



# Family Information Guide

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# Family Information Guide 2021-2022

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a superior Montessori Program of Study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences.

## Guiding Principles

- To encourage independence and self-reliance
- To honor, respect and value individual differences
- To commit to multi-age, multi-ability and multicultural classroom environments
- To provide safe, prepared environments, filled with developmentally appropriate, tactile materials
- To maintain a highly qualified staff and administration
- To recognize parents' role in our educational process
- To be a resource for our community as a center of Montessori training and awareness

## School Hours

8:30am - 3:00pm  
(Doors will open at 8:00am)

## Student Dismissal

***Important Note: If you are having another adult pick up your child on any day, please make sure that you email [dismissal@mrcserie.org](mailto:dismissal@mrcserie.org) authorizing the pickup. If we do not receive authorization, we will ask that the driver come into the front office so that we can contact you.***

We want you to know that at dismissal, your child's **safety, security and a stress free environment is our highest priority.** At MRCS we make it our business to know the dismissal plans for each and every child, every day. We need your help in fulfilling this goal! **Please take a moment to read over the following** and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at [office@mrcserie.org](mailto:office@mrcserie.org).

We know that sometimes dismissal plans will change. If you must change your end-of-day transportation plans, please talk to your child to prepare him/her for the change before your child leaves for school in the morning. Then, make us aware of the change by:

1. Sending an email to [dismissal@mrcserie.org](mailto:dismissal@mrcserie.org) (You will receive a confirmation email)
2. Calling the school **before 2:00 pm** at 833-7771, ext. 170 *In the case of family medical or other emergencies, please notify the school office as soon as possible to enable us to support you and your child's dismissal needs.*
3. Please know, we do not permit early dismissals of students **after 2:30pm** due to end of the day routine and heavy bus traffic in the school parking lot at that time.

*\*Regarding shared custody, when a parent has provided a copy of a Court Order which decrees shared custody of a child, MRCS recognizes the right of each parent's access to their child and dismissal from MRCS to either parent. We hope that you can appreciate our neutrality and that it is inappropriate for any school employee to discuss custody schedules, complaints, or disputes with either parent.*

## **Carpool**

Every family will receive two (2) car placards to be used for any day that you are participating in carpool pickup. This placard should be placed on the driver side dashboard.

Morning: 8:00-8:25 am
Afternoon: 3:00-3:30 pm

**FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM CELL PHONE USE WHILE IN THE CARPOOL LINE.**

**Please take the following into consideration regarding carpool dismissal:**

- Children under 80 lbs. /8 years of age are required by law to have car seats.
- Please restrain family pets so they will not interfere with students being assisted in or out of vehicle

## Bus Transportation

Each local home school district is responsible for transporting students residing in their district to and from Montessori Regional Charter School. Students must live within 10 miles driving distance from the school property. Transportation is provided on days that MRCS is in session, and this includes days when the local school district may be closed.

The local home school district will assign the student bus route and time to and from *one address only*. The address must be within the boundaries of the local home school district.

Please Contact Your Local School District Bus Garage:

1. If the bus is running late
2. If the bus didn't stop or
3. Regarding bus safety

School District Bus Garage	Phone Number
Erie	824-4113
Fairview	474-3171
Ft. LeBoeuf	796-2146
General McLane	273-1033
Girard	774-2100
Harborcreek	899-5681
Iroquois	899-8848
Millcreek	838-1602
Wattsburg	824-4113

Please Contact MRCS:

- If you have moved (and need a bus route change)
- If you would like to start bus service

- If your child will no longer ride the bus

Phone: 814-833-7771 X206

Email: [office@mrcserie.org](mailto:office@mrcserie.org)

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Families will be informed of school cancellations through ParentSquare and on the local TV stations after 5:15 am. Look for news about **Montessori Regional Charter School** – we are not associated with any other Montessori school.

More information about [Winter Weather School Closure](#).

## Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating and recognizing student birthdays in the classroom. Families who would like to send in a treat may send in a **non-edible item** to be shared with the class. Families are welcome to, but not required to send in a non-edible item.

Some examples of non-edible food items include:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- Stickers
- Bookmarks

In our continuing efforts to provide a healthy and safe environment for our students, and in recognition of the increasing number of food allergies and dietary restrictions we have updated our policy. ***MRCS will no longer allow edible treats/snacks in school for any reason. Any edible treat or snack sent to school will be sent home with your child.***

To avoid hurt feelings, party invitations will be passed out only if there is one for each child in the class. Privacy laws prevent the distribution of student names or home addresses.

Birthday flowers, balloons or gift bags brought or sent to the school will be kept at the office and given to the student at dismissal time.

## Dress Code

MRCs does not have a uniform. We ask that parents send students to school dressed **neat, clean** and comfortable, **appropriate clothing** for school. Please consider the weather since we will have outdoor recess if it is over 28 degrees (with wind chills factored in) and not raining.

If a student arrives at school wearing inappropriate clothing (t-shirts with unacceptable pictures or words, shirts that do not cover completely, exposed midriffs, shorts or skirts that are immodest or shoes that are unsafe) a parent/guardian will be called to bring in alternate clothing. Students will not be allowed to wear anything provocative or disruptive to the classroom or school procedures. For the safety of all students and staff, no hats or hoods will be permitted to be worn inside the school building.

**GYM CLASS** - For safety reasons, students must have the proper footwear to participate in gym class. Shoes with a rubber sole that fit securely on the foot (such as tennis or gym shoes) are best. Boots, flip-flops, slippers and dress flats are not allowed. Participation in gym class is an important life skill. If your child cannot participate in gym on any given day, due to illness or injury, please send in a doctor's note excusing the child from class and indicating the duration of the excuse from class.

## Food Service Program

***Food Service Program Information can be found on the school website at [www.mrcserie.org/parents/food-service](http://www.mrcserie.org/parents/food-service)***

## Communication

It is our intent to ensure timely and effective communication of policies, procedures and programs while being respectful of the environment and "green" practices whenever possible. Please help us stay in touch with your family by making sure that we have accurate address and phone information for all parents/guardians. If your child has multiple households, please be sure to inform the office so that we can make sure all parents/guardians are receiving timely school information.

We will communicate with you in several ways:



- **Weekly Backpack Communication folder** – This is information from your child's teacher regarding classroom academics, upcoming field trips, homework and/or classroom activities
- **ParentSquare Communication** – School-to-Family communication will be delivered in a timely manner via ParentSquare (email, text and/or app). These notifications are generally sent for information that is more immediate in nature such as reminders of upcoming activities or programs, changes in time or location of various athletic events and **school closures due to weather or emergencies**. Please be sure you keep the office informed of any email or phone number changes.
- **MRCs website** – [www.mrcserie.org](http://www.mrcserie.org). Our website contains the school calendar of events, information on programs, activities and policy information. The office updates the website on a regular basis.

Email us at [office@mrcserie.org](mailto:office@mrcserie.org) and your question/concern will be directed to the correct person. Please allow 2 business days for a response. Thank you.

## Video Surveillance Policy

### Policy & Purpose:

It is the policy of Montessori Regional Charter School ("MRCs") to conduct video surveillance of all or a part of its operation, with or without notice, in order to assure a safe, efficient facility. MRCs may employ video cameras and digital recorders (DVR) on the property for purposes of quality assurance, investigations, student safety, employee safety, deterring crime, and protection of property.

Surveillance cameras will be used in a professional, ethical and legal manner. Their use will avoid unnecessary intrusion upon freedom and individual civil liberties such as privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. The surveillance system shall not be installed in, or used to monitor or record, areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy in accordance with accepted social norms, such as restrooms, locker rooms or similar facilities. Additionally, the surveillance system shall be used in a manner consistent with other policies, including those pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, privacy and freedom of expression.

### Guidelines:

- Video surveillance for the purpose of this policy is defined as continuous observation of a place, person, group, or ongoing activity in order to gather information.

- Video surveillance **will not** include areas identified as private. Private areas include but are not limited to restrooms, locker rooms or similar facilities.
- Only authorized personnel will be permitted access to the cameras and images produced in accordance with applicable law.
- Access will be permitted to:
  - Designated authorized administrative staff or official first responders
  - Solicitor

### Procedure:

- Parents/guardians will be informed of and sign the surveillance notification upon a student's enrollment at MRCS. Parents and students will also be notified of the policy by its placement in the student handbook.
- All staff will be informed of the surveillance upon hire. New hires and current employees will review and sign an acknowledgement of this policy along with other policies found in the employee handbook.
- All visitors will be informed of this policy via facility signage.
- Video surveillance will be accessed for the purposes of gathering information regarding, but not limited to, the following events:
  - Student accusations against staff members
  - Student accusations against each other
  - Student injuries
  - Staff injuries
  - Accidents that occur on the campus
  - Unknown origin of property destruction
  - Vandalism
  - Theft
  - Other illegal access or activity on school premises

### Signage

- Signs will be posted throughout the facility at common surveillance locations.

