



Parent Handbook

2025-2026

The information contained in this handbook/manual is provided for informational purposes, and is not intended to replace or deviate from any current Board policy or the Coastal Montessori Charter School – Student Code of Conduct. In the event of any conflict between any provision in this handbook/manual and the terms of the Student Code of Conduct or any Board policy, the terms in the Student Code of Conduct and/or Board policy will control and take precedence. All students and parents are strongly encouraged to review the Code of Conduct, which is available for viewing on the school's website at www.coastalmontessoricharter.org.

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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 3rd 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 the CMCS Director or CMCS Board Chair. Complaints may also be directed to the GCSD Title IX Coordinator or the GCSD Section 504 Coordinator.

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. 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

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).

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 ideas, 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 began 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 the 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 your studies.
- 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).
- Show by their conduct consideration for the rights and privileges of others and will demonstrate cooperation with all members of the school community.
- Evidence of 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.
- Assume the responsibility for diligent work in order to profit from the educational experiences provided.

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.
- Support the classroom teacher in his/her efforts to promote improved and acceptable behavior of students.
- Notify parents/guardians of students, 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 the 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 support is 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 1st year students is between October 1 and December 15 of their kindergarten year. Thirty-two 1st 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. All students applying for grades 2nd - 8th will be included in the lottery for the purposes of establishing a wait list only.

After-School Enrichment

Coastal Montessori Charter School offers on-site activities sponsored by external vendors or teachers. Activities that have been sponsored in the past are Art Studio, Stingray Care, Literacy Club, Drama Club, and Sewing. 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(s) to an offsite activity.

Arrival / Dismissal

ARRIVAL: School begins at 7:30 A.M. Students may begin arriving at 7:10 A.M. and must be inside the building by 7:29 A.M.. Students arriving through the door at 7:30 A.M. or later will be considered tardy. Please see the Student Code of Conduct for the full tardy policy.

During morning arrival, parents may drop off in the front loop in front of CMCS. A staff member will be in the carpool line from 7:10 until 7:29 to greet students.

DISMISSAL: School ends at 2:10 P.M. We use a silent dismissal method at the end of each day to get our students to the appropriate means of transportation to depart school. Each family must have a placard that hangs from the rear view mirror, which displays the number that is linked to their 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. Be sure they have their driver's license available.

ALL VEHICLES must enter through the Allston Plantation entrance to CMCS at dismissal to pick up student(s) outside the front of the building using the traffic loop. The gate opens at 1:30 P.M. Proceed from the Allston Plantation entrance AS DIRECTED BY A STAFF MEMBER through the parking lot before pulling your vehicle in front of the building. As you enter into the traffic pattern, your child is being called from the classroom to enter the atrium in front of our school for pick up. The key to an efficient dismissal for all is that parents stay in an orderly pattern in line so that the children will be ready to meet the proper vehicle in the proper sequence of release from the classroom.

Attendance / Tardiness

Please see the CMCS Student Code of Conduct regarding attendance and tardiness.

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 third Monday of each month at 6:00 P.M. Board meetings are public and attendance is encouraged. For the current list of board members, please see our website.

Parental Responsibilities

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 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.

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 found on the CMCS website. firstinitiallastname@coastalmontessoricharterschool.org. Parent information is distributed in mass emails from the school. Classroom teachers use a communication platform to keep parents updated on community events, sign up for conferences, and other volunteer opportunities.
- 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. The school's website offers up-to-date information about the school and upcoming events.
- Parent Conferences: There is one mandatory parent conference in the fall (October) and by appointment parent conference in the winter (January). Additionally the third and sixth grade

parents are invited to meet at the end of the school year to discuss transition to Upper Elementary and Middle School.

- Parent Education Night: Every fall and winter we hold a parent education night. This time may not be the best to get personal information, but it does provide an opportunity to learn more about the method of instruction and the expectations of independence.

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

Subject	First Contact
Admissions/Annual Lottery	Operations Manager
Attendance	Operations Manager / Front Office
Behavior and Discipline	Classroom Teacher / Director
Billing/Accounts	Operations Manager
Bus Transportation	Front Office / Operations Manager / Director / District Office
Carpool/Dismissal	Front Office/ Director
Child's Progress	Classroom Teacher
Classroom Procedures	Classroom Teacher
Curriculum	Classroom Teacher
Dress Code	Classroom Teacher / Director/ Assistant Director
Health Concerns	School Nurse
Parent Education	Director/ Assistant Director
Parent Powerschool Portal	Operations Manager
PTO	PTO President
Parent Volunteering	Director / Operations Manager/Assistant Director

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. Rather than simply individualizing instruction to match ability, Montessori teachers thoughtfully design lessons by considering each child’s interests, personality, and developmental needs. Instruction is delivered in a variety of formats—large group, small group, individual, and peer-to-peer—creating a dynamic learning environment that supports both personal growth and academic progress.

