



FAMILY HANDBOOK

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

1900 South Taft Hill Road, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526
970-311-8612

PRIMARY PROGRAM

1709 West Elizabeth Street, Fort Collins, Colorado 80521
970-691-7650

Email: office@focomontessori.org
Website: www.focomontessori.org

CONNECT

Facebook: [@FortCollinsMontessoriSchool](https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsMontessoriSchool)
Twitter: [@FoCo_Montessori](https://twitter.com/FoCo_Montessori)
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WELCOME

Welcome to School year 2018-2019 at Fort Collins Montessori School. We are delighted you have chosen FCMS as an educational home for your child and, as this FAMILY HANDBOOK explains, just as pleased to be serving your entire family through an authentic Montessori public option in Fort Collins.

This handbook is a further effort to help us work together in the interest of children and families. It opens with the PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT. We hope you will take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with that document. It responds to two questions: "What is it that you can expect of FCMS?" and "What will FCMS expect of you?" Our goal in leading with this document is to communicate as clearly as possible what we can expect of each other, and to eliminate the frustration and disappointment that can result when unstated expectations go unmet.

This FAMILY HANDBOOK is a part of our effort. We invite you to familiarize yourself with its contents and to use it as a reference tool. If you do have questions, please ask. If you have suggestions, we welcome them.

Please note that the following sentence has been added to the Parent Agreement. "I understand that a signed copy of this Fort Collins Montessori School Parent Acknowledgement form must be submitted to Fort Collins Montessori School before my child can attend school." In this way we can make sure that we all have the same understandings as we begin our new school year. We welcome you and your children to a year of discovery and growth.

Sincerely,

Paul Vincent
Head of School
Fort Collins Montessori School
pvincent@focomontessori.org

FCMS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Fort Collins Montessori School is a family-centered learning community: we take seriously our commitment to serve not only children enrolled in the school, but the entire family. Children thrive when home and school work in harmony, with both environments sharing the same educational values and expectations. Choosing to attend Fort Collins Montessori School means agreeing to a set of expectations related to the School's mission, operating principles, and policies. Our mission statement is immediately below. Additionally, some of the principles and policies we refer to here are described in this Partnership Agreement.

Fort Collins Montessori School Mission: The mission of Fort Collins Montessori School is to provide a high quality, classic Pre/K-9th Montessori school that will inspire and empower children to develop fully their academic and personal potential through the implementation of the methods and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori.

Q. What is the School's most basic expectation of parents?

A. We expect you to make continuing efforts to both understand and embrace the Montessori approach and to work in partnership with the School. We believe our most constructive relationship building will begin with families prior to admission. Fort Collins Montessori School expects parents to understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, we help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education as part of the admission process—so that parents can make an informed decision in choosing to enroll their children—and continue to provide more opportunities throughout a family's years at the school. Once children are enrolled, the school expects parents to attend regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences and parent education events, and to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the Fort Collins Montessori School Family Handbook and other school publications.

Q. What contribution can I make to create a positive school community?

A. You can demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the school, and the school's Programs. Be a role model for your children. Show respect for them, their classmates, parents of classmates, teachers and other School staff—in short, for everyone associated with the School. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our most fundamental behavioral guidelines for the children are "Respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment." We expect the same from adults, parents, and School staff, at all times and in all relationships within the school community. This includes speech, digital communications, and outward behavior. Support your child by speaking of her/his teachers, classmates, and school in positive terms. Respect and abide by the school's policies and procedures. Honor your commitments. Look for ways to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Through your behavior you contribute to your children's moral development and to the culture and climate of their school, which they experience on a daily basis.

Q. How can I create consistency between home and school?

A. You can strive to parent according to Montessori principles. Learn as much as you can about Montessori principles as they apply to preparation of your

child's home environment, as well as the way you, as a parent, interact with your children. This begins with the general principle: "Never do something for your child that s/he is ready to do for her/himself." Allow your child to engage in all of the simple tasks of practical life that a child can do for him or herself at each stage of development. Montessori education may also entail learning a communication style different from the way in which you were parented. Children develop a love of learning and become responsible, independent, and capable when parents' values and expectations are consistent with those of the School.

Q. What are my responsibilities regarding communication between home and school?

A. We expect you to maintain an active, direct, and respectful two-way communication with the school. Read communications that are sent home: these may include letters, newsletters and Calendars **that will be primarily through email or other digital means**. Inform the school in a timely fashion of pertinent changes in your child's life.

Active communication involves parents sharing observations and concerns about their child with the child's current teacher. In matters large and small, remember the principle of respect: even when there is disagreement, disagree respectfully.

Q. What can I expect of the school academically?

A. Fort Collins Montessori School aspires to fulfill its mission as a Montessori school. As a Montessori school, we are different from traditional schools. Our first commitment is to the multi-dimensional development of your child. Montessori children do amass a great deal of factual knowledge in school. However, our goal is for each child to be far more than a repository of this information: we guide each child to think for him/herself. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are essential elements at our school, with the academic foundation being standards based. This said, cognitive development and a solid academic foundation represent but two of several dimensions of our aspirations for your child; equally significant is your child's social, emotional, and physical development.

At FCMS, children will be given choices and a great deal of freedom—within limits—during the school day. The choices a child makes, and the accompanying responsibilities, influence the emerging character of your child. By choosing his/her own work or shaping it to a considerable degree and following that work through to completion while working independently or in cooperation with others, a child at FCMS will identify her/his interests and develop his/her individual gifts.

Significant emphasis is placed upon community service. Younger children learn by serving their small community, e.g., classmates, classroom, and family. As they grow, children reach out to the larger community and experience the many rewards of helping others. The children gain awareness and appreciation of others, of the challenges faced by others and, equally important, of their own strengths and abilities to help others and affect the world around them. Community service is an integral and important part of their lives and stays with them well beyond their Fort Collins Montessori School years.

We will treat each child with dignity and respect and expect that s/he will treat all others in

the same manner. We will treat each child as an individual and strive to develop each child's unique gifts—within the context of the classroom and the community. With freedom comes responsibility, and each child will learn to balance his/her personal freedom with a clear sense of responsibility to him/herself, to others, and to the community as a whole.

Q. What can I expect in terms of communication from the school?

A. We aim to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with you about your child and about information affecting the community. There are two regularly scheduled parent-teacher (or in the case of older students, parent-teacher-student) conferences each year, accompanied by written summaries, as well as a year-end written progress report. In the event of special concerns, your child's teacher will contact you to discuss these concerns by phone, by **email**, or in person. In addition to conference reporting, classroom teachers will communicate with you via classroom letters and newsletters, email messages, and short reports as needed for individual children.

Each FCMS teacher is a well-trained professional, and his or her evaluation is confidential and based on direct observation of your child. Teachers will always offer their current best understanding of your child's progress and his/her strengths and needs. For all children, this evaluation is based on the teacher's observation, which may be augmented by input from the Head of School and/or auxiliary staff. In addition to work sampling and observation, Fort Collins Montessori School adheres to Poudre School District and Colorado State expectations related to assessment and standardized testing. We will report the results of these assessments annually.

Regarding ongoing school-wide communication and parent involvement, Fort Collins Montessori School distributes a regular update or newsletter, and will provide a Family Handbook, Calendar, and other occasional letters and publications. As to basic parent involvement at the school, we will expect you to attend Montessori educational events and open house opportunities at our school. Additionally, there will be parent nominated and Board-elected positions on our school's Board. We will canvass the parents in order to learn of their skills, interests, and desires to volunteer in various activities that support the school; parents will not be asked to assist with day-to-day classroom instruction.

Q. What can I expect of the environment?

A. We strive to ensure an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive as well as aesthetically beautiful. Dr. Montessori said that the classroom teacher's first responsibility is to prepare the environment. The learning materials should correspond to the developmental characteristics of the child at each level, and those materials must be attractive to the child: correct in size, aesthetically pleasing, well maintained, and complete. More broadly, the whole environment must appeal to the child and inspire his/her work. Our community of children and adults comprises a social environment and culture that impacts your child's experience. We will strive to make this environment emotionally supportive and safe for every child. This does not mean that there will be no problems. It does mean that we will work with your child in developmentally appropriate ways to deal with problems as they arise, empowering him/her with social skills and aiding him/her in the development of emotional intelligence to prepare for a

lifetime of working with others in different communities and organizations.

Q. What professional standards can I expect of the school and faculty?

A. Fort Collins Montessori School aspires to maintain the highest pedagogical standards of Montessori practice. At a minimum, all lead teachers will hold a bachelor's degree; a number have earned master's degrees as well. In addition, Primary, and Elementary teachers will have a post-graduate diploma from an accredited Montessori teacher training center and will be or will become "Highly Qualified" according to the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind Legislation and the Colorado Charter School Grants Program. Our teachers will have a sense of mission in working with children and demonstrate high standards for themselves and their students.

The school promotes a culture of professional growth in a number of ways. Teachers will work annually with the Head of School to create a Professional Growth Plan driven by goal-setting for professional development. Over a three-year cycle, Montessori school consultants will observe each teacher and work with the school as a whole to maintain the highest standards of Montessori pedagogy. In addition, the school annually will host workshops for professional development of faculty, administration, and board. Our school will also seek Montessori accreditation within the first 5 years of opening.

Q. What can I expect of the school administration?

A. Integrity: a focus on the needs of the individual child in harmony with the life of the community; mission-driven decisions embodying good stewardship and responsible management; and an open door to your questions or concerns.

Administrative team members interface with all the various constituencies of the School: students, parents, extended family, faculty, alumni, prospective parents, professional visitors, government officials, other schools and educational organizations, and the general public. In your interactions with the administration, you can expect professional, courteous, and businesslike conduct, as well as mutually respectful communication.

The Head of School will work closely with the Board of Fort Collins Montessori School and leadership within Poudre School District. Our Head of School may often face decisions requiring a balance of competing priorities. Sometimes those factors are mutually exclusive; sometimes equally well-intentioned adults see matters differently. In making decisions, our administration will focus on the interest of the individual child in balance with the needs of the school.

MONTESSORI AND FCMS

Social Reform in Action

In the early 1900's, Dr. Maria Montessori, one of Italy's first woman physicians, was invited to develop a child-care program as part of an urban renewal project in the San Lorenzo district of Rome. The program, located on the first floor of a low-income housing project, came to be known as the Casa dei Bambini or "Children's House." Within months, news of the success of the Casa spread, first throughout Italy and later across the globe.

Over the next fifty years, her "experiment," as she called it, evolved into a carefully organized, evidence-based approach to providing children, at all developmental levels, the opportunity to construct themselves. Based on on-going observation of children, Dr. Montessori concluded that learning should be active, driven by interest, and occur in mixed-age classrooms where children at various stages of development can learn from and with one another. Her advice was always to "follow the child."

From the beginning, however, Dr. Montessori's revolutionary vision of optimal education was deeply linked to an equally powerful vision of social reform driven by the potential inherent in children. By following the child, by attending to his needs, respecting her interests, and guiding (not dictating) growth, we come to see the possibilities of a better world.

It is this spirit of hope and possibility that animates the work of FCMS, and is exemplified in our integration of children's and family development.

The Method

The Montessori Method is built on the conviction that children are intelligent, active, and purposeful beings who are deeply invested in their own formation. It is distinguished by three interconnected characteristics. The adults' roles, the environment, and a caring ethic.

