

# Coastal Montessori

— CHARTER SCHOOL —

Parent Handbook

2016-2017

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## **Mission Statement**

*To produce highly-educated, self-directed, socially-responsible citizens who work collaboratively, respectfully, and peacefully as individual yet interdependent learners in a diverse and nurturing community. Through the unique combination of empirically-validated Montessori principles, localized charter governance, and open access, Coastal Montessori Charter School further aims to provide Georgetown County School District with an academically excellent, financially accountable public school choice.*

## **WHY WE EXIST**

### **To Close the Achievement Gap**

Because all children deserve the same opportunity to be successful and because investing in our children's success strengthens our community.

### **To Read on Grade Level by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

Because the first few years of school, children are learning to read; for the rest of their lives they are reading to learn.

### **To Cultivate Real Life Skills in Children**

Because our children will compete globally and must be equipped with what education experts call the Seven Survival Skills.

1. Critical Thinking
2. Problem Solving
3. Self-Regulation
4. Taking Initiative
5. Communication
6. Inquisitiveness
7. Ability to Work as Part of a Team

### **Preparation for High School and Life**

Because a diverse, complex world requires a student with a myriad of skills and talents to achieve optimum success in high school and life.

## Notice to the Public

In compliance with the Executive Order 11246: Title II of the Education Amendments of 1976; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Act of 1972; Title IX Regulation Implementing Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and all other Federal, State, School rules, laws, regulations, and policies Coastal Montessori Charter School (herein after CMCS) shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion or handicap in the educational programs or activities which it operates.

It is the intent of Coastal Montessori Charter School to comply with both the letter and spirit of the law in making certain discrimination does not exist in its policies, regulations and operations. Grievance procedures for Title IX and Section 504 have been established for students, their parents and employees who feel discrimination has been shown by the school.

Specific complaints of alleged discrimination under Title IX (sex) and Section 504 (handicap) should be referred to Dr. Nathalie Hunt (Director) or Mr. Rob Horvath (Board Chair). Complaints may also be directed to Jon Tester, GCSD Title IX Coordinator, email: [jtester@gcsd.k12.sc.us](mailto:jtester@gcsd.k12.sc.us), 843 - 436 - 7203 or Michael Caviris, GCSD Section 504 Coordinator, email: [mcaviris@gcsd.k12.sc.us](mailto:mcaviris@gcsd.k12.sc.us), 843 - 436 - 7125.

Complaints of discrimination can also be filed with the Office for Civil Rights; U.S. Department of Education; 400 Maryland Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20202-1475. Email: [OCR.DC@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.DC@ed.gov). Telephone: 202 - 453 - 6020. Fax: 202 - 453 - 6021. All students attending Georgetown County Schools may participate in educational programs and activities, including but not limited to health, P.E., music, vocational ed., homemaking, and consumer ed., trades and industrial ed., business/office ed., regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability or sex.

All students attending CMCS may participate in educational programs and activities regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap or sex.

### **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):**

#### Notice to Parents/Guardians/Eligible Students

The revised Family Rights and Privacy Act became a Federal Law in December, 1974. The law intends to protect the accuracy and privacy of students' educational records. In that regard, please note the following:

- The definition of "educational records" includes all records, files, documents, and other materials containing information directly related to your child.
- Without your prior consent, only you and authorized individuals will have access to your child's educational records. Except in rare health and or safety emergencies. However, unless you make a request in writing to the contrary, we may release without consent "directory information" contained in your child's educational records: Name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height, athletic team membership, degrees and awards received, and most recent previous education agency or institution attended. Your written request should be received by the school by September 15th, or within ten days of your child's enrollment in the school, whichever is later.

- You may make an appointment with the school to inspect and review your child’s educational records.
- You may obtain copies of educational records for \$3.00, other than the first copy of a transcript to another educational institution, which will be sent without charge.
- You have the right to challenge any information contained in your child’s educational records if you think it is inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate information.
- The Director has ultimate responsibility for all educational records and will periodically review student educational records for the purpose of correcting and deleting any inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate information.

**From the Office of Special Services**

A student’s education records, including special education records, may be transferred from one district to another for enrollment purposes without parental permission, according to Federal and State regulations.

**Nondiscrimination Policy**

CMCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or age in any of its policies, procedures or practices, nor does it tolerate sexual harassment, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1991, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (pertaining to race, color, and national origin), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (pertaining to sex), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (pertaining to handicap) and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, (pertaining to age).

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Hours of Operation: 7:45 am - 3:45 pm  
 Address: 247 Wildcat Way, Pawleys Island, SC 29585  
 Telephone: 843-235-0413  
 Fax: 843 – 235 - 0418  
 Website: [www.coastalmontessoricharter.org](http://www.coastalmontessoricharter.org)  
 Calendar: CMCS follows that Georgetown County School District Calendar which can be found at [www.gcsd.k12.sc.us](http://www.gcsd.k12.sc.us)

School Administration and Faculty

Director	Dr. Nathalie Hunt	<a href="mailto:nhunt@coastalmontessoricharter.org">nhunt@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Assistant Director	Mr. Chris Bergeron	<a href="mailto:cbergeron@coastalmontessoricharter.org">cbergeron@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Office Manager	Ms. Kristy Harbaugh	<a href="mailto:kharbaugh@coastalmontessoricharter.org">kharbaugh@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Operations Manager	Ms. Tia Lori Bergeron	<a href="mailto:tbergeron@coastalmontessoricharter.org">tbergeron@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Nurse	Ms. Kelly Metz	<a href="mailto:kmetz@coastalmontessoricharter.org">kmetz@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Lead Teachers	Ms. Nan Gadek	<a href="mailto:ngadek@coastalmontessoricharter.org">ngadek@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Shaye Heiskell	<a href="mailto:sheiskell@coastalmontessoricharter.org">sheiskell@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Andrea Hejl	<a href="mailto:ahejl@coastalmontessoricharter.org">ahejl@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>

