



CREC Montessori Magnet School

# Family Handbook 2023-2024

*"THE GREATEST GIFTS WE CAN GIVE OUR CHILDREN ARE THE ROOTS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE WINGS OF INDEPENDENCE."*

~ Dr. Maria Montessori



1460 Broad Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: 860-757-6111  
Fax: 860-757-6144  
[www.crecschools.org](http://www.crecschools.org)



Welcome to the CREC Montessori Magnet School. This handbook explains how the school operates and outlines our official policies and procedures. It also provides guidelines, suggestions and answers to questions that may arise throughout the year. At MMS, parents are essential partners in our mission to provide the highest quality public Montessori education while ensuring equity, excellence, and success for all, through a high-quality, theme-based education. We rely on your commitment to help us create the unique community that is CREC Montessori Magnet School. We value your participation in every facet of your child's education and invite you to join us on this exciting journey.

We are Connecticut's oldest public Montessori School, serving students from 40 different towns and cities in Connecticut. Public Montessori is expanding throughout the country, and our recognitions serve as a model for districts across the country. We are accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the most esteemed affiliation in the Montessori community.

We are proud that our school is one of only FOUR public Montessori schools in the United States that are AMI recognized in primary and elementary! AMI is the most esteemed affiliation of the Montessori community. We are proud of our achievements and continue to strive for excellence in all we provide.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Warmest wishes for a successful 2023-2024 school year!

*Antonio Napoleone*

---

Dr. Antonio Napoleone  
Principal

*Jessica Leon*

---

Mrs. Jessica Leon  
Assistant Principal

# CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>General Information</b>                     | <b>5</b>  |
| Mission  |           |
| CREC Montessori Magnet School History          | 5         |
| Governance and Leadership                      | 5         |
| CREC   | 6         |
| Core Values                                    | 6         |
| Early Dismissal Days/Holidays and Vacations    | 6         |
| Transportation                                 | 7         |
| Arrival and Dismissal                          | 7         |
| Drop off/Pick Up/Parking                       | 7-8       |
| Attendance                                     | 8         |
| Excused Absences                               | 9         |
| Unexcused Absences                             | 9         |
| Truancy  | 10        |
| Montessori Magnet School Attendance Procedures | 11        |
| Tardiness                                      | 11        |
| Before School Program                          | 12        |
| After School Program                           | 12        |
| School Dress                                   | 12        |
| Toy Policy                                     | 12        |
| Lost and Found                                 | 13        |
| The Learning Corridor                          | 13        |
| Visitors                                       | 14        |
| <b>Admissions and Enrollment</b>               | <b>13</b> |
| Applying to MMS                                | 13        |
| Sibling Applications                           | 13-14     |
| Tours  | 14        |
| <b>Montessori Education</b>                    | <b>15</b> |
| <b>The Educational Program</b>                 | <b>16</b> |
| Your Child's Day at School                     | 16        |
| The Primary Program                            | 16        |
| The Elementary Program                         | 16        |
| Homework                                       | 17        |
| Field Trips and "Going Out"                    | 17        |
| Evaluation and Assessment                      | 18        |
| Promotion, Retention and Placement             | 18        |
| Early Intervention Process (EIP)               | 19        |
| <b>Special Services</b>                        | <b>21</b> |
| Vision Statement                               | 21        |
| Mission Statement                              | 21        |
| Social Worker                                  | 21        |
| Cornerstone Counseling Services                | 21        |
| Special Education Resource                     | 21        |
| English Language Learner Students              | 21        |
| Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Process      | 22        |
| Crisis Intervention                            | 22        |

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Behavioral Expectations, Conduce and Discipline</b> | <b>23</b>     |
| General Information                                    | 24-25         |
| Suspension   | 26-31         |
| Expulsion  | 26-31         |
| Bullying   | 32-33         |
| <br><b>Health and Safety</b>                           | <br><b>34</b> |
| Emergency Procedures                                   | 34            |
| Emergency School Closings                              | 34            |
| Health Policies  | 35            |
| Immunizations and Physicals                            | 35            |
| Injuries   | 36            |
| Injury or Illness during School Hours                  | 36            |
| Administration of Medication                           | 36            |
| Peanut Allergies                                       | 37            |
| School Information Verification Forms                  | 37            |
| Screenings   | 37            |
| Security   | 37            |
| Media Access   | 38            |
| Security Guards  | 38            |
| Fire Drills  | 38            |
| Environmental Issues                                   | 38            |
| Meals/Snacks   | 38-39         |
| NonDiscrimination                                      | 39            |
| Sexual Harassment                                      | 39-40         |
| Child Abuse  | 40            |
| Smoking  | 41            |
| Substance Abuse  | 41            |
| Cell Phone/Electronic Policy                           | 42            |
| Physical Activity                                      | 42            |
| Sexual Abuse Prevention                                | 42            |
| Family Life Education                                  | 42            |
| <br><b>Being a Parent at MMS</b>                       | <br><b>42</b> |
| Communication  | 43            |
| Conferences  | 44            |
| Progress Reports                                       | 44            |
| Friday Bags  | 44            |
| Parent Workshops                                       | 44            |
| The Montessori Memo                                    | 44            |
| Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications            | 44            |
| Parent Teacher Association                             | 44            |
| PTA Meetings and Parent Workshops                      | 44            |
| Volunteers   | 45            |
| Family Involvement Card                                | 45            |
| Telephone/Fax/E-Mail                                   | 45            |
| Parent Notification                                    | 45            |
| Special Events   | 46            |
| <br><b>Appendices</b>                                  | <br><b>47</b> |