Signage will contain the following or similar language: **This area may be subject to video surveillance and recording for security/safety purposes.**

## Recorded Information Storage, Retention and Release

- Surveillance images obtained will be stored in a secure location and configured to prevent their unauthorized access, modification, duplication or destruction.
- Surveillance images will be maintained for no longer than 90 days. After an incident, images will be maintained per solicitor recommendations and applicable law.
- All requests for release of surveillance images must be made in writing. Release of surveillance imaging may only be released when authorized by the solicitor, applicable law or court order.
- Videos are exempt from the definition of a "public record" under Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law for one or more of the following reasons: the disclosure of the video would risk the loss of Federal or State funds; the video is a record relating to a non-criminal investigation; or the disclosure of the video increases the risk to the security of MRCS' building or the safety of individuals. MRCS reserves the right to assert further defenses to disclosure of the video as those defenses may be applicable to a particular situation.

## Attendance Policy

### **Policy: Attendance Policy UPDATED August, 2021**

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>As a public school, Montessori Regional Charter School follows Public School Code of 1949 (P.S. §§ 1-101 - §§ 27-2702) which contains the state mandated attendance laws. MRCS strongly believes, and research shows that daily, on time attendance at school is critical to your child's academic, social and emotional success at school.</p> <p>The Montessori program uses "hands on" manipulatives and experiential learning on a daily basis. Therefore, it is difficult to provide homework or make up work for lost classroom time. The Montessori method requires students to be present in the learning environment. Please support your child's education by ensuring that they are at school, on time and prepared, each and every day. If you are having difficulties with attendance, please call the school immediately so that we can work together to find solutions that ensure your child's presence at school and support their academic success.</p>
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**Definitions**

1. Citation: shall mean a non-traffic citation or private criminal complaint.
2. Compulsory School Age: shall mean the period of a child's life from the time a child's parents/guardians elect to have the child enter school which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until reaches seventeen (17) years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school
3. Educational Entity: shall mean a public-school district, charter school, regional charter school, and cyber charter school or area vocational school.
4. Excused Absence: shall mean an absence from school which is permitted under section 1329. It is any absence for one of the reasons set forth below and a parent/guardian sends in a written excuse note within three (3) days:
  1. Illness
  2. Family emergency
  3. Quarantine
  4. Death of a family member
  5. Authorized school activities
  6. Educational family travel with prior approval – Please obtain an Educational Travel form from the office or from the MRCS website.
  7. Religious holidays and religious instruction not to exceed 36 hours per year.
5. Habitually Truant: shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.
6. Person in parental relation: shall mean a:
  - a. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
  - b. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
  - c. Guardian of the person of a child.

d. Person with whom a child lives and who is acting in a parental role of a child.

7. School Attendance Improvement Conference: shall mean a conference where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance, with or without additional services. The following individuals shall be invited to the conference:

- a. The child (if applicable)
- b. The child's person in parental relation.
- c. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
- d. Appropriate school personnel
- e. Recommended service providers.

8. School Attendance Improvement Plan: shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C.

9. School: shall mean the educational entity in which the child is enrolled.

10. School Days: shall mean the length of time that a child that is subject to compulsory school attendance is expected to be receiving instruction during a calendar day, as determined by the governing body.

Governing Body: shall mean the board of school directors at a school district or any other governing entity of a school.

11. Truant: shall mean having three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a compulsory school aged child.

12. Unexcused Absence: shall mean an absence from school which is not permitted by the provisions in section 1329 and for which an approved explanation has not been submitted within the time period and in the manner prescribed by the governing body. An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

<b>Delegation of Responsibility</b>	<p>The CEO or designee shall notify students, parents/guardians, and staff about Montessori Regional Charter School's attendance policy by publishing such policy in the Family Information Guide, school's website, and other efficient communication methods.</p> <p>The CEO or designee shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.</p> <p>The CEO or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ensure the maintenance of attendance records are in accordance with the PA Attendance Laws.</li><li>2. Create a procedure for the Parent Sponsored Education Trip request form and all excuses relating to student absences.</li><li>3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency if warranted, and citation to the appropriate judge.</li></ol>
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## Guidelines

Please read the following outline of Pennsylvania law regarding attendance. A complete copy of **Public School Code of 1949 (P.S. §§ 1-101 - §§ 27-2702)** may be found on our website.

All students of compulsory school age who attend Montessori Regional Charter School or alternative educational placement shall be subject to the compulsory attendance requirements. Attendance will be taken each day. (Attendance Policies will apply to all phases and models of instruction).

### *Excused/ Lawful Absences*

An Excused absence is any absence for one of the reasons set forth below **and** a parent/legal guardian sends in a written excuse note within three days.

1. Illness
2. Family emergency
3. Quarantine
4. Death of a family member
5. Authorized school activities
6. Parent Sponsored Educational Trip – Please obtain an Educational Travel form from the office or from the MRCS website.
7. Religious holidays observed by bona fide religious groups and religious instruction not to exceed 36 hours per year.

### *Excuses from Attending School*

According to Section 1329 of the Public School Code of 1949 a student shall be excused from the requirements of attendance at Montessori Regional Charter School for the following reasons:

1. If a student is dismissed from school during school hours for health-related reasons by a certified school nurse, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse or a school administrator or designee employed by MRCS, the student's absence from school shall be deemed excused.
2. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a student shall be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.

3. The Department of Education shall provide guidance, resources and strategies for families, schools and students related to students with chronic health conditions which shall be posted on the department's publicly accessible internet website.

*Temporary Excusals*

**Pennsylvania School Code Chapter 11 Student Attendance**

**§ 11.25. Temporary excusals due to illness or other urgent reasons**

1. CEO or designee, upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical or other urgent reasons, excuse a student for nonattendance during a temporary period, but the term "urgent reasons" shall be strictly construed and does not permit irregular attendance. A school district shall adopt rules and procedures governing temporary excusals that may be granted by principals and teachers under this section. Temporary excusals may not exceed 3 months.
2. A school district, area vocational technical school, charter or independent school may provide students temporarily excused under this section with homebound instruction for a period not to exceed 3 months. A school district, area vocational technical school, charter or independent school may request approval from the Department to extend the provision of homebound instruction, which shall be reevaluated every 3 months. When a student receives homebound instruction, the student may be counted for attendance purposes as if in school. A school district shall be reimbursed for homebound instruction provided to a student under section 2510.1 of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § 25-2510.1).
3. A school district shall adopt policies that describe the instructional services that are available to students who have been excused under this section. The policies must include statements that define the responsibilities of both the district and the student with regard to these instructional services.

*\*See homebound instruction policy\*\**



### **Parent Sponsored Educational Trip**

Montessori Regional Charter School recognizes that there may be educational family travel during the academic year. The parent/legal guardian must complete a written request at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip and submit to the CEO or designee for approval. The CEO or designee shall only approve one (1) educational trip per student per school year. The trip may not exceed ten (10) school days. These absences will count towards the ten (10) parental excused absences as outlined in the PA attendance laws.

The CEO or designee will review the student's records. The Parent Sponsored Educational Trip form can be found on our website or obtained through the school office.

Approval may be denied for reasons such as:

- During the standardized testing window (PSSA)
- Student identified as Truant or Habitually Truant
- Trip planned out of state on PA Quarantine List
- Trip taken without prior approval

Trips that are not pre-approved or are denied approval from the CEO or designee will result in the student's absences on those days being recorded as unexcused absences.

#### *Unexcused/ Unlawful Absences*

An Unexcused absence is any absence that would be considered excused but the school does not receive a note within 3 days, or any absence in excess of 10 days (cumulative for the school year) that is not accompanied by a physician's note.

A maximum of **ten (10)** days of cumulative absences per school year will be considered lawful **if the school receives written parental notification within three days of the absence.**

#### Absence

If your child is absent please contact the school by email to let us know the reason for your child's absence. The email should state:

1. your child's name
2. teacher's name
3. date of absence
4. reason for absence

Truant and Habitually Truant (Reference Act 138 2016)

**Truant**

"Truant" shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When the child is truant, the school will notify in writing the child's parent or legal guardian of the child's violation of compulsory school attendance within 10 school days of the child's third unexcused absence. The notice will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant and an offer to attend a school attendance improvement conference. If the child continues to incur unexcused absences after the school has issued the notice the school will offer by advance written notice a school attendance improvement conference to the child and the parent/ guardian of the child. The conference will occur even if the parent/ guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference. The outcome of the conference will be documented in a written school attendance improvement plan.