	Ms. Liz Intrieri	<a href="mailto:eintrieri@coastalmontessoricharter.org">eintrieri@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Mr. Chad Rentz	<a href="mailto:crentz@coastalmontessoricharter.org">crentz@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Jen Smoak	<a href="mailto:jsmoak@coastalmontessoricharter.org">jsmoak@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Mr. Tom Strong	<a href="mailto:tstrong@coastalmontessoricharter.org">tstrong@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Antoinette Ursits	<a href="mailto:aursits@coastalmontessoricharter.org">aursits@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Hillary Usher	<a href="mailto:husher@coastalmontessoricharter.org">husher@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Amy Williams	<a href="mailto:awilliams@coastalmontessoricharter.org">awilliams@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Sarah Wilson	<a href="mailto:swilson@coastalmontessoricharter.org">swilson@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Teaching Assistants	Ms. Jo Addington	<a href="mailto:jaddington@coastalmontessoricharter.org">jaddington@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Natalie Boggs	<a href="mailto:nboggs@coastalmontessoricharter.org">nboggs@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Jacque Onions	<a href="mailto:jonions@coastalmontessoricharter.org">jonions@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Sarah Stimpson	<a href="mailto:sstimpson@coastalmontessoricharter.org">sstimpson@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Jamie Williamson	<a href="mailto:jwilliamson@coastalmontessoricharter.org">jwilliamson@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Johanna Wilson	<a href="mailto:jwilson@coastalmontessoricharter.org">jwilson@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Mr. Jarod Soucie	<a href="mailto:jsoucie@coastalmontessoricharter.org">jsoucie@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
	Ms. Gina Goodyear	<a href="mailto:ggoodyear@coastalmontessoricharter.org">ggoodyear@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Art Teacher	Ms. Kim Evans-Robey	<a href="mailto:kerobey@coastalmontessoricharter.org">kerobey@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Literacy Specialist	Ms. Amber Wheeler Bacon	<a href="mailto:awbacon@coastalmontessoricharter.org">awbacon@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Music Teacher	Mr. Chad Thompson	<a href="mailto:cthompson@coastalmontessoricharter.org">cthompson@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Spanish Teacher	Ms. Keely Elliott	<a href="mailto:kelliott@coastalmontessoricharter.org">kelliott@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>
Special Education	Ms. Nicole Nucero	<a href="mailto:nnucero@coastalmontessoricharter.org">nnucero@coastalmontessoricharter.org</a>

## The CMCS Story

Having witnessed the powerful impact Montessori had on their own children, a group of ordinary parents began to dream of something extraordinary: a Montessori education available to every child. They began sharing their idea and soon other parents of children in public and private schools, community leaders, teachers, administrators, and public Montessori and SC charter school experts joined in this grassroots effort. After nearly two years of planning and collaboration, a clear vision of an authentic Montessori education delivered by a public charter school took shape.

The CMCS charter application was certified by the SC Department of Education in June of 2011. The Georgetown County School Board voted unanimously to authorize CMCS less than a month later. CMCS opened its doors in August of 2012 offering grades 1-6. Starting in August of 2016, CMCS will be offering middle school starting with the seventh grade and following with the eighth grade in the 2017-2018 school year.

CMCS is proud to be a part of the Georgetown County School District and is working hand-in-hand with all of its educators in service of our children.

## EXPECTATIONS

### Parent or Guardian

The Parent/Guardian Shall:

- Adhere to existing policies governing the conduct and education of their children
- Comply with Compulsory Education Laws which state that a person between the ages of 5 and 17 years is subject to compulsory full- time education
- Be liable for any misconduct resulting in injury or death to any student, or to any persons employed by or volunteering for the school
- Be liable for any defacement or injury to any real or personal property belonging to

the school

- Be liable for all property belonging to the school, which is loaned to the student and not returned upon demand of an employee of the school
- Ensure compliance with policies regarding bicycle and automobile and pedestrian regulations in the vicinity of and on school property
- Encourage their children to adhere to CMCS policies regarding conduct and education

### **Students**

The student shall:

- Attend school punctually and regularly
- Conform to the regulations of the school
- Obey promptly all the directions of his/her teacher and others in authority
- Observe good order and propriety of deportment
- Be diligent in study
- Be respectful to his/her teacher and others in authority
- Be kind and courteous to schoolmates
- Refrain entirely from the use of profane and vulgar language
- Comply with all safety rules and regulations (e.g. use of bicycle helmets)
- Students shall show by their conduct consideration for the rights and privileges of others and will demonstrate cooperation with all members of the school community
- Students shall evidence respect for constituted authority by following rules and regulations of the school, by attending regularly, by following the instructions of their teachers, and by complying with those provisions of civil and criminal law that apply to the conduct of juveniles or minors
- Students should assume the responsibility for diligent work in order to profit from the educational experiences provided
- Students shall be helped in all ways possible to enable them to take advantage of their educational activities

### **School Administrators**

The School Administrator shall:

- Initiate and enforce a set of school rules to facilitate and promote positive attitudes and habits of good citizenship
- Communicate the rules of student discipline to all students at the time of their enrollment
- Support the classroom teacher in his/her efforts to promote improved and acceptable behavior of students
- Notify parents/guardians of student, by telephone, letter or in person, of offenses as needed
- Maintain documented records of student behavior as a means of helping in the guidance of the students, as a record for parental conferences, as reference for authorized agencies and for supporting evidence where suspension or expulsion may become necessary
- Cooperate with law enforcement personnel
- Always remain cognizant of legal and professional responsibilities to the school and to the students

- Be responsible for the administration, management, instructional program, and operation of the school
- Report violations of the law by students, faculty or staff to the appropriate law-enforcement agency as required by law

## **Teachers**

The Teacher shall:

- Conduct a well-planned and effective classroom program
- Initiate and enforce a set of classroom regulations that facilitate effective learning
- Cooperate with administrators and other classroom teachers in enforcing general school rules and appropriate campus behavior
- Follow procedures outlined in this handbook and the Code of Conduct in handling discipline problems for which he/she is directly responsible
- Make prompt referrals when a student's conduct and record indicate that additional supports are needed
- Remove any student whose behavior seriously disrupts the learning atmosphere of the class, and cooperate with the administrator in his/her effort to promote improved and acceptable behavior of students
- Report violations of the law by students, faculty or staff to the appropriate law-enforcement agency as required by law

## **ADMISSIONS**

Coastal Montessori Charter School is a free, public choice school in Georgetown County for children in grades 1-8. The open enrollment period for rising 1<sup>st</sup> graders is between October 1 and December 15 of their kindergarten year. Thirty-two 1<sup>st</sup> years are accepted each year. If there are more than 32 applications for enrollment, then a blind draw is conducted at a January lottery open to the public and a waiting list is created. Siblings of currently enrolled students and students of staff members are given preference in their enrollment.

## **AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT**

Coastal Montessori Charter School offers on-site activities sponsored by external vendors and teachers from 3:45 pm - 5:00 pm., Monday through Thursday. Activities that have been sponsored in the past are Art Studio, Homework Club, Mad Science, Cooking School, Sport Camps, and Tae Kwon Do. There is an individual fee for these activities.