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Mission

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

### CREC Montessori Magnet School History

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

### Leadership

#### Principal, Assistant Principal and Staff

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

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

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

### CREC Background:

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

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

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

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

### **Core Values**

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

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

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

### **Early Dismissal Days / Holidays and Vacations**

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

### **Transportation**

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

### **Transportation Safety Complaints/Procedures**

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

### **Transportation Changes**

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

### School Day Schedule/Arrival and Dismissal

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

### Half A Day Schedule

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

## Drop off/pick up/parking

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

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

Parents dropping off students at 8:40 a.m, must enter the driveway on Brownell Avenue near the parking garage. Proceed around the big loop that circles the green. Buses will line up along the roadway along the Green to the back entrance of the school where staff will unload the students. **Parking on Brownell or Broad Street is strongly discouraged as it poses extreme safety hazards and disrupts the flow of traffic.**

**Only primary families (students in PK3-PK4) have a grace period to walk their child to the door of their child's classroom approximately a month after their start date. This may not apply to all students.**

If you have the need to walk your child into the building, please park safely and walk your child to the front door of the building. Doors open at 8:40 a.m. **DO NOT DROP YOUR CHILD OFF ON BROAD STREET AND LET HIM/HER CROSS THE STREET, THIS IS A SAFETY HAZARD.**

**After 8:45am students are considered tardy.** All students, parents and visitors must enter the building through the front entrance. If a student is late, he/she must report to the office before they go to the classroom.

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

Any student being picked up during the school day must have an **authorized** adult sign them out through the main office. The bus lane in front can be used for quick student drop off or pick up after 8:50am and before 3:00pm. **Students will be called to the office for such pick up when the parent/guardian arrives, not prior to.**

Buses for pick up at the end of the day will begin to arrive between 3:05 – 3:35. Please **do not** park in the bus lane in the front of the building.

Students picked up at 3:35pm will be waiting at the back entrance using the same procedures as the morning drop off.

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

## Late pick-up policy

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

## Attendance

Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education. Time lost from class is a lost instructional opportunity. The CREC Council requires



that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent. Guidelines for addressing absences and tardiness are contained below. These laws and regulations are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

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

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

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

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

### **Excused Absences**

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

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

### **Other**

- 1. Per guidance provided by the CT State Department of Education in May 2013, “absences that result from a student not receiving transportation from one school district to attend school in another district must be deemed as an excused absence.” (i.e.: in the case of an inclement weather situation.) No parental note is needed in the circumstance.
- 2. Per guidance provided by the CT State Department of Education in May 2013, Extraordinary Educational Opportunities may now be considered excused absences if the established criteria are met. Approvals for Extraordinary Educational Opportunities will be submitted by parent/guardian to the CREC Superintendent's office 10 days prior to the trip.

### **Unexcused Absences**

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

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

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

### **Truancy**

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

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

### **Montessori Magnet School Attendance Procedures:**

1. Tardy Arrivals
  - a. School begins promptly at 8:40 am. Any student arriving after 8:45 am will be marked "tardy".
  - b. Students who arrive after 8:40 am due to a late bus will not be marked tardy.
2. Early Dismissals

School dismisses promptly at 3:35 pm. Any student who is dismissed prior to 3:15 pm will be marked "dismissed early". All early dismissals must report to the office and be signed out by Parent/Guardian. Please try to schedule doctor's appointments after the school day so that it does not interfere with instructional time.
3. Absences
  - a. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school if a student will be absent on a given day. **Please call the school's attendance office at (860) 757-6109 to report an absence and provide the following information:**
    - the student's name
    - the teacher's name
    - the reason for the absence
    - a number where a parent/guardian can be reached with any questions during the school day
  - b. The school nurse or designee will make reasonable efforts to contact parents/guardians of students who are marked absent (unexcused) by telephone if prior notification of the absence has not been received.

***It is critical that the school has current, working phone numbers for all parents/guardians, as well as reliable emergency contact numbers.***

***Please notify the school of any changes to your phone numbers or email addresses.***

- c. The school will keep parents/guardians informed of student attendance records in the following ways:
- Attendance data will be included in student progress reports, which are sent home to parents/guardians in December, March and June.
  - Teachers will review attendance records and will discuss concerns with parents/guardians at Parent-Teacher Conferences in December and March.
  - In addition, we want to ensure our students are here at school so they have every possible opportunity to learn and achieve to their fullest potential as we may periodically call to see if we can be of assistance.
- d. If the school has concerns about a student's attendance record (excessive absences, tardies, and/or early dismissals), the teacher will refer the student to the school's Early Intervention Process (EIP). The EIP team will review the student's attendance data and will develop an action plan with specific strategies to address the attendance issue. The parent/guardian will be notified of the referral to EIP and of the specific attendance concerns. The school will seek the parent/guardian's input in the creation of the action plan.
- e. Per CT state law, if Montessori Magnet School has concerns about a child's irregular attendance record, the school will notify the parent/guardian of this concern by telephone and by mail.
- f. If the school is concerned about irregular attendance or truancy, the school will schedule meetings with parents/guardians to discuss the attendance concerns. A collaborative working plan to address the student attendance concern will be developed as part of the meeting. The school social worker and/or school nurse may be in attendance to support the creation of the plan.
- g. If the parent/guardian of the truant child fails to attend the mandatory school meeting required under law, or otherwise fails to cooperate in solving the truancy problem, the CREC superintendent of schools will file, within 15 calendar days of such parent/guardian's failure to cooperate, a written complaint to the Superior Court pursuant to existing state law. The parent/guardian, LEA (sending school district), and CREC Assistant Director of Student Services will be notified of the attendance concerns. Depending upon the circumstances of the truancy, the school may also be required to file an educational neglect petition to the state Department of Children and Families.
- h. If a student has **20 or more unexcused absences in a school year**, the student is considered **Habitually Truant** and the CREC Superintendent or designee will file a Family with Service Needs (FWSN) referral to the CT Superior Court, Juvenile Matters division. The student's parent/guardian, LEA (sending school district), and CREC Assistant Director of Student Services will be notified about this referral.

***PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD MAKE EVERY ATTEMPT TO CONFINE NECESSARY APPOINTMENTS TO AFTER SCHOOL, WEEKENDS AND VACATION PERIODS. IN***

**ADDITION, PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO PLAN FAMILY VACATIONS FOR TIMES WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION.**

### **Tardiness**

Instruction begins at 8:40 am. All children arriving after 8:45 are considered late. Our doors open at 8:25 to allow enough time for students to be in the classroom by 8:40. Coming late to school is not only disruptive to the child but also to the classroom. Please make every effort to be on time every day. The parent/guardian is required to sign in the child if he/she is entering the school after 8:40am. The sign-in book is located on the security desk in the main lobby.

### **Before School Program**

The school provides Before Care services for families who may need to drop their children off early, for \$3 per day. Before care begins at 7:30 am and parents must accompany their child into the main lobby to sign him/her in at the security desk. Classroom assistants are in each classroom to greet students at 8:30 am. **Payments for before care are to be made payable to CREC and given to the office staff monthly and in advance on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.** Children will not be permitted to continue in the before care program unless accounts are current and balances are paid fully in advance. The office staff can work with you to arrange a payment plan for before care if needed. You can contact our staff directly at 757-6111.

### **After School Program**

The After School Program is handled through an application process. The After School Program is provided from 3:35 to 5:30 p.m. Primary students join together for outside play, arts and crafts, music, cooking, sports and social play. Elementary age students are provided choices for enrichment activities such as art, dance, sports, Zumba or Tech Quest/Computer exploration. Snack and free play is part of each age group's daily schedule. **Payments for the Montessori After School Enrichment Program are to be made to out CREC, by the scheduled payment date via the program's payment schedule. We strongly prefer checks for payments, but will accept cash on an as needed basis.**

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

### **School Dress**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Toys/Belongings from Home**

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

### **Lost and Found**

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

### **The Learning Corridor**

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

### **Visitors**

#### ***Observations***

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

## **ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT**

### **Application Process**

The 2023-2024 lottery application process opens in November. Applications will be available on the Regional School Choice Office website at <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/School-Choice/RSCO/Regional-School-Choice-Office-Home-Page>

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

### **Sibling Applications**

Siblings who qualify for the lottery may be given a seat provided sufficient space is available and an application has been received. A lottery application must be completed through the Regional School Choice Office. Families must also inform our main office once the application is completed. The spirit of the sibling admission policy is to provide cohesiveness for all children in the same family while providing an equal opportunity for all students who desire to attend the school to obtain admission. With that in mind, a sibling is defined as a younger child, whose older sibling currently attends the CREC Montessori Magnet School, and within the week, resides in the same household as the older sibling. When a younger sibling is enrolled, the older sibling must remain at the school for the entire school year. If the older child is withdrawn from CREC Montessori Magnet School before the end of the year, the younger child will also need to withdraw. Should there be more sibling applications than space available, the sibling applications will be subject to a lottery.

### **Tours**

Families wishing to tour our school are requested to make arrangements to attend a scheduled tour. Tours in 2023-2024 are TBD and will be announced and advertised:

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

# Montessori Education

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

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

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

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

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

## Accreditation

In the 2022-2023 school year, we received AMI accreditation. The Montessori Magnet School is an associated public school recognized by AMI-USA (Association Montessori Internationale). It receives yearly recognition and hosts consultation visitations every 3 years. We are also a NAEYC Accredited Early Learning Program.



# THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

## Your Child's Day at School

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

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

## The Primary Program

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

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

## The Elementary Program

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



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

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

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

## Homework

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

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

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

## Field Trip/Guaranteed Experiences

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

Permission slips are always sent home in advance of going out. The student's permission slip must be returned in order to participate. Some going out experiences may incur an extra cost. However, no student will be denied participation due to financial need.

## Evaluation and Assessment

### CREC Assessments-

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

### F & P - Fountas & Pinnell

Beginning in the third year of the Primary Program, students are individually administered a Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment three times a year. These assessments can help determine the reading level of each child for instructional and independent reading. They can also identify students who are struggling readers and the appropriate interventions can be put into practice. The scores will be discussed with parents at each conference or upon request.

## Promotion, Retention and Placement

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

## Early Intervention Process (EIP)

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

Montessori Magnet School utilizes an Early Intervention Process (EIP) to help students who are struggling to learn in school. This model is based on the federally mandated Response to Intervention (SRBI in CT) that public schools are required to have. Each of the school programs (Primary, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary) has an EIP team that meets on a weekly basis. The EIP team consists of classroom teachers, special education teacher(s), school administrators, the school social worker, the speech and language pathologist, and academic interventionists. Not all members of the EIP team are present at each meeting; the attendance of support personnel varies depending upon the issues that are being discussed.

