in grades K-8 who is entering IL schools for the first time, as well as **all kindergarteners**. Complete documentation should be submitted to the office no later than October 15th of the school year. Progress reports may be withheld until the eye exam or an approved waiver has been submitted if it has not been submitted by this date. Please note that this exam is NOT the same as the annual vision screenings provided in Illinois schools; it must be performed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist.

**DENTAL EXAM REQUIREMENT:** Students in the following age levels must have a recent (within 18 months prior to child's start date) dental exam on file with the office: **All kindergarteners, 2nd graders, and 6th graders.** Complete documentation should be submitted to the office no later than May 15th. Progress reports may be withheld until the dental exam, or an approved waiver has been submitted if it has not been submitted by this date.

### Accidents and Medical Emergencies

Minor accidents are handled by staff members using basic first aid techniques. Written accident reports are given to parents at the end of the day. The school does not administer medications or ointments as first aid treatment. On some occasions, we may find it reasonable to reach out to parents and let them know in advance of the end-of-day what is on this accident report form and what is being done.

If a child is involved in a major accident or medical emergency, every attempt will be made to contact parents. If such attempts fail, the child, with his/her school folder will be transported to a healthcare facility. The child will be accompanied by a staff member who will remain with the child until a parent or guardian arrives.

## Student Accident Insurance

The school carries a student accident insurance policy that provides coverage for students in the event of accidental injury while they are participating in or attending regularly scheduled School activities and during travel to and from regularly scheduled School activities, such as field trips.

## Allergies and Asthma

Parents must fill out the emergency information requested by the enrollment form at the start of each new school year. If allergies or asthma are life-threatening or severe, parents must fill out an Allergy or Asthma Action Plan available online and in the main office. This form must be returned to school prior to the first day of class, along with any medication required by the child's situation (e.g., Epi-pens, antihistamines, inhalers, etc.). Families who wish to self-carry Epi-pens and/or inhalers due to their medical situation may reach out to the office to submit proper forms to authorize self-carry of these emergency medications. Personal Epi-pens can be kept safely on-hand in the office alongside their action plan and will be carried by the teacher when going on field trips away from the school building.

**Due to peanut and nut allergies, do not bring any food into our buildings that contains nuts or peanuts, or seafood.** Oily nut residue is easily spread from hand to hand, and around school surfaces such as lunch tables and educational materials. This policy is designed to minimize the risk of severe allergic reactions, to prepare faculty and staff to deal with allergy emergencies, and to minimize anxiety on the part of all students, faculty, and staff around the issue of food allergies. Specific measures include:

- a) No tree nuts/peanuts, tree nut/peanut products, or seafood/seafood products are knowingly served by the school.
- b) Children are instructed not to share food.
- c) Hand washing before and after meals and snacks is part of the daily routine
- d) Tables will be washed after snacks and meals. This is the teachers' responsibility in classrooms or any other schoolroom where food is eaten.
- e) Parents of children with life-threatening allergies must provide the school with a written medical treatment protocol for their child, as well as any emergency medication prescribed by the doctor.

Parents of children with severe allergies are made aware of policies and protocols. A copy of our Allergy Action plan is available in the front office. Staff are trained to recognize and treat severe food allergies.

## Seizures and Epilepsy

Under the Seizure Smart School Act (IL Public Act 101-0050), all staff complete seizure recognition and first-aid response training. Parents must fill out the emergency information requested by the enrollment form at the start of each new school year. Parents must also fill out a Seizure Action Plan to have on file

at school, which is available online. This form must be returned to school prior to the first day of class, along with any medication required by the child's situation.

### General Illness

**SICK CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL.** Please keep your child at home if he/she is feverish, coming down with an illness, or otherwise not feeling well. Your child should NOT come to school if he/she has:

- Vomited within the last 24 hours
- Had diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Had a fever of 100°F or higher within the last 24 hours
- Pink/red inflamed/matted eyes
- Displayed any signs of illness or feel warm/feverish to the touch
- **Tested positive for COVID-19**

If your child has been diagnosed as having a virus or other contagious illness, please keep him/her at home and call the school office immediately.

Notice of Contagious Illness will be sent via email to the classroom(s) involved. Please email [schoolmanager@montessorischoolofcu.org](mailto:schoolmanager@montessorischoolofcu.org) immediately if your child is diagnosed with COVID-19, strep, chicken pox, lice, or other contagious illness so we may determine appropriate next steps and notify the community and the public health department as needed.

**Children sent home with symptoms of contagious illness must miss the following school day** unless it is a Monday to Friday.