All CMCS students may, by law, join any extracurricular activity at any other public school in the county. All try-out rules and regulations apply. For example, CMCS seventh and eighth years are eligible to participate in the high school athletic program at the public school in the attendance zone of their residence. Middle school students are eligible to participate on Junior Varsity and B teams, as well as some Varsity teams according to the rules of the SCHSL. CMCS does not provide transportation to these activities. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to get their student to an offsite activity.



## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL**

**ARRIVAL:** School begins at 8:30 am. Students can begin arriving at 7:45 am and should be inside the building prior to 8:30 am. Scholars arriving through the door at 8:30 am or later will be considered tardy.

During morning arrival, parents may drop off in the bus loop behind Waccamaw Middle School. A staff member will be in the carpool line from 8:10 to 8:25 to greet students. On rainy days, drop off occurs in the main entrance loop to Waccamaw Middle School.

**DISMISSAL:** School ends at 3:30. Please do not arrive for dismissal or get into the car pool line prior to 3:10 due to Waccamaw Middle School dismissal. Carpool dismissal occurs in the main entrance loop to Waccamaw Middle School. Each family should have a placard that hangs from the rear view mirror, which displays the number that is linked to your student(s). We will continue to use the four spot system in carpool where students are sent to a location for pickup based on your position in line. If you wish to park and walk up to collect your student(s), please bring your placard with you. If you do not have your placard, you will be asked to go inside to sign out your student(s).

No student will be released from school to an unauthorized person. If someone different is going to pick up your student(s), they must either have your placard (extra placards can be purchased in the CMCS office by the parent or legal guardian) or they must be on your Pick Up Permission Slip in order to sign them out of school at the end of the day. Please do not use your student to pass off placards. An individual without a placard will be requested to go into the school in order to sign out a student.

## **ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS**

See the CMCS Student Code of Conduct Handbook

## **COASTAL MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Coastal Montessori Charter School maintains its success by the strong leadership of its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has defined the mission and vision of the school. Board members consist of parents and community leaders whose responsibilities include but are not limited to promoting the mission of the school, hiring and evaluating the Director, fundraising, and fiscal management.

The Board of Directors meets on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 pm at CMCS. Board meetings are public and attendance is encouraged.

# COASTAL MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The Coastal Montessori Charter School Code of Conduct was developed to promote a peaceful learning environment based on respect for the rights of students, teachers, and parents. Students learn best when they are free of interference by others and know what is expected of them. Teachers are most effective when they use a consistent approach to student behavior and know that the administration and parents support the handling of students. Therefore, parents and students both need to be aware of these rules and their relationship to the rights of other persons in the school.

As my child's most important educator, I understand that I teach my child best by my own example of reverence, responsibility, and respect. I understand that my child's teacher is a dedicated professional with expertise and training in the pedagogy of Montessori philosophy and child development. As a member of the CMCS community, I will show my support and cooperation by:

- I will have my child in school on time every day with the necessary school supplies and appropriate dress
- I will not tolerate vulgar, sarcastic, or catty language from my child or bullying, violent, or aggressive speech and behavior. I will set a good example in my own speech and behavior
- I will show respect for the teacher and any other adult in authority in front of my child at all times
- I will stop rumors. I will go through the proper channels when I have a problem
- I will speak respectfully and with kindness and courtesy to other parents in front of students, especially when there is a disagreement
- I will follow the school's rules, calendars, deadlines, and expect my child to do the same
- I will speak respectfully with kindness and courtesy to all students at CMCS
- I will abide by the CMCS Code of Conduct while my child is enrolled at Coastal Montessori Charter School
- For additional information please see the CMCS Student Code of Conduct Handbook

## COMMUNICATION

Coastal Montessori Charter School strives to foster clear communication between the school and home. Below are several of the methods that can be used to contact people and to provide information.

- Email: All teachers and staff have a CMCS email address. [firstinitiallastname@coastalmontessoricharterschool.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@coastalmontessoricharterschool.org). Parent information is distributed in mass emails from the school as well as class emails sent out by each classroom teacher
- Telephone: The school telephone number is 843-235-0413. Teachers, staff

members, and students will not be called out of class to answer the phone but messages can be taken and will be delivered at an appropriate time that does not interfere with the educational day

- Website: [www.coastalmontessoricharter.org](http://www.coastalmontessoricharter.org). The school’s website offers up-to-date information about the school and upcoming events. Each teacher also has a classroom update page on the website where important information and upcoming events for their class is posted
- Parent Conferences: Two mandatory parent conferences will be held to discuss your student’s progress midway through the school year and at the end of the school year. Conferences can also be held at any other time as requested by the administration, teacher, or parent as needed

The chart below offers guidelines regarding the proper channels to use for gaining information and solving problems.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>First Contact</b>
Admissions/Annual Lottery	Kristy Harbaugh, Office Manager
Behavior and Discipline	Classroom Teacher, Mr. Chris, Asst. Director, Dr. Hunt, Director
Billing/Accounts	Tia Bergeron, Operations Manger
Bus Transportation	Kristy Harbaugh, Office Manager, Dr. Hunt, Director, District Office
Carpool/Dismissal	Tia Bergeron, Operations Manger
Child’s Progress	Classroom Teacher
Classroom Procedures	Classroom Teacher
Curriculum	Classroom Teacher, Dr. Hunt, Director
Dress Code	Classroom Teacher, Mr. Chris, Asst. Director, Dr. Hunt, Director
Health Concerns	Nurse Kelly
Parent Education	Dr. Hunt, Director
PTO	Melissa Nordstrom, PTO President
Parent Volunteering	Kristy Harbaugh, Office Manager

# CURRICULUM AND SUPPORT

DR. MARIA MONTESSORI



Maria Montessori, a noted Italian educator and physician (1870 – 1952), was the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. She worked in the fields of psychiatry, education and anthropology. She believed that each child is born with a unique potential to be revealed, rather than as a “blank slate” waiting to be written upon. Dr. Montessori revolutionized education by advocating that children be allowed the freedom to explore and develop their own creative potential through a wealth of self-teaching educational materials. The Montessori practice is always up-to-date and dynamic because observation and the meeting of needs are continual and specific for each child. When physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional needs are met, children glow with excitement with a drive to play and work with enthusiasm to learn, and to create.

## **The Montessori Method**

The Montessori method offers an enriched curriculum, which incorporates and extends district, state, and national standards. Scientific and mathematical aptitudes, appreciation for history and timelines, literacy across disciplines, and research and development of community help students flourish in the Montessori classroom. Students are actively involved in their education, learning the habits and skills necessary for self-directed, independent, life-long learning.