The main task of the teacher is to foster the child's development rather than transmit knowledge. Montessori educators are specially trained to observe children. They use these skills to monitor student progress, diagnose needed interventions, and plan future work. The classroom is a rich, specially prepared, and developmentally appropriate environment that invites the child to active, purposeful engagement with learning.

Finally, an abiding ethic of care flows from the first two. Within the prepared environment, children develop at their own pace and adults guide that development with quiet respect for the needs of the children and their emerging capacities as learners.

The method is a response to a universal plea among children: "I want to learn, but help me to do it myself." Through carefully orchestrated experiences guided by physical and mental order, children acquire the inner discipline necessary to persist at their chosen tasks, to interact with

the world respectfully, and to participate confidently in an increasingly complex world.

To learn more about Montessori education, we suggest the following:

Books by Maria Montessori

The Montessori Method was prepared especially for readers interested in learning about her new pedagogical approach. Most titles are widely available through commercial booksellers or the public library; others can be obtained through the North American Montessori Teachers Association.

- The Absorbent Mind
- The Secret of Childhood
- The Discovery of the Child
- Education and Peace
- Education for a New World
- To Educate the Human Potential
- From Childhood to Adolescence
- The Montessori Method

Books Related to the Montessori Experience

- David Kahn (Ed.) Montessori Talks to Parents
- Paula Polk Lillard, Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education from Birth to Adulthood
- Lynn Jessen and Paula Polk Lillard, Montessori from the Start: The Child at Home from Birth to Age Three
- Angeline Stoll Lillard, Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius

Montessori Recommended Books on Child-Rearing and Family Life

- Robert Evans, Family Matters: How Schools Can Cope With the Crisis in Child-rearing
- Faber, Adele, and Elaine Mazlish, How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk; Siblings without Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too
- Jane Healy, Failure to Connect: How Computers Affect our Children's Minds – And What We Can Do About it
- Mogel, Wendy, The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self Reliant Children

Books in Spanish

- La mente absorbente (The Absorbent Mind)
- El niño: secreto de la infancia (The Secret of Childhood)
- Formación del hombre (The Formation of Man)
- La educación de las potenciales (To Educate the Human Potential)

- Un ser humano: La importancia de los primeros tres años de vida by Silvana Montanaro (Understanding the Human Being)
- La educación para el desarrollo humano by Maria Montessori (Education for Human Development)
- Cómo cultivar el espíritu del niño en un ambiente laico by Aline Wolf (Nurturing the Spirit in Non-Sectarian Classrooms)
- Una guía para padres al aula Montessori by Aline Wolf (A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom)

For these books or for assistance in locating other books in Spanish, contact: Consejo Interamericano Montessori 1203 Pacific Drive, Davis, CA 95616 530-758-6340; cite@pacbell.net.

Useful Catalogs

- The Michael Olaf Montessori Company publishes beautiful and informative catalogs
- containing Montessori-compatible books, toys, clothing and other materials.
- The Joyful Child, for Birth to Three
- Child of the World, for Age 3-12 +

Useful Websites

- www.montessori-ami.org
- www.montessori.namta.org
- www.public-montessori.org
- www.michaelolaf.net
- www.mariamontessori.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission

The mission of Fort Collins Montessori School is to provide a classic Pre/K-9 th grade Montessori program that inspires and empowers children with an exceptional educational experience based on the principles and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori.

Vision

We envision a classic Montessori school providing an individualized educational program that recognizes the development of children and supports the natural intelligence and potential within each child. Children will work in a prepared learning environment where they will flourish as enthusiastic and responsive learners, and as innovative and collaborative problem solvers. Our school will create and maintain an atmosphere in which children are intrinsically motivated, joyful, responsible, committed life-long learners who exhibit an undeniable personal strength in their knowledge of self at each stage of their growth and development.

Statement of Values

At Fort Collins Montessori School, we believe in individualized care and support for every member of our school community.

We love and dignify children by listening to them, valuing the whole child, honoring their inner guide, and providing the most optimal environment for them to become empowered, inspired, and engaged.

We provide developmentally appropriate experiences and expectations so our children can bring out that which is already within them, instilling a life-long love of learning.

We foster independence and creativity in the learning process, empowering all to fulfill their highest human potential.

We create a physically and emotionally safe environment by practicing patience and openness that invokes discovery and harmony with each other and the natural world. We support diversity, empathy, tolerance, and transparency.

In order to exemplify these values, we must:

- Nurture relationships and build community through communication based on trust, honesty, kindness, and transparency.
- Be compelled by integrity, cooperation, collaboration, compassion, and service to others.
- Honor our individuality, respect our differences, and inspire each other with candor and courage.
- Consider our impact beyond the classroom, including in our community and in our natural environment.

Maria Montessori's integrated vision of social reform, fueled by service to the child, animates all aspects of our program. From our intensive approach to engaging families, to the beautiful, developmentally appropriate environment that we will maintain for all members of the community, we view education as an "aid to life" for learners of every age.

Guided by this optimistic vision of social progress, we believe that the purpose of education is to realize human potential, which enables transformative outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. That vision will be seen in graduates who demonstrate superior capacities for creativity, adaptability, leadership, and compassion.

Leadership and Governance

FCMS's charter contract, mission, and bylaws are administered by its Governing Board. The Board has final authority for the policy and operational decisions of the school in accordance with its Charter and the Charter School Law. The Board's structure is designed to focus its energies on governance including developing and implementing policies, supervision of the academic and non-academic operations of the school, compliance with fiduciary and legal requirements and financial oversight. The Board will hire, supervise, and evaluate the Head of School, and will delegate management of the school to the Head of School, and through him or her to the professional staff of the school.

What is a Charter School?

From the Colorado League of Charter Schools website:

"Charter schools are tuition-free, public schools that have the flexibility to be innovative, entrepreneurial, self-governing, and are held accountable for student and operational performance.

Charter schools are independent public schools with rigorous curriculum programs. Each charter school is different, thus offering parents a variety of choices so they can select the school that best fits their child's unique learning style.

In exchange for operational freedom and flexibility, charter schools are subject to high levels of accountability. Charter schools, which are tuition-free and open to all students, offer quality and choice in the public education system.

The "charter" establishing each school is a contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. The "charter" contract is between the charter school and the entity granting the charter ("the authorizer"). In Colorado, the authorizer is generally the local school district, but in some cases it is the state via the Colorado Charter School Institute.

In Colorado, charters are granted for a period of time, generally five years. At the end of the term, the authorizer may renew the school's contract. Charter schools are accountable to their authorizer, as well as to the students and families they serve, to

produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract. Charter schools must also follow state and federal public school laws.

Like traditional public schools, charters receive state funding based on a formula for each child enrolled in the school. This funding is called "Per-Pupil Operating Revenue," or "PPR".

School districts finance their facilities using property tax, mill levies, and taxpayer-backed bonds. Charter schools generally do not receive a proportionate share of these monies. As a result, money often comes out of the classroom to pay for buildings."

Fort Collins Montessori School has a charter contract with Poudre School District. PSD is our authorizer and we are accountable to them. With that in mind, if you have any questions or would like to review our charter application, please contact our Board President.

Enrollment

Currently enrolled students have priority for enrollment in Fort Collins Montessori School for the following school year. Beginning in January, parents, guardians or legal custodians of students currently attending FCMS must declare their intentions to return to the school in the next academic school year. The Fort Collins Montessori School website will post a reminder to parents/legal guardians of the need to return re-enrollment forms, copies of the re-enrollment forms, and the final day the forms will be accepted. It will be the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to return the re-enroll form by the date determined and communicated to families. Early in February, the Head of School will determine the number of spaces available for new students in each grade level for the upcoming school year. If there are more applicants for positions than spots available, the Head of School will conduct a lottery. The details of our lottery system are available for review on our website, or by visiting the school office.

Applicants for the preschool positions at Fort Collins Montessori School must be at least 3 years old as of September 15th of the upcoming school year. Applicants new to our school will be accepted and placed according to their true age on September 15th unless the student has previous experience in a public school in a different grade. Children up to six years of age as of September 15th of the upcoming school year may also enroll in the Primary Program. It is strongly encouraged for children in the Primary Program to be fully potty trained with the ability to go to and from the restroom independently.

Fee Schedule

All students have a supply fee due before the first day of school. Preschool students have an application fee. Tuition, when required, is paid in 10 installments. The first installment is considered a non-refundable deposit and is due when the spot is accepted. The next nine payments are paid monthly September through May. Payments are due on the 1st of each month with a late fee of \$20 applied when payment has not been received by the 7th of the month.

Preschool Fees & Tuition

Half Day Tuition = \$4700 paid in 10 installments of \$470.00

Full Day Tuition = \$7835 paid in 10 installments of \$783.50

Application fee \$50, non-refundable

Half Day Kindergarten – Elementary

FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Full Day Kindergarten

Full Day Kindergarten = \$3920 paid in 10 installments of \$392

Supply Fee (all children)

\$160 Annual Fee. This fee covers supplies used throughout our school inside and outside the classroom (ie: classroom supplies, bathroom supplies, cleaning supplies, medical supplies, grounds supplies, & paper supplies)

Before Care Per Month

5 days: \$80 child/\$72 sibling

4 days/week: \$68 child/\$61 sibling

3 days/week: \$55 child/\$50 sibling

2 days/week: \$42 child/\$38 sibling

1 day/week: \$28/child/\$25 sibling

Drop-in: \$12/child per day

After Care Per Month

5 days/week: \$185 child/\$167 sibling

4 days/week: \$150 child/\$140 sibling

3 days/week: \$125 child/\$113 sibling

2 days/week: \$90 child/\$81 sibling

1 day/week: \$50 child/\$45 sibling

Drop-in: \$17/child per day

Withdrawal

When preschool or Before or After School Care service is withdrawn by FCMS, we will give a one-month written notice, unless circumstances for this withdrawal involves disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians are asked to give a 30-day written notice if withdrawing their student from FCMS, and a two week written notice if withdrawing from Before & After School Care.

COMMUNICATION, RESPECT AND DISCIPLINE

Communication

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

Contact your child's TEACHER if a matter pertains to:

Child's Progress, Classroom activities, Class procedures, Elementary Assistants, Behavior and discipline, Observations

Contact the HEAD OF SCHOOL if a matter pertains to:

Pedagogical issues, Academic policy, Admissions, Parent education Facilities, Legal matters Fundraising, Public relations

Contact the CHILD CARE DIRECTOR and HEAD OF SCHOOL if a matter pertains to:

Before/After Care Issues, Primary Programming or Schedule

Contact your child's OFFICE MANAGER, HEAD OF SCHOOL, OFFICE ASSISTANT if a matter pertains to:

Daily Scheduling, Student records, Registration, Tours, Parent Volunteering, Billing/accounts, Changes in Tuition

In addition to the above guidelines for channeling the flow of communication, we call your attention to the following elements of our program designed to enhance the school-home relationship:

Classroom Observation

There is no better way to gain an understanding of your child's experience here at School than by observing in the classroom. Knowing what is going on in the classroom provides a common point-of-reference for you and your child to talk about his or her "work" at school. It also enhances communication with teachers. Beginning in October, our programs are open to anyone interested in observing the Montessori environment. In order to preserve the quiet atmosphere of the classroom, we limit visitors to one per day. Please schedule your observation time with your child's teacher.