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

- Tier One – The classroom teacher collects and presents data that reflects the student’s strengths as well as his/her areas of difficulty. The teacher shares his/her concerns about the student, along with the various interventions that he/she has already tried within the classroom setting. The team selects one specific and measurable goal for the student related to his/her area of difficulty. The EIP team then brainstorms together about different approaches that may prove more successful with the student, after which the classroom teacher selects a few strategies that he/she will try over a period of time. The teacher will continue to collect data related to the student’s progress and will then report back to the team in approximately 4-6 weeks with the data in hand. This act of collecting specific, measurable data is called “progress monitoring” and is a very important component of EIP at all three tiers. Depending upon the student’s progress at the time of the review meeting, the EIP team will recommend one of the following: 1) student be exited from Tier One; 2) student continue in Tier One with the same or different interventions; or 3) student be moved to Tier Two because he/she has not made expected gains and requires more intensive interventions.
- Tier Two – Tier Two action plans and interventions are developed when a child needs further intervention. The classroom teacher presents student data from Tier One and shares his/her concerns with the EIP team. The EIP team agrees upon two to three specific, measurable goals for the student and then works together to create a Tier Two Action Plan to address these goals. Typically Tier Two Action Plans include interventionist(s), speech and language services, and/or counseling services in addition to classroom interventions. Home-school collaboration in which parents take a more active role in helping students with specific academic tasks is often another component of the Tier Two Action Plan. Again, student progress is tracked and monitored using agreed upon data collection methods over a period of 4-6 weeks after which time the student’s growth is reviewed again with the EIP team. After reviewing the data, the EIP team will recommend one of the following: 1) given significant progress, the student will be moved back to a Tier One intervention plan; 2) the student is recommended to remain at a Tier Two level of intervention and his/her goals will be revised according to his/her progress; or 3) the student be moved to Tier Three due to the fact that he/she has not made adequate gains given the level of intervention that he/she has received over the past 4-6 weeks.
- Tier Three – The classroom teacher presents the student data from Tiers One and Two, including review of interventions that the student has received. The special education teacher is closely involved in this tier and provides additional consultation and direct support to the teacher to explore possible learning related difficulties. At this time, the team may recommend “screens” to be completed by a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, or a physical therapist. The Tier Three EIP team may also recommend referral to a special education Planning and Placement Team (PPT) to determine if further evaluation(s) is/are warranted.

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

formal evaluation. The only way to determine eligibility for special education services is through the PPT process.

# Special Services

## Vision Statement

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

## Mission Statement

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

## Social Worker

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

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

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

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

## Cornerstone Counseling Services

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

## TESOL/Bilingual Services

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

## Special Education Resource

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

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

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

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

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

### **Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Process**

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

Procedure:

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

\* For a complete list of Parental Safeguards go to: [www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde)

### **English Language Learner Students**

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

### **Crisis Intervention**

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

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

Resources:

- CREC Crisis Team
- Community Agencies

## **Behavioral Expectations, Conduct and Discipline**

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

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

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

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

CREC Magnet School *students* will:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

## **Discipline**

All disciplinary incidents, including removal from the classroom for over 90 minutes, are to be properly entered into the State-approved reporting system.

### **Article I - Disciplinary Procedures**

#### **Overview**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Article II - Removal**

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

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

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

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

## **Articles III or IV, whichever is applicable.**

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

## **Article III - In-School Suspension**

In-School Suspension - means an exclusion from regular classroom activities for no more than ten

(10) consecutive school days. In-school suspension does not involve exclusion from school. An in-school suspension shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the in-school suspension was imposed.

Except as provided in Article IV, below, all suspensions of students shall be in-school suspensions.

### 3.1 During an In-School Suspension:

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

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

## **Article IV – Out-of-School Suspension**

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

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

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

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

## **Article V - Informal Hearing Process**

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

- 5.1 Prior to an out-of-school suspension, the student shall be informed of the charges which have been posed.
- 5.2 The student shall meet with the school principal or designee to review the incident.
- 5.3 The student shall be granted an opportunity to refute the charges against him/her.
- 5.4 Based on the information provided, the school principal or designee shall make a decision. The school principal or designee, if he/she deems it necessary, shall investigate the matter further, and, upon completion of the investigation, shall make a decision.
- 5.5 The school principal or designee shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the disciplinary action imposed within a reasonable period of time.

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

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

- 6.1 The school principal or designee shall make every effort to immediately notify the parents and/or guardians at the last phone number(s) provided by them to the school about the student's action and state the cause(s) leading to the school action.
- 6.2 Whether or not telephone contact is made with the parents or guardians, the school principal or designee shall notify the parents or guardians in writing at the most recent address reported on school records within one school day of the action and shall offer them an opportunity for a conference to discuss the matter.
- 6.3 If a student is eighteen years of age or older, any notice required by this regulation shall also be given to the student.
- 6.4 Any student who is given an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work, including, but not limited to, examinations, which such student missed during the period of suspension.

## **Article VII - Expulsion**

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

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

- 1) a preschool student was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, on or off school grounds or at a preschool program-sponsored event; or
- 2) a student in grades Kindergarten to twelve on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity, (a) was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, as defined in C.G.S 53a-3; or (b) off school grounds, possessed a firearm or possessed and used such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or (c) on or off school grounds,

offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as defined in C.G.S. 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering, or administering is subject to criminal penalties under C.G.S. 21a-277 and 21a-278.

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

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

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

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

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

## **Article VIII - Actions Leading to Suspension or Recommendation for Expulsion**

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

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

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

n. Misconduct of a nature that threatens the safety of school property or the welfare of the persons who work or study therein.

o. Gambling.

p. Accumulation of minor offenses.

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

8.3 The CREC Council considers conduct which is “seriously disruptive of the educational process” to mean conduct that “markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operations of a school”, in addition to being violative of publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, phoning in a bomb threat, or making a threat, off school grounds, to kill or harm a teacher or student.