## **The Individual Learner**

The individual learner is at the heart of the Montessori approach. Montessori teachers individualize instruction so each child works at a level and pace which is comfortable and challenging. Learning occurs in large groups, small groups, individually and in cooperative peer learning situations.

## **Cosmic Education**

Montessori considered two things to be necessary for the creation of a peaceful human being: an awareness of interdependence and a sense of gratitude that comes from it. At CMCS students are taught grace and courtesy as well as practical life skills. We desire for each student to leave us able to navigate the world with confidence and humility. Students practice interdependence through service learning experiences both in and outside of the school. We want each student in our care to understand what it is like to be a productive and helpful member of a community. Students at CMCS also experience “going outs” or learning experiences that take them into the community to learn directly from an expert in a meaningful field of study. Ultimately, Montessori felt it was the role of the school to create opportunities for the child to understand themselves and each other, including a reverence for nature and all living things. When an individual has a sense of importance and purpose they will be better apt to pursue a career or vocation that brings them joy, fulfillment and financial independence.

## **Multi-Grade Classrooms**

Multi-grade classrooms provide wide ranging academic and social growth. Younger children benefit from positive learning and behavior models provided by the older children. Leadership and social responsibility are developed by the older students. Staying with the same teacher for three years has a positive effect on students' attitudes and performance.

## **Long Uninterrupted Work Periods**

Long uninterrupted work periods enable students to explore a topic or material thoroughly and to carry it through to completion. Whole-class instruction time is minimal; the school day is structured to allow students to spend long blocks of time on work that they choose within the framework of their work plan.

## **Hands-on Materials**

Hands-on materials encourage active learning in all subject areas. Montessori said, "The hands are the instruments of man's intelligence." The materials are designed to teach, to test understanding, to correct errors, and to lead to the understanding of abstract concepts. Students have ready access to the materials, which are arranged on shelves according to subject areas.

## **Technology Resources**

Technology resources include laptops, tablets, and Chromebooks for research, keyboarding, and learning programs like Prezi, PowerPoint, and Word. Students, visitors, and staff have access to a secure Wifi network at all times. Montessori education is rooted in the natural curiosity of children about life and the world around them. Students learn how to learn: how to pose questions, design investigations, interact responsibly online, and gain the skills necessary to express and pursue their own research interests. Information Literacy (the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information) is embedded throughout the curriculum to give students the critical skills necessary to become self-reliant lifelong learners. These skills help children know when we need information and where to locate it effectively and efficiently while also analyzing and evaluating the validity of resources. Upper Elementary and middle school students have the opportunity to join an in-school Technology Club. In this club students learn skills like green screen motion technology, how to create and then program a robot, as well as coding, which can be used to create websites and videogames.

## **Textbooks**

Textbooks are owned by the State of South Carolina.

## **Elementary Program Homework**

Both over a century of Montessori experience and the last thirty years of educational research agree (1) that people learn best when they are learning something that personally interests them and (2) that having some sense of control over one's learning is a prerequisite of personal interest. Thus, coercing someone to "learn" something they have no interest in may lead to a detachment in the learner and sometimes the development of a negative self-image with regards to one's ability to achieve or learn. These are among the main reasons why Montessorians typically do not give assignments and, in particular, why we do not assign traditional homework on a daily basis. On the other hand, the freedom to

choose one's work and to go as deeply as possible into a few subjects means that the learner may need to spend more time learning in order to get a well-rounded education. The school day is short, and there is simply not time for most children to cover all the bases during the school day. For this reason, our teachers depend on their parent partners to provide a rich learning environment at home where the child can build on the work they began at school. Without this, the child's development may seem delayed, and the education may seem spotty or shallow. So, in summary, we do not require traditional homework on a daily basis. Instead, we ask the parent to facilitate learning opportunities at home that allow the learner to continue their self-discovery of the world and themselves. We are looking not for worksheets and assignments but for *learning as a way of life*, both at home and at school.

### **Homework Guidelines**

In order to better support learning as a way of life, we are providing the following guidelines for the child's work at home.

1. The child should spend time each day on Montessori homework on a wide variety of activities: physical exercise, service, intellectual activity, household responsibilities, the arts, etc.
2. Spend time each day reading from books on the CMCS suggested reading list, which will be on the CMCS website. Students should build up to reading 30 minutes a day. The suggested reading list will share high-quality book options for your student and it will address how to choose the right book for your child.
3. CMCS teachers always reserve the right to assign homework as needed to facilitate student growth and work completion. This work could include work on math facts, reading comprehension, reading fluency, projects, etc.
4. Each child will keep a record of the at-home activities and experiences they have over the course of the year. This may be in the form of a journal, video, blog, PowerPoint, etc. This communication log will be presented monthly to the classroom teacher and/or his/her peers.

### **Middle School Program Homework**

Homework is a practical life experience that helps to prepare the students for the expectations in high school, college, and eventually the work place. It is a necessary component of Middle School, yet should not be assigned in such abundance that it interferes with extra curricular activities, including spending time with family. Your adolescent can expect to spend 1 – 1.5 hours per night on homework. Of course this depends on the their efficiency and time management, thus students may end up spending less time out of the classroom on homework.

If a student is struggling with homework, the content or amount, please have the student let his or her teacher know immediately. We want to help him or her be successful. Also, having a student ask for help directly is part of the maturation process. We want to keep

communication lines open with parents, but we want to give the students a chance to develop the needed communication skills to be successful in high school and college.

### **Academic Assessment**

CMCS chooses to stay true to the Montessori philosophy (which measures progress but does not grade in the traditional sense) while meeting the requirements of a public charter school dictated by SC law. Due to this, the administrative and teaching faculty has spent considerable time to create multiple opportunities for individual assessment.

Progress reports are disseminated two times a year to reflect progress. Lower and Upper Elementary classes do not use grades in the typical A-B-C-D-F format. They use a developmental approach, which shows parents how students are progressing within the framework of the Montessori curriculum and the SC standards. Middle school classes use a percentage system for each of the subject areas that fall into the A-B-C-D-F format.

### **Assessment Types**

- Quantitative Assessment: National standardized testing. MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), CogAT and STAR (Gifted and Talented), PASS (Palmetto Assessment of State Standards), SC Ready (SCDE Assessment in Reading, Math, and Writing), End of Course Exams (Middle school), NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress), Advanced Placement Exams (If Applicable), ACT (If Applicable), etc.
- Qualitative Assessment: Observation of work habits and work completion, Portfolios of students' work over time, Observation of social and emotional progress based on students' behaviors and interactions with their peers, teacher-student conferring, etc..

