



MOUNTAIN CITY PUBLIC MONTESSORI

Student and Family Handbook
2023-2024

Approved by the MCPM BoD May 3, 2023

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers: Wren Cook , Chair Dr. Dawn Meskil , Vice Chair Stella Plato , Secretary	At large: Aaron Brumo Maegan Brown Alexandra “Sasha” Skau Lara Lustig Jerick Wilson
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The Mountain City Public Montessori Board of Directors welcomes family and community involvement in our board meetings. Board meetings are open to the public and meeting dates and times are posted at the school as well as on our website.

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Mission:

Mountain City Public Montessori provides equitable access to a high-quality, relevant Montessori education to meet the needs of all students and to strengthen our community.

Vision:

We partner with families and the community to cultivate a supportive and inspiring environment where all can thrive. Using the Montessori method, we educate the whole child, integrating their physical, social-emotional, cultural, and academic needs and interests. Our multi-age classrooms encourage care, connection, and collaboration with peers. Uninterrupted periods of self-directed work foster each child's love of learning, allow them to develop their concentration, and create a natural environment for building executive functioning skills. Students work with hands-on materials in carefully prepared environments to promote learning in a way that is tangible and intuitive. At Mountain City Public Montessori, we believe all students deserve access to a quality education that affirms each individual and enhances the collective by giving them an opportunity to practice living in and contributing to a more just society.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Admissions

Enrollment

MCPM is open to all students in North Carolina.

Age Requirements for Kindergarten

Students must be 5 years old by August 31st of the school year to be age-eligible for Kindergarten.

Lottery

MCPM utilizes a randomized lottery via Lotterease to determine admission if more students apply than there are seats available. After the lottery and if there is still space available in the grade in which the student has applied, the student will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. If there are no spaces available, then the student will be added to the waiting list for that grade. A new lottery is run each spring to fill any available seats for the upcoming school year.

Staff and Administrators

Curriculum Director - Rachael Shaw Marshall

Finance and Operations Director - Brittany Wager

Montessori Coach - Cheryl McCabe Allen

Classroom teachers

- Primary
 - Lucy MacGregor
 - Molly Hardy
- Lower Elementary
 - Dana Ivey
- Upper Elementary
 - Henry Blackford

Teaching Assistants

- Primary
- Lower Elementary
- Upper Elementary

Exceptional Children's Teacher
Student and Family Support Specialist
Transportation
Custodial
Food Service

ACADEMICS

Grading Scales

Grades represent an assessment of a student's work. Grades are used to communicate to parents how a student is progressing in their work in the classroom. If there are any questions regarding a grade, a conversation to gain understanding with the lead teacher may be initiated by the student or family. The request for a grade review must be made within two weeks of the grade being issued. If an understanding cannot be reached in the initial meeting, the teacher and/or the student or parent may appeal to the Curriculum Director who will make the final decision.

Students in grades K-3 will receive quarterly progress reports indicating if they are working at, above, or below grade level standards.

Students in grades 4-8 will receive letter grades following the scale below:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 or below

Report Cards

Mountain City Public Montessori is committed to including families in their child's education, maintaining open communication regarding academic performance, and ongoing discussion related to enrichment and remediation efforts at school and at home to meet the needs of each child.

Report cards will be distributed within five days of the ending of each academic session. The final report card will be mailed home within 10 days of the last day of school.

Assessments

Teachers and administrators at MCPM use a computerized record keeping system in order to monitor each student's significant work, social and emotional development, and academic growth and to record their observations. Students are assessed throughout the year using various assessment methods including formative and summative assessment, both formal and informal. Formative assessments are those that provide teachers with information needed to adjust individual and group lessons while they are happening. Summative assessments are used to determine a student's knowledge base. Standardized assessments are required by the North Carolina Office of Charter Schools. Students at MCPM will participate in the following assessments:

Assessment	Grade/ Domain	Issued
<p>NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a computer-adaptive benchmark assessment for reading and math. It provides a different, personalized test for each student. Depending on how a student answers each question, the test adjusts in difficulty. This allows students with widely varying skill levels – from struggling to advanced – to take a test that is well-suited to their needs. Teachers are able to access student scores immediately after students complete a test. Each test provides detailed teacher reports that show the skills students are proficient in and what they are ready to work on next.</p>	<p>K-6/ Math and Language</p>	<p>Three times a year</p>
<p>Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS) assesses executive function skills using a brief, standardized instrument administered on an iPad. Executive function refers to the neuro-cognitive skills needed for successful learning and performance in school, at work and in life. They include cognitive flexibility, working memory and inhibitory control.</p>	<p>K-6/ Executive Function</p>	<p>Twice a year</p>

Montessori Education

Who was Dr. Maria Montessori?