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

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

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

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

1. Use, possession, sale, or distribution of dangerous weapons; (as defined C.G.S. 53a-3, 53-206, and 29-35)

2. Use, possession, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs

3. Violent conduct

4. Making of a bomb threat

5. Threatening to harm or kill another student or member of the staff.

6. Engaging in activity that has the reasonable likelihood of threatening the health, safety or welfare of individuals at the school, endangering school property, and/or disrupting the educational process.

For example, if it is determined that a student's use or possession of drugs in the community has a strong likelihood of endangering the safety of students or employees because of the possibility of such sales in the school; or if violent conduct in the community presents a reasonable likelihood of repeating itself in the school environment; or if any similar type of misconduct in the community has a reasonable likelihood of being continued or repeated in school or of bringing retaliation or revenge into the school, discipline up to and including

suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion may be imposed. The standard to be applied in considering disciplinary action is whether the off-school grounds conduct will markedly interrupt or severely impede the day-to-day operation of a school.

## **Article IX - Special Education/Section 504 Students**

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

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

9.3 Prior to recommending expulsion for a student requiring special education and related services or with a Section 504 Plan, a PPT or Section 504 team shall convene to determine whether the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. A student may be suspended for up to 10 days pending the PPT or Section 504 team determination.

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

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

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

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

## **Article X - Cumulative Records**

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

## **Article XI - Withdrawal From School**

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

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

## **Article XII – Notification**

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

12.2 The Principal of each school/program shall take steps to ensure that all rules pertaining to the discipline of students are communicated to students at the beginning of each school year, and to newly-enrolled students at the time of their enrollment in the school/program.

# **MMS IS A BULLY-FREE ZONE!**

## **Bullying**

The Capitol Region Education Council is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and CREC's Safe School Climate Plan, CREC expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by CREC; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by CREC.

CREC also prohibits any form of bullying outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including recommendation for expulsion, in accordance with CREC's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law. CREC does not expel students. CREC may recommend that the local board of education enrolling the student in a CREC program expel a student in accordance with the law.

Public Act No. 11-232 defines bullying as: (A) the **repeated** use by one or more students of a written, oral, or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or (B) a **physical act or gesture** by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in



the same school district, that: (i) Causes **physical or emotional harm** to such student or damage to such student's property, (ii) places such student in **reasonable fear of harm** to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, (iii) creates a **hostile environment** at school for such student, (iv) **infringes on the rights** of such student at school, or (v) **substantially disrupts the education process** or the orderly operation of a school. Public Act No. 11 – 232 clearly indicates that bullying may occur: on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, as well as outside of the school setting. Physical acts or gestures, based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics are to be considered under the classification of bullying.

Student and/or their parent may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying.

Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and action. The complaint procedure is also posted on the District's website and the school website.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Students are informed of their ability to make anonymous reports of bullying by placing a note in one of the administrator's mailboxes or in the box outside of the nurses' office. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Safe School Climate Specialist is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school.

The MMS bullying prevention program includes the following components:

- a. Students are annually educated about the definition of bullying, the school's bullying policy, and the fact that bullying is not tolerated in any way, shape or form at MMS.
- b. Students and parents are given copies of the school's policies and procedures as they relate to bullying and bullying prevention.
- c. Students are informed of their ability to make anonymous reports of bullying by placing a note in one of the administrator's mailboxes or in the box outside of the nurse's office.
- d. Classroom teachers create charters with their students at the beginning of each school year that reflect how students want to feel in the classroom (safe, respected, etc.), what they are going to do as a classroom in order to promote those feelings, and how they are going to resolve conflicts when they do arise within the classroom.
- e. Students and staff members are taught strategies to recognize, understand, label, express and regulate their emotions, including use of the Blueprint form.
- f. The social worker routinely meets with students in small groups when conflicts arise in order to talk through situations and to resolve conflicts in a safe, supportive setting. Teachers and school employees are encouraged to refer students to the social worker as a proactive measure if they are concerned about negative peer interactions.
- g. Teachers are encouraged to contact the social worker if they have concerns about specific classroom issues or dynamics. The social worker facilitates classroom groups and/or parent meetings to address particular issues and to problem solve with those involved.

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

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

### **Hazing**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Verbal Threats to self or others**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Emergency Procedures**

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

### **Emergency School Closings**

#### **Full Day School Closing**

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

#### **Delayed School Opening**

Most late openings are a 90-minute delay. Should this occur, school will begin at 10:10, Before School at 9:25. If there is a 2-hour delay, school begins at 10:15, Before School at 9:30. Primary students in our half-day program are excused on these days and are not required to attend.

#### **Early Dismissal**

In the case of early dismissals due to emergency school closings, families will want to have a plan in place for the child to be picked up from school or from the bus stop. If a

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

## Health Policies

### Absences

**Please call the nurse's office at 757-6109 to report your child's absence.** To ensure all students absent from school are accounted for, student absences not reported are first checked by a call home or to the parent's workplace and to the other numbers listed on your student's school verification form.

### Illness

**Asthma** – The school nurse has a nebulizer machine for those students that require treatments during school hours. A medication administration form signed by the student's doctor and parent is necessary.

**Fever - ALWAYS** keep your child at home if his/her temperature is 100 degrees or higher. If your child comes to school with a fever, you will be notified by the nurse and asked to pick him/her up. Your child's temperature should be normal for 24 hours prior to his/her return to school.

**Contagious Illnesses** – Notify the school nurse if your child develops a communicable disease that calls for separation, isolation or other special measures to protect the health of others, e.g. strep throat, chickenpox, head lice, pink eye, ringworm, Covid19 etc. Please review the Communicable Disease Control Guidelines for a description of common illnesses, their communicability and exclusionary periods.