**After missing that following school day, children may NOT return to school unless they meet the following criteria:**

- **No fever** (without the use of fever reducing medicine) for 24 hours
- **No diarrhea** (without the use of antidiarrheal medicine) for 24 hours
- **No vomiting** for 24 hours
- **No other symptoms of contagious illness** for 24 hours
- If diagnosed with a bacterial infection, children should remain at home for 24 hours after beginning antibiotics

If your child becomes ill at school, s/he will be immediately isolated in the infirmary area for the building where staff will take his/her temperature and assess the nature and severity of the illness. Parents may be contacted to pick up sick children with temperatures of 100°F or higher, symptoms of contagious illness, or symptoms of more extreme discomfort, and will be expected to come immediately. **If the parent cannot be reached or cannot come pick up the child within 30 minutes of being contacted, the School will reach out to the family's emergency contacts to come pick up the child.** Please make sure you have authorized persons who are able to pick up your sick child within 30 minutes if your plans prevent you from doing so. Longer-term illness will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

### Specific Contagious Illnesses Common to School Settings

<p><b>COVID-19</b></p>	<p>If your child is tested for suspected COVID-19, please keep them at home until you are notified that the results are negative or until they are symptom-free for over 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing or antidiarrheal meds).</p>
<p><b>Strep throat</b></p>	<p>If your child is tested for suspected strep throat, please keep him/her at home until you are notified that the results are negative or until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.</p>
<p><b>Chicken pox</b></p>	<p>Chicken pox is a highly-contagious airborne virus. Children are most contagious 1 to 2 days before the rash appears and may have mild symptoms like low grade fever, loss of appetite, fussiness, chills, and headaches. Children continue to be contagious while the blisters are erupting. Children must stay home until all the blisters have crusted over and no new blisters have appeared within the last 24 hours.</p> <p>According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the chicken pox vaccine is only 70% to 90% effective in preventing chicken pox. If vaccinated children do get chicken pox, they generally have a much milder form of the disease. However, even vaccinated children with a mild case of chicken pox can still infect others and <b>MUST</b> remain home until the rash has fully crusted.</p>
<p><b>Lice</b></p>	<p><b>MSCU has a no-lice, no-nits policy.</b> The school understands that though head lice is not harmful, it is time consuming, expensive, and can be stressful to treat; out of consideration for the rest of the school community, if you find your children have a case of head lice, please begin treatment immediately and contact our office right away to let us know. If lice/nits are found on your child at school, you will be asked to take your child home immediately to begin treatment.</p> <p>The school recommends Nix (chemical) or Cetaphil (non-chemical) cream rinse methods; however, some strains of head lice are now resistant to the common treatments. Some treatments are prescriptions and can only be obtained through your physician. In case it is helpful, here are a couple of links about lice treatment:</p>

<https://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/lice-treatment>  
<http://health-faq.com/family-health/how-to-treat-head-lice-with-cetaphil/>

**Please remember that treating for lice will include a variety of ongoing measures beyond the first scalp treatment, including:**

- Daily laundering of all items children have come into close contact with in hot water and drying on high heat (especially bed linens, jackets, backpacks, etc.)
- Bagging all stuffed animals and non-washable pillows for several weeks
- Vacuuming out the car and furniture
- **Continually checking children daily and re-treating the scalp at about the 7 day mark to kill any nits that may have hatched since the first treatment; it is recommended that all family members undergo the second treatment at the 7-day mark to be thorough.**

Lice can be very persistent, and it only takes one missed louse to start the cycle all over again; please be sure to give your scalp treatment of choice enough time to work, attend to the environment, and don't rush the process. **Students may return when there are no live lice OR nits in their hair or personal items.** Children must be checked by office staff on the morning of their return date prior to returning to the classroom; parents must notify the office of the expected return date at least 12 hours in advance so we can have someone on hand to check your child prior to returning to the classroom.

Please help us minimize the possibility of lice outbreaks at school by encouraging your children to avoid head-to-head contact when playing with others, as well as encouraging them to not share hair accessories such as hats, hairbands, etc. If your children have long hair, please consider having them put it back in a ponytail, tight braids, or bun if a lice case is reported at school or if your own child experiences a case of lice.

	If you need help in identifying head lice, consult our office or your doctor.
<b>Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)</b>	Children with pink eye or conjunctivitis should be kept at home until 24 hours after an antibiotic is started.
<b>Any bacterial infection</b>	Children should remain at home for 24 hours after beginning antibiotics for bacterial infections.

**Medication**

Since MSCU does not have a school nurse, if your child needs OTC medication administered throughout the day while on campus, a parent/guardian will need to come and administer it to the child at the appropriate time.

In the case of those who require specialized medical attention based off an **Emergency Action Plan**:

If a child must take medication during the school day that is prescribed by a doctor and is necessary for the critical health and well-being of the student, (e.g., Epi-Pen, diabetes medication, seizure medication, etc.), please fill out the appropriate form (Emergency Action Plan) to authorize the staff to administer medication.

All prescription medications must be in the original containers and must bear labels with the child's name, doctor's name, and directions for dosage. Non-prescription medication must be in the original containers and have labels with the child's name and directions for dosage. The school will not administer aspirin or aspirin substitutes unless it is necessary for the critical health and well-being of the child and a physician's prescription is on file.

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the appropriate school personnel if there are any changes in the child's health or a change in medication.