**Habitually Truant**

"Habitually truant" shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When a child is habitually truant, the school will:

1. Refer the child to either of the following:
  1. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program.
  2. The county children and youth agency for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child under the provisions of 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to juvenile matters).
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the child.

3. When referring a habitually truant child to the county children and youth agency or filing a citation with the court because a child has been habitually truant, the school shall provide verification that a school attendance improvement conference was held.

### **Tardy**

If for any reason, a student arrives at school after **8:30 am and before 10:30am** accompanied by an adult, the student will be considered tardy.

A student who arrives after 10:30 am will require a parental note or doctor's note. **This will count towards your ten (10) parental excuses allowed by law.** If no parental note or doctor's note is provided after 10:30am your child will be marked as an unexcused absence for the whole day.

### **Tardy Procedures:**

- If you arrive after 8:30 you will enter through the 8th street gates, park your vehicle in the parking lot and walk your child into the office. For the safety and security of your child, parents must sign their children in after 8:30. We cannot allow students to walk into the school unaccompanied by an adult.
- After your third tardy, you will be asked to stay for a meeting with an administrator.

### **Early Dismissals**

If for any reason, a student leaves school before 1:00pm for an early dismissal, the student must have a parental note or doctor's note. **This will count towards your ten (10) parental excuses allowed by law.** If no parental note or doctor's note is provided within three (3) days of the early dismissal, your child will be marked as an unexcused absence for the whole day.

**A student must be in school for 4.5 hours a day for the student to be marked present for the full day.**

***ATTENDANCE FOR STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN VIRTUAL OR DISTANCE LEARNING DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC*** – Compulsory school attendance (truancy) rules apply to students who may be receiving their instruction through virtual or distance learning during periods of school closure or being used as a method of complying with mandated

social distancing safety requirements. A student's failure to participate in the required number of hours in these alternative learning platforms could result in that lack of participation being categorized as unexcused absences from school, with a possible consequence of truancy prosecution.

Remote learning attendance will be accounted for through a combination of:

- student contact with classroom teachers
- online attendance during live Classroom sessions
- work submission from live instruction OR viewing recorded lessons throughout the day

Here at Montessori Regional Charter School we understand the many challenges Remote Learning may present to our families. We will offer flexibility to our families experiencing unique barriers and discuss potential solutions and resources to support your unique situation.

If students are struggling with participation in remote learning – whether through accessibility issues with technology or any other reason – parents are encouraged to communicate with the MRCS Attendance Coordinator at [Attendance@mrcserie.org](mailto:Attendance@mrcserie.org) for assistance and to develop a plan prior to compulsory attendance becoming an issue.

#### *Filing a Citation*

Under Section 1333.2 of the Public School Code of 1949 the venue and corresponding judge for the filing of a citation under section 1333.1 shall be based on the location of the school in which the child is enrolled or shall be enrolled except for section 1327.2(b) applies.

The citation will be filed by the CEO or designee.

#### **Accumulated Absences**

A notice will be sent to your home after a student has incurred 3 or more unexcused absences (Truant) and will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant and an offer to attend a school attendance improvement conference. A notice will also be sent home when the student has 6 unexcused absences (Habitually Truant).

A notice will be sent to your home after a student has incurred seven (7) (excused or unexcused) absences, and when a student reaches 10 excused absences.

Montessori Regional Charter School will report unexcused absences directly to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**Unaccounted Absences (Reference 55 Pa. Code§ 11.24.)**

Students whose names are on the active membership roll, who are at any time in the school term absent from school for 10 consecutive school days, shall thereafter be removed from the active membership roll unless one of the following occurs:

(1) The district has been provided with evidence that absence may be legally excused. (2) Compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued.

**Special Needs and Accommodations**

If a student with a disability or who may qualify with a disability, is truant or habitually truant, the CEO or designee and the appropriate team will be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with the applicable laws.

## Attendance Contract

In accordance with Pennsylvania Mandatory School Attendance Laws and board policy, the following are the expectations for attendance:

### Daily Attendance

- Students are required to attend school daily. A student must be in school for 4.5 hours a day for the student to be marked present for the full day.
- Parents can write 10 excuses per school year.
- After 10 parent excuses, a doctor's note will be required for any future absences to be considered legal/excused.
- Excuses are due within 3 days of any absence. After 3 days the absence will be marked as unexcused.
- After 3 unexcused absences, a student is considered truant.
- A mandatory School Attendance Improvement Conference is required after 3 unexcused absences. A School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) will be developed. The conference will occur even if the parent/guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.
- A truancy citation may be submitted to the District Magistrate following the development of the SAIP. Possible consequences for noncompliance with attendance laws: First offense: up to \$300.00 fine. Second offense: up to \$500.00 fine. Third or subsequent offense: up to \$750.00

### **Virtual Instruction Students:**

Remote learning attendance will be accounted for through a combination of:

- daily student contact with classroom teachers
- online attendance during live Academic Classroom sessions
- work submission from live instruction OR viewing recorded lessons throughout the day

### Parent Sponsored Educational Trip

Montessori Regional Charter School recognizes that there may be educational family travel during the academic year. The following are the expectations for Parent Sponsored Educational Trips:

- The parent/legal guardian must complete a written request at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip and submit it to the CEO or designee for approval.
- The CEO or designee shall only approve one (1) educational trip per student per school year.
- The trip may not exceed ten (10) school days. These absences will count towards the ten (10) parental excused absences as outlined in the PA attendance laws.

Approval may be denied for reasons such as:

- During the standardized testing window
- Student identified as Truant or Habitually Truant
- Trip taken without prior approval

*Trips that are not pre-approved or are denied approval from the CEO or designee will result in the student's absences on those days being recorded as unexcused absences.*

### Tardy and Early Dismissal:

If for any reason, a student arrives at school after **8:30 am and before 10:30am** accompanied by an adult, the student will be considered tardy. A student who arrives after 10:30 am will require a parental note or doctor's note. **This will count towards your ten (10) parental excuses allowed by law.** If no parental note or doctor's note is provided after 10:30am your child will be marked as an unexcused absence for the whole day. **After the third tardy, you will be required to stay for a meeting with an administrator.**

If for any reason, a student leaves school before 1:00pm for an early dismissal, the student must have a parental note or doctor's note. **This will count towards your ten (10) parental excuses allowed by law.** If no parental note or doctor's note is provided within three (3) days of the early dismissal, your child will be marked as an unexcused absence for the whole day.

**I understand that by signing this contract, I will adhere to the Attendance Guidelines. A full copy of the attendance policy can be found in the Family Information Guide.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

Date

**Failure to sign the contract means that you are in assent and agreement to these conditions.**

### **Code of Conduct**

Montessori Regional Charter School is committed to providing a superior Montessori Program of study that will develop lifelong learners in a safe, respectful environment. MRCS takes a proactive approach to student discipline based on the Montessori philosophy of education. All school discipline is based on improving the whole child and addressing the core reasons for the improper behavior. This process is designed to empower the child, with the ultimate goal of having the child use their skills and talents in a positive and productive manner.

The MRCS Code of Conduct is applicable to students on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, this includes school dances and field trips, transportation to and from a school-sponsored activity, and transportation to and from school.

The MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy procedure will be presented to and discussed with students annually. Teachers will review the Montessori Pride Values with the students and set clear expectations surrounding the Montessori Pride Values.

### **Montessori Pride Values**

- Be Respectful of People and Property
- Move Safely Through the Environments
- Be Ready to Listen and Learn
- Understand, Ask, Do Your Best

### Student Responsibilities

Each MRCS student will:

- Understand and utilize the six pillars of Character Education:
  - Trustworthiness
  - Respect
  - Responsibility
  - Fairness
  - Caring
  - Citizenship
- Use self-control and behavior management techniques
- Use strategies for positively responding to and reporting bullying
- Use Appropriate problem solving techniques inside and outside of the classroom
- Follow the expectations for appropriate student behavior as explained in the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy as well as the Montessori Pride Values.
- Follow the consequence process for inappropriate student behavior as explained in the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy.