### **Promotion and Retention**

Student promotion is based upon an evaluation of each student's achievement. The basis for making the determination of retention, also known as the gift of the fourth year, reflects the teacher's judgment of a student's achievement based on the following: progress reports, classroom assignments, daily observations, standardized tests, IEP plans (where appropriate) and other data as appropriate. The primary responsibility for determining each student's level of performance and ability to function academically, socially, and emotionally at the next grade level is that of the classroom teacher. If a student is showing a need for retention, this will be communicated well in advance to the parents/guardians, ensuring that all parties are informed of the potential for retention. If a student is retained the parents/guardians will be asked to sign a retention document, which will be kept in the student's file here on campus. Students with more than 10 absences during the school year may be retained.

## **NUTRITION AND LUNCHES**

Nutritious food is essential for young, growing bodies. We encourage parents to establish sound eating habits at an early age. Coastal Montessori Charter School asks all parents/guardians to refrain from packing and sending items containing nuts. We have children in our school community that suffer allergic reactions to nuts and to nut products.

Due to the size of our school community we request your cooperation in keeping all of our students safe. There is no such thing as a nut free school. We cannot guarantee that the school does not have nuts without searching everyone and everything all the time, which is impossible to uphold. I encourage you to refer to [https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take\\_action/schools/snacks\\_and\\_beverages/smart\\_snacks/](https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/smart_snacks/) for the nutritional guidelines suggested by the South Carolina Department of Education for healthy snack suggestions for students. The goal is to provide each student with good calories from foods rich in protein and whole grains, as opposed to foods high in saturated fats and sugars.

### **Breakfast**

Breakfast is served at CMCS. Students who wish to attend breakfast need to be at school prior to 8:00 am. There is a cost for breakfast that is determined by the District. Please do not send your student with breakfast to finish at school.

### **Snack**

There is an opportunity for your student to have a snack during the school day. The students do not eat lunch until 1:00 pm, so it is highly recommended to send a snack with your student each day. At least once a month each classroom will be responsible for making a community snack. Teachers may seek donations for community snack throughout the year. Some teachers even take students to the grocery store to shop for the items for community snack (with your approval via a permission slip). As a Montessori school we take pride in preparing your student for life, which includes opportunities to practice making good food decisions and then preparing these foods.

### **Lunch**

Hot lunch is served at CMCS through the District at a cost that is determined by the District. Students always have the option of bringing in a lunch from home. If bringing a lunch to school, please make sure that the lunch conforms to healthy standards. There should be at least one component of protein and two components of fruit and vegetables along with 100% juice, milk, or water. We discourage the use of prepackaged foods due to their nutritional content. Please consider sending the packed lunch from home in a reusable container as opposed to a throw away container. We are dedicated to creating conscious consumers who think deeply about their carbon footprint. This means any opportunity we have to reuse, reduce, or recycle, we will.

## **PARENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

Parents and teachers share in the responsibility of a child's education. The two should work cooperatively to foster a positive educational experience for a child. At times, however, conflicts do arise. The Board of Directors and faculty at CMCS recognize the need for parents to resolve these conflicts effectively and respectfully in order to not interrupt the educational process of their child. The following procedure is in place to help facilitate a positive learning environment in which good problem solving skills are utilized and modeled for our students. When a conflict arises between a parent and a staff member at CMCS, the following steps should be taken.



1. The parent should arrange and attend a meeting with the faculty member to discuss concerns and attempt to come to a mutually agreed upon solution.
2. If mutual agreed closure is not reached, the parent may arrange a meeting with the Director of CMCS. In this meeting, the parent should discuss and document the attempts that have been made to settle the problem with the faculty member. The Director may invite the faculty member to be present.
3. If there is still no closure, the parent may use the Parent Conflict Resolution Procedure, to request action by the Board of Directors. The parent may write a letter to the Board or attend a CMCS Board Meeting to share their grievance. The Board will determine if the conflict falls under Board directive and if so, a meeting will be scheduled. The Director, faculty member, and parent may be present at this meeting. The majority decision of the Board of Directors is final, and the conflict will be considered resolved.

## **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

The objective of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is to support the mission of the school and enhance the school's sense of community or culture. The PTO annually supports fundraisers, volunteerism in the school, and community bonding events. For more information on becoming involved, contact Melissa Nordstrom, President.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

All CMCS students participate in Physical Education classes throughout the school year. Students are expected to wear appropriate PE clothing (see the CMCS Student Code of Conduct) on days that they have PE. The majority of our classes take place outside, so students are also required to bring their own water bottle to class. If students are not dressed appropriately and/or they do not bring a water bottle, they will not be allowed to participate in PE that day. CMCS water bottles can be purchased in the CMCS office for \$3.00.

## **REGISTRATION**

All CMCS families must register their students every year in order to continue their enrollment at CMCS. Registration takes place during the first week in August at the CMCS office. Specific dates and times for registration are posted on the website and in the final weekly newsletter of the year. When registering, families must provide current documents that show proof of residency. The proof of residency must include a recent power bill (within 2 months of registering), and two other documents that bear the same address as the power bill, such as another utility bill, drivers license, pay stub, car registration, etc. At this time, all past due accounts must be paid in full in order to complete the registration process. Yearbooks are available for purchase at registration for \$25.

# SAFETY

Coastal Montessori Charter School believes in the dignity of all and that everyone, including students, families, and staff should be treated with dignity and respect at all times. In accordance with this philosophy, CMCS will not tolerate any behavior by students, families, visitors, or staff that is insulting, degrading, or stereotyping of any race, religion, gender, disability, physical characteristic, ethnic group, sexual preference, age, or nationality. CMCS also expects disagreements between adults to be handled professionally and without aggression. The CMCS Director reserves the right to postpone a meeting if the conversation becomes unproductive or aggressive in nature.

## **Bullying, Harassment, Threats, Intimidation**

Bullying, harassment, threats, or intimidating, like other disruptive or violent behavior, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. School administrators, faculty, staff, volunteers, students, parents, and visitors will demonstrate appropriate behavior by treating others with civility and respect and will refuse to tolerate bullying, harassment, threats, or intimidation. Persons who incite others to bully or who gather groups with intent to bully shall be held as guilty of the offense as those who perform these acts.

### **What is bullying?**

- **Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions**
- **Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time**
- **Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength**

Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between playful teasing and bullying. Teasing usually involves two or more friends who act together in a way that seems fun to all the people involved. Often they tease each other equally, but it never involves physical or emotional abuse.