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. While the teacher provides structure and guidance, students have some choice in the order, duration, and completion of their work—encouraging independence, responsibility, and deep engagement with the material. At CMCS, we thoughtfully assign follow-up work from instructional lessons and targeted academic activities—even when they are not a student's personal choice—to ensure each child develops a well-rounded foundation and is prepared for the academic expectations of higher grade levels. While our Montessori approach emphasizes freedom of choice and interest-led learning, we also recognize the importance of guiding students toward essential skills and content areas.

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. In the upper elementary and middle school years, "hands-on" learning evolves to include real-world, project-based experiences that connect academic concepts to meaningful applications. This might look like students designing experiments, conducting independent research, building models, planning community service projects, managing classroom businesses, or creating multimedia presentations. These activities allow students to apply skills in authentic contexts, fostering deeper understanding, responsibility, and a sense of purpose in their learning.

Technology Resources

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. Technology resources include laptops, tablets, and Chromebooks for research, keyboarding, and learning programs. Students, visitors, and staff have access to a secure Wifi network at all times.

Textbooks

Textbooks are owned by the State of South Carolina and assigned to middle school students. If not returned or damaged, parents are invoiced for the cost.

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. Therefore, Montessori philosophy does not rely on traditional, daily homework assignments. Because the school day is finite, parents play a crucial role in creating a rich home environment where learning continues naturally. Most follow-up work is expected to be completed during the school day. However, if a child chooses to dedicate significant class time to a personal interest project, they may be asked to complete required follow-up work at home.

We encourage families to view learning as a way of life—engaging in meaningful discussions, exploring the natural world, participating in practical life activities, and nurturing curiosity in everyday moments. Homework should include; math facts, reading thirty minutes each day, and journaling to improve writing skills. This home-school partnership ensures students grow not only academically, but also in self-awareness and independence.

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.

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 workplace. 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 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

While CMCS is deeply rooted in the Montessori philosophy—which emphasizes developmental growth and alternative approaches to measuring progress—we are also a public charter school and therefore follow the academic standards and testing requirements set forth by South Carolina law. To honor both our Montessori principles and our public school obligations, our administrative and teaching teams have thoughtfully developed a variety of assessment methods that align with state expectations while respecting the individuality of each learner. These assessments provide meaningful insight into student growth without relying solely on traditional grading systems.

Progress reports are disseminated two times a year to reflect progress. Lower and Upper Elementary classes use a developmental approach that uses the terms; Exceeds, Meets, Approaches, or Below expectations. . 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. IReady, 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 unexcused 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 nut products. Due to the size of our school community we request your cooperation in keeping all of our students safe. 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 receive breakfast need to be at school prior to 7:30 A.M. 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. When sending in snacks for the class, we encourage parents to choose healthy, easy-to-serve options that support students' focus and well-being throughout the day. Ideal choices include fresh fruits and vegetables (washed and pre-cut), whole-grain crackers, cheese sticks, yogurt cups or tubes, applesauce pouches, and granola bars. Please avoid items high in sugar. Thank you for helping us promote a healthy classroom environment.

At least once a month each classroom will be responsible for making a community snack. Teachers may seek donations for community snacks 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 students 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 on a pre-order basis only. The meal order link will be published in each weekly newsletter for the following week. This form needs to be submitted prior to 10:00 AM each Friday to ensure we have received your child's meal order for the following week. Students may bring lunch from home. There should be at least one component of protein and two components of fruit and vegetables along with 100% juice, milk, or water (never soda). 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 Procedures

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 Assistant Director or 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 Assistant Director or 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 Assistant Director or 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 Grievance

The purpose of this information is to clarify for parents a process by which concerns can be addressed. The Board of Directors of CMCS values open communication between parents/guardians, faculty, staff, administration and the Board. The Board encourages active parent participation in their children's education, and hopes that parents will feel empowered to voice their opinions, volunteer in and out of the classroom for the School, and work as a team to provide the best education for their children. The Board also believes that individuals can generally resolve their own disputes through open, respectful communication. If a situation arises that cannot be resolved between the parties involved, then the Parent Grievance Policy will be used (refer to Board policy).