### Parent/ Family Responsibilities

Each parent / family will:

- Provide physical, emotional, and academic support for his/her student
- Explain and discuss The MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy and behavior expectations and consequences to his/her student
- Instill in his/her student the obligation to demonstrate appropriate behavior and comply with the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy
- Fully cooperate with MRCS school personnel whenever support services and/or disciplinary consequences are indicated for his/her student
- Understand and utilize the Montessori Pride Values with his/her student

***Due to federal confidentiality laws, schools cannot share with parents/guardians disciplinary consequences given to students other than their own child.***

### MRCS Staff Responsibilities

Each staff member at MRCS is committed to implementing The MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy with fairness, fidelity, and consistency. Each staff member will honor, respect, and value the individual differences of every student. At the same time, problem solving strategies will be taught to empower each student to become independent and self-reliant as they interact appropriately in the school environment.



Each staff member will:

- Maintain a positive learning environment with meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences during the school day.
- Model respectful, positive, appropriate behavior when interacting with students and peers.
- Explain, discuss, and model the difference between inappropriate and appropriate school behavior to the students.
- Support and reinforce the appropriate behavior strategies taught to the students using the Montessori Pride Values
- Be consistent in explaining and enforcing the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy to every student.
- Communicate level one and two infractions to parents/ guardians.

Students, Parents, and MRCS staff working cooperatively as partners; will empower our students to choose positive, appropriate behaviors that will result in a safe, productive learning environment with high academic expectations.

### **Student Discipline**

MRCS takes a proactive approach to facilitating appropriate and positive student behavior, ensuring that every student has access to a safe, meaningful learning environment for in person and online learning. Each behavior will be aligned with our Montessori Pride Values and progress will be reviewed quarterly. Student behaviors can be defined under the following levels.

#### **Level 1:**

Level One behaviors are addressed by a classroom teacher or teaching assistant. The student is often redirected so that the behavior does not interfere with student learning or safety.

#### **Be Respectful of People and Property**

- Teasing another student- The act of making fun or name calling another student in the classroom and/ or online learning environment.
- Inappropriate words - Words that are not appropriate for the school environment which could be offensive to another student or staff member in the classroom and/or online learning environment. When communicating with teachers or classmates online posts should be positive, appropriate, and related to the activity or assignment.
- Misuse of school property- Using school materials, technology, or furniture in a way in which they were not designed to be used.

#### **Move Safely Through the Environment**

- Pushing and Shoving; Horseplay - Engaging in unsafe behavior or play that is rough or boisterous.

- Dress Code / Electronic Policy Violation- A violation of the MRCS Dress Code or Electronic Policy. Dress Code and Electronic Policy can be found in the Parent Information Guide.

### **Be Ready to Listen and Learn**

- Non-compliance- Failure to follow the directions or expectations set by the classroom teacher or any other MRCS Staff member in the classroom or online learning environment.

### **Understand, Ask, Do your Best**

- Minor class disruptions- Behavior that causes a disruption to the learning of others.
- Excessive Talking - Talking that is disruptive to the learning of others in the classroom or online learning environment.
- Minor Temper Tantrum - An outburst that includes but is not limited to stomping of the feet, crying, yelling out, pouting, but is easily deescalated.

### **Level 2:**

Level Two behaviors are those that are considered to be inappropriate or intentional behaviors. These behaviors disrupt the orderly classroom environment, student learning and/ or safety. These behaviors disrupt the classroom environment and interfere with student learning or safety. These behaviors will first be addressed by the classroom teacher or teaching assistant.

### **Be Respectful of People and Property**

- Profanity- Including these forms, but not limited to: gestures, symbols, verbal, written, etc. Profanity is prohibited in the classroom and online learning environment.
- Destruction of property- the action or process of causing so much damage to something that it cannot be repaired properly.
- Verbal altercation- A verbal disagreement between two or more students that includes but is not limited to yelling, offensive remarks, profanity, inappropriate language.
- Stealing- Taking another person's property without the owner's knowledge.

### **Moving Safely in the Environment**

- Intent to hurt- Student attacks another student verbally, physically, or through online communication.
- Sharing passwords or school accounts- Students should protect their passwords- do not share with peers or classmates. Students should only access their MRCS account.

### **Be Ready to Listen and Learn**

- Major disrespect- The lack of control of words, actions, and body movement towards another MRCS staff member or peer in the classroom or online learning environment.
- Major classroom disruption or tantrums- An emotional outburst which includes but is not limited to crying, screaming, violence, and defiance.

### **Understand, Ask, Do Your Best**

- Cheating- Using or copying another student's work or that of an online classmate.

### **Level 3:**

Level Three behaviors are behaviors that are considered aggressive in nature. These behaviors will result in immediate contact with a school administrator.

#### **Be Respectful of People and Property**

- Inappropriate language or touching- Discussing or touching parts of the body that are covered by a bathing suit. Making sexual jokes or overtures or repeated use of profane language.
- Bullying and Cyber-bullying- Intentional, electronic, verbal, written, or physical act that is directed at another student or students in a school setting which is severe, persistent, or pervasive. It has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, creating a threatening or substantially interrupting the orderly operation of the school or school setting.
- Harassment- aggressive pressure or intimidation.
- Vandalism- The repeated destruction of property.
- Plagiarism Using or copying internet content to turn in as your own.

#### **Move Safely Through the Environments**

- Fighting- Physical altercation between 2 or more students.
- Threats or acts of violence- Attempt or threaten to attempt to injure or damage another student or school personnel.

#### **Be Ready to Listen and Learn**

- Bringing pornographic or violent pictures to school or accessing pornographic or violent websites during school.
- Defying Authority - Increased aggression and out of control behavior which creates an unsafe environment and imposes an imminent danger for the individual or others in the classroom.

#### **Understand, Ask, Do Your Best**

- Possession of illegal or controlled substances in school at any time, real or imitation.
- Possession of a weapon, real or imitation.

#### **Behaviors Regarding Infectious Disease**

If applicable in accordance with school policy, PDE, and the Department of Health guidelines.

- Refusing to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during designated times
  - *Masking will be enforced by building level administration. The first time a warning and mask will be provided when a student is not in compliance. The second time will result in a parent collaboration. The third and other subsequent times will result in disciplinary action or transition to remote learning.*
- Taking and/or touching the PPE of others
- Refusing to follow social distancing rules

- Purposely coughing and/or sneezing on others
- Touching and/or taking the food/ drinks of others
- Taking and/or touching the school supplies of others
- Refusing to wash hands during designated hand washing times
- Wiping bodily fluids on others or their belongings
- Refusing to sanitize one's area and items during designated times
- Removing, tampering with, or breaking protective barriers

***Refusal to follow these guidelines will result in disciplinary action.***

***This policy outlines possible steps to be followed. Alternative disciplinary procedures may be followed at the discretion of The Board and Administration.***

### **Truancy Policy (referenced in Attendance Policy)**

Truant and Habitually Truant (Reference Act 138 2016)

#### **Truant**

"Truant" shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When the child is truant, the school will notify in writing the child's parent or legal guardian of the child's violation of compulsory school attendance within 10 school days of the child's third unexcused absence. The notice will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant and an offer to attend a school attendance improvement conference. If the child continues to incur unexcused absences after the school has issued the notice the school will offer by advance written notice a school attendance improvement conference to the child and the parent/ guardian of the child. The conference will occur even if the parent/ guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference. The outcome of the conference will be documented in a written school attendance improvement plan.

#### **Habitually Truant**

"Habitually truant" shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When a child is habitually truant, the school will:

1. Refer the child to either of the following:
  1. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program.
  2. The county children and youth agency for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child under the provisions of 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to juvenile matters).
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the child.
3. When referring a habitually truant child to the county children and youth agency or filing a citation with the court because a child has been habitually truant, the school shall provide verification that a school attendance improvement conference was held.

Unexcused Absence: shall mean an absence from school which is not permitted by the provisions in section 1329 and for which an approved explanation has not been submitted within the time period and

in the manner prescribed by the governing body. An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

### **Discipline of Special Education Students**

Montessori Regional Charter School will comply with all Federal and State regulations. MRCS will continue to provide Free and Appropriate Public Education to students requiring special education services as deemed necessary by their Individualized Education Program. MRCS will make every effort to work collaboratively with families to ensure that special education services are provided.

*In accordance to 22 Pa.Code §§ 14.143 & 711.61 an intended disciplinary exclusion of a student eligible for special education is a change in educational placement in any of these three situations:*

- *The disciplinary exclusion is for more than 10 consecutive school days;*
- *The disciplinary exclusion, when cumulated with other disciplinary exclusions in a single year, exceeds 15 school days; or*
- *The disciplinary exclusion (for any length of time) involves a student with an intellectual disability*

### **The following infractions to the MRCS Code of Conduct will be handled for special education students**

- All level I and level II infractions will be handled the same as their non-disabled peers
- Level III infractions that result in a short-suspension ,less than three days, will be handled the same as their non-disabled peers, except for students with an Intellectual Disability .
- Suspensions for special education students must be no more than 10 consecutive days or no more than 15 cumulative days in a single school year.