Conferences

You may schedule a conference with your child's teacher at any time by contacting them through email or a phone call. For Primary and Elementary children, conferences are formally scheduled two times a year, in the late fall and early spring. School is closed to accommodate these events and parents arrange individual appointments with

their child's teacher.

Progress Reports

All students receive formal progress reports twice yearly. You will notice that these documents are notable for the level of detail they provide; they will tell you not only how your child is doing, but also what your child is doing. Normally, Progress Reports are distributed at scheduled conferences and we hope you will use these reports to prepare for any subsequent meetings you may have with your child's teacher. Like classroom observation, they provide a concrete point-of-reference for discussing the nature of your child's work at School.

Information Nights

All of our programs offer parent seminars regularly. These gatherings are usually organized around a Montessori-related topic. They are opportunities to share information about making the most of a Montessori education. These events will be advertised as we develop them; we encourage you to join us.

Notes, Reminders, Updates and Newsletter

Our Head of School will distribute news, updates, and reminders periodically throughout the year. Our teachers will distribute newsletters on an individual basis.

Online Presence

The FCMS website, www.focomontessori.org, contains the most up-to-date information about the experience of FCMS, our values, our mission and our vision. We also have a school Facebook page (@FortCollinsMontessori School) and Twitter & Instagram accounts (@FoCo_Montessori) you may follow for school happenings.

Telephone/Email

School offices are open for calls 7:30 am to 3:30 pm each day. Please call FCMS's Elementary number—970-631-8612 or Primary number—970-691-7650 during these hours or email office@focomontessori.org. Teachers are not available for calls during school hours, but they will return calls as soon as possible after 3:00 pm.

FCMS relies **regularly and primarily on e-mail as a tool for sharing important information about goings-on at school**. Please add office@focomontessori.org and pvincent@focomontessori.org to your address book.

Visitors

All visitors must check in at the office. All visitors who are not parents are required to sign in on the Visitor Log at the office with their name, date, signature and reason for visiting. Each visitor must show a valid form of identification and wear a visitor's badge. For security reasons, everyone, including parents, must check in at the office before going to their student's classroom after the school day has begun.

Discipline

Behavior management at Fort Collins Montessori School is based on a positive attitude toward children, awareness of the developmental psychology of children and the unique ability to view and address each child's needs as an individual. Students are taught that Fort Collins Montessori School is a peaceful school based upon mutual respect and care for the community. Teachers model appropriate behaviors and teach students problem-solving skills and conflict resolution strategies. The goal is to help children arrive at inner discipline through concentrated work. The child is assisted in developing the skills necessary to control his/her own actions to develop self-discipline. Natural and/or logical consequences are used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits. Teachers explain the reasons for limits or rules to be sure children understand the need for them, and strive to create an environment to promote learning, where children feel safe and secure.

Peaceful Curriculum

Peaceful resolution is inherent within the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy through the Peace Curriculum, the goal of which is to teach students to be skilled peacemakers. Students are taught that their behavior and interactions with others will demonstrate compassion, affirmation of others, active listening, respectfulness and peaceful conflict resolution. Fort Collins Montessori School encourages students to show respect for differences. This is done while fostering a school environment free from all forms of bullying and intimidation whether physical, social, emotional or verbal. The school's focus, based on Montessori pedagogy, is on preventative measures for such behaviors, by teaching children how to:

- Be caring and courteous
- Cooperate with others
- Deal with angry feelings
- Stand up for themselves without being aggressive
- Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person
- Make appropriate behavioral and academic choices

Fort Collins Montessori School will take a progressive educational approach for a safe and peaceful learning environment. Starting at the earliest ages and whenever a student first enters the school, FCMS will provide the skills necessary not only to learn basic safety rules but to interact with classmates, teachers, families and the larger school community in positive and constructive ways.

Inner discipline consists of four components:

- Distinct knowledge of safety rules
- Clear awareness of personal responsibility
- Respectful attitude towards the members of the school community and the larger global learning environment
- An understanding and preparedness of the proper way of acting under different circumstances in different places

Teachers at all age levels will provide lessons in suitable class, school and community behaviors through direct instruction, modeling and reminders. Teachers will support children in solving difficulties amongst themselves. Clear guidelines, based on three major propositions, are communicated in each room:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for environment

Staff at Fort Collins Montessori School will model appropriate behavior to further provide examples of how people act in social settings. Older children will also model proper behaviors for the younger children, providing even more examples of appropriate behaviors.

Because of the open and respectful nature of this approach, students will understand that mutual respect, care and consideration for others and an empathetic interest in the environment are important in school and all other places. Any issues that arise will be handled individually (or by group) with that person first. Out of respect for each child, these conversations will be done privately. Fort Collins Montessori School will not use parents or family as a threat, but rather as partners in this growth process. Fort Collins Montessori School will strongly encourage families to support this method and support their child in his/her total growth, not just in being “good for the teacher.” Fort Collins Montessori School will care very much about each child and will encourage this partnership to be useful with continuous dialogue. On minor incidents, it will not be uncommon for staff members to request that a student talk to his/her family about a decision or action so that they can brainstorm other ways to handle a situation.

The staff of Fort Collins Montessori School will have the responsibility to:

- Work with the children to develop reasonable classroom ground rules consistent with the mission and beliefs of the school
- Explain through group meetings, modeling and dialogue what the standards for behavior are for both the classroom and the school
- Maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom and the school through redirection and dialogue with the student and his/her family
- Report and record school discipline problems to the Head of the School and family using a communication form (to be developed)

While Fort Collins Montessori School hopes that unwanted behaviors will be uncommon at the school, there may be occasions where children need more formal direction. Therefore, Fort Collins Montessori School will provide consequences based on C.R.S. §22-33-106, “Grounds for suspension, dismissal and denial of admittance,” as outlined in our Charter Application (available in our Office). It is through this handbook that parents receive a copy of both the Montessori approach to discipline (discussed above) and our discipline policy.

Special Needs

FCMS acknowledges and understands that it is subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Colorado Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Fort Collins Montessori School will be accountable to the Board of Education of Poudre School District for purposes of assuring compliance with federal and state special education and disability laws.

FCMS will educate its special education students to the extent appropriate in our mixed age, Montessori classrooms with needed accommodations, instructional/curricular modifications and other supports. The District will make available to Fort Collins Montessori School its continuum of alternative placements if a Fort Collins Montessori School student is unable to be involved in and progress in our classrooms with such accommodations, instructional/curricular modifications and supports.

Discipline Policy – Primary and Elementary Programs

Student Discipline, Suspension and Expulsion

1. Fort Collins Montessori School Code of Conduct

Fort Collins Montessori School's goal is to help each student attain the independence and self-confidence needed to become self-disciplined. In so doing, the school will provide a community with structure and order that aids students in the development of self-discipline. Behavior is based on cooperation, logical and natural consequences, fairness, consistency and the belief that all people have the ability to look at themselves honestly, and to change and grow. Fort Collins Montessori School's common goal is the creation of a supportive educational environment where an enthusiasm for learning is fostered. There are certain rights, responsibilities and consequences that contribute to that environment.

2. Philosophy and Understanding

Behavior at Fort Collins Montessori School is based on a positive attitude toward children, awareness of the developmental psychology of children, and the unique ability to view and address each child's needs as an individual. Students are taught that Fort Collins Montessori School is a peaceful school based upon mutual respect and care for the community. Teachers model appropriate behaviors, and teach students problem-solving skills and conflict resolution strategies. The goal is to help children arrive at inner discipline through concentrated work, and the child is assisted in developing the skills necessary to control his/her own actions to develop self-discipline. Natural and/or logical consequences are used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits. Teachers explain the reasons for limits or rules to be sure children understand the need for them, and strive to create an environment to promote learning, where children feel safe and secure.

Peaceful resolution is inherent within the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy and the goal is to teach students to be skilled peacemakers. Students are taught that their behavior

and interactions with others will demonstrate compassion, affirmation of others, active listening, respectfulness and peaceful conflict resolution.

Fort Collins Montessori School encourages students to show respect for differences. This is done while fostering a school environment free from all forms of bullying and intimidation whether physical, social, emotional or verbal. The school's focus, based on Montessori Pedagogy, is on preventative measures for such behaviors, by teaching children how to:

- Be caring and courteous
- Cooperate with others
- Deal with angry feelings
- Stand up for themselves without being aggressive
- Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person
- Make appropriate behavioral and academic choices

Fort Collins Montessori School will take a progressive educational approach for a safe and peaceful learning environment. Starting at the earliest ages and whenever a student first enters the school, FCMS will provide the skills necessary not only to learn basic safety rules but to interact with classmates, teachers, families and the larger school community in positive and constructive ways. The intention of this education is to foster the development of inner discipline in the child.

Inner discipline consists of four components:

- Distinct knowledge of safety rules
- Clear awareness of responsibility
- Respectful attitude towards the members of the school community and the larger global learning environment
- An understanding and preparedness of the proper way of acting under different circumstances in different places

Teachers at all age levels will provide lessons in suitable class, school, and community behaviors through direct instruction, modeling and reminders. Teachers will support children in solving difficulties amongst themselves. Clear guidelines, based on three major propositions, are communicated in each room:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for environment

Staff at Fort Collins Montessori School will model appropriate behavior to further provide examples of how people act in social settings. Older children will also model proper behaviors for the younger children, providing even more examples of appropriate behaviors.

Because of the open and respectful nature of this approach, students will understand that

mutual respect, care and consideration for others and an empathetic interest in the environment are important in school and all other places. Any issues that arise will be handled individually (or by group) with that person first. If further discussion is necessary, students in the elementary classes can bring up the matter in a regularly scheduled class meeting for arbitration. Fort Collins Montessori School will not use parents or family as a threat, but rather as partners in this growth process. Our school will strongly encourage families to support this method and support their child in his/her total growth, not just in being “good for the teacher”. Fort Collins Montessori School will care very much about each child and will encourage this partnership to be useful with continuous dialogue. On minor incidents, it will not be uncommon for staff members to request that a student talk to his/her family about a decision or action so that they can brainstorm other ways to handle a situation.

The staff of Fort Collins Montessori School will have the responsibility to:

- Work with the children to develop reasonable classroom ground rules consistent with the mission and beliefs of the school
- Post ground rules in each classroom and keep them on file in the office; make rules clear to all students
- Explain through regular class meetings, modeling and dialogue what the standards for behavior are for both the classroom and the school
- Maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom and the school through redirection and dialogue with the student and his/her family
- Report and record school discipline problems to the Head of the School and family using a communication form (to be developed)

“Making good choices, even when others are not watching” will be an important standard at Fort Collins Montessori School. The school will strongly suggest that families keep an open dialogue with their children about “making choices” which directly influences moral development. Fort Collins Montessori School students will not get “in trouble” and teachers will not recognize a “bad day” as an excuse for inappropriate behavior. However, teachers will be very empathetic to children’s issues and concerns, and will validate them whenever appropriate. Fort Collins Montessori School will remind and encourage all learners that “only you make your choices” and will initiate problem solving whenever possible. When situations do arise, each incident will be assessed individually. Fort Collins Montessori School recognizes that all children are different and have different needs. Fort Collins Montessori School will encourage all students to “use their words” when a situation arises. A child may use firm language to redirect an unwanted behavior, walk away or get help. Retaliation will not be an option and the adult supporting the situation will not be concerned with “who started it”. Instead Fort Collins Montessori School will support each child in peaceful conflict resolution and taking responsibility for their actions.