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 the PTO president at PTO@coastalmontessoricharter.org.

Registration

All CMCS families must register their students online every year, through their Parent Portal account, in order to continue their enrollment at CMCS. Georgetown County School District generally opens the online registration system in April of each year. Specific dates are published in the weekly newsletter when it is available. Families must provide current documents that show proof of residency. The proof of residency must be a document, other than a driver's license, such as a utility bill, pay stub, car registration, etc.

Stingray Prep Day

Stingray Prep Day is held in the summer, usually a couple of weeks before the start of school. The specific date and time will be announced on our social media pages as well as in a mid-summer newsletter. At this time, all past due accounts must be paid in full in order to complete the registration process. Placard issuance and uniform purchases also occur at Stingray Prep Day.

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 characteristics, 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.

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.

Criminal History/Background Checks

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

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.

Lockdown/Weather Drills

Intruder drills are held three times per year. Once within the first ten days of school and then once more each semester according to the GCSD guidelines. Information will be sent home prior to the drills occurring as well as preparation and instructions provided to staff and students before-hand. Severe weather drills occur twice each year. A tornado drill is conducted in the Fall and an earthquake drill in the Spring.

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 desks, vehicles, and personal belongings such as purses, book bags, wallets, satchels, cell phones, etc. 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 Title IX Coordinator.

School Closings

CMCS will follow GCSD's inclement weather / school closings guidelines. 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 and the Coastal Montessori Charter School and the 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.

In the event of a crisis or emergency (i.e. State of Emergency, disaster, severe weather, pandemic, and the like) the Director or other authorized school leader has the ability to make decisions for the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff, including but not limited to adjusting the school calendar, school times, and instructional model, and implement/revise procedures and guidelines for the school.

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 child at school on occasion. To help maintain a safe and orderly environment, we ask that parents provide at least 24 hours' notice to the front office or classroom teacher. All visitors must check in at the front desk and wear a visitor badge while on campus. You are asked to follow the school's food guidelines while on campus. Lunch visits should be limited to the cafeteria area and occur during the student's scheduled lunch period. We appreciate your cooperation in supporting a positive and respectful lunch environment for all students.

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 & vomit 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 year, in conjunction as 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.

Food Brought By Students for Class

In the event a parent wishes to send food in for the entire class, please check with the teacher at least one week in advance.

Birthdays

In Lower (and by request in the Upper Elementary and middle school), students are honored with the Birthday Walk Around the Sun. Students walk around the sun once every year 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 would like to send a snack for your child's birthday, please provide at least five days' notice so we may plan accordingly. We encourage healthy options such as fresh fruit (cut and ready to serve), whole-grain muffins, ice pops or yogurt tubes. Due to student allergies, all snacks must be nut-free and clearly labeled with ingredients. Please check with the teacher beforehand to ensure the selected snack is safe for all students. Thank you for helping us celebrate in a thoughtful and inclusive manner.

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. An activity fee of \$75 for the first child and \$40 for each additional child will be assessed at the beginning of the school year. This fee helps cover the cost of all field trips throughout 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 sent to parents with an electronic signature and need to be signed 24 hours prior to each field trip.

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 may experience expeditions to the marsh, ocean, beaches, and rivers surrounding our community. Adolescent students 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

Middle School students will go out to a place of work in the spring for one week both their 7th grade and 8th 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 the internship week is to move career development beyond a career day shadowing an expert for an entire week. Students will arrive at 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. The role of the guardian is to assist and support the learner in arranging and attending to their chosen workplace.

Financial Responsibility

Middle School students will run and manage a business alongside 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 USA's contribution to the greater market economy around the world (exports/imports/supply/demand/economics/etc.)

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 project that culminates in a school-wide United Nations conference and an optional 6th 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 6th years who have 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 week in advance, so you can reserve the date. Oftentimes 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.

Volunteers

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 our Operations Manager Kristy Harbaugh at kharbaugh@coastalmontessoricharter.org to receive a volunteer application. The Director will approve or deny volunteer applications.

Signature Page

I/We, the parents/ guardians of _____, have read and understood the 2025-2026 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.

Parents at Coastal Montessori will...

- Understand and embrace the mission of CMCS.
- Strive to understand what it means to be a Montessori school.
- Maintain active, direct, respectful two-way communication with CMCS.
- Model respect for your children, for their classmates, for adults and for CMCS.
- Volunteer their time to support the academic and financial success of CMCS.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____