### **Manifestation Determination:**

The LEA must first conduct a manifestation determination for a disciplinary change in educational placement. An eligible student may be removed to a 45-school-day interim alternative educational setting without the require manifestation determination if the student:

- Carries a weapon or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function;
- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function;
- Inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function. 34 C.F.R§300.530(g)

### **Manifestation Determination Process:**

- If the suspension is more than 10 consecutive days, the school must first conduct a Manifestation Determination.
- IDEA 2004 requires the LEA, parent, and relevant members of the student's IEP team to determine whether the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability.
- The Manifestation Determination must be conducted within 10 school days of the decision to change the educational placement with a disability due to a violation to the Code of Conduct.
- At the manifestation determination meeting the team will ask:
  - What was the student behavior that violated the school's Code of Conduct?
  - What were the circumstances surrounding the incident?

- What is the student's disability?
- Was there a causal relationship between the behavior and the disability?
- Was the IEP being implemented properly? If not, did the school fail to implement the IEP which caused the violation of the Code of Conduct?
- Was the student's behavior which resulted in a violation of the Code of Conduct a manifestation of the student's disability?
- The regulation at 34 C.F.R § 300.530 (f)(1) requires that If the LEA, parent, and IEP team members determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability and the IEP team must either conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless one had previously been conducted prior to the behavior resulting in the change of educational placement, and implement a behavior intervention plan for the student; or if a behavioral intervention plan has already been developed, the IEP team must review the behavioral intervention plan and modify it, as necessary to address the behavior.
- If the LEA determines that the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be excluded from school.
- If a LEA determines that a student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the LEA may proceed with the disciplinary exclusion via the procedures for changing educational placement.
- IDEA 2004 provides that parents may discount the manifestation determination by requesting a due process hearing, thereby invoking pendency. Such hearing, as well as parent-requested hearings regarding disciplinary exclusions which are changes in educational placement, must be expedited.
- 34 § C.F.R 300.530 (e)(1)(ii) states that if during the manifesting determination, the LEA determines that the conduct was the direct result of a failure to implement the IEP, the LEA must take immediate steps to remedy the deficiencies. For children placed in a 45-school day interim alternative education setting under 34 C.F.R § 300.530(g), there is no requirement for a manifestation determination.

**Exclusions from school (Reference 22 Pa.Code § 12.6)**

(a) The governing board shall define and publish the types of offenses that would lead to exclusion from school. Exclusions affecting certain students with disabilities shall be governed by § 14.143 (relating to disciplinary placements) and 34 CFR 300.519—300.529 (relating to discipline procedures).

(b) Exclusion from school may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

(1) Suspension is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.

(i) Suspensions may be given by the principal or person in charge of the public school.

(ii) A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.

(iii) The parents or guardians and the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended.

(iv) When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements in § 12.8(c) (relating to hearings).

(v) Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period.

(vi) Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the governing board.

(2) Expulsion is exclusion from school by the governing board for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing under § 12.8.

(c) During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the governing board in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his normal class except as set forth in subsection (d).

(d) If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.

(e) Students who are under 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled and shall be provided an education.

(1) The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the district's superintendent.

(2) Within 30 days of action by the governing board, the parents or guardians shall submit to the school district written evidence that the required education is being provided as described in paragraph (1) or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, the school entity shall, within 10 days of receipt of the notification, make provision for the student's education. A student with a disability shall be provided educational services as required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).

(3) If the approved educational program is not complied with, the school entity may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See § 12.1(b) (relating to free education and attendance).

### **In-School Suspension (Reference 22 Pa.Code § 12.7.)**

(a) A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.

(b) Communication to the parents or guardian shall follow the suspension action taken by the school.

(c) When the in-school suspension exceeds 10 consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the principal shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th school day in accordance with the procedures in § 12.8 (relating to hearings).

(d) The student's school entity has the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension.

**Hearings (Reference 22 Pa. Code § 12.8.)**

(a) *General.* Education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.

(b) *Formal hearings.* A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the governing board or an authorized committee of the board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the board. When a committee of the board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire governing board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:

(1) Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.

(2) At least 3 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.

(3) The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.

(4) The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.

(5) The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.

(6) The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.

(7) The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf.

(8) A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.

(9) The proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:

(i) Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.

(ii) Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his rights under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).

(iii) In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.

(10) Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.



(c) *Informal hearings.* The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended.

(1) The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.

(2) The following due process requirements shall be observed in regard to the informal hearing:

- (i) Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.
- (ii) Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.
- (iii) A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
- (iv) A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf.
- (v) The school entity shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.

### Behavior Matrix

Infraction	Number of incidents	Number of incidents	Consequence	Parent Contact
Level 1				
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		
Teasing another student	1-3	1-2	Redirection, Apology note	optional
	4-5	3	In class or online reflection sheet, student conference, apology note if applicable	Required phone call from teacher
	6 +	4+	Level 2 - Intent to Hurt	Required parent meeting with teacher
Inappropriate words	1-3	1-2	Redirection, Apology note	optional
	4-5	3	In class or online reflection sheet, student conference, apology note if applicable	Required phone call from teacher
	6 +	4+	Level 2- Profanity	Required parent meeting with teacher
Misuse of school property	1-3	1-2	Redirection, Apology note	optional

	4-5	3	In class or online reflection sheet, student conference, apology note if applicable	Required phone call from teacher
	6 +	4+	Level 2- Destruction of Property	Required parent meeting with teacher
<b>Move Safely Through the Environment</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		
Pushing and Shoving; Horseplay	1-3	1-2	Redirection, Apology note	optional
	4-5	3	In class reflection sheet, student conference, apology note if applicable	Required phone call from teacher
	6 +	4+	Level 2- Intent to Hurt	Required parent meeting with teacher
Electronic Policy Violation	1 +	1 +	Electronic device is taken to office. Parent must pick up electronic device at school office.	Parent phone call from teacher
Dress Code Violation	1+	1 +	Student will be asked to make appropriate changes to rectify dress code violation.	At discretion of Administrator
	2 +	2+	Student will be asked to make appropriate changes to rectify dress code violation.	Phone call to Parent by Admin
<b>Be Ready to Listen and Learn</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		
Non-compliance	1-3	1-2	Redirection, Apology note	optional
	4-5	3	In class or online reflection sheet, student conference, apology note if applicable	Required phone call from teacher
	6 +	4+	Level 2: Major disrespect	Required parent meeting with teacher
<b>Understand, Ask, Do your Best</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		

Minor class disruptions; excessive talking, temper tantrum	1-3	1-2	Redirection, Apology note, Separation if needed	optional
	4-5	3	In class or online reflection sheet, student conference, apology note if applicable	Required phone call from teacher
	6 +	4+	<b>Level 2- Verbal Altercation or Major classroom disruption or tantrum</b>	Required parent meeting with teacher
<b>Level 2:</b>				
Infraction	Number of incidents	Number of incidents	Consequence	Parent Contact
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		
Profanity	1	1	Student Conference, in class or online reflection sheet, apology note if applicable	Required phone call from teacher
	2-3	2	Recess Reflection , apology note if applicable, referral to Building Level Support Team	Required parent meeting with teacher
	4+	3+	<b>Level- 3 Inappropriate language or touching Behavior Improvement Plan</b>	Admin Contact
Destruction of property	1	1	Student Conference, in class or online reflection sheet, apology note if applicable	Required Parent phone call from teacher
	2-3	2	Recess Reflection, apology note if applicable,referral to Building Level Support Team	Required parent meeting with teacher
	4+	3+	<b>Level 3- Vandalism Behavior Improvement Plan</b>	Admin Contact
Verbal altercation	1	1	Student Conference, in class reflection, apology note if applicable	Required Parent phone call from teacher