3. Legal Basis for Fort Collins Montessori School Discipline Procedures

While Fort Collins Montessori School hopes that unwanted behaviors will be uncommon at the school, there may be occasions where children need more formal direction. Therefore, Fort Collins Montessori School will provide consequences based on C.R.S. §22-33-106,

“Grounds for suspension, dismissal and denial of admittance,” as outlined below. Parents and students will receive a copy of both the Montessori approach to discipline discussed above along with this discipline policy at the beginning of each school year as part of the parent/student handbook.

Grounds for suspension or expulsion from Fort Collins Montessori School:

- Continued willful disobedience
- Open and persistent defiance of proper authority
- Willful destruction or defacing of school property
- Behavior on or off school property which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other pupils or of school personnel, including behavior which creates a threat of physical harm to the child or children

An exception to this rule is if the child who creates such a threat is a disabled child pursuant to C.R.S § 22-20-103 (5). The child may not be dismissed if the actions creating the threat are a manifestation of the child's disability.

a. In such instances, the child may be removed to an appropriate alternative setting within the District in which the child is enrolled for a length of time that is consistent with federal law.

b. During this time, the school may reexamine the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) to ensure that the needs of the child are addressed in a more appropriate manner or setting that is less disruptive to other students in the classroom.

- Declaration as an “habitually disruptive student” as defined in C.R.S. § 22-33-106
- (c.5)to (III).
- Serious violations in a school building or in or on school property for which suspension or dismissal (expulsion) shall be mandatory, except that dismissal shall be mandatory for the following violations:
 - a. Carrying, bringing, using or possessing a deadly weapon as defined in C.R.S. § 22-33-106 (d) (II); except in situations as defined in C.R.S. § 22-33-106 (d) (III);
 - b. The sale of a drug or controlled substances as defined in C.R.S. § 12-22-303;
 - c. The commission of an act which, if committed by an adult, would be robbery pursuant to part 3 of Article 4 of Title 18, C.R.S.; or
 - d. Assault pursuant to Part 2 of Article 3 of Title 18, other than the commission of an act that would be third degree assault under C.R.S. § 18-3-204, if committed by an adult.
- Repeated interference with the school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students.
- Failure to comply with the provisions of Part 9 of Article 4 of Title 25, C.R.S. Any suspension, dismissal or denial of admission for such failure to comply shall not be recorded as a disciplinary action but may be recorded with the student's immunization record with an appropriate explanation.

- According to C.R.S. § 22-33-106 (2), subject to the District’s responsibilities under Article 20 of that Title (Exceptional Children’s Education Act), the following shall be grounds for dismissal from or denial of admission to a public school or diversion to an appropriate alternate program.
 - a. Physical or mental disability such that the child cannot reasonably benefit from the programs available.
 - b. Physical or mental disability or disease causing the attendance of the child suffering from it to be detrimental to the welfare of other Students.

Procedures for Expulsion:

The Head of School may suspend a student from one day to up to 10 days and may require the suspension to be in school or out of school.

- Oral or written notification will be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s), and must include:
 - a. A statement of charges against the student;
 - b. Statement of the basis of the allegation.
- Informal Hearing: The student will be given an opportunity to have an informal hearing before the Head of School to admit or deny the allegations. In some instances, witnesses may be presented in order to allow the Head of School to make a more informed decision. The notice and informal hearing should precede the student’s removal from school, but there does not need to be a delay between the time notice is given and the time of the hearing.
- A suspended student must leave school immediately, and will not be allowed to attend any school activities on or off campus from the time the suspension is issued to when the student is reinstated in the school.
 - a. Under C.R.S. § 22-33-106 (1) (a), (1) (b), (1) (c) or (1) (e), the Head of School may suspend a student for a period not to exceed five (5) days.
 - b. Under C.R.S. § 22-33-106 (1) (d), the Head of School may suspend a student for a period of up to ten (10) days for serious violations.
- To be readmitted to the school, the student and a parent/guardian must meet with the Head of School for a reinstatement meeting.

4. Procedures for Dismissal from Fort Collins Montessori School

In instances where the Head of School is considering dismissal of a student, the following procedures will be followed:

- Written Notice
 - a. The Head of School will give written notice to the parents(s)/legal guardian(s) of a student threatened with dismissal five (5) days prior to the contemplated Action.
 - b. The written notice will be mailed to the last known address of the student or the parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - c. In the event that an emergency exists which requires a shorter period of notice, the period of notice may be shortened provided that the student and his/her parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have actual notice (written or verbal) of the hearing

prior to the time it is held.

- Contents of Notice: The notice must contain the following basic information:
 - a. A statement of the basic allegations leading to the contemplated dismissal.
 - b. A statement that a hearing on the dismissal will be held if requested by the student or his/her parent(s)/legal guardian(s) within five (5) days after the date of notice.
 - c. A statement of the time, date and place of the hearing.
 - d. A statement that the student may be present at the hearing and hear all information against him or her; that the student will have an opportunity to present such information as is relevant; and that he/she may be accompanied and represented by his/her parents(s)/legal guardian(s) and an attorney.
 - e. A statement that failure to participate in such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.
- Conduct of Hearing:
 - a. The hearing will be conducted by an ad hoc discipline committee consisting of the Head of School and two other staff. The members of the ad hoc discipline committee shall not discuss the details of the hearing with anyone outside of the discipline committee.
 - b. The hearing will be conducted in a closed session except to those deemed necessary by the Discipline Committee; but shall include the student, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and the student's attorney. Such additional individuals as may have pertinent information will be admitted to the closed hearing but only to the extent necessary to provide such information and to answer questions related to such information as permitted by 3 c. below. Following such testimony, the additional individuals shall remove themselves from the hearing.
 - c. Testimony and information will be presented under oath if requested by either party. However, technical rules of evidence will not be applicable, and the discipline committee may consider and give appropriate weight to such information or evidence deemed appropriate. The student or his representative may question individuals presenting information.
 - d. A sufficient record of the proceedings will be kept so by a third party unaffiliated with either of the parties and unrelated to the hearing's participants as to enable a transcript to be prepared in the event either party so requests. Preparation of the transcript will be at the expense of the party requesting the same.
 - e. The discipline committee will render a written decision no later than five (5) school days after the hearing. The decision will be delivered only to the student or his/herparent(s)/legal guardians and the Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board in the manner described above. The discipline committee may establish reasonable conditions for readmission, as well as the duration of the dismissal, which may not extend beyond one calendar year.
- Appeal to the Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board:
 - a. An appeal of the decision of the discipline committee may be made to the FCMS Governing Board. New evidence must be presented in writing to the Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board. No appeal may come more than 10 days after a decision is rendered.

- b. In case of an appeal, it will consist of a review of the facts that were presented and that were determined at the dismissal hearing conducted by the Discipline Committee, introduction of new facts, arguments relating to the decision, and questions of clarification from the Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board.
- c. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the Board may vote to affirm, reverse or modify the decision. The Board's decision will be communicated orally and entered in the minutes of the meeting.
- d. Upon written request, the Board's decision will be reduced to writing for purposed of further judicial review pursuant to state law.
- Re-Admittance
 - a. No student shall be readmitted to school after dismissal until after a meeting between the Head of School and the parents(s)/legal guardian(s) has taken place, except that if the Head of School cannot contact the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or if the parent(s)/legal guardians(s) repeatedly fails to appear for scheduled meetings, the Head of School may readmit the student.
 - b. If the student is dismissed, he/she may only be permitted to reapply for the following school year and enter through the lottery system.
- Notice to School District
 - a. Fort Collins Montessori School will notify the Poudre School District Charter School Liaison and the Poudre School District Expulsion Officer of any dismissal within two (2) school days.
 - b. A copy of all written discipline reports, suspensions, and dismissal proceedings will be sent when requested by the Poudre School District Governing Board or Superintendent.
 - c. Upon dismissal from Fort Collins Montessori School, the Poudre School District Governing Board may consider each instance on a case-by-case basis and may reinstate the student in another school.
 - d. The Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board has the final authority in determining a dismissal from Fort Collins Montessori School consistent with state and federal laws.

5. Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are neither immune from the Fort Collins Montessori School disciplinary process nor entitled to participate in programs when their behavior impairs the education of other students. Fort Collins Montessori School will comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in disciplining these students. Students with disabilities who engage in disruptive activities and/or actions dangerous to themselves or others will be disciplined in accordance with their IEP, and behavioral intervention plan and this policy.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit an IEP team from establishing consequences for disruptive or unacceptable behavior as a part of the student's IEP. The plan shall be subject to all procedural safeguards established by the IEP process.

All students, including students with disabilities, may be suspended for up to 10 days in any given school year for violations of the student code of conduct. The procedure for suspension is the

same as outlined above.

For suspension of a student with disabilities, a team including Special Education staff members and the Head of School, will determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of the disability and whether the student's disability impaired his or her ability to control or understand the impact or consequences of the behavior.

Once the team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, disciplinary procedures shall be applied to the student in the same manner as applied to non-disabled students.

A student with disabilities whose behavior is determined to be a manifestation of his or her disability may not be dismissed but will be disciplined in accordance with his or her IEP, any behavioral interventions and this policy.

6. Discipline Protocol

Procedure for Re-directable Behaviors (all grade levels):

Inappropriate behaviors that are considered re-directable or "teachable moments" by staff (and do not involve physical contact with another student, but can still develop into disruptive situations for the classroom community) will be addressed as follows:

1. The teacher will start by redirecting the student and helping him/her get engaged in work. The teacher will continue with this step if positive progress is being made. (At this step verbal communication with parents is recommended)
2. If the student is not responding positively to redirection by the teacher, the teacher will help the student find a place in the classroom to calm his/her body and observe the rest of the class.
3. If the student is not responding positively to sitting alone in the classroom, the teacher will refer the child to the office. The child will remain at the office for an appropriate amount of time based on his/her age. (Written documentation to parents required at this step.)
4. If the student reaches step 3 twice in one day, the child may be excused from school for the remainder of the day. (Written documentation to parents required at this step.)
5. If Step 4 is reached for five consecutive days, the student may be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead teacher, the parents and the Head of School. At this time a behavioral action plan will be presented and discussed. (Written documentation to parents required at this step)

Pre-K Program:

Hitting, Kicking and Spitting

- First Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself. The teacher will discuss appropriate conflict resolution strategies.
- Second Offense in a Day: Student may be excused from school for the remainder of the day.

Biting:

- First Offense in a Day: Parents of both students will be called.
- Second Offense in a Day: Student may be excused from school for the remainder of the day. Written documentation required.

Misuse of Materials:

- First Offense in a Day: Teacher will review appropriate use of materials in the classroom with student, and model correct behavior.
- Second Offense in a Day: Student may be asked to put the specific material or work away for the day.
- Third Offense in a Day: The specific material or work may be closed to the student for a week. The teacher will lead a discussion with student and parents.

Inappropriate Language: Swearing, Using Taunting or Bullying Language, Speaking Disrespectfully to Others (Students and Adults):

- First Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself. The teacher and student will discuss what was inappropriate. Written documentation required.
- Second Offense in a Day: Student may be sent to the office for an appropriate amount of time based on his/her age. Written documentation required.
- Third Offense in a Day: Student may be excused from school for the remainder of the day. Written documentation required.