## Immunizations and Physicals

### Pre-school

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

### K – 6

In order to provide the best educational experience, school personnel must understand your child's health needs. School health forms request information from you (Part I) which will also be helpful to the health care provider when he or she completes the medical evaluation form (Part II). State law requires complete primary immunizations and a health assessment by a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a registered nurse licensed pursuant to chapter 378, a physician assistant licensed pursuant to chapter 370, a school medical advisor or a legally qualified practitioner of medicine, an advanced practice registered nurse or a physician assistant stationed at any military base prior to school entrance in Connecticut (C.G.S Secs. 10-204a and 10-206).

All students entering the school **must** have a medical form completed and signed by the child's doctor. A physical examination within one year of the child's entrance is required. Children may **not** enter the building until these forms are completed.

The following are immunization requirements:

Pre-school:

- 3 doses of Hepatitis B
- 4 doses of DPT/DpaT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus)
- 3 doses of polio
- 1 dose of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- 1 dose of HIB (given after one year of age)
- 1 dose of varicella or written proof from doctor that child has had chickenpox

K-6:

- 3 doses of Hepatitis B (if born after 1/1/94)
- 4-5 doses of DPT/DtaP (one dose must be after 4 years of age)
- 3-4 doses of polio (one dose must be after 4 years of age)
- 2 doses of MMR
- 1 dose of HIB
- 1 dose of varicella or written proof from doctor that child has had chickenpox (If born after 1/1/97)

## **Protocols**

Safety protocols will be established specific to COVID and are expected to be adhered to for all CREC sanctioned activities.

## **Injuries**

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

## **Injury or Illness During School Hours**

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

## **Administration of Medication**

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

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

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

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

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

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physical are required.

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

### **Peanut Allergies**

**MMS is not a peanut-free school. We are very aware that there are many children with peanut allergies. If we know of a child with peanut allergies we make every effort to help the child avoid contact with foods that may contain peanuts. We do ask that if someone is bringing in a snack to share that it does not contain peanuts/tree nuts.**

### **School Information Verification Forms**

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

### **Screenings**

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

### **Security**

For the safety of the children, the doors of the school are locked each morning after supervised arrivals at 8:15 a.m. Visitors are required to enter through the front doors, sign in at the office and wear a visitor's badge. There is a video camera system and a security guard stationed at the Montessori Magnet School during arrival and dismissal time. In addition to

video surveillance, security guards regularly patrol the campus. The campus has security coverage Monday – Friday 7:00am-7:00pm.

### **Media Access to Students**

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

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

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

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

### **Security Guards**

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

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crises response drill may be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills every three months.

### **Environmental Issues**

#### **Asbestos**

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

#### **Pesticide Application**

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years.

Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact Douglas Henley. Note: If the district is implementing the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concept, similar requirements as above must be met.

### **Meals / Snacks**

#### **Breakfast**

Breakfast is available for early arriving students each morning beginning at 7:30am at no cost..

### **Lunch**

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

### **Snack**

Healthy snack food and drink is available in each classroom each day. The classroom teacher handles this in his or her own room. Teachers will notify parents of the method utilized in their child's classroom.

### **Food Allergies**

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

In accordance with federal and state law, it is CREC's policy to provide students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require all meals served to meet or exceed the stricter of either the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the "Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools".

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

## **Non-discrimination**

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

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

Any incident or complaint of discrimination or harassment will given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources. Every student shall have a ready means of resolving any complaint of discrimination or harassment. (See full policy for Incident Investigation Form.)

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment will not be tolerated among students of the school district. It is the policy of CREC that any form of sexual harassment is forbidden whether by students, supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, individuals under contract, or volunteers subject to the control of the

Board. Students are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful and courteous to employees, to fellow students and to the public.

**Definition**

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

**Procedure**

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

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

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

**Child Abuse**

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

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

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

**Smoking**



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

## **Substance Abuse**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Psychotropic Drug Use**

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is

prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

### **Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy**

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

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

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

### **Physical Activity**

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

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

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

### **Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program**

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

### **Family Life Education**

Family life education shall help students acquire knowledge, attitudes and values which will contribute to the well-being of individuals, families and society.

Students and parents or guardians shall be informed of their right to exempt the student from the family life program.

## **BEING A PARENT AT MMS**

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

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

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

## Communication

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

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

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

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

## Communication Opportunities

### Conferences

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice during the school year. The first parent-teacher conference is in December and the second conference is in March. These meetings are

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

### **Progress Reports**

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

### **Friday Bags**

Primary students are provided a Friday Bag at the beginning of the school year. This bag is used to communicate information between school and home each week. The Friday Bag is to be returned by the student on Mondays. Use this method to return monthly lunch invoices, signed permission slips, and any other communication from home to school. A helpful hint: choose a designated spot at home for the Friday Bag, so that important communications aren't forgotten. Lost Friday Bags must be replaced by the family at a cost of \$5.00.

### **Parent Workshops**

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

### **The Montessori Magnet Memo**

The school will produce a quarterly newsletter with information on curriculum and upcoming school events.

### **Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications**

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

### **Parent Teacher Association**

The school has a very active parent-teacher organization. All parents/guardians are welcome at PTA meetings and events and are encouraged to become members. PTA officers are elected each spring at the final PTA meeting of the school year. PTA meeting dates and activities are included in a packet distributed at the beginning of each school year. The PTA has a phone extension at Montessori Magnet School. All questions or concerns should be directed to this dedicated phone extension. The number is 757-6108. PTA officers for 2023-2024 are:

**President – Lyndsey Russell**

**Vice President – Dee Dee Huang**

**Treasurer – Christina Schatz**

**Secretary – Bill Ennever**

### **PTA Meetings and Parent Workshops**

The Parent Teacher Association meetings are held each month. In order to have a specific topic addressed at a meeting, contact a PTA board member or leave a message on the dedicated PTA phone line at school, 757-6108. A series of PTA and school sponsored parent workshops are held throughout the year. Notices are sent home with students and via email.