	2-3	2	Recess Reflection, apology note if applicable, referral to Building Level Support Team	Required parent meeting with teacher
	4 +	3+	Level 3 - Physical Altercation or Inappropriate Language Behavior Improvement Plan	Admin Contact
Stealing	1	1	Student Conference, in class reflection, apology note if applicable	Required Parent phone call from teacher
	2-3	2	Recess Reflection, apology note if applicable, behavior contract	Required parent meeting with teacher
	4+	3+	Admin Contact Behavior Improvement Plan	Admin Contact
<b>Moving Safely in the Environment</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		
Intent to hurt	1	1	Student Conference, in class or online reflection sheet, apology note if applicable	Required Parent phone call from teacher
	2-3	2	Recess Reflection, apology note if applicable, referral to Building Level Support Team	Required parent meeting with teacher
	4	3+	Level 3- Bullying or Threats or Acts of Violence Behavior Improvement Plan	Admin Contact
Sharing Passwords or School Accounts	1-2	1	Student Conference, in class or online reflection sheet	Required Parent Phone Call from teacher
	3+	2+	Level 3- Defying Authority	Admin Contact
<b>Be Ready to Listen and Learn</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		
Major disrespect / Major classroom disruption or tantrums	1	1	Student Conference, in class or online reflection sheet, apology note if applicable	Required Parent phone call from teacher

	2-3	2	Recess Reflection, apology note if applicable, referral to Building Level Support Team	Required parent meeting with teacher
	4 +	3+	Level 3- Defying Authority Behavior Improvement Plan	Admin Contact
<b>Understand, Ask, Do Your Best</b>	<b>K &amp; Lower Elementary</b>	<b>Middle &amp; Upper Elementary</b>		
Cheating	1	1	Student Conference, in class or online reflection sheet, apology note if applicable	Required Parent phone call from teacher
	2-3	2	Recess Reflection, apology note if applicable, referral to Building Level Support Team	Required parent meeting with teacher
	4 +	3+	Behavior Improvement Plan	Admin Contact
<b>Level 3</b>				
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>				
Inappropriate language or touching			Recess Reflection, Removal from Classroom, In School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, Expulsion or any other possible consequence deemed necessary by the CEO or designee.	Required Parent Phone call or Conference from Administrator
Bullying , Cyber-bullying, Harassment				
Vandalism				
Plagiarism				
<b>Move Safely Through the Environments</b>				

Fighting		Recess Reflection, Removal from Classroom, In School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, Expulsion or any other possible consequence deemed necessary by the CEO or designee	Required Parent Phone call or Conference from Administrator
Threats or acts of violence			
<b>Be Ready to Listen and Learn</b>			
Bringing pornographic or violent pictures to school or accessing pornographic or violent websites during school or on a school-owned device		Recess Reflection, Removal from Classroom, In School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, Expulsion or any other possible consequence deemed necessary by the CEO or designee	Required Parent Phone call or Conference from Administrator
Defying Authority		Recess Reflection, Removal from Classroom, In School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, Expulsion or any other possible consequence deemed necessary by the CEO or designee	Required Parent Phone call or Conference from Administrator
<b>Understand, Ask, Do Your Best</b>			
Possession of illegal or controlled substances in school at any time, real or imitation		Recess Reflection, Removal from Classroom, In School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, Expulsion or any other possible consequence deemed necessary by the CEO or designee	Required Parent Phone call or Conference from Administrator
Possession of a weapon, real or imitation			

*MRCS does not suspend students in grades K-2 for minor offenses. All suspensions are at the discretion of the CEO or designee.*

# Academics

## Philosophy

The Montessori Method of Education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori; Dr. Montessori observed children from birth to adulthood, recorded her observations and developed a child-centered educational approach. The development of the whole child (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) is carefully considered as the learning environment is prepared to encourage students to become independent, self-reliant, life-long learners and problem solvers.

## MRCS Curriculum

The MRCS Montessori curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies including Language (Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening), Mathematics, and Cultures (History, Geography, and Science) and is fully aligned with Pennsylvania State Standards. All students in grades 3 through 6 participate in the state required PSSA Assessment administered each Spring. Mathematics and Language assessments are administered to grades 3 through 6 with grade 4 receiving a Science Assessment and Grade 6 receiving a Writing Assessment.

## MRCS Teachers

All MRCS classroom teachers are Pennsylvania State Certified elementary education teachers and have completed training for and received a Montessori Teaching Credential for the age group they instruct. In addition, each classroom has the academic support of a Teaching Assistant. The Specials teachers (Music, Art, Physical Education/Health, and Latin) are certified in their areas of expertise.

## Homework

MRCS believes that homework should be academically meaningful and support independence and self-reliance in our students. Certain grade levels will receive homework on an age appropriate, regular schedule.

### Homework is not optional

- Homework assignments are critical to the lesson plan.
- Homework assignments will support your student's academic foundation.

- Homework assignments need to be done completely and turned in when due.

#### Homework will:

- Reinforce a previously taught lesson.
- Students will have learned the fundamental skills needed to complete the assignment.
- Have clear instructions.
- Be corrected and returned with constructive feedback to each student.

#### Conference/Progress Reports

Families will receive detailed progress reports for their students four times per year. MRCS schedules two conferences per year – Fall and Spring – to discuss with parents/guardians their student's progress.

During the conferences, teachers will:

- Review the student's Progress Report.
- Explain specific components and academic requirements of each subject area in the curriculum.
- Discuss any areas of concern about the student's academic progress and behavior.
- Listen to parent's concerns about the student's academic progress and behavior.
- Explain and share the results of available assessments used to monitor student progress.

*Attendance at conferences is extremely important for facilitating the home to school connection. If you are unable to attend a conference, the progress report will be sent to your home.*

#### Parent/Teacher Communication

- Teachers may contact parents as needed to discuss concerns and issues affecting their academic needs.
- Please **do not** use Back to School night, school social events, or arrival and dismissal carpool times to ask teachers or teaching assistants for updates or to discuss specific issues about your child.
- Parents may **e-mail** or message teachers via ParentSquare (not teaching assistants) to schedule an appointment to discuss and resolve specific academic issues.

#### Classroom Placement

Montessori classrooms are small communities where students work respectfully and harmoniously together as they learn independence and creative thinking. The student placement process at MRCS is thoughtfully done by the academic staff.



The classroom placement will reflect:

- The students' Academic needs.
- The students' ages.
- Social dynamics.
- Family relationships.
- Ratio of boys/girls.
- Personalities of the students and teachers.

***The students' classroom placements are made with each student's individual needs in mind to facilitate a balanced, safe, empowering classroom environment.***

## Health Policy

The purpose of our health program during school hours is to provide first aid and medical care for injuries and illnesses. School nurses perform health screenings for all students, which are mandated by the state and provide support for those with special needs. There will be a focus on education, prevention, and overall wellness for the child. School nurses cannot diagnose, prescribe treatment, or give medications without parental permission and doctors' orders. Please be aware that if you send your child to school then we expect them to participate in all the planned activities of the day, including recess (indoor and outdoor) and gym.

Your child should be kept home if he/she:

1. He/she has a fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit within the past 24 hours without medication
2. Vomiting/diarrhea within the past 24 hours
3. Live head lice
4. Communicable disease such as flu or signs of chicken pox.
5. Pink eye with drainage or crusting may be contagious, however a student may be sent to school if the student has been on antibiotics for the past 24 hours (as indicated by a physician's note) or has a written permission slip from a physician stating the conjunctivitis (pink eye) is not contagious.

If your child gets sick at school:

The school will assess your child and determine whether or not he/she needs to be sent home.

Your child will be sent home if:

1. He/she has a fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
2. Vomiting/diarrhea
3. A pink eye with drainage or crusting
4. Live head lice
5. Severe, persistent cough

6. Communicable diseases such as flu or signs of chicken pox.

If your child presents any of these symptoms, you will be called at the number(s) you have provided for us in your child's emergency contact list. It is very important for us to have an accurate and up to date phone number in order to call you in case of an emergency. Please contact the office immediately if there is any change in your contact numbers.

In the case of a medical emergency

The school will contact you at the emergency numbers that you have provided. If we are unable to reach you, and it is medically necessary, we will contact 911 and a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital emergency room. In the health questionnaire, please specify what hospital you would prefer your child be sent to in the case of an emergency. The school will make every effort to notify you regarding your child.

If your child needs medication during school hours

If at all possible, medications should be administered at home. If it is medically necessary that a child must take medication during school hours the medication must be hand delivered by an adult to the office with a medication authorization form and the medication **MUST** be in its original container.

Students are not to carry any medications with them during school hours unless a physician's permission is obtained (i.e.: inhalers, EpiPen).

If your child needs medication on a field trip

If your child is scheduled to participate on a school field trip and it is necessary for him/her to take a daily medication, please take the following steps:

1. Enclose and seal the medication in an envelope or original container
2. Print clearly your child's name, the name of the medication, amount to be administered, as well as the time it should be given (ie: lunch time) and signature on the envelope or on a permission slip
3. Please, have an adult hand deliver medication to the office. For the safety of your child and others please never send your child to school with their medications in a backpack
4. Please bring medication at least one day before the field trip.