**IN ALL CASES THE SCHOOL RETAINS THE DISCRETION TO REFUSE TO ADMINISTER MEDICINE.**

**Child Abuse and Neglect**

Staff members are mandated reporters legally required by the State of Illinois to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services. The Child Protection Act 1999 (PDF) requires certain professionals, referred to as 'mandatory reporters', to make a report to Child Safety, if they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them. Mandatory reporters should also report to Child Safety a reasonable suspicion that a child is in need of protection caused by any other form of abuse or neglect.

## Suspected Drug Use

MSCU does not allow alcohol, smoking, cannabis, vaping, or use of other drugs on school property. If a student is suspected to be in possession of or under the influence, a meeting between the family and the MSCU Head of School will be scheduled immediately to discuss consequences.

## Campus Safety Policies

We are very mindful of the need to keep our children safe while they are at school. As a result, the following policies have been put into place.

### Building Security

All doors will remain locked at all times. **At all times, MSCU reserves the right to request photo I.D. of anyone wishing to enter either the Primary or the Elementary Building, as well as to refuse entrance to unauthorized persons on campus.**

### General Building Safety

Children are not allowed in any part of the building or any part of the grounds unattended by an adult except in restrooms. Please do NOT leave your child unattended on any part of the campus grounds, including the circle drives while entering/exiting your car, the sidewalk, and the street in front of school.

Children may not open entrance/exit doors on their own; only adults should open/close these doors at any time. Please do not allow children to run ahead of supervisory adults unattended. **Toddler and Primary children should not go out the front door alone; they should hold an adult's hands when walking through the driveway or parking lots. While older, Elementary and Secondary children should still not run ahead of supervisory adults.**

Toddler and Primary children are not allowed to enter or exit the building without an adult. **For safety reasons, children and non-staff members may not open doors for other children or adults to enter, even if they recognize them.** Do not hold or prop the doors open for other families without the assistance of a staff member. Children should not have access to key fobs, key codes, or keys. Doors should only be opened by authorized adults (i.e. staff).

Children and adults must always walk on sidewalks, decks, driveways, parking lots, stairs and indoors. Please use your "slow walking feet." Trees, fences, tables, shelves, and other furniture should not be climbed.

## Weapons Policy

MSCU is committed to ensuring the safety of its employees, students and families, visitors, and the public. **MSCU policy prohibits the possession of weapons on MSCU property.** MSCU property is defined as, but not limited to MSCU facilities, vehicles and equipment and facilities that have been reserved by MSCU.

Gunplay and other excessively violent "pretend" play is not allowed at School. Remind children that pretending to kill each other or imaginary living things is not peaceful. It is not safe at school and does not create a peaceful classroom. Students are not allowed to bring in real or pretend weapons in any situation or circumstance.

Note: Please reference MSCU Weapons Policy, Appendix A, for additional information.

## Photo/Video/Social Media Privacy Policy

**PHOTOS & VIDEOS:** Families are welcome to observe through the observation windows of our classrooms at any time, but are NOT ALLOWED TO PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD VIDEO through the windows as it is a potential violation of privacy for other families whose children may be in the background. If you are in the classroom for a special occasion involving your child (e.g., birthday celebration), you may ask the teacher for permission to photograph only your own child (no other children may be in the background of the photo or video). Please do not post any photos, videos, or other media taken on campus that include other children or students in the image/video on any form of social media. We apologize for the inconvenience, but this is done to respect the privacy of all of our families.

A "safe photo" spot that is an exception to the rule of no photography/videography on campus is the "Montessori Tree" sign outside the Primary Building. You may post photos taken there, provided that NO OTHER STUDENTS OR FAMILIES APPEAR IN THE BACKGROUND.

The school does maintain a presence on social media, and it is appropriate to "share" photos posted by the school with others via social media, as all permissions have already been granted by families on any photos/video posted by the school. Thank you for supporting our efforts to keep our children safe on social media!

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. Please note that this policy does not deal with access to anything owned/operated by the school; the school can still regulate its own equipment, monitor internet traffic, block social media sites with a firewall, etc.

## Internet Access

Classroom internet access via school desktop computers is limited, monitored, and protected.

## Cell Phone and Electronics Usage

Personal electronics are not allowed in the Toddler or Primary programs.



For Elementary and Secondary students, personal electronics seen outside of backpacks anywhere on campus (including all indoor and outdoor spaces) during school hours will be confiscated by teachers/staff, whether they are in use or not, unless the teacher has requested the student bring the electronic for schoolwork purposes.

If a student has permission from their teacher to bring a personal electronic for schoolwork purposes but is found using it for non-school purposes or during non-instructional time, the item may still be confiscated by teachers/staff. In the event that a student refuses to give up their personal electronic item that is being confiscated, parents will immediately be asked to come pick up their child for the day and a meeting will be scheduled with the Head of School to discuss further consequences.

Head teachers will assume responsibility for securing a confiscated item until a parent has been contacted to pick the item up from school. Parents/guardians will be notified and, along with their student, will need to meet with the Head of School to retrieve the item.