### **Bullying may include:**

- Saying mean or hurtful things to someone, making fun of someone, or calling someone mean or hurtful names
- Completely ignoring or excluding someone from their group of friends or leaving him/her out of things on purpose
- Hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, an individual
- Telling lies or spreading false rumors about someone
- Sending mean notes on paper or electronically
- Trying to make other students dislike someone
- Doing hurtful things to someone

### **What is Cyber Bullying?**

Cyber bullying is bullying through email, instant messaging, chat room exchanges, Website posts, or digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone. Cyber bullying, like traditional bullying, involves an imbalance of power, aggression, and a negative action that is often repeated.

### **Six Most Common Forms of Cyber Bullying:**

- **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
- **Denigration:** Distributing information about another that is derogatory and untrue through posting it on a Web page, sending it to others through email or instant messaging, or posting or sending digitally altered photos of someone
- **Flaming:** Online “fighting” using electronic messaging with angry, vulgar language
- **Impersonation:** Breaking into an email or social networking account and using that person’s online identity to send or post vicious or embarrassing material to/about others
- **Outing/Trickery:** Sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information, or tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information and forwarding to others
- **Cyber Stalking:** Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating, or engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his/her safety

### **Students:**

#### **If you are being bullied:**

- Tell someone – a parent, a teacher, or a counselor
- Try not to show anger or fear
- Calmly tell the student to stop or say nothing and walk away
- Try to avoid situations where bullying is likely to happen

#### **If you know someone who is being bullied:**

- If you feel safe, tell the bully to stop
- Say kind words to the student being bullied
- Be a good friend
- Don’t encourage the bully by laughing or joining in
- Tell other bystanders how to help stop bullying
- Tell someone – a parent, a teacher, or a counselor
- Encourage the bullied student to talk to someone about what is happening

### **Parents/Guardians:**

**If you suspect your child is being bullied, review these common signs to help you recognize if bullying is occurring. Your child may:**

- Come home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings
- Have unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches from fighting
- Have few, if any, friends with whom he or she spends time
- Seem afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or taking part in organized activities with peers
- Lose interest in school work or suddenly begin to do poorly in school
- Appear sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he/she comes home
- Complain frequently of headaches, stomach aches, or other physical problems
- Have trouble sleeping or frequent bad dreams
- Experience a loss of appetite

- Appear anxious and suffer from low self-esteem

### **Filing a complaint**

At CMCS, the Director is responsible for receiving complaints alleging bullying, harassment, threats, or intimidation. All school employees are required to report alleged violations to the Director. All other members of the CMCS community are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation. Reports by students may be made anonymously. CMCS is committed to providing each student with a safe means of reporting incidents.

### **Reprisal or Retaliation**

CMCS prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying, harassment, threats, or intimidation. The consequence and remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Director after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, federal and state statutes, and district policies and procedures.

### **Child Abuse**

All CMCS employees and volunteers are required by law to report suspected child abuse by any person, even if that person is not the student's parent or otherwise responsible for his/her care. Any person that reports suspected child abuse should have no fear of reprisal.

### **Definition of Child Abuse**

South Carolina Code 63-7-10, et seq., defines an abused or neglected child as any child less than 18 years of age:

- Whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care create or inflict, or threaten to create or inflict, upon such a child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means; or create a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions
- Whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care neglect or refuse to provide care necessary for the child's health; provided, however, that no child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination shall for that reason alone be considered to be an abused or neglected child
- Whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care abandon such child
- Whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care commit or allow to be committed any sexual act upon a child in violation of the law
- Who is without parental care or guardianship caused by the absence or the mental or physical incapacity of the child's parents, guardian, or other person standing *in loco parentis*

### **Indicators of Abuse and Neglect**

Physical neglect is one of the most widely recognized forms of neglect. It is important to keep in mind that all incidents in which a person fails to provide for the basic needs for a child are necessarily considered neglect.

**Neglect:** underweight, poor growth pattern, and failure to thrive; inappropriate

dress, consistent hunger, and poor hygiene; consistent lack of supervision; unattended physical and medical problems and needs; and abandonment

**Physical Abuse:** human bite marks, lacerations or abrasions, burns in the shape of an iron, grill, or cigarette, immersion burns, and any other significant unexplained marks or bruises

**Sexual Abuse:** difficulty walking or sitting; torn, stained, or bloody underclothing; pain, swelling, or itching in genital and/or anal area; pain during urination; bruises, bleeding, or lacerations in genital and anal area; venereal disease

**Mental Injury:** speech disorders; lags in physical development or failure to thrive; hyperactive and/or disruptive behavior; isolation; withdrawn

### **Who Must Report Child Abuse and Neglect?**

South Carolina state law provides that certain people are mandated to report when they learn information in their professional capacity that leads them to believe that a child is harmed or at significant risk of being harmed (abused or neglected) by their parent, guardian or other caregiver as defined by statute. All other persons may report when they believe a child is harmed or at significant risk of being harmed.

The Code of South Carolina, Section 63-7-310, requires that certain persons, including teachers and other persons employed, report suspicions of child abuse or neglect within 72 hours of “first” suspicion. Failure to file such a report within the prescribed time limit is a misdemeanor and is subject to a fine up to \$500 and/or jail time up to six months. Any employee or volunteer of CMCS who suspects child abuse or neglect must immediately notify the Director.

The Director, in turn, will report the matter to the local department of the county or city where the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred, or to the Department of Social Services toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline. In the absence of the Director, such employee may directly report the matter to the appropriate authorities listed below.

### **How to make a report?**

- County DSS where the child resides – Georgetown County DSS 843-546-5134. Trained staff will assist the person to make a report and assess the information to determine if meets screening criteria for investigation
- Reports can also be made to local law enforcement officers who will communicate with DSS to coordinate an investigation

### **Criminal History/Background Checks**

All individuals employed by, volunteering for, or working in a consulting relationship with CMCS, who have unsupervised direct contact with CMCS students are subject to criminal history review.

### **Conduct Expectations**

For Conduct Expectations, see the Student Code of Conduct

### **Dress Code**

For Dress Code Expectations, see the Student Code of Conduct

## **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis in accordance with DHEC. Drills are usually unannounced. Fire drill routes are posted in each classroom. All fire equipment including extinguishers and alarm systems are checked annually.