## Health Screenings Provided

### Height / Weight/ BMI Measurement

K-6 grade students are screened annually. The purpose of this measurement is to screen for possible weight concerns (under and over). BMI is used as a screening tool that calculates a child's weight to his/her height.

### Vision Screenings

K-6 grade students will have both near and distance vision checked annually. Color vision and depth perception need to be checked only once, and these are usually done in first and second grade respectively. A referral slip is sent home if the screening indicates potential vision problems so the parent can arrange for an examination by a vision specialist.

### Hearing Screenings

K-3 grade students will have their hearing checked annually.

### Scoliosis Screening

6th grade students will be screened for scoliosis and parents will be notified of any abnormal findings for referral to a physician.

### Physical Examination Screenings

As mandated by Public Health Act 404, Kindergarten and 6 grade students must receive a physical examination by their family doctor or a screening by the school physician. You do have the option to be examined by the School Physician at no cost.

### Dental Examinations

As mandated by the state, K, and 3 grade students must have a dental examination and evaluation by their own dentist or a screening performed by the school dentist at no cost.

## A Few Health Topics

### SKIN CONDITIONS

There are a variety of skin conditions that can be seen in the school setting ranging from insect bites to ringworm. It is the role of the school nurse to determine whether or not the condition is contagious and if the student should be excused from school. Rashes associated with internal diseases such as chickenpox, are contagious and the student will be excused from school until released by a physician to return to school. Other contagious conditions that should first be evaluated by a physician before returning to school are impetigo, ringworm, and scabies.

## CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINKEYE)

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the eye(s) that causes redness, tearing, and irritation. Some cases are caused by allergies. However, if the eye has discharge or is crusted over the cause is most likely bacterial or viral in nature, which is very contagious. If the pink eye appears to be caused by allergies, the child will be monitored for the day. If the pink eye appears infectious the child will be sent home from school and referred to a physician.

## LIFE THREATENING ILLNESS

If your child has a life threatening illness such as asthma or severe allergies the school nurse will make an individualized health plan (IHP) for your child's needs. This health plan will include an emergency action plan. This plan will be shared with the student's teacher as well. If your child requires medication (for example an Epi-Pen or rescue inhaler), please refer to our medication policy segment.

## HEAD LICE POLICY

Head lice, while a nuisance, are not a health hazard and are not responsible for the spread of disease. Some schools have adopted a "no-nit" policy, however, there is no evidence that a no-nit policy prevents or shortens outbreaks. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American School Nurse Association, and the Center for Disease Control discourage the use of a "no nit policy". The Center of Disease Control recommends a no-lice policy. Here at MRCS we are utilizing a No-Lice Policy. This means if we find live head lice on your child's head, he or she will be sent home with recommendations on how to treat the head lice.

After thorough investigation, the school believes that the best method for eliminating head lice is a two-step approach: use natural, non-pesticide products to kill live lice (such as olive oil) and to do a comprehensive "nit" check for 21 days. The school nurse can provide you with both information and training on how to detect and remove head lice.

A chronic case of head lice can be defined as a child infested three separate months of the year or for 6 consecutive weeks. Chronic head lice can result in unnecessary school absences, long-term discomfort to the child, and infections from long term scratching. Chronic cases of head lice may signify other family or socioeconomic problems. These cases should be addressed by a multidisciplinary work group to determine the best approach to help identify and resolve this issue. Members of this group may consist of the school nurse, health department, social services, and other necessary members to achieve the best outcome for the child's health.

## Electronics Policy

The use by students of digital media devices (see definition below) shall be prohibited during the school day, or during school activities and programs. Devices that are brought to school must be turned off and made inoperable and stored in a personal backpack or locker at all times. Parents should be aware that the school will not be responsible for, nor will investigate any lost or stolen digital media device. High value items should not be brought to school.

Violation of this policy will result in confiscation of the device. Only a parent or guardian may retrieve the item upon notification.

Definition of digital media device:

Any item that can store information in a digital format, including but not limited to: cell phones, cameras, computers, recorders, smart watches, and gaming devices etc.

## Field Trips

Field Trips are designed to support classroom learning and are an important part of the Montessori Curriculum. All Field Trips are staffed by our highly qualified academic personnel, which ensures that MRCS policies and conduct are maintained. Since students on field trips are representing Montessori Regional Charter School they should dress appropriately and behave according to school conduct code at all times.

**If students are traveling to a field trip destination, all students must have a parent completed permission slip that will be posted on ParentSquare prior to the day of the trip in order to participate.** Permission slips will be posted on ParentSquare a minimum of one week prior to the trip. Students who elect not to participate in a field trip are expected to report to school and will be given alternate assignments.

Please note that in order to ensure student safety, parents or other relatives are not permitted to meet students at the field trip location.

## Lost and Found

Lost and Found shelves are located on the first floor near the office and in each common area on each floor of the academic wing. Cell phones, jewelry, money, and electronics will be turned into the office for safekeeping. As a reminder, please refrain from sending money or valuables to school.

## Fire and Safety Drills

Fire and safety drills are conducted at least once a month. When the alarm signals a fire drill, all students will leave their room in single file and walk out of the building through the prescribed exit. Students will not have an opportunity to take personal items or coats with them. Complete directions for the fire and safety drills and proper exits are posted in each room throughout the building.

## Notice of Non-Discrimination

Montessori Regional Charter School is an equal opportunity education institution and does not discriminate in employment, education programs or activities based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, because a person is disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam Era or any other legally protected class, or for engaging in any other protected activities. This policy of non-discrimination extends to all other legally protected classifications. Publication of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Inquiries may be made by contacting the School at 814-833-7771.

Montessori Regional Charter School is obligated, pursuant to various federal and Pennsylvania laws, to notify the parents/guardians of District students of their rights regarding various issues. The following information will explain these important concepts and give required notifications of student and parent/guardian rights on the various topics set forth below.

### 1. **Right to request teacher and paraprofessional qualifications**

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that parents/guardian be notified they have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher/s including, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Whether their child's teacher has met state qualification or licensing criteria for their child's grade level and subject matter in which the teacher provides instruction.
- b. Whether their child's teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which Pennsylvania qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- c. What baccalaureate degree major their child's teacher has earned and any other graduate certification or degree held by their child's teacher and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- d. Whether their child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and, if so, their qualifications. Parents/guardians shall be notified by the District administration if

or when their child is taught by a teacher who is not “highly qualified” for four consecutive weeks.

## 2. **Homeless children and youth**

The No Child Left Behind Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act require that homeless children and youth have full and equal access to an appropriate public education and that they experience success in school. Homeless students shall have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other students. Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated, or stigmatized based on their status as homeless. The District administration shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education.

Students enrolling in the charter school who are, or become, homeless students should notify the District of that fact so the District can better ensure the student’s rights under federal and Pennsylvania law are explained to him/her and to his/her parents. “Homeless students” are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, which includes the following conditions:

- a. Sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
- b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- c. Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- d. Abandoned in hospitals.
- e. Awaiting foster care placement.
- f. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
- g. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
- h. Living as migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

## 3. **Migrant student education**

Pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act and Pennsylvania’s Migrant Education Program, the Charter school cooperates and participates in the Northwest Pennsylvania Tri-County Intermediate Unit’s (“IU”) migrant education program for the benefit of migrant children attending the school. The school works in conjunction with the IU to improve and coordinate the educational continuity for the children of migratory workers who attend the school and encourages the parents/guardians of migrant children to inform the school of that status so the school can better ensure the student’s rights under federal and Pennsylvania law are explained to him/her and to his/her parents.

4. **Limited English proficient students**

The school complies with the language instruction for limited English proficient (“LEP”) student provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. If your child is identified to participate in the school’s LEP program, you will be notified of further details about your child’s rights and participation in the LEP program at that time. Additionally, if your child participates in the school’s LEP program, you will receive notice of opportunities to attend meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of students who are limited English proficient and identified for participation in the LEP program.

5. **Adequate Yearly Progress/school improvement/school choice**

Charter school students will be notified of their educational options and rights should the school fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act and relevant Pennsylvania standards.

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

### Notice for Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Montessori Regional Charter School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, the Montessori Regional Charter School may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without prior written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with school procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Montessori Regional Charter School to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill showing your student’s role in a drama production
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets
- Musical concert programs

**Directory information**, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s/eligible student’s prior written consent unless the parent or eligible student has advised the charter school that they do not want the information disclosed without their prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class pictures, etc...