The school cannot assume liability for any damage or loss pertaining to cell phones or other personal electronic items.

### Leaving Campus

Children will only be released to a parent or guardian or those persons authorized in writing by the parent or guardian. Please indicate upon enrollment those people who will be picking up your child on a regular basis. **We will not release a child to an unauthorized adult.** Please contact the office if you would like to give permission to friends or family members who would like to visit/observe at the school prior to their arrival and provide their names. If we do not recognize an adult during pick-up, we will ask to see their ID and check to make sure they are authorized in writing to pick up your child.

Do not prop doors open during business hours – this is a safety issue for our students.

If you need to make special arrangements, please send a note or email to school that day stating the name of the person who will pick up your child. The school will request photo identification.

### Personal Information and Records

Personal information regarding students and their families is confidential and will only be released to others outside the school with written consent from the parents.

### Emergency Procedures

In accordance with Illinois State Board of Education requirements, MSCU practices a minimum of three fire evacuations, one shelter-in-place weather drill, and one law enforcement drill. The Savoy Fire Department inspects the buildings and observes a practice fire drill each October.

In the event of an actual emergency, the school has designated safe places to which we may evacuate. We do not publish these locations due to safety concerns; if an evacuation occurs, you will be contacted by the school and/or by local authorities as soon as safely possible.

### Severe Weather

MSCU does not allow outdoor activities or outdoor recess to continue when there are thunder or lightning storms. Students are taught to take shelter in designated areas of each building in the event of a weather emergency.

## Parent Involvement at School

### Parent Education

All parents whose children are enrolled in the school are expected to become familiar with the Montessori Method by reading, visiting the school, attending open houses, and more. A child will benefit more if the Montessori approach is carried beyond their hours at the school. Parents of children in their first year at the school are expected to attend at least one of any parent education meetings offered by the school over the course of the year.

### Visitor & Observation Policy

We encourage parents/guardians to observe our classrooms in order to enjoy watching the joy and growth that a Montessori education brings to children. The best time to observe is between 9:00-11:00 am. Please view through the observation windows.

Parents are always welcome to observe Primary and Toddler classrooms through the one-way viewing windows at any time when the hallway lights are off. This affords parents the opportunity to see their children at work and at play throughout the day. Please be aware that we may ask visitors to provide I.D. if we do not recognize them. If the hallway lights are on, please refrain from observing at the windows as it may prove to be disruptive for students in the class.

If you would like to observe at the Elementary, please make an appointment with your child's teacher. The teacher will provide guidelines for your visit that will help minimize any potential class disruption and that will help maximize your observation experience. We recommend periodic viewing times of up to twenty minutes. It can be distracting and may hinder your child's sense of independence if your child knows you are present in the building. If you have a concern regarding how your child is doing, you may call the office at any point during the day.

We understand that extended family and/or friends may wish to come visit the school and observe your child in the classroom, or see the school. Visits must either be scheduled with the office through the parents/guardian(s) ahead of time or the parent/guardian(s) must be physically present with the visitor(s). **NO PHOTO/VIDEO ALLOWED. All visitors must check in at the main office before proceeding into the School. MSCU reserves the right to ask unauthorized visitors to leave the campus."**

### Communication with Teachers and Board

Communication with teachers may take many different forms, including:

- Parent-Teacher Conferences (formal/informal)
- Written notices

- Phone calls
- Progress reports
- Email
- Social media
- Weekly flyer via email
- Website

There are typically a minimum of two formal parent-teacher conferences with each child's Montessori directress during the year with an additional touchpoint mid-year. The conference is a time for parents and teachers to talk together about the child and his/her development. Conferences do not need to be limited to these two times a year; they can be scheduled at other times at the request of a parent or a teacher. Flyers and newsletters are emailed on a regular basis to keep parents informed of current and upcoming events in the school and in the classroom. Board of Directors meetings are held quarterly and are open to all families.

### Expected Volunteerism

An important aspect of MSCU is the involvement of parents. Parents are expected to spend time during the year volunteering for the school. Some typical opportunities include making learning materials, caring for the building and grounds, providing refreshments for school functions, listening to young readers in the classrooms (following a training session), helping in the school office and library, chaperoning field trips, serving as a tutor, or serving as a member of the school's Board of Directors. There are also several committees run by the school board that always need helpful volunteers. Parents are also often excellent resources for units of study in the classroom.

As a non-profit, parent-operated school, we rely heavily on the participation and skills of parents/guardians. Whatever your expertise or background, your contribution can expand the learning experiences for children. When volunteering to work with children, a trained MSCU staffer will be in the room at all times.

### Chaperoning for Field Trips

Occasionally, classes go on field trips. Sometimes parents are needed to help chaperone a field trip. Bus seats are limited; a limited number of chaperones will be allowed. Not all field trips will require chaperones; if chaperones are needed, a request will go out to families accordingly.