## **Search of Persons and Property**

In accordance with the laws of the State of South Carolina, any person entering the premises of any school shall be deemed to have consented to a reasonable search of his/her person and property. The Director of CMCS or their designee may conduct reasonable searches on school property of lockers, desks, vehicles, and personal belongings such as purses, book bags, wallets, and satchels with or without probable cause. Any weapons, alcohol, stolen property, contraband, or controlled substances found in such search shall be seized by school administration, the appropriate police agency notified, and the individual recommended for disciplinary action which can include suspension of enrollment for psychological testing or expulsion.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Coastal Montessori Charter School is committed to maintaining a learning environment for all students which provides for fair and equitable treatment including freedom from sexual harassment. It is prohibited for any individual to harass another individual by making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or engaging in other verbal, written, electronic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of activities, which could constitute sexual harassment, include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome leering, sexual flirtations, or propositions
- Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments, or sexually degrading descriptions
- Graphic comments about an individual's body or overly personal conversation
- Sexual jokes, stories, drawings, or pictures
- Spreading sexual rumors
- Inappropriate or suggestive sexual gestures
- Touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way
- Cornering or blocking of normal movements with sexual intent
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects

Any individual who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment by another student, teacher, administrator, adult, or agent of CMCS should file a complaint of the alleged act immediately with the school's Director.

## **Weather Related Closings**

CMCS will follow GCSD's inclement weather / school closings policy. Severe weather or other hazardous conditions may require schools to close or delay opening for the safety of students. Announcements concerning closings or delayed openings will be made at the earliest possible time.

If closings occur during the middle of the school day, parents will be notified via social media, radio and television and telephone calls. Parents are asked to tune to local radio and

television stations when they are aware of possible hazardous conditions and to call the District's 24-Hour Communications Line at 843-436-7043. Individuals calling the schools may tie up phone lines needed for school communications. Information will also be posted at [www.gcsd.k12.sc.us](http://www.gcsd.k12.sc.us) and the Coastal Montessori Charter School's and Georgetown County School District's Facebook pages.

Parents are reminded that severe weather is fairly common and should make arrangements ahead of time for their children's care in the event of such emergencies.

### **Visitors**

Parents and visitors are cordially invited. We require that upon entering the property, all visitors go directly to the office for proper direction and to obtain a visitors pass. CMCS reserves the right to deny visitors access to the school building.

Parents are welcome to dine with their students. Since this is a variation from the regular school day, we ask that you limit the number of times that you choose to dine with your student. Also, due to limited space in the cafeteria, we ask that you call the school prior to the day that you wish to dine with your student to make sure that there is space available. Weather pending and with prior consent from administration and the classroom teacher, parents may dine outside with their student at an available picnic table.

CMCS has regularly scheduled observation days. The second Wednesday of each month is reserved for teacher observation days. Observations are 30-minutes in length and occur between 9:30 am and 11 am. Prior to observing in classrooms, you will be provided with an observation framework with guidelines that will help you focus on characteristics to look for in a classroom and also on how to best minimize disruption to an environment. Due to their teaching schedule, classroom teachers will not be available for a one-on-one meeting during or right after an observation. If you wish to schedule a meeting with a teacher or the Director, you may contact the teacher or Director directly via telephone or email. You may set up a time to meet with the Director the same day as your observation. Due to limited space, in order to participate, you must call in advance and schedule a time to observe a classroom. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

## **STUDENT WELLNESS**

Coastal Montessori Charter School employs a full time registered nurse to monitor school health records and provide training and care for health concerns. A completed medical information form is required for school admission. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to update the form if their child's condition changes. You can contact the school nurse directly via email or telephone.

### **During the Day**

Injuries such as bumps, cuts, fevers, and rashes may happen in the course of your student's day. If your student has a temperature of 101 degrees F or higher during school, you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately. If your child is hurt to the point that it disrupts his/her school day, you will be contacted to pick up your child.

### **Illnesses**

In order to decrease the possibility of infecting others, students should not be brought to school ill. Please keep your child home if he /she has symptoms of illness including: an

oral temperature above 101 degrees F, any undiagnosed rash, repeated diarrhea or vomiting, sore or discharging eyes, ears, or profuse nasal discharge, a stiff neck, or unexplained lethargy.

If your child will be absent due to illness, please notify the school between 8:30 and 9:00 am. Notification regarding the nature of your student's illness allows us to advise other parents in order that they may act proactively and help prevent an outbreak of further illness. Returning to school is based on the child being fever free (without medication) for 24 hours.

### **Guidelines regarding readmission after common childhood illnesses**

**Colds:** Students may return when there is no presence of yellow or green mucus, which may be related to an infection and if there is no elevated temperature, sore throat, or severe cough.

**Conjunctivitis:** Students who have pink or red eyes and who have eye pain, reddened eyelids with white or yellow discharge, or eyelids matted after sleep may have purulent conjunctivitis and should not be in school until symptoms are gone and have been seen and treated by a doctor. A medical note is required for return.

**Diarrhea:** Students may return when they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours or more if caused by illness and not medication.

**Ear Infection:** Students may return when they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours or more.

**Fever:** Students must be fever-free for at least 24 hours. Please be aware readings are generally lower in the mornings.

**Head Lice:** Students may return after completing an approved treatment. A parent must accompany the student into school upon return and provide proof of treatment (the lice shampoo bottle or medication box). No live lice or nits ¼ " off scalp may be present at the time of re-admittance.

**Strep Throat:** Students may return after treatment with antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

**Vomiting:** Students may return when free from vomiting for 24 hours or more.

Note: A faculty member certified in CPR and/or first aid is available at all times during regular school hours.

### **Medication**

Medication will be administered by the school nurse or by trained office staff in the case of the nurse's absence. The nurse will only administer over the counter medications when provided by the parent with a completed Permission to Administer Nonprescription Medications form. This form can be found on the CMCS website. The school nurse will only administer over the counter medications as instructed on the medication packaging. A doctor's signature is required, by law, for staff members to give/apply your student's prescription medication. Please obtain a doctor's signature, information on dosage and description of medicine, or treatment before your student has an emergency. Keep these in the original container.

- **Students may not carry medication into the school.** Any medication found in a student's possession will be confiscated by school officials. The one exception is for students with life-threatening conditions, who may keep medication in their possession and self-administer, as long as permission has been granted and the proper procedures have been followed. Please see the school nurse for additional



information.

- **Immunization records** must be kept up-to-date or a student must have a Religious Exemption form on file.
- **Individualized Health Management Plan.** The school nurse, in consultation, with the parents, physician, and student will develop a formal procedure for medical procedures as needed.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **Back to School Night**

Each August, before school commences, Coastal Montessori Charter School hosts a Back to School Night. This evening is filled with pertinent information you and your student do not want to miss, including classroom expectations for behavior and work. The goal of our Back to School Night is to set each family up for success as a member of the Coastal Montessori Charter School community. In addition, this evening is filled with opportunities to learn more about our staff as well as the culture of our school. We see your student's educational progress as a partnership between the school and family. Since we share this responsibility we believe in transparent communication and we encourage families to come with their questions.