Dr. Maria Montessori was the first female Italian doctor and developed the educational method that takes her name in the first half of the 1900's. She began her work with children with intellectual disabilities and 3-6 year olds living in a government housing project in Rome. Using observation and experimentation, she developed a complex series of hands-on materials that help children understand abstract concepts, and discovered what she called “the secret of childhood”. This “secret” is that all children, no matter their background or abilities, are natural learners who, given the right environment,

are able to concentrate, connect peacefully in their community, and develop to their full potential. She spent her life working to create these ideal, child-centered environments around the world and Montessori teachers and schools continue this work today.

The Montessori Method

Over a century ago, Dr. Maria Montessori developed a comprehensive approach to education based on her observations of children's needs and her understanding of children's natural learning tendencies. The Montessori method draws its principles from the natural development of the child and is designed to help children with their task of inner construction as they grow from childhood to maturity. The child's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving him/her opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult. Through their work, children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. Within a framework of order, children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities.

Montessori Philosophy

Montessori educational methods develop out of the philosophy that all children are natural learners who are motivated by an internal drive to build skills and understand the world. Children are seen as people who desire independence and are capable of doing a great deal for themselves when they are given clear and concise lessons and allowed to experiment for themselves. Students are not considered empty vessels who gain all their knowledge from the teachers and textbooks. Rather, they are seen as active constructors of knowledge who bring knowledge with them from past experiences and build on it everyday through interacting with their teachers, peers, families, and learning materials. A deep understanding of child development is intrinsic to this method. Classrooms, learning materials, and lessons are purposefully designed in order to appeal to children based on the unique characteristics of their age.

Mixed Age Groups

One of the hallmarks of the Montessori method is that children of mixed ages work together in the same class. Age groupings are based on developmental planes. In partnership with our half day preschool provider, children from 3-6 years of age are together in Primary classes. Students aged 6-12 share the

elementary classes, often grouped as Lower Elementary for 6-9-year-old children and Upper Elementary for children ages 9-12 years. Because the work is individual, children progress at their own pace; there is cooperation rather than competition between the ages. Younger children learn from older children and older children naturally become classroom leaders.

The Prepared Environment

The “prepared environment” is Dr. Montessori’s concept that the classroom environment should be designed by the adult to facilitate maximum, independent learning and exploration by the child. Attributes of a prepared environment include order and reality, beauty and simplicity. Everything is child-sized to enhance children’s independent functioning. In the Montessori classroom, learning materials are arranged invitingly on low, open shelves. Children may choose any materials they have had lessons on that they would like to use and may work for as long as the material holds their interest. When they are finished with each material, they return it to the shelf from which it came.

North Carolina Standard Course of Study

North Carolina’s Standard Course of Study defines the appropriate content standards for each grade level to provide a uniform set of learning standards for every public school in North Carolina. These standards define what students should know and be able to do. The goal of these standards is to prepare all students to become career and college ready. At MCPM, highly-trained teachers develop personalized learning plans for each child to move step-by-step through the sequenced Montessori curriculum, which has been mapped to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Student Grade Placement, Acceleration, Promotion, or Retention

Students are required to meet a minimum standard of academic performance in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Students who

do not meet the minimum standard may be retained in the same grade. Students must have at least a C average or better in reading/language arts, math, and science in order to be eligible for promotion to the next grade. Students must also demonstrate academic progress on the MAP Assessment. Retention and promotion decisions are made by a team consisting of school administration, classroom teachers, and other related school personnel. The team reviews report card grades, MAP Assessments, State End of Grade (EOG) Test Scores, and teacher recommendations.