**Volunteers (e.g., parental involvement)**

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

**Family Involvement**

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

The school has a Family and Community Engagement Coordinator who is the voice of the families and students, and works closely with the Room parents. Room parents reach out to families to set up special activities and events throughout the school year. Our PTA also reaches out to families for school wide events and activities.

**Telephone/Fax/E-mail**

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

**Parent Notification**

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

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

- Bullying
- Student Records
- Student Suspension/Expulsions
- Weapons & Dangerous Instruments
- Child Abuse
- Sexual Harassment
- Internet Safety/Filtering
- Youth Suicide
- Alcohol Drugs and Tobacco
- Non Discrimination/ Grievance Procedures

**Directory Information**

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

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

## **Birthdays**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to celebrate their child's birthday with their child's class. This may take the form of bringing in a special treat your child can serve to the class, bringing in baby pictures up to the current age, or talking to the class about the birthday boy or girl. All plans should be coordinated with the child's classroom teacher in advance. Birthday party invitations may **not** be distributed in school unless **all** children in the class are invited. Use the school directory for student addresses to mail invitations. The main office will not give out any family information that is not listed in the directory.

## **Holidays**

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

## **Special Events**

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

## **Excluding your child from celebrations**

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

## **Student-Initiated Fundraisers**

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

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

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

## **Appendix**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| A Montessori Glossary                             | A |
| Freedom & Responsibilities: A Montessori Approach | B |
| Student Blue Print                                | C |
| Learning Corridor Map                             | D |
| Family Education Rights and Privacy Act           | E |
| Observation Guidelines                            | F |
| Student Wellness Policy                           | G |
| CREC Council Policies                             | H |

## A

### A MONTESSORI GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

**Planes of Development:** Maria Montessori based her concept of the four planes of development on observations of children throughout childhood and adolescence. These



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

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

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

**Upper Elementary:** Ages 9-12, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade.

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

## B

# Freedom and Responsibility A Montessori Approach

|                |                               |                       |                           |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Freedom</b> |                               | Use of bathroom       | ⇒                         |
|                |                               | Resolve own conflicts | ⇒                         |
|                | Choose daily work             | ⇒                     |                           |
|                | Amount of time on an activity | ⇒                     | Teach other children      |
|                | Permission to be idle         | ⇒                     | Movement in the classroom |
|                | Use of glass, knives, etc.    | ⇒                     | Choose place to work      |
|                | Eating snack when hungry      | ⇒                     | Work outside              |

Travel throughout building



Good hygiene and proper use of facility

Nap in classroom



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

Appropriate interaction, key points

Walking, maneuvering between student  
work areas

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

Stay within sight of windows

Walk in hallways, know how to get  
to destination

Get enough sleep at night, know when  
rest is needed

### **Responsibility**

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

Watching, sitting or wandering  
without interruption

Proper care and handling

Proper food handling and fair share

**C**

## **Montessori Magnet School Primary Student Blueprint**

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

| <b>Questions</b>           | <b>Answers</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| What happened?             |                |
| How did I feel?            |                |
| Why made me feel this way? |                |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
| How did I express my feelings?           |  |
| How did the other person or people feel? |  |
| What could I have done better?           |  |
| What can I do now?                       |  |

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Montessori Magnet School

### Lower Elementary Student Blueprint

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

| Questions                   | Answers |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| What happened?              |         |
| How did I feel?             |         |
| What made me feel this way? |         |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| How did I express my feelings?           |  |
| How did the other person or people feel? |  |
| How did they express their feelings?     |  |
| What could I have done better?           |  |
| What can I do now?                       |  |

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Montessori Magnet School Upper Elementary Student Blueprint

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

| Me                                 | Other Person<br>(if applicable)                    |
|------------------------------------|--|
| What happened from my perspective? | What happened from the other person's perspective? |
| How did I feel?                    | How did the other person feel?                     |



## **E**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For request of records please contact:

Yomarie Soler-Velez  
**[ysolervelez@crec.org](mailto:ysolervelez@crec.org)**

757-6112 – Phone  
757-6144 – FAX

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

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

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

### **Equal Opportunity**

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

### **Education Rights for Homeless Children and Youth**

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

### **Military Families**

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

# F

## Observation Guide



[Observation Guide](#)

## Welcome to our school!

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

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



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

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

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

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

Enjoy your visit and thank you for your support!

# G



## **Student Wellness Policy**

### **Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Student Wellness Policy)**

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. CREC is committed to providing a learning environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total educational experience. In a healthy school environment, students will be exposed to, and participate in, positive nutritional and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement. In accordance with federal and state law, it is CREC's policy to provide students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require all meals served to meet or exceed the stricter of either the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the "Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools".

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

#### **Goals for Nutrition Promotion and Education**

The goals for addressing nutrition education include the following:

- Schools will support and promote good nutrition for students consistent with applicable federal and state requirements and guidelines.
- Schools will foster the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and the capacity of students to develop and learn.
- Nutrition education will be part of CREC's comprehensive standards-based school health education program and curriculum and will be integrated into other classroom content areas, as appropriate.
- Schools will link nutrition education activities with existing coordinated health programs or other comparable comprehensive school health promotion frameworks.
- Healthy snacks for the classroom, healthy packed lunches, and non-food alternatives for classroom celebrations will be strongly encouraged.
- Staff will be strongly encouraged to model healthful eating habits.