MRCSS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Photographs used to promote the charter school
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed

Directory information does not include a student's:

1. Social Security number, or
2. student identification (ID) number, user ID, or other unique personal identifiers used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, except those identifiers may be included in "directory information" if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

Questions or written requests should be directed to:

Montessori Regional Charter School

Krystal Wright, Enrollment

[kwright@mrcserie.org](mailto:kwright@mrcserie.org)

2549 W. 8th St.

Erie, PA 16505-4401

\* This notice is available in several languages-Please contact the Office of Student Services

## Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- 1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the Charter School receives request for access.**

Parents or eligible students should submit to the CEO (or other designated school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school

official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

**2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate or misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.**

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask MRCS to amend a record should write to the CEO (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed.

If the charter school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the charter school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

**3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. While you may request a listing of all of the exceptions, the three most common of these exceptions to the prior consent rule are as follows:**

- a. The charter school may disclose education records to "school officials" with "legitimate educational interests" without obtaining the prior consent of parent(s). A "school official" is a person employed by the charter school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, insurer, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- b. Upon request, the school will disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
- c. Unless directed otherwise in writing by eligible students or parents, the charter school may disclose without consent "directory information," which consists of the following information: the student's name, address, telephone number (unless indicated as unlisted), date and place of birth, electronic mailing address, dates of attendance, grade level, photograph, major field of study, awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or

an invasion of privacy if disclosed. For further information regarding directory information, see below.

- 4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Charter School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:**

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5920

\*This note is available in several languages-please contact the Office of Student Services

## Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
3. Sex behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

### **Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:**

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

**Inspect, upon request, and before administration or use:**

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

*These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.*

The charter school will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The charter school will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The charter school will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the charter school has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and are provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

***Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:***

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by MRCS.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

# Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services & Programs, Services for Gifted Students, & Services for Protected Handicapped Students

The Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit and its Member School Districts, Charter Schools  
and Private Rehabilitation Residential Institution (PRRI)

Conneaut School District  
Corry Area School District  
Crawford Central School District  
The School District of the City of Erie  
Fairview School District  
Fort LeBoeuf School District  
General McLane School District  
Girard School District  
Harbor Creek School District  
Iroquois School District  
Millcreek Township School District  
North East School District  
Northwestern School District  
PENNCREST School District  
Union City Area School District  
Warren County School District  
Wattsburg Area School District  
Erie RISE Leadership Charter School  
Montessori Regional Charter School  
Perseus House Charter School of Excellence  
Tidioute Community Charter School  
Robert Benjamin Wiley Community Charter School  
Harborcreek Youth Services

## Notice to Parents

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding child find responsibilities. School districts, intermediate units and charter schools are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitle Implementation of

Chapter 15. Also, school districts are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via 22 PA Code Chapter 16. For additional information regarding gifted services, the parent may refer to 22 PA Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedure in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district, intermediate unit, and charter schools of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children. In addition to this public notice, each school district, intermediate unit and charter schools shall publish written information in the handbook and on the website. Children ages 3-21 can be eligible for special education programs and services.

If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the school district where the child attends or the Director of Special Education for the NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit identified at the end of this public notice. Children age three through the age of admission to first grade are also eligible if they have developmental delays and, as a result, need special education and related services. Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners and at least three years of age and is considered to have a developmental delay when one of the following exists: (i) The child's score, on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25 percent of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas, or (ii) The child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized tests. Developmental areas include cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional and self-help. For additional information you may contact the Early Intervention Department at the Intermediate Unit. (See Evaluation Process below for contact info.)

## Evaluation Process

Each school district, intermediate unit and charter schools have a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about procedures applicable to your child, contact the school, which your child attends. Parents of preschool age children, age three through five, may request an evaluation in writing by addressing a letter to the Early Intervention Supervisor, NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5, 252 Waterford St., Edinboro, PA 16412 or call 1-800-677-8461.

## Consent

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of the

parents. For additional information related to consent, please refer to the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net). Once written parental consent is obtained, the school district, intermediate unit, charter schools, or PRRIs will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

## Program Development

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and the parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the individualized education program (IEP) team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, school district staff, intermediate unit staff or charter school staff will issue a notice of recommended educational placement/prior written notice. Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

## Confidentiality of Information

The school districts, intermediate units, charter schools and PRRIs maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the agency who have access to personally identifiable information.

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials:

- PSSA, Keystone Exam, and PASA test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered for the administration associated with the test booklets.
- PSSA and Keystone Exam answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment.

For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to the FERPA at the following URL: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

This notice is only a summary of the special education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents. For more information or to request evaluation or screening of a preschool or school aged child, public or private, contact the school or district where your child attends. Additionally one may contact the name and number or e-mail listed below:

Christine Carucci  
Director of Special Education  
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 252 Waterford Street  
Edinboro, PA 16412  
1-800-677-5610  
[christine\\_carucci@iu5.org](mailto:christine_carucci@iu5.org)

The school district, intermediate unit and charter school will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status or because a person is a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. No preschool, elementary or secondary school pupil enrolled in a school district, intermediate unit, or charter school program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status or financial hardship.

## Programs for Eligible or Protected Handicapped Students

In compliance with Pennsylvania (22 Pa. Code 14.121) and federal (34 C.F.R 300.111) law, notice is hereby given by Montessori Regional Charter School (MRCS) that it conducts ongoing identification activities as a part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services (eligible students) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. If your child is identified by MRCS as possibly being in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures. Special Education services are available, at no cost to parents, for children with disabilities, ages 3-21 years.

### Services and Programs

Individualized services and programs are available for children ages 3 through 21 years who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to one or a combination of the following conditions:

**Developmental Delays (Early Intervention)**  
**Autism**



**Orthopedic impairment**  
**Multiple disabilities**  
**Deafness**  
**Specific learning disability**  
**Other health impairment**  
**Mentally gifted**  
**Mental retardation**  
**Emotional disturbance**  
**Traumatic brain injury**  
**Speech or language impairment**  
**Deaf-blindness**  
**Hearing impairment**  
**Visual impairment, including blindness**

### **Potential Signs of Developmental Delays and Other Risk Factors This Could Indicate a Need For Special Education Services**

Some indications that your child may be a child with a disability who is in need of special education are:

- Exhibition of an emotional disturbance over a long period of time which affects your child's ability to learn
- Consistent problems in getting along with others
- Difficulty communicating
- Lack of interest or ability in age-appropriate activities
- Resistance to change
- Difficulty performing tasks that require reading, writing, or mathematics; and
- When a child who is at least 3 years of age but before s/he has started school as a beginner, scores on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, which score indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas or if the child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized test.

### **Gifted Education**

In compliance with state law, MRCS provides services designed to meet the unique needs of gifted students. The school identifies "gifted" students on a case-by-case basis based on state law and school policy. Such students may possess superior IQ scores or met multiple criteria indicating gifted ability. If your child is believed to be in need of such services, you will be notified of evaluation procedures. If you believe your school-age child may qualify for gifted education services, you may contact the office of Student Services at any time to request a

determination of eligibility. Please note that entitlement to gifted services includes only those rights proved for Pennsylvania law.

## Screening and Evaluation

If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost upon your request. You may request a screening and evaluation at any time, however each request will be reviewed by the Charter School for appropriateness. Requests for evaluation and screening should be made to the CEO of MRCS or the Student Services Office, 2910 Sterrettania Rd, Erie PA 16506, at 833-7771. Parents of children ages 3 to school age, with requests for early intervention programs/services may request screening and evaluation by contacting the Early Intervention off of their home school district. Details regarding time and location of screening and evaluation activities conducted by MRCS for school children are available from these sources.

## Protected Handicapped Children

In compliance with state and federal law, MRCS will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. . In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to tan aspect of the school program. These services and protections for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

## I.D.E.I.A.

MRCS complies with the recent reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Procedural safeguards for students' ages 3 through 21 are available through the Student Services Department, 2910 Sterrettania Rd Erie PA 16506.

## What's Next?

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time, and location), and rights to due process procedures, you may contact the Charter School, or Department of Student Services.

## Confidentiality

All information gathered in the evaluation, identification, and programming of children who may require special education services is governed by confidentiality requirements under Pennsylvania and federal law, specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Records generated by this process as well as records sought from non-school agencies are confidential and protected by both federal and Pennsylvania legislation. Information to/from outside sources cannot be requested/released without written parental consent and the Charter School does not disclose personally identifiable information about students except as when so authorized under these laws. Information about confidentiality and access to your child's education records is available from Charter School CEO or the Office of Student Services and is also described in this Parent Information Packet.

***Esta informacion es disponible en Espanol. Pongase en contacto MRCS.***