On occasion, it may be in the best interest of the student to have a new grade placement, be accelerated more than one grade, or be retained in the current grade. In this event, supporting documentation with interventions already offered to the student will be provided by the school. If a student's parent or teacher believes one of these grade changes should be considered, a written request for consideration should be provided to the Advisory Council, including the reasons for such consideration. The final decision regarding placement, acceleration, promotion, or retention of a student rests solely with the Advisory Council.

The following shall be considered, when making such decisions:

1. The education record of the student, including but not limited to a student's grades, standardized test scores, attendance, discipline, reading, speaking & math skills.
2. The physical, social and emotional readiness of the student for the curriculum of each grade.
3. The current research on grade placement, promotion, acceleration and retention.
4. The recommendation of the student's parents and teachers.
5. The applicable laws governing these decisions.

The goal of placing, accelerating, promoting or retaining a student is to enhance the opportunity for the student to achieve learning goals, meet state and school performance expectations, and to be prepared for high school, college, and career plans.

In the Montessori classroom students follow a three year cycle. The biggest transitions are from Primary to Lower Elementary, Lower to Upper

Elementary, and Upper Elementary to Middle School. It is at these times that the most consideration regarding retention or acceleration occur.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

At Mountain City Public Montessori we take our mission to serve the needs of all students very seriously. Fortunately, the Montessori method is purposely designed so that no learner is left on the margins and there are key elements of the pedagogy that specifically serve all students.

Mixed age classrooms allow children to learn from each other and act as mentors to their younger peers. This also means that a wide range of materials is available at all times, so children can work in their zone of proximal development, even if they are at different levels in different subjects. Students who struggle academically still have opportunities to lead younger students, maintaining their identity as an important person in a learning environment.

Students spend 3 years in the same classroom, with the same teacher. Practices such as observing, conferencing with students, providing choices, maintaining a calm and orderly environment, and building collaborative relationships with students and families, allow educators to deeply understand their students and tailor learning goals and activities to meet their needs.

Hands-on materials and activities appeal to a variety of learning styles.

Individually-tailored learning goals (called work plans) that students develop in conference with the teacher allow them to practice needed skills in topics of interest.

Freedom to move, work in different positions, individually or in groups means that children are not punished for following the needs of their growing bodies.

Child Find

The IDEA includes a Child Find Mandate. Child Find requires all school districts to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities regardless of the severity of their disability. This obligation encompasses all children who are suspected of having a disability, including children receiving passing grades and “advancing from grade to grade...”. A parent who suspects that their child may have a disability and is in need of special education and related services may request a free evaluation of their child by contacting the school Curriculum Director and providing a written request for an evaluation under IDEA and/or Section 504. The school must take the parent’s request into consideration and provide a response consistent with State and Federal special education requirements.

Section 504 (General Education)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 794, (sometimes referred to as “Section 504”) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities solely on the basis of their disability. If you have Section 504 questions please contact the school’s principal who has been designated as the Section 504 Coordinator. The Section 504 Coordinator is responsible for investigating and resolving complaints. In addition, any individual who desires information related to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act, may contact the school’s principal or the CSA Special Education Department at (616) 222-1700. The school does not discriminate against individuals seeking to access a program or service of the school based on disability. Where an individual desires to participate in a program or service and needs reasonable accommodation in order to do so, they should contact the school’s Curriculum Director to request an accommodation. In addition, if you suspect that your child has a disability which may qualify him/her for support under Section 504, you should contact the school’s Curriculum Director to begin the referral process. Upon initiation of the Section 504 referral process, parents will be provided with a copy of the Section 504 Procedural Safeguards and Parent/Student Rights which contains complaint and due process procedures.

Multi-tiered Support System (MTSS)

Montessori inherently allows differentiation as this is the base of the method. Teachers follow the student using observation that informs action, helping the teacher meet the students where they are and guide them in the right direction to achieve proficiency throughout their experiential learning.