If a maximum number of offenses is reached by a student for three consecutive school days for any of the aggressive behaviors outlined above, the student may be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the teacher, the parents and the Head of School. At this time a behavior action plan may be presented and discussed.

Elementary Program:**Spitting, Hitting, Kicking, Bullying and Pushing:**

- First Offense in a Day: Appropriate conflict-resolution strategies will be discussed with the student. The student may spend the remainder of the day working at a solo workspace, or a space directly next to a teacher. Written documentation required.
- Second Offense in a Day: Student may be excused from school for the remainder of the day. Written documentation required.

Biting:

- First Offense in a Day: Appropriate conflict-resolution strategies will be discussed and practiced with the student. Student may be excused from school for the remainder of the day. Parents of both students will be called. Written documentation required.

Inappropriate Language: Swearing, Using Taunting or Bullying Language, Speaking Disrespectfully to Others (Students and Adults):

- First Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself. The teacher and student will discuss what were inappropriate and alternate appropriate

behaviors. Written documentation required.

- Second Offense in a Day: Student may be sent to the office for an appropriate amount of time based on his/her age. Written documentation required.
- Third Offense in a Day: Student may be excused from school for the remainder of the day. Written documentation required.

Intentional Destruction of Materials or Possessions of Others:

- First Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself to complete work. The teacher and student will discuss what was inappropriate. Student's family will be responsible for funding the replacement of destroyed materials in the classroom. Written documentation required.
- Second Offense in a Day: Student may be excused from school for the remainder of the day. Written documentation required.

If a maximum number of offenses is reached by a student for two consecutive school days for any of the aggressive behaviors outlined above, the student may be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead teacher, the parents and the Head of School. At this time a behavioral action plan will be presented and discussed.

7. Behavior Action Plans:

If a student has a documented history of reaching the maximum number of offenses (for either re-directable or aggressive behaviors) for five consecutive school days it is the responsibility of the teacher to write and implement a behavior action plan to share with parents before the student returns to class. The Head of School must also be present at this meeting. The goal of the behavioral action plan is to observe, explore and document accommodations/modifications in the current classroom environment to help the student be a positive and contributing member of the class. Behavior action plans may be given a four-week period of implementation. (During this period of implementation the normal behavioral consequences as outlined above will continue to be followed.) If at the conclusion of the four week period the teacher observes positive change being made, s/he may choose to adjust the current behavioral sanction plan and allow for another four week period of implementation. If minimal or no positive change is being observed, the teacher and Head of School will meet with the parents and discuss appropriate alternatives. At this point a referral for a formal hearing of dismissal or suspension may also be considered as outlined in Sections 3 and 4.

The discipline protocol will be expanded when middle school is added to Fort Collins Montessori School.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Overview

Fort Collins Montessori School aims to cultivate every child's own natural desire to learn. Grounded in Maria Montessori's theory of human development, each classroom supports each child's development according to his/her readiness. Each child is free to explore within a specially prepared environment and with the guidance of the Montessori-trained teachers or "guides". Designed to be beautiful, orderly, and calm, each classroom is a community of peaceful, purposeful, and developmentally appropriate activity.

Mixed age classes provide a real-world experience for the developing child, as peers learn from one another and work together to maintain their community. Within an environment that intentionally balances freedom and responsibility, children learn to recognize the needs of others while also developing life-long skills of persistence, critical thinking, and independence.

Each Montessori environment is prepared to meet the needs of children moving through successive phases of development— however several common characteristics are a part of all Montessori classrooms. These are:

- **Large blocks of uninterrupted time for self-directed work.** The morning work period, from 8:30 to 11:30 (depending on the child's age) is especially important. For older children, an afternoon work period is also a feature of his/her day. It is critical that your child arrive at school in time to begin this period with the rest of his/her peers.
- **The teachers' intense focus on the children.** Successful Montessori teaching is based on detailed and ongoing observation of the children, both individually and as a group. Once the school day begins, teachers are immersed in the work of the classroom, which means they are not able to give parents or other visitors attention. We support this element of the program by limiting interruption during the school day. Teachers are available after school for conferences or telephone conversations.
- **Consistency in routines and order in the physical environment.** Children, especially those between two and five, are sensitive to routines and order and they respond positively to consistency in their daily lives. An orderly classroom environment (everything has its place and everything is in its place) fosters independence as children are given lessons in caring for their environment and share responsibility for its maintenance. Daily jobs, such as helping younger friends put on their coats, feeding classroom animals, or setting the table reinforce a predictable pattern of expectations. Because of the presence of routines and order, there is very little adult "correcting" of students' behavior.
- **Meticulous attention to grace and courtesy.** At all times we aspire to model good manners and sociable interactions. You should expect to be greeted with a cheerful "good morning" or "good afternoon" during arrivals and departures. Mealtimes are opportunities to practice table manners, and lessons in making an introduction, offering refreshments, and solving

problems peacefully are a regular part of the curriculum.

Primary

The Primary Program, also known as the Children's House, serves children from approximately three to six years of age. The environment is carefully prepared using Montessori principles that allow the children to choose work according to their interests and developmental level. The Montessori teacher initially presents the specially designed Montessori educational materials. Each child works at his/her own pace, repeating activities, making choices, and developing abilities through exploration of his/her work. Indirect learning occurs as children observe the work of others and in turn share what they have learned with their classmates. In this way, children explore basic concepts of literacy, numeracy, geography, music, art and care of self and the environment.

The Child in Nature

Exposure to a variety of outdoor educational experiences is an integral part of the child's total development and a vital aspect of the Montessori curriculum. The goals of FCMS Montessori Outdoor Education program are to:

- Help the child explore and appreciate the natural environment and his relationship to the natural world
- Provide close and friendly social interaction and a sense of group and community awareness
- Build on skills learned in the classroom by transferring and adapting them to the outdoors through observing, recording, listening, identifying and comparing
- Allow children practice in problem-solving situations in which there is an interchange of helping and receiving among children and adults
- Encourage each child to show different skills in outdoor environment
- Foster a sense of active creativity by integrating the arts, literacy, numeracy and science in a new environment

Going Out

Going Out (for Lower Elementary and older) is the Montessori term for off-campus excursions taken by small groups of two to five children and an adult to visit museums, galleries, stores and other businesses, libraries, non-profit organizations, zoos, historical sites, and other places where subject-matter experts can be found or hands-on experiences can be had. Going Out is initiated, planned, organized, and carried out by the students themselves as a spontaneous extension of studies or projects they are pursuing in the classroom. Going out requires approval by the student's teacher and permission from the student's parents/guardians. Dr. Montessori was adamant about the importance of developing the children's intellectual knowledge and their "real world" social skills and self-reliance at the same time by means of these excursions into the larger world outside the school. Chaperones for Going Out are chosen and contacted by the children from a list of parents who have passed a thorough background check process and are specially trained to closely monitor and guard the children's physical and emotional safety without usurping responsibilities and roles that are properly the children to learn and practice.

Because the children and their adult chaperones are carefully chosen, trained, and prepared, Going Out establishes and invigorates the children's sense of responsibility for their own safety and helps ensure their ability to think clearly and make sound choices in taking care of themselves well before they reach the age to leave the house without their parents. Our aim is safer children and adolescents both at home and at school.

Montessori Assessment

FCMS fosters the development of integrative thinkers who see and make connections within and among the disciplines. Powerful learning experiences are relevant, rigorous and coherent. FCMS's program transforms learning by supporting and encouraging self-directed reflection, inquiry and self-assessment. Teachers evaluate progress on a daily basis, keeping careful record of lessons presented and skills and concepts mastered. In addition, Montessori teachers compile twice yearly observational assessments for presentation at parent conferences.

Student Placement and Transitions

Continuity is a hallmark of the Montessori experience. Mixed age classrooms allow students to develop stable relationships with adults and peers over a two to three-year cycle. The stability enables both security and growth, as the child's role within the group evolves over time from being among the youngest to a community elder. Mixed age grouping also honors the unique pace at which each child develops, a process which does not always correspond to chronological age.

Because we appreciate the importance of continuity and consistency in healthy human development, we take special care in supporting the child as he or she moves through several key transitions during her/his time at FCMS. Transitions are always monitored by FCMS staff in consultation with you.

Entering FCMS

The first transition takes place when the child leaves home to become a member of his or her first classroom. We assist families in establishing a trusting relationship with our teachers.

For most children this takes place at 36 months. Independent care of self (toileting, dressing, feeding) are signs of readiness for the Primary program. We also look for signs of emerging independence and sense of order. Order is seen in the child's handling of classroom materials; independence is evident in the child's ability to separate from his or her parents and to choose work in the classroom.

Some children may benefit from spending an additional year in the Primary to gain greater social-emotional maturity and to hone academic skills. This "gift of the third year" provides a student the opportunity to truly assume a leadership role prior to entering the more complicated Elementary environment. Because there is overlap between the materials and lessons in the Primary and Elementary classrooms, students who spend additional time in the Primary continue to progress at their own pace. When a student is considered for a fourth Primary year, families are consulted and the decision is made collaboratively between the

teacher, the family, and the Head of School. Parents should be aware that placement and transition to a new division of the program at FCMS might not precisely replicate a graded program in traditional education.

Daily Schedule

Typical Primary School Day

- 7:30 – 8:15 Before Care (if needed)
- 8:15 – 8:30 Arrival/Drop-Off
- 8:30 – 11:15 Morning Work Cycle/Snack
- 11:15 – 11:45 Lunch
- 12:00 – 1:00 Outdoor Time
- 12:30 Half Day Dismissal
- 1:00 – 1:30 Rest Time
- 1:30 – 3:00 Afternoon Work Cycle
- 3:00 – 3:15 Dismissal
- 3:00 – 5:10 After Care (if needed)

Typical Elementary School Day

- 7:30 – 8:00 Before Care (if needed)
- 8:00 – 8:15 Arrival/Drop-Off
- 8:15 – 11:30 Morning Work Cycle/Snack
- 11:30 – 12:30 Lunch/Outdoor Time
- 12:30 – 2:00 Afternoon Work Cycle
- 2:00 – 3:00 P.E.
- 3:15 – 3:30 Dismissal
- 3:15 – 5:10 After Care (if needed)

Attendance: Why it Matters

Consistent attendance is important. The children who benefit most from the prepared environment are those who attend regularly. There are several reasons for this:

- A consistent routine provides security for children; a sense of security enables children to learn more readily.
- A child's experiences in the classroom and with the materials are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning.

Your own commitment to your child's presence in school affirms the importance of school and learning. If you often invite your child to stay out of school for different activities, you implicitly undermine the importance of school in her/his mind—which can affect her performance when she/he is present.

Intermittent attendance, or periods of long absence, can affect both your child's adaptation to school and her learning. Please make every effort to ensure your child's regular attendance. In

this regard, we specifically request that you:

- Schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays;
- Schedule appointments with doctor, dentist, orthodontist, or other professionals outside of classroom hours.

Arrival Procedures

**Please note: All students between the ages of 3 and 5 are required to be signed in and out by their parent or guardian when they arrive. Brothers or Sisters are not allowed to sign siblings into or out of any FCMS program.

Before School Care Arrival

Students will be accepted to the early morning program, based on registration with the Office between 7:30 and 8:15 a.m. depending on site times.

Elementary School Day Arrival

Students are dropped off in front of the school between 8:05 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Members of our staff will open car doors as needed, greet children and supervise them as they go to their classrooms.