### Guidelines for Bringing Special Classroom Snacks

Occasionally the opportunity arises for families to share special classroom snacks with their child's class. For general class celebrations, such as birthday celebrations, we request that families bring in only fresh fruits and/or vegetables. **We do not accept brownies, cupcakes, frosted cookies, cakes, candy, or other overly sweet treats due to health concerns.** Fruit trays or other pre-prepared fruit from the store are ideal.

If bringing fresh, unprepared fruit, please bring it to the school still in its packaging from the store. Staff will wash and prepare the fruit/vegetables in our school kitchen to minimize the chance of cross - contamination with potential allergens in home kitchens. Please try to bring fruits/vegetables that require a minimum of preparation to be served.

If bringing a culturally-significant special snack to share with students, the snack MUST be store-bought with a wrapper that clearly states the ingredient list. This is to minimize the potential for students with severe allergies to accidentally consume a snack with ingredients they are supposed to avoid.

**ALL special snacks brought from home to share with the class must come individually pre-packaged or packaged directly from the store with prior- approval from staff at MSCU.**

**Because we have students who have severe and sometimes life-threatening allergies, please do NOT send ANY snacks that contain nuts or foods that were processed in a facility that processes nuts. NO NUTS OR NUT PRODUCTS ARE ALLOWED!** This means no hazelnut spreads or filling (e.g., Nutella), almond milk, cashews, nut granola bars, noodle sauces that may contain peanuts, etc. If in doubt – fruit is best!

MSCU reserves the right to decline to serve any food that we deem may not be safe or appropriate for all students.

### Birthdays and Seasonal Celebrations

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at the school. Parents may provide fresh fruit/vegetables and party napkins for the class for their child's birthday celebration and for seasonal celebrations. As noted above, candy, cake, cupcakes, brownies, and other snacks with high sugar content will not be served. Invitations for parties at home are not distributed at school; you may request a class list by an email to the school secretary. The student directory will provide family contact information. **Please do not send party favors, piñatas, balloons or treat bags to the school. The Montessori approach to celebrations reflects calmness and predictability.** They will receive a ribbon to wear and there is a beautiful ceremony.

## Financial Obligations

### Tuition Agreement

All parents are required to sign a tuition agreement. The agreement, which must be signed by either parents or the custodial parent and returned to the school office, obligates the parents to pay the tuition monthly in the amount specified. Parents are encouraged to read the agreement carefully and to ask questions regarding anything that is unclear before signing.

Please refer to your tuition agreement for your tuition rate and dates of payments due. The school sends invoices once a month from the Business Manager email account. Tuition payments are due two months in advance. Another way of saying that is that **the updated tuition payment schedule is June 1st through March 1st**. The total tuition is calculated based on the program(s) that the child is enrolled in, and the total for the year is divided into 10 equal payments for their convenience; it is not prorated based on dates or hours attended. **Payments not made by the 10th of each month will be subject to \$25.00 late fee unless special arrangements have been made.**

Any discounts (sibling, scholarships, or staff) and program costs are contingent upon the family fulfilling the conditions necessary to obtain those discounts. If the family situation changes such that those conditions are no longer fulfilled, the tuition agreement will need to be replaced with a new tuition agreement which reflects the family's new situation. For example, if a family is receiving a sibling discount with two concurrently enrolled siblings, and then decides to move one of those siblings to another school, the remaining student can no longer receive a sibling discount; the tuition agreement must be replaced with a new tuition agreement that specifies the full cost of tuition going forward.

When appropriate, you may receive additional invoices that are not part of your Tuition Agreement; these charges may be for extracurricular activities, late fees, or field trips for which you agree to in advance.

### Early/Late Charges

As mentioned earlier, please respect our staff by not dropping off your children earlier than their program's start time or picking them up later than their program ends. MSCU reserves the right to ask parents to wait until their assigned drop-off time for children who arrive too early, or to charge late pickup fees for children who are picked up later than their scheduled pickup window. Late charges begin five minutes after your scheduled time window ends. If your car is already in the car line during your pickup window, you do not need to worry about late charges. The charge is a flat rate of **\$10.00**. **For each additional minute there will be a \$5.00 per minute charge.**

In case of emergency, the office must be notified to avoid the late charges.

## Community Expectations for Behavior

### Montessori Expectations

Children and adults are expected to respect each other's concentration by using an indoor voice and walking feet and by minimizing all other disruptions (i.e. "If you see your classmate is busy working, wait to ask them about their weekend until lunch time").

The Montessori concept of discipline is that of inner-discipline. This inner-discipline comes from the child's interest in working with Montessori materials and established ground rules that are consistently and fairly enforced. These are guidelines that guarantee the freedom of and respect the rights of all the group members. By knowing limits, the child can modify his/her behavior to discipline himself/herself. Encouragement, positive reinforcement, and natural and logical consequences are used to help the child learn self-discipline.

Fighting and/or bullying by students or adults will not be tolerated. Above all, children and adults should strive to show respect towards all living creatures and plants, the materials and environment, and each other.