#### **Goals for Physical Education and Activity**

The goals for addressing physical education and activity include the following:

- Schools will support and promote an active lifestyle for students.

**6142.10**

- Physical education will be taught in all grades and shall include a standards-based, developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that fosters the development of movement skills, enhances health-related fitness, increases students' knowledge, offers

direct opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively in a group setting, and encourages healthy habits and attitudes for a healthy lifestyle.

- Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in CREC's physical education program.
- Recess and other physical activity breaks, before and after school activities, and walking and bicycling to schools, where safe to do so, are supported by CREC.
- Schools will work toward providing sixty minutes of physical activity daily for students (as a best practice).
- All elementary school students shall have at least twenty minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide space, equipment and an environment that is conducive to safe and enjoyable activity. , A planning and placement team may develop a different schedule for a child requiring special education and related services.
- School employees shall not deny a student's participation in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline or punishment, nor should they cancel it for instructional makeup time. Further, any student in kindergarten through grade twelve shall not be required to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline.
- Physical activities will be integrated across the curricula when possible.

### **Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available in Schools**

Students will be offered and schools will promote nutritious food choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and My Plate, published jointly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, and guidelines promulgated by the Connecticut Department of Education in addition to federal and state statutes and national health organizations. In addition, in order to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity, the Executive Director or designee shall establish such administrative procedures to control food and beverage sales that compete with CREC's nonprofit food service in compliance with the Child Nutrition Act. CREC shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and will ensure that all foods sold, served, or made available to students separately from school meals meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. All beverages sold, served, or made available to students on school premises will be healthy choices that meet the stricter of either state statute or USDA beverage requirements.

### **Pesticide Application/Management**

The Capitol Region Education Council has adopted an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy for pest control within our buildings and grounds.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that students, employees and parents/guardians receive adequate notice, in conformity with applicable statutes, prior to pesticide application in school buildings and on school grounds.

### **Reimbursable School Meals**

Reimbursable school meals served shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.

### **Marketing**

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA “Smart Snacks in School” nutrition standards. Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. As the District/School Nutrition Services/Athletic Department/PTA/PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the CREC wellness policy.

### **Food Exemptions**

CREC will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

### **Community Input**

CREC will develop and implement methods of communicating with, and educating, parents and staff regarding this policy.

The Executive Director or designee will provide opportunities, suggestions and comments concerning the development, implementation, periodic review and improvement of the student wellness policy from community members, including parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, teachers of health and/or physical education, school health professionals, members of the CREC Council, school administrators, and the public.

A Wellness Committee comprised of a variety of members (following state mandates) will be established to develop, and guide the implementation of, procedures consistent with established policy.

**6142.10**

### **Monitoring**

CREC designates the Executive Director or his/her designee to ensure compliance with this policy and any administrative regulations. The Executive Director or designee is responsible for retaining all documentation of compliance with this policy and any regulations, including, but not limited to, each

school's three-year assessment and evaluation report and this wellness policy and plan. The Executive Director or designee will also be responsible for public notification of the three-year assessment and evaluation report, including any updates to this policy made as a result of CREC's three-year assessment and evaluation.

CREC shall develop a plan designed to achieve the involvement requirements in the development, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of this policy.

The Executive Director or designee shall provide periodic implementation data and/or reports to the CREC Council concerning this policy's implementation sufficient to allow the Council to monitor and adjust the policy. CREC, as required, will retain records and documents pertaining to the wellness policy which shall include the written school wellness policy, documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, documentation of the triennial assessment of the wellness policy and documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirement.

### **Evaluation of Wellness Policy**

In an effort to measure the implementation of this policy, the Executive Director or designee will be responsible for ensuring that each school meets the goals outlined in this policy. To ensure continuing progress, CREC will evaluate implementation efforts and their impact on students and staff at least every three years.

CREC will make available to the public an assessment of the implementation, the results of the three-year assessment and evaluation, including the extent to which the schools are in compliance with policy, and a description of the progress being made in attaining the goals of this policy.

The Student Wellness Policy shall be made available annually, at a minimum, to students and families by means of school registration, student handbooks and CREC's website. This availability shall include the policy, including any updates to and about the wellness policy and the Triennial Assessment, including progress toward meeting the goals of this policy. In addition, the annual notification shall include a description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals; summary of each school's wellness events or activities; contact information for the leader(s) of the wellness policy team; and information on how individuals and the public can get involved.

## **6142.10**

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-16b Prescribed courses of study.

10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and the feeding programs for public school children and employees.

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

10-215b Duties of state board of education re: feeding programs.

10-215e Nutrition standards for food that is not part of lunch or breakfast program.

10-215f Certification that food meets nutrition standards.

10-221o Lunch periods. Recess.

10-221p Boards to make available for purchase nutritious, low-fat foods.

10-221q Sale of beverages.

PA 04-224 An Act Concerning Childhood Nutrition in Schools,  
Recess and Lunch Breaks

PL 108-265 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

USDA Regulations

10-221o Lunch periods. Recess. (as amended by P.A. 12-116, An Act  
Concerning Educational Reform; as amended by P.A. 13-173, An Act  
Concerning Childhood Obesity and Exercise in Public Schools)

Local School Wellness Policy Requirements, 42 U.S.C. 1758b

Policy Adopted: March 31, 2006

Policy Revised: March 17, 2010

Policy Revised: November 20, 2013

Policy Revised: June 21, 2017

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL

Hartford, Connecticut