### **Birthdays**

In Lower and Upper Elementary classrooms (and by request in the Adolescent Community), students are honored with the Birthday Walk Around the Sun. Students walk around the sun once for every year celebrated and special milestones are shared for each year. Parents are welcome to share in this tradition. Please contact your classroom teacher to plan a walk around the sun for your student.

If you are planning a birthday party for your student, we ask that you do not send invitations to the school unless all children in the class are invited.

### **Field Trips**

In order that students may benefit from experiences that make learning more relevant, memorable, and meaningful, CMCS supports and encourages the extension of learning through instructional field trips. There is a \$20 fee charged to all students to cover the cost of field trips at the beginning of the year. All field trips have prior approval by administration and all students participating in the field trip need to have a signed field trip permission form on file with the organizing teacher of the field trip in order to attend the event. Digital field trip permission forms are now available on our website with an electronic signature.

CMCS frequently utilizes parent drivers to reduce the cost of field trips. All parent drivers are arranged by the student's teacher and all drivers must have a background check as well as a valid drivers license and proof of insurance on file with the CMCS office prior to transporting students. Please remember that if you choose to be a parent driver/chaperone, your main responsibility is the safety of the students at all times.

### **The Great Outdoors**

Dr. Montessori believed that land-based experience is essential, especially for the adolescent. This includes opportunities for land and water-based encounters. Throughout

the year students will experience expeditions to the marsh, ocean, beaches, and rivers surrounding our community. Adolescent students will also experience overnight stays throughout the year. All expeditions and outdoor work are based on Dr. Montessori's vision for the extended classroom and the respect and responsibility inherent in meaningful encounters with the land and sea. Students are challenged both physically and mentally within the outdoors in their quest to push limits and learn more about themselves. Among many other activities-based skills and objectives, students learn how to cook in the outdoors and contribute to their community.

### **Internship Week**

Adolescent students will go out to a place of work in the spring for one week both their 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years. Students will work closely with their middle school teachers and the director to arrange their partnerships with local businesses able to accept young adolescents. The goal of internship week is to move career development beyond a career day to shadowing an expert for an entire week. Students will arrive to their place of work as if they were employed by that organization. This will give students direct experience with being punctual and prepared for adult work life. It will also allow students to explore potential career interests well before deciding on a major in college.

### **Financial Independence**

Adolescent students will run and manage a business alongside of their middle school teachers and the director. Dr. Montessori believed money is currency and represents life, thus students should have experience with and knowledge of the free market economy and the US's contribution to the greater market economy around the world (exports/imports/supply/demand/economics/etc.) The middle school teachers will incorporate the monitoring of stocks and the market economy into their curriculum. They will teach students the value of money and its role in the way the world works.

### **Service Learning**

All students will experience service learning throughout the academic year. Service toward human communities and the environment helps shape the developing child. Our relationship with several local organizations allows our students to practice building self-esteem, character, teamwork, respect, compassion, and kindness. Middle school students will also examine how socioeconomic status, race, age, and circumstance might affect specific communities and their opportunities. All students are encouraged to introduce new service learning projects and endeavors to our school community and are supported through the process of translating an idea into a reality.

### **Montessori Model United Nations**

Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) is a yearlong Upper Elementary and Middle School project that culminates in a school wide United Nations conference and an optional 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> year trip to New York City for the international MMUN Conference. This trip is not mandatory because there is a mandatory fundraising element and a family cost involved, but it is open to all 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> years who has met the criteria established by their classroom teachers to attend. The MMUN curriculum is designed to create opportunities for each student to learn about the United Nations as an organization as well as the real issues that ail underdeveloped countries in our world. Ultimately, the MMUN curriculum is designed to incite productive research and conversations about how to mitigate real issues facing

our world. For more information on the MMUN Conference please visit <http://montessori-mun.org>.

### **Open Houses**

Each year we open our doors to families for school-wide events where your student will present his or her research, poetry, science projects, etc. These open house experiences are designed to showcase your student's work. As a Montessori school the materials of the classroom do not travel well, so we choose to invite families into the school to see and experience your student's learning accomplishments through presentations. All open house events will be announced at least a month in advance, so you can reserve the date. Often times we incorporate a parent education component into our open house experiences. This way we can share with you the latest research in supporting literacy at home or building automaticity for math facts, the same evening you are on campus to support your student. All open house events will be posted in our weekly community newsletter, on our Facebook page, as well as sent home via email through your classroom teacher.

### **Parent Education**

Each year the Director of CMCS offers a variety of ways for parents to learn more about the Montessori methodology. Twice a month the Director writes a Director's Note in the community newsletter, which is received electronically, so be sure that our Office Manager has your most recent email address. The Director also has office hours each Tuesday morning from 9 am to 11 am. No appointment is necessary, however, prior notice is always appreciated. The Director may offer an after school book club featuring a text either written by Dr. Maria Montessori or written about Montessori pedagogy or principles. Parent education nights also occur at each open house event. We like to incorporate an educational moment for parents with the students' presentations of work. Another experience we have provided for parents in the past is the Silent Journey. This is when we select Montessori materials to showcase in each classroom and then we allow the parents to use the materials in the same way their child does. The Director is always looking for new and inventive ways to provide parent education. If you have a specific request you can always contact Dr. Hunt at [nhunt@coastalmontessoricharter.org](mailto:nhunt@coastalmontessoricharter.org) or 843 - 235 - 0413.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

Coastal Montessori Charter School encourages the use of volunteers. Any individual who wishes to volunteer will have a background check completed through Georgetown County School District. Please contact Kristy Harbaugh at [kharbaugh@coastalmontessoricharter.org](mailto:kharbaugh@coastalmontessoricharter.org) to receive a volunteer application.

CMCS uses parent drivers for a number of their field trips to reduce costs. Parent drivers are organized by each classroom teacher prior to the field trip. In order to be a parent driver, a background check needs to be completed and a copy of a valid drivers license and proof of insurance needs to be on file in the main office.

# Signature Page

I/We, the parents/ guardians of \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the 2016-2017 Coastal Montessori Charter School Parent Handbook. We agree to abide by the rules and regulations in all of our interactions with Coastal Montessori Charter School in order to support the educational experience of the entire community.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_