### Interventions and Response to Inappropriate Behavior

We use consistency with rules, recognizing appropriate behavior, re-stating expectations or ground rules, redirection, and brief cool down periods as part of our approach to discipline. Punishments are not given. However, there are natural consequences to certain behaviors. For most unwanted behaviors, children will be given a warning before a natural consequence is enforced. If consistent unwanted behaviors continue, a Directress may request a meeting with the family. We do not use corporal punishment.

Individual conferences and on-going open communication between parents and staff will address discipline problems that might occur, and staff members will work with parents on a plan for resolution. **Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates inability to benefit from the type of program that the Montessori School offers or whose presence is detrimental to the group, will be dismissed from the school. These problems do not include those adjustment and developmental problems that fit within reasonable bounds.**

### Anti-Bullying/Harassment/Sexual Misconduct/Discrimination Policy

Harassment and bullying of students and school personnel, as well as sexual misconduct and discrimination in general, are against federal, state, and local policy, and are not tolerated by the MSCU board or MSCU Society in the school or school district. The anti-bullying/harassment/sexual misconduct/discrimination policy is in effect while students, parents, or school personnel are on property; within the jurisdiction of the board; while on school-owned or school-operated vehicles; while

attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school.

**“Bullying”** includes written, verbal, electronic or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of

- (a) one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs, services, activities, or privileges provided by the school by placing the student (or students) in reasonable fear of physical, psychological, or emotional harm.
- (b) one or more of school personnel\*/parents to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs, services, activities, or privileges provided by the school by placing the school personnel/parents in reasonable fear of physical, psychological, or emotional harm.

*\* “School personnel” include persons employed by, on contract with, or who volunteer in the school as well as the board members.*

Bullying, as defined in this subsection, may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: cyber-bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

**“Cyber-bullying”** means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation 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 system, photoelectronic system, or photooptical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. This includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. This also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

**“Harassment”** means written, verbal, electronic or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of

- (a) one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs, services, activities, or privileges provided by the school because the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive.
- (b) one or more school personnel/parents to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs, services, activities, or privileges provided by the school because the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive.

Harassment and bullying may include, but are not limited to, the following behaviors and circumstances:

- Verbal, non-verbal, physical, electronic, or written harassment, bullying, hazing, or other victimization that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, property, etc. that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student that have the purpose or effect of causing injury, discomfort, fear, or suffering to the victim; and/or
- Unreasonable interference with a student's or school personnel's performance or creation of an intimidating, offensive, or hostile learning environment.
- Sexual harassment: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, electronic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:



- Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education or benefits or a school's personnel employment;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct by a school personnel is used as the basis for decisions affecting that person; or
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance or school's personnel by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

In situations between students and school personnel who have direct contact with students, bullying and harassment may also include the following behaviors:

- Requiring that a student submit to bullying or harassment by another student, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of the targeted student's education or participation in school programs or activities; and/or
- Requiring submission to or rejection of such conduct as a basis for decisions affecting the student.

**“Sexual Misconduct”** includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) **Sexual Contact** includes any non-consensual sexual contact that is:
- intentional sexual touching
  - Intentional contact with the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals, or touching another with any of these body parts, or making another touch you or themselves with or on any of these body part
  - Any other intentional bodily contact in a sexual manner
    - however slight
    - with any object
    - by an individual or group upon an individual or group
    - that is without consent and/or by force
- (b) **Sexual Assault** is non-consensual sexual intercourse.
- Any sexual intercourse
  - Vaginal, anal, or oral penetration
  - By a penis, object, tongue or finger, and copulation (mouth to genital contact)
  - No matter how slight the penetration or contact 2
    - However slight
    - With an object
    - by an individual or group upon an individual or group
    - that is without consent and/or by force
- (c) **Sexual Exploitation** occurs when one person takes non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for his/her own advantage or benefit or to benefit or advantage anyone other than the one being exploited, and that behavior does not otherwise constitute one of the other sexual misconduct offenses. Examples of sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to: Prostituting another student; Nonconsensual video or audio-taping or photographing of nudity or sexual activity; Unauthorized posting or distribution of materials involving the sexual activity or nudity of another person(s), electronic or otherwise; Going beyond the boundaries of consent (such as voyeurism or secretly watching others); Intentionally or recklessly exposing one's genitals in nonconsensual circumstances; Tampering with birth control or condoms; Knowingly transmitting a sexually transmitted infection or HIV to another student.

**“Discrimination”** means “the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics including, but not limited to, race, gender, age, religion, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation.

**“Electronic”** means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, page service, cell phones, electronic text messaging or similar technologies.

The board prohibits harassment, bullying, hazing, sexual misconduct, or any other victimization, of students, and school personnel, for example based on any of the following actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the abovementioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived.

### Reporting Bullying/Harassment/Sexual Misconduct/Discrimination

Any person who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, and/or discrimination under this policy to a school official, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to the person's participation in any administrative, judicial, or other proceeding relating to the report. Individuals who knowingly file a false complaint may be subject to appropriate disciplinary or legal action.