Please:

- Arrive at school between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. each day.
- Observe the circular, counter-clockwise traffic pattern in the parking lot. Keep to the right side of the parking lot and circle to the left to pull up into the drop off lane near the building.
- Drive slowly into the drop-off lane.
- Come to a complete stop and wait for one of our FCMS staff members to open your car door and accompany your child inside.

Primary Sign-In Procedures

Parents bring children to their child's teacher or assistant in the parking lot or hallway for sign in. Kinderlime assigns each parent a PIN for ease of sign-in and out. No one should use your PIN but you as it identifies who dropped off or picked up the student.

Late Arrivals

If your elementary student arrives between 8:15 and 8:30, they will need to check in through the office and will be marked tardy. Please call the office if you will be arriving after 8:30.

If a child arrives at school late and the class is on a field trip, the parent may take the child to join the group or the child will be placed in another classroom until his/her class returns.

Transitional Items

A key to independence is the ability to transition from home to school in a calm manner. We

have found the process to run most smoothly when drop-off is swift, confident, and focused on school. Dolls, stuffed animals, pacifiers, trucks and trains actually delay this process and do little to assist. Kindly help your child separate from you by leaving favorite items at home or, at the very least, in the car. A struggle at the school entryway is difficult for everyone involved. We will be glad to offer suggestions if necessary. Please also refrain from giving your child food to ease the transition.

Storage

Each child is assigned a space in the classroom to keep their belongings. Depending on the age, the space may be a cubby, hook, or basket. The child's belongings that he/she would be using during the day are stored in this area (hat, gloves, coat, backpack, bottles, extra shoes, personal items). Teachers encourage children to keep their assigned spaces neat and organized. Some items are not allowed to be stored in these spaces, i.e. money and/or any item that states "keep out of reach of children."

Elementary School Day Dismissal

The classroom teacher will escort children to the car, open car doors as needed but cannot buckle or unbuckle students into car seats, so you will be asked to buckle quickly and help keep the line moving.

Please:

- Enter the pull-through lane and line-up behind the other cars waiting to pick up children.
- Pull up as far forward as possible to allow the maximum number of cars. This will speed up the line for everyone.
- If you personally pick up your child, please make sure the teacher sees you doing so.

For a child to be authorized to walk home (grades 1-3 only), the classroom teacher and main office must be notified in writing.

After School Care Program

Students may be picked up in the After School room by parents and must be signed out. Please enter through the main office entrance at both sites.

Authorized Student Release

FCMS will only release a child to:

- The enrolling parent(s)
- Persons listed on the child's Emergency Form when a parent does not arrive by FCMS closing time (5:10 p.m.). FCMS prefers verbal confirmation from the parent for changes in pick-up.

For all other instances, a written notice or email will be required, in advance if possible. Picture ID's will always be required. If someone arrives to pick up your child who is not on the list of those authorized to do so, your child will not be released to them until we can verify with you that we are allowed to do so.

Late Pick-Up

Students who haven't been picked up at the end of the school day will remain with their teacher until 3:30 to wait for their ride. The office will make every attempt to contact the parent, guardian or other individual authorized to pick-up the child. However, if a child is not picked up by 3:15 at the Primary site and 3:30 at the Elementary site, and other arrangements have not been made, the teacher will send the child to after school care and a \$15.00 fee will be assessed for the after school program for that day. If there is not space for the child in the After Care program and we have not been able to contact any individuals listed on the emergency contact list, we are required to contact Department of Human Services or the police.

FCMS After School Care closes daily at 5:10 p.m. It is important that each parent adhere to the departure schedule made in the family's enrollment agreement with Fort Collins Montessori School. After Care closes daily at 5:10 p.m. There will be a 5 minute grace period. Pick-ups from 5:16-5:30 will be charged a late fee of \$20. Pick-ups from 5:31-5:45, will be charged \$40. Pickups from 5:46-6:00 will be charged \$60. Pickups after 6:00 pm will be charged a fee to be determined by Aftercare Director. Cell phone clock time will be used to certify lateness.

If a child is still at school at 6:00 p.m., we will begin calling those individuals listed on the child's emergency contact form. If a child remains at school after 5:30 p.m. and we have not been able to contact any individuals listed on the emergency contact list, we are required to contact Department of Human Services or the police.

Repeated failure to pick your child up on time may jeopardize your child's enrollment in our Montessori program.

Out-of-the-Ordinary Departure Plans

Please notify the office for out-of-the-ordinary departure plans. As the school is responsible for your child during school hours, we must have written permission from you before we can release your child to another person. If you must pick your child up early, please call and let the office know beforehand. Staff will be sure your child is in the office at the specified time for pick up.

Change in Pick-up Plans

If a parent calls FCMS with a change in pick-up (due to traffic delays or other circumstances) the message will be referred to the child's classroom. In the interest of timely communication, please call FCMS before 2:45 p.m. for end of school pick-ups and 4:45 for After School Care pick-ups, if possible. Anyone designated to pick-up a child needs to be at least sixteen years of age. For the safety and security of your child, we will request photo identification of persons unfamiliar to the staff. Please inform persons on your emergency pick-up form that they will be asked for identification.

Separation and Reunion

As a family-centered community, the importance of drop-off and pick up extends beyond getting your child in and out of the building. The processes of separating in the morning and

reconnecting in the afternoon are crucial to your child's sense of security. A peaceful arrival sets a positive tone for the day. Likewise, a successful reunion increases the odds that your evening family routine will run smoothly. The key to both is your attention. To make the transition process run as smoothly as possible we strongly suggest the following: Prepare your child for morning drop-off by situating his or her car seat on the curb-side of the car. The teacher's focus during arrival and departure is on assisting the child (and you) and making the transition to and from school. If you have question about the child's day or wish to have a conversation with his or her teacher, please contact the teacher directly to make an Appointment.

Appropriate Dress

We ask children to bring to school each day: Clothing, backpacks, and lunch boxes. We ask that all of these items be free of character-themed, media influenced, or violent images; these can create a distraction from our student's purpose at school or create acting out behaviors and disturbances. If a child arrives in media influenced clothing, or brings such a lunchbox or backpack, we will ask them to change into extra clothing and to leave their lunchbox or backpack at home.

Please provide your children with the following footwear: Rubber soled, closed-toe shoes for outdoor use, and walking shoes for indoor use.

Primary-aged children must be toilet trained to attend Fort Collins Montessori School. Pull-ups and diapers are not allowed without special needs documentation. Policies and procedures for meeting all developmental needs of children will be in alignment with health and sanitation code. Any personal supplies (extra underclothes, extra clothing, snacks and lunch, water bottle, sunscreen, etc.) your child may need throughout the day must be provided by the Parents.

To encourage independence, clothing, including jackets, coats and sweaters, should be free of belts, suspenders, and any other encumbrances. Clothing may be any brand, but, in accordance with Montessori principles of simplicity and beauty, clothing should be free of any designs, characters, decals or written messages.

Please clearly label all clothing (jackets, gloves, hats, boots, shirts, pants, socks, undergarments) and personal items with your child's name using a permanent marker. Primary children should have a complete change of weather-appropriate clothing at school at all times, including socks. If your child is developing bathroom independence, several spare sets of clothing including underpants and socks are necessary. Should an item become misplaced, please check the Lost and Found Basket in the School Office.

Inclement Weather

Our outdoor policy states that students may be kept inside, with appropriate activities, if the temperature falls below 20°F or rises above 90°F, unless a specific activity is authorized. Please be sure outdoor clothing is sent each day that is appropriate when the weather permits.

We will go outside in light rain and snow. In the case that the weather is bad enough to cancel classes, we will follow the lead of the Poudre School District. Listen and watch local radio and TV channels for information.

Naps

In the Primary classroom, quiet time is after lunch between 12:30 and 1:00. Each student will have a washable nap mat assigned to them. Please send a crib-sized sheet and small blanket with your student each week, as this is a licensing requirement. Each day the bedding will be removed and stored accordingly, so please send the listed sizes. We do not have room to store pillows, stuffed animals, or extra bedding. On Friday, the bedding will be sent home and mats will be disinfected. Mats will also be cleaned as needed throughout the week.

Before and After School Care

Before and After School care will be provided for all ages of children enrolled in FCMS. The program will be offered all days we have school. Age appropriate activities will be available. Afternoon snacks will need to be brought from home. Parents will be informed of activities planned and will have the opportunity to request that their child not participate if ever necessary. Programming will be as follows:

Before School Care Program

- 7:30 Sign In
- 7:35 Breakfast or snack as sent from home
- 7:45 Free choice activities/reading
- 8:05 Transition to classrooms
- 8:15 School Begins

After School Care Program

- 3:00 Sign In, story/group time, snack
- 3:30 Outside
- 4:15 Inside, hand washing
- 4:20 Club time (rotating club choices each day)
- 4:40 Free choice
- 5:00 Sign out to parents

Please let the office know if you would like your child(ren) to be registered for Before or After School Care and complete the forms provided.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency Records

It is mandatory that all health forms be kept current (Required by Colorado State Department of Education as well as Child Care Licensing: Registration Form, Emergency Card, Medical Statement, and Immunization Form). If you take your child to the doctor during the school year, please update his/her immunization record as needed. If your child's health form is not kept current, your child may be denied admission until updated. All health forms MUST be on file before your child begins school.

Please keep the school informed of any changes in your contact information on your child's Emergency Card. The school must have accurate phone numbers for home, work, and emergency contacts. Kindly indicate on the form which number should be used first.

FCMS accepts non-immunized children. Please check in with the office if you have any questions.

Illness

Be considerate of others in your child's class. Do not send your child to school if s/he is "coming down with something." Children who are not feeling well have a more difficult time participating in the classroom. Inform the school office, not the teacher, that your child will not be attending school due to illness, specifying the illness when you call. It is very important that we keep track of the illnesses going around school. Please keep your child at home until they are fully well and no longer contagious. This is so important for the well-being of all in our school community.

Policy and Procedure for Excluding Ill Children

Children with any of the following symptoms are not permitted to remain in care:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher (axillary). No rectal or ear temperatures are taken. Digital thermometers are used. (Oral temperatures may be taken for preschool through school age children if single use covers are used over the thermometer. Glass thermometers contain mercury, a toxic substance, and are therefore should not be used. Temperature strips should not be used because they are frequently inaccurate.)
- Diarrhea or Vomiting
- Earache with fever
- Profuse green nasal discharge
- Headache that affects activity level
- Rash, undiagnosed or quickly spreading
- Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye) until clear or until 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- Sick appearance, not feeling well, and/or not able to keep up with program activities .
- Open or oozing sores , unless properly covered and 24 hours has passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if antibiotic treatment is necessary.

- Lice or scabies:
 - Head lice: until no nits are present.
 - Scabies: until after treatment is begun.
- Any major medical event such as but, not limited to: Head/neck injury, seizure, severe allergic reactions, severe asthma attacks. Keep child home for 24hrs after the event to monitor.

Following exclusion, children are readmitted to the program when they no longer have any of the above symptoms, she/he has been free of all fever, vomiting, diarrhea or other symptoms of illness for 24 hours, has been on antibiotics for 24 hours, or there is a verifiable doctor's note stating the child is not contagious to those around them. This policy is required by the Health Department and is in effect for the health and safety of your child as well as that of other children and staff. The director reserves the right to determine whether or not a child will be allowed to stay.