Retaliation against any person, because the person has filed a bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, or discrimination complaint or assisted or participated in a related investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. Individuals who knowingly file false complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline or legal action by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy.

- Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment.
- Any parent, school volunteer, or board member found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds and termination from the Board of Directors.

### Violating Bullying/Harassment/Sexual Misconduct/Discrimination Policy

The MSCU school will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment implementing the following procedure:

#### *Peer Misconduct*

- If there is an allegation of any of the above kinds of misconduct between peers, it should be promptly reported to the director/directress at which time, the director/directress will notify the administrator. Documentation shall be made in said student's file.
- Within 7 days, the victim's parents, with the victim, shall meet with the director/directress and, if appropriate, the administrator regarding the incident(s).
- Within the next 7 days, the director or directress shall request a meeting with the perpetrating child and their parents to discuss the incidents and potential consequences including suspension or expulsion, if appropriate.

- The director/directress shall work on an action plan and communicate it with both parents and children, to facilitate a peaceful relationship between the children.
- Disciplinary actions for bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct may include, but are not limited to: warnings; counseling; loss of opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, school social events or graduation exercises; loss of school bus transportation; community service; in-school suspension; short term suspension; or transfer to another school among others. The specific consequences should be consistent, reasonable, fair, age-appropriate and match the severity of the incident.
- If necessary, counseling will be provided for the target and/or the student perpetrating the misconduct.

#### *Adult to Student Misconduct*

- If a student believes s/he has been on the receiving end of any of the above types of misconduct by an adult, either the student or their family should report it to the Administrator or any other trusted adult school personnel, absent a conflict.
- If after an investigation a school personnel is found to be in violation of this policy, the school personnel shall be disciplined by appropriate measures up to, and including, termination.
- Documentation shall be made in all personnel files.

#### *Adult to Adult or Student to Adult Misconduct*

- If a staff or other MSCU community member (including parents, volunteers, Board members, or Administrator) believes he or she has been on the receiving end of any of the above types of misconduct, they will report it to the Administrator.
- If after an investigation a school personnel is found to be in violation of this policy, the school personnel shall be disciplined by appropriate measures up to, and including, termination.
- Documentation shall be made in all personnel files.

## Dismissal of a Child from MCSU Programs

### School Action

**Step 1:** If a problem arises with a child that may warrant dismissal, the child's Directress notifies the Head of School of the existence of the problem in writing. The notice is dated and placed in the child's file. Children's files, it should be noted, are open to the parents of that child at any time but are closed and confidential to all other persons. Written parental permission must be obtained before information in a child's file may be copied or passed on to anyone outside the administrative staff of the Montessori School.

**Step 2:** Concurrently with Step #1, the Directress arranges a conference with the parents involved to discuss the problem and to seek means of solving it. Parents will be made aware of this dismissal policy now. A record of the meeting and any resolutions should be prepared by the directress and submitted to the Head of School to read and place in the child's file.

**Step 3:** The Directress shall call another meeting after a reasonable period if no progress has been made. This meeting is to include the Head of School, the Directress, and the parents. The Directress and the Head of School shall recommend new steps to be taken, such as, Directress-specified parent involvement other than has been attempted before, consultation with professional counselors and/or disabilities screening, a complete physical examination, etc. In cases where the parents have followed the suggestions of the Head of School and the Directress but no apparent progress has been made after a reasonable period, or in cases where the parents refuse to meet with the Directress and the Head of School as specified in Steps 2 and 3, or refuse to follow the recommendations of these staff members, then the School shall have the right to dismiss a child and terminate the Tuition Agreement at any time by decision of the Head of School (after consulting with the student's Directress) in their sole discretion. The parent/guardians will be given advance notice of the decision of dismissal. Families with concerns regarding this process or execution of this process may request a meeting with the Head of School, Director/Directress, and Board Executive Committee by contacting a member of the Board Executive Committee

## Sources: Community Expectations for Behavior; Dismissal of a Child from MSCU Programs

Illinois Association of School Boards. ISBE Bullying Policy Requirements. (PDF).

<https://www.iasb.com/law/ISBEBullyingPolicyRequirements.pdf>;

Legal Information Institute. (n.d.). *29 CFR § 1604.11 - sexual harassment*. Legal Information Institute.

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/29/1604.11>

Mt. Pleasant Schools Harassment Policy 103. (PDF). [http://www.mt-](http://www.mt-pleasant.k12.ia.us/files/4413/5949/8634/Harassment_Policy_103.pdf)

[pleasant.k12.ia.us/files/4413/5949/8634/Harassment\\_Policy\\_103.pdf](http://www.mt-pleasant.k12.ia.us/files/4413/5949/8634/Harassment_Policy_103.pdf)

New School Harassment Discrimination Title IX Policy. (PDF). [https://www.newschool.edu/student-](https://www.newschool.edu/student-conduct/sexual-misconduct-policy/)

[conduct/sexual-misconduct-policy/](https://www.newschool.edu/student-conduct/sexual-misconduct-policy/)

## Appendix A: WEAPONS POLICY ON SCHOOL PREMISES

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff, and the public.