In the case of an absence due to a contagious disease or an illness of more than three days duration, a note from your child's physician stating that it is acceptable for the child to return to school is required before your child can be re-admitted to the classroom.

Please note that children who are not immunized for a contagious disease must be excluded from school by law until the incubation period of the last reported incident of the disease has expired.

If a child becomes ill, has an accident, or is injured, school staff will take the child to the sick room and fill out an incident report and the parent or legal guardian or the person(s) listed on the child's emergency information will be notified. If emergency contacts cannot be notified and immediate medical care is needed, the school will call 911. However, Fort Collins Montessori School will in no case accept financial responsibility for care. It is imperative that we have current phone numbers including at least two emergency contacts. Minor incidents and illnesses will be referred to the school nurse and/or our trained office staff.

When children have been diagnosed with a communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia or shigella, Fort Collins Montessori School will immediately notify the local health department or the State Department of Public Health and Environment, all staff members, and all parents and guardians of children in care. Children's confidentiality will be maintained. Parents need to report exposure of a child to communicable illness outside of school, and, at the discretion of the Head of School, the child should be excluded from school for the period of time prescribed by the child's physician or by the local health department.

If your child develops a fever while at school or shows other signs of any communicable illness (see below), the above procedure will be followed and you will be contacted and requested to take him/her home within an hour. If you cannot be reached, an emergency contact will be called to take your child home. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

Please remember that children go outside daily except in inclement weather. If your child is unable to take part in outdoor activities because of illness, please keep him/her at home for the

day since we cannot keep individual children indoors during these activities.

Medication

All medication must be given directly to the school office for proper storage: no medication may be left in lunchboxes or backpacks.

Prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications for eyes or ears, all oral medications, topical medications, inhaled medications, and certain emergency injections can be administered only with the written order of a person with prescriptive authority and with written parental consent. We administer medications for chronic health conditions or emergency situations.

The written order by the licensed prescribing practitioner must include:

- Child's name
- Licensed prescribing practitioner name, telephone number, and signature
- Date authorized
- Name of medication and dosage
- Time of day medication is to be given
- Route of medication
- Length of time the medication is to be given
- Reason for medication (unless this information needs to remain confidential)
- Side effects or reactions to watch for
- Special instructions

Medications must be kept in the original labeled bottle or container. Prescription medications must contain the original pharmacy label that lists:

- Child's name
- Prescribing practitioner's name
- Pharmacy name and telephone number
- Date prescription was filled
- Expiration date of the medication
- Name of the medication
- Dosage
- How often to give the medication
- Length of time the medication is to be given

Over-the-counter medication must be kept in the originally labeled container and be labeled with the child's first and last name. In the case medication needs to be given on an ongoing, long-term basis, the Medication Authorization Form is to be turned in on an annual basis. If more than one dose is to be administered, a licensed health practitioner must approve the administration and dosage on the Medication Authorization Form or a physician's prescription Slip.

A written medication log is kept for each child. This log is part of the child's records. The log contains the following:

- Child's name
- Name of the medication, dosage, and route
- Time medication is to be given
- Special instructions
- Name and initials of the individuals giving the medication
- Notation if the medication was not given and the reason

Topical preparations such as petroleum jelly, diaper rash ointments, sunscreen, bug repellent sprays, and other ointments may be administered to children with written parental authorization. These preparations may not be applied to open wounds or broken skin unless there is a written order by the prescribing practitioner, and the prescribed medication needs to contain all the information listed in the medication section.

Sunscreen

Fort Collins Montessori School obtains the parent or guardian's written authorization and instructions for applying sunscreen to their children's exposed skin prior to outside play. A doctor's permission is not needed to use sunscreen at school. When supplied for an individual child, the sunscreen must be labeled with the child's first and last name. Children over 4 years of age may apply sunscreen to themselves under the direct supervision of a staff member. Please follow instructions for non-prescription medication if you would like sunscreen to be applied during the school day. (The parent must provide the sunscreen).

Food, Nutrition and Community

Due to licensing and health care regulations, neither FCMS nor children are allowed to prepare or share food with other children. Children must also bring their own morning snack, and a second snack if they are in the After Care program.

FCMS strives to be a peanut-free environment, and we therefore insist that you do not send any foods containing peanuts in your child's lunch. This includes all foods prepared with peanut oil as well as peanut butter! Along with peanuts, there are other allergens in our school. If your student has tree-nuts or sesame (hummus) in their lunch or snack, your student's teacher must be notified. Instead of banning these foods, we intend to create a culture of safety and caring for our community members through notification of allergens, hand washing, and thorough clean up practices. If this does not create a safe environment, we will be forced to ban these foods in the future. Please see our allergen procedure below for further details on allergens in our school.

We will return the uneaten portion of your child's lunch so that you know what s/he has consumed and can make appropriate adjustments.

For Elementary students, please include either a cold pack or thermos for items that must be

kept cold or warm, as we do not have a refrigerator or microwave to use. Preschool lunches with perishable items will go in a fridge if needed (cold pack is not up to health standards for that age group). Please place perishable items in a Ziploc bag with your student's name written on the bag into the designated "Refrigerator Box" in their classroom each day. This box will be placed in the refrigerator until lunch each day.

FCMS Allergen Procedure

Allergen definition (as determined by ongoing needs): All nuts and nut products, sesame and sesame products

Individual classrooms/teachers may define specific allergens for segregation within their environments as necessary

Goal: Create awareness, safe hygiene habits and a sense of community responsibility.

Daily Procedure:

All children and staff wash their hands upon arrival to school as well as before and after eating. Children with an allergen in their lunch/snack must give an allergen card to their teacher upon arrival.

- Each teacher keeps track of this information as they see fit.
- Eating takes place on clean and sanitized surfaces per Health Dept guidelines.
- Children with allergens in their lunch/snack eat their food at a designated spot on the tile floor or splash mat in order to keep allergens contained to a known area.
- Within these broader categories, individual classrooms may define allergens more specifically on an as need basis.
- Food is never shared and children do not touch other people's food.
- Clean-up includes four steps:
 - Gathering physical mess- each classroom has their own procedure for this; it could include brooms, hand brooms, and/or vacuums. In the case of severe allergies, a vacuum is used to best contain dust particles.
 - Cleaning surfaces with soap and water- again, each classroom has their own procedure for this.
 - Rinsing surfaces with water
 - Sanitizing surfaces per product and health department guidelines using disposable paper towels.
- Children with allergies do not prepare surfaces for eating or clean up of other people's food to prevent cross contamination. Only adults empty vacuum cleaner.
- To keep computer keyboards clean, washing hands must be done before using the classroom computers.
- Substitute and extra-curricular teachers are fully informed of all procedures.
- All procedures are routinely reviewed.
- Discussion and community learning experiences are promoted to increase understanding and awareness of allergens in school.
- Considerations for going out/field trips will be made on a case by case basis following all policies and procedures for said activities.

- School sponsored activities- when menu and location planning, we will take into consideration all known allergies.

Suggestions for Home

Involve your child in preparing his/her own lunch. Your child can slice cheese and put crackers into a container, choose and wash vegetables and fruit, and even help make a sandwich. Prepare the kitchen/dining room so your child can participate. Your child will want to pour her own milk or water, help with peeling vegetables, set and clear the table. You can make that process safe and fun by providing the proper equipment: a small glass pitcher, safe vegetable peelers, apple corers, egg cutters, scrub brushes, child-sized mops and brooms.

Snacks

Daily snacks should be nutritionally balanced. We ask each family to provide both snacks and bottled water for their child.

Celebration Food

Celebration food is not allowed for several reasons. First, many children have allergies to food ingredients in foods, and it may not be obvious without extremely careful reading of preparation place and ingredients. Second, some children do not celebrate events such as birthdays for religious reasons, and would have to be excluded from a party. Third, health department regulations prevent the distribution of foods that are not pre-packaged, meaning that we can't even serve pizza if it were brought to school.

A much better alternative is to contribute a book to your child's classroom—most teachers have an Amazon book Wish List. Your child can present the book to the class and the teacher can read the book. In this way your child can have a lasting presence in the classroom.

Food Allergies

Parents are responsible for providing all food, including lunch and snack, for their child to prevent food allergic reactions.

Parking Lot Safety

When parking in the parking lot to bring your child to or from school, please be sure that your child is with you at all times and not allowed to run out to your car while you visit with others.

Car Seat Safety

FCMS follows all applicable laws and safety guidelines for child safety seats. Please ensure that your child is in a safety seat upon arrival and departure from FCMS. Colorado State Legislation requires that a child under age 4 or weighing 40 pounds or less must be properly secured in an infant, toddler, or booster child safety seat in accordance with the child safety seat and vehicle manufacturer's instructions.

Colorado continues to require that all passengers regardless of age wear their seat belts. There

are significant penalties and fines for violations. Additional information is available in the school office.

Student Transportation Policy

The safe operation of motor vehicles is very important at FCMS. The following shall apply to all persons operating school vehicles or operating their own vehicles to transport students for any reason or for school business:

- Fort Collins Montessori School reserves the right to order and review employee and volunteer Motor Vehicle Records as part of their standard background check policy. These reports are subject to Fort Collins Montessori's commercial auto policy underwriting guidelines, established by the insurance carrier during the applicable coverage period.
- Employees or volunteers must have a valid driver's license at all times when operating a school vehicle, or their own personal vehicle when used for student transportation or school business.
- All employees or volunteers must provide Fort Collins Montessori with a copy of their current Automobile Liability insurance showing proof of compliance with the minimum statutory limits required by Colorado, a copy of their current driver's license, and the attached waiver signed and dated.
- Seat Belts are an essential element of our driver safety policy/procedures. All employees and volunteers must wear seatbelts while transporting students and must make sure that students are wearing seat belts. No child under the age of 12 should be placed in the front seat due to the passenger side airbag. Child safety seats or booster seats must be used in accordance with Colorado state law. All vehicles are subject to a visual inspection for safety.
- If an employee or volunteer is driving their own personal automobile for business use on behalf of the school, their personal automobile insurance will act as the primary insurance for damages related to an accident. If the employee or volunteer's own personal insurance limits have been exhausted, the school's automobile insurance would respond on an Excess basis for damages related to a 3rd party. Fort Collins Montessori School is not liable for collision damage on an employee or volunteer's vehicle. Evidence of this insurance as well as a copy of the employee's or volunteer's current motor vehicle report must be kept on file and updated upon insurance and license renewals.
- Staff and volunteers will ensure that Field Trip Permission Slips have been signed for each child participating in the excursion and that copies of these documents are on file in the School Office. The forms required to be taken on every trip include: signed permission form, a copy of the student's' emergency card, all medication permissions as applicable, and emergency contact information.
- When not in the driver's seat, the drivers shall place the vehicle in park, set the parking brake, turn off the engine, and remove the ignition key.
- Drivers will not leave students unattended in or out of the vehicle for any length of time.
- Drivers will only use their cell phones when the car is parked.

Field Trip & Going Out Policy

- A school permission form must be signed by the parent or guardian of a student before the

student may participate in any field trip or other activity away from school.