### II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

No student or non-student, including staff, and visitors, shall possess, use, or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in this policy. The MSCU School will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer, or member of the public who violates this policy.

### III. DEFINITION

#### *A. "Weapon"*

A "weapon" means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or which through its use can threaten or produce bodily harm or which may inflict self-injury. This may include, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; air guns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; num-chuks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.

No person shall possess, use, or distribute any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or non-functional, such as look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.

No person shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e., lasers, laser pointers, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.), to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

#### *B. "School Location"*

The "School Location" includes the school building or grounds MSCU School, whether rented, leased, owned, or controlled by the school. Included are locations of school activities or trips; bus stops; school buses or school vehicles; school contracted vehicles; and the area of entrance or departure from school premises or events; all locations where school-related functions are conducted; and anywhere students are under the authority of MSCU School.

#### *C. "Possession"*

"Possession" means having a weapon on one's person or in an area subject to one's control in a school location.

#### *D. "Full day suspension"*

"Full day suspension" means at least a complete day out of school. Suspension will be immediate after processing and the full day of suspension will begin at the start of the following school day.

### IV. EXCEPTIONS

#### *A. Instructional Equipment/Tools*

While MSCU School takes a firm "Zero Tolerance" position on the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students, and a similar position with regard to non-students, it is not the intent for this position to interfere with instruction or the use of appropriate equipment and tools by students or non-students. Such equipment and tools, when properly possessed, used, and stored, shall not be in violation of the rule against the possession, use or distribution of weapons. However, if authorized instructional and work equipment and tools are used in a dangerous or threatening manner, such possession and use is the possession and use of a weapon.

#### *B. Police or Military Personnel*

It shall not be a violation of this policy if licensed peace officers or military personnel who are performing official duties have a weapon on school premises.

#### *C. Firearms in School Parking Lots and Parking Facilities*

A school district may not prohibit the lawful carry or possession of firearms in a school parking lot or parking facility. For purposes of this policy, the "lawful" carry or possession of a firearm in a school parking lot or parking facility is specifically limited to non-student permit-holders. Under Illinois law, authorized and permitted users may carry a pistol in the interior of a motor vehicle or outside the motor vehicle for the purpose of directly placing a firearm in, or retrieving it from, the trunk or rear area of the motor vehicle. Any possession or carry of a firearm beyond the immediate vicinity of a permit-holder's motor vehicle shall constitute a violation of this policy.

#### *D. Other Exceptions with Administrative Approval*

Other possession of dangerous weapons, BB guns, and replica firearms or other may be allowed with written permission of the MSCU School Head of School, for such purposes as a ceremonial color guard, school play, or historical display.

### V. CONSEQUENCES FOR WEAPON POSSESSION / USE / DISTRIBUTION BY STUDENTS

*A. MSCU School takes a position of "Zero Tolerance"* regarding the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students. Consequently, the minimum consequence for students possessing, using, or distributing items determined to be weapons shall include:

- a) Confiscation of the weapon;
- b) Parent or guardian notification; and
- c) Immediate one full-day out-of-school suspension.

*B. The minimum consequence* for students using as weapons objects modified and used as a weapon may at staff or administration discretion include:

- a) Confiscation of the object;
- b) Parent or guardian notification; and
- c) Immediate one half-day in-school suspension
- d) A problem-solving session with affected students

*C. A student* who brings a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school shall be expelled from MSCU. The Board of Directors may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

### VI. ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION

While MSCU takes a “Zero Tolerance” position on the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students, the Head of School may use discretion in determining whether, under the circumstances, a course of action other than the minimum consequences specified above is warranted. If so, other appropriate action including consideration of a recommendation for lesser discipline.

Such actions may include but are not limited to:

1. Immediate notification of police;
2. Recommendation by the Head of School for dismissal not to exceed one year.

## VII. CONSEQUENCES FOR WEAPON POSSESSION / USE / DISTRIBUTION BY NONSTUDENTS

### *A. Employees*

- a) An employee who violates the terms of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including non-renewal, suspension, or discharge as deemed appropriate by the school board.
- b) Sanctions against employees, including non-renewal, suspension, or discharge shall be pursuant to and in accordance with applicable statutory authority and MSCU School policies.
- c) When an employee violates the weapons policy, law enforcement may be notified, as appropriate.

### *B. Other Non-students.*

- a) Any member of the public who violates this policy shall be informed of the policy and asked to leave the school location. Depending on the circumstances, the person may be barred from future entry to MSCU School locations. In addition, if the person is a student in another school district, that school district may be contacted concerning the policy violation.
- b) If appropriate, law enforcement will be notified of the policy violation by the member of the public and may be asked to provide an escort to remove the member of the public from the school location.