- Determinations regarding the appropriateness of a field trip/activity, supervision requirements, necessary accommodations and/or modifications, and other matters concerning students with disabilities or special needs shall be made by the student's IEP, § 504 team, or appropriate FCMS staff.
- Adult chaperones shall be either FCMS employees or authorized volunteers that are qualified under FCMS Volunteer Policy and have attended a volunteer training.
- FCMS reserves the right to deny any request for a field trip/activity, to cancel any previously approved field trip/activity up to the time of departure, and to terminate or redirect any field trip/activity in progress for any reason deemed necessary or appropriate, including but not limited to health/safety concerns or misconduct.
- District vehicles, private vehicles or commercial transportation may be used for student transportation in connection with any field trip/activity. In order to transport students in private vehicles, FCMS employees and authorized volunteers must be approved by FCMS through the FCMS Auto Policy and its application process.
- All personal vehicles are subject to a visual inspection by an FCMS employee before escorting students.
- Chaperones shall bring a safety backpack on the trip including first aid kit, wipes, medications, permission slips, emergency procedures, and emergency contact information.
- Students, FCMS employees and volunteers are subject to FCMS policies and regulations, including but not limited to policies and regulations included in the Code of Conduct, Student Transportation Policy, Auto Policy, Allergen Policy, and Health Department & Licensing regulations on every field trip/activity.
- Each field trip/activity, including the mode(s) of transportation to be used, shall be approved in advance on the appropriate school form by the Head of School after considering any information and recommendations provided by the insurance company.
- The Head of School shall approve an FCMS employee to serve as the sponsor for each field trip/activity. The sponsor shall have primary responsibility for the field trip/activity and all participating students, FCMS employees and volunteers. The Head of School shall determine the number and qualifications of adult chaperones required for student supervision in connection with each field trip/activity.
- In the case of an emergency, the sponsor and/or chaperone will contact emergency personnel as necessary and the school. The school will reach out to parents of participating students. In the case that a student has special needs, all instructions listed on IHPs, IEPs, or any other plan filed with the school will supersede.
- If any student is injured during the field trip/activity (including transportation to or from the field trip/activity), the sponsor shall forward the original signed permission form for that student and a completed FCMS Incident Report to the office.

Television or Video Policy

All television or video viewing must be approved by the Director and/or the Head of School. Parents will also be given information in advance. Teachers need to explain to the Director or Head of School how the video is a developmentally-appropriate and curriculum related in order to show it.

Security

During arrival, the school's entrance is open and monitored by staff. At 8:15 for Elementary or 8:30 for Primary, the door is closed and remains locked for the day. In order to enter the school, visitors must go to the main office and check in. If your child arrives after these times, you must sign in with the front office.

Procedure for Identifying Where Children are at all Times

Teachers are responsible for knowing where all children are at all times. Teachers do periodically "count heads" throughout the day, making sure that every child who is signed in is present in the room. These head counts should take place every fifteen minutes throughout the day. Teachers keep the Sign-in/Out sheet with them at all times.

Emergency Preparedness

In emergency situations, FCMS will follow the Crisis Response and Management Procedures outlined in the manual developed by the Emergency Responders of Fort Collins. Every classroom has a copy of these emergency procedures.

Fire Drills:

Fort Collins Montessori School will conduct regular fire drills. Emergency evacuation procedures and building maps are posted near the door of every classroom. Children are taught to respond quickly but calmly to the fire alarm, quietly lining up and exiting the building under the direction of the teacher. One teacher in each classroom will be responsible for ensuring that all children leave the classroom, and for carrying the class sign-in clipboard. The last teacher to leave the classroom will close the door. The class takes the safest, most direct route to their safe place, identified on the evacuation plan. Teachers then have children sit as a class in a line or group. Teachers take roll (using sign-in sheets) to make sure all children are accounted for. Teachers report any missing children immediately to the Head of School. Groups must remain at their safe place until given the "all clear" by the Head of School (The Head of School will wait for an okay from the fire department if they are present).

Tornado Drills:

Fort Collins Montessori School conducts tornado drills as required by law. Emergency evacuation procedures are posted near the door of every classroom. In the event of a tornado, teachers are to quickly and calmly lead children to the designated "safe" areas within the building. If out on the playground, classes immediately enter the building and go to the designated safe area for their group. While waiting in the safe areas for the storm to pass, children are taught to remain calm. Teachers take the class list (sign-in/out clipboard) with them. When the classes reach the designated safe place, children sit as a class in a line or group. Teachers take roll (using sign-in sheets) to be sure all children are accounted for. Teachers report any missing children immediately to the Head of School. Groups must remain at their safe place until given the "all clear" by the Head of School.

Lost Child:

If teachers should discover a child is missing, they report the missing child to the Head of School immediately. A thorough search of the building and playground areas will be conducted. If after a few minutes searching, the child has not been found, the Head of School will call Fort Collins Police and the parents of the child.

Other:

FCMS has made extensive preparations for a wide range of emergencies, including on-site emergencies, local emergencies, and alerts issued by the National Homeland Security Office.

Here are some guidelines to follow in the event of a crisis or emergency:

- **FIRST RESPONSE:** A notice of procedures will be posted on the school's website or social media pages (and emailed if possible). Follow instructions carefully.
- If feasible, you will be contacted directly by telephone. Remain calm and follow instructions.
- In some emergencies the children may be walked to a safe location where you can pick them up. This will be posted on the website, and an attempt will be made to call you.
- If we are required to "shelter in place" at the school, we have provisions and are prepared to do so.
- In some cases, FEMA may instruct FCMS to leave the building or location or we may be told to allow anyone to enter our building. These are stressful situations. Please know that your child's well-being and safety are our top priority and that they will be carefully supervised until you can be reunited with your child.
- It is critical that you keep all records up to date in our office—including cell phone numbers, email and names of those individuals you allow to pick up your child. Consider carefully your list of those to whom we can release your child in a crisis/emergency. Please email any changes to office@focomontessori.org.
- Respond immediately to any requests for items or information related to our emergency plan.
- Keep the school's telephone number and website handy at home, work and in your car.

FCMS follows the Emergency Preparedness guidelines outlined on the Poudre School District website.

Complaints and Reporting

Parents who are concerned about specific unresolved issues related to the preschool or Before Care and After Care could file a complaint at The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care, 1575 Sherman St, Denver, CO 80203-1714 or call (303) 866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876.

School personnel are required, by law, to report any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Head of School and County Department of Social Services. Parents should report to the Head of School any inappropriate behavior or action taken by staff toward children. To report suspected child abuse, call the Larimer County Child Abuse Hotline a (9800)CO4-KIDS.

Grievance Process

The Grievance Process provides a means by which conflicts can be resolved. Parents, students or teachers may initiate this process. Such a request must be in writing and submitted to the Head of School for further action. The Head of School will then communicate with those involved in the conflict within two working days. A meeting will take place within five working days at the end of which a plan for resolution will be agreed upon. If, after completion of this meeting, the conflict has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, it may then be taken to the Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board of Directors for a final ruling. The procedure for filing concerns is as follows:

1. The parties will make every attempt to communicate the concern directly to the teacher, the Head of School, or the parent(s) for resolution. An appointment should be set up where the concern can be expressed in private. Care should be taken to express concerns calmly and respectfully so that an environment conducive to resolution can exist. In addition, care should be taken to not discuss the issues with others not involved in the dispute.
2. If the parties are unable to come to a resolution, they may use the Dispute Resolution Form to file their concern, in writing, with the Head of School.
3. In cases where the concern has been addressed with the Head of School, and any party remains dissatisfied with the decisions made to resolve the conflict at this level, that party may take their concerns to the Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board. Such a complaint will be made in a written statement using the Complaint Form, which details the violation, procedures taken and requested remedy, and the complaint shall be submitted to the Fort Collins Montessori School Governing Board at least one week prior to the next Board of Directors meeting. Disputes submitted later will be addressed at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board of Directors responding at or prior to its next regular public meeting.
4. The Board of Directors may hear arguments from the parties, review prior decisions and evidence, and make inquiries as it deems necessary. The Board of Directors shall render a written decision within ten business days after the meeting unless additional time is needed. The Board of Director's decision shall be final.

Confidentiality

Fort Collins Montessori School (FCMS) is very sensitive to the fact that information concerning

you, your child, and your family is private and personal. Trust and confidentiality are essential to building trusting relationships. We are committed to maintaining your privacy and protecting your personal information. FCMS will not disclose information except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of the individuals and families we serve.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).

GETTING INVOLVED

FCMS Volunteer Policy

FCMS has a talented and involved parent body. Because we are a charter school, we depend greatly on the support of these parent volunteers throughout the year. When you donate your time and talents you make a valuable contribution to the children of FCMS, you help to keep our school running efficiently, and you get the opportunity to meet other parents. Parent volunteers help to build community spirit and provide needed (and appreciated!) help to our faculty and staff.

There are four categories of Parent Volunteers at Fort Collins Montessori School. Each category may volunteer in any other category under their level of approval.

Task Oriented Volunteer

- These volunteers help with tasks around the classroom, school, or office that do not require contact with children.
- No background check required.

Classroom Volunteer

- These volunteers may help within the classroom and on campus with special activities and/or events. They may be in the classroom with children but may not be alone with children.
- Background check required: CO Child Abuse Record check.
- Requires Volunteer training attendance.

Escort Volunteer

- These volunteers may help within the classroom and on campus with special activities and/or events and may escort children around campus to help keep them safe.
- Background check required: CO Child Abuse Record check & CBI/FBI fingerprint background check.
- Requires Volunteer training attendance.
- In the case that a child with special needs is participating, other trainings may be required.

Driver Volunteer

- These volunteers may provide rides to approved students on a "Going Out" activity off campus.
- Background check required: CO Child Abuse Record check, CBI/FBI fingerprint background check, driver's record check, insurance check, transportation waiver signed. Requires Volunteer training attendance.
- In the case that a child with special needs is participating, other trainings may be required.

Fundraising

A long-term financial objective of Fort Collins Montessori School is to fully cover basic operating expenses through the annual per pupil allotment budgeted through Fort Collins Public Schools. At the same time, FCMS is a non-profit organization that must rely on fundraising to close the gap between public revenue and the actual cost of an FCMS education. As a charter school and because we have requested a waiver from the Colorado Revised Statute 22-32-110(1)(y) we are allowed to fund raise, apply for grants, accept and solicit gifts.

Money raised through fundraising may support:

- Teacher training and faculty development
- Physical and programmatic enhancements and enrichment
- Capital expenses

Fundraising and Community Events

In addition to direct gifts, each year FCMS will sponsor events designed to raise both awareness of and financial support for our programs. Public Lectures, Festivals, and/or House Parties may take place. If you have an idea for an event, please contact our Board President.

Store Rebate Programs

FCMS endeavors to enlist the support of all parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and other community friends in securing funds from a number of store rebate programs.

Other Ways of Giving

You can also give to the school through donations (financial, goods, services), planned giving, vehicles, stock, insurance policies, and inclusion in your estate. If you are interested supporting FCMS financially, please contact our Board President.

Fort Collins Montessori School

Parent Acknowledgement

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Fort Collins Montessori School Family Handbook. I understand that if I have any questions about the information in the handbook, I will address them with a school administrator.

I understand that the provisions of the handbook are the most current at this time and supersede all previous policies, manuals or handbooks issued by Fort Collins Montessori School and I agree to follow these provisions. Further, I understand that the provisions of the handbook are subject to modification at any time, at the sole discretion of Fort Collins Montessori School, with or without notice to me.

I understand that a signed copy of this Fort Collins Montessori School Parent Acknowledgement form must be submitted to Fort Collins Montessori School before my child can attend school.

Student(s) Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____

Date: _____