MTSS is a school wide program utilized with all students. The use of an MTSS framework will not be used to delay a referral to the Exceptional Children's (EC) program. An EC referral must be considered at any time if a disability is suspected. MTSS begins with relationship building and observation in the classroom. Teachers get to know students as individuals, their strengths, and areas of need. They work with students to create daily/weekly/monthly (depending on age level) work plans that balance what students need to work on and what they are interested in so they are able to maximize engagement and motivation. Teachers also work with students for up to three years in the same classroom. Work in the classroom constitutes Tier I (differentiation) in the MTSS framework that MCPM will use to help identify students performing below grade level and monitor their progress. The MTSS goal is to intervene early so students can catch up with their peers. In order to identify struggling students and be able to provide support, our school will start with Tier I: in class instruction provided for all students using the Montessori method which provides differentiation.

Students who continue struggling academically move to Tier II: families are informed and the student begins receiving more targeted support through small group lessons and interventions. At Tier II, additional activities such as targeted math or reading games, flashcards, puzzles, etc. may be added to the classroom for the student to use for extra practice during the daily work period. These students can be identified using a Montessori observation tool (such as Transparent Classroom), MAP assessment, the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS) and State Assessments.

A student stays in Tier II for 6 to 8 weeks and if still not making progress, moves to Tier III: intensive individualized support with more time spent in one on one interventions. At Tier III we will also initiate the Child Study protocol developed by Public Montessori in Action. This process begins with a meeting between the classroom teacher, family of the child, Montessori Coach and

Curriculum Director. In this meeting the child's teacher describes the academic struggles the child is facing in objective language and asks the family members for insight. The adults develop ideas for how to help the child and create a plan that can be implemented in the classroom and at home. If the child continues to struggle after 4-6 weeks, the classroom teacher and Montessori Coach or Curriculum Director conduct a child study meeting with the other lead teachers at the same grade level. This meeting follows a protocol for investigating the difficulties the student is having, reviewing what has been tried and the outcomes, and developing ideas and a plan for further support. Students that continue to struggle after Tier III may be referred for EC identification through specialized assessments for specific learning disabilities. These students will have other support personnel to work with them one-on-one or in small groups in or outside the classroom.

The Individual Education Program (IEP)

If a student is believed to have a disability that is having an impact on their ability to learn, they will be referred to the Exceptional Children team. This team will decide the need for full evaluations and any specialized designed instruction. At a minimum, the IEP team (led by the EC Coordinator), will include the parents, regular education teacher and an individual that can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation. This team determines that evaluations are appropriate for the next step, and the parent(s) sign (giving consent for initial evaluations). MCPM will contract with a local school psychologist to provide any diagnostic testing required during the school day. The EC Coordinator will oversee the evaluation process, scheduling the time and location of the evaluations, receiving each report and scheduling the eligibility determination meeting to ensure compliance within the 90-day timeframe and making sure that all forms provided by the NCDPI are completed. Parents may also choose to refer their child for testing at any time by providing a written request to the school. All decisions (accepted or refused) will be reflected in detail within the Prior Written Notice for each meeting.

If the student qualifies for an IEP, one will be developed by the IEP team. The student will receive any necessary specially designed instruction and accommodations as well as in-classroom support as needed from the

licensed EC teacher and contracted related services providers. The EC team, including the parent / guardian, will meet regularly to discuss the child's progress, monitor records and use a problem-solving approach to address academic, behavioral and/or developmental concerns regarding the student. If a child does not qualify they will continue to receive tier III intensive individualized interventions.

The EC team (EC teacher, Curriculum Director, classroom teacher, and parent) will collaborate in regular meetings held at an interval dictated by the IEP. They will monitor and discuss the student's growth and progress towards their IEP goals. The child's classroom teacher will be supported by the team in order to make adjustments and/or accommodations based on the student's IEP. The EC teacher will ensure that the student's Montessori work plan is appropriately leveled for their needs. MCPM follows all federal and state laws and regulations relating to the education of students with disabilities. All staff will be educated as to the contents and implications of these laws.

Educational Placement of Students with Disabilities

Every student at MCPM will receive an individualized education that meets their specific needs. In accordance with IDEA, students with disabilities will receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least-restrictive environment. Accommodations will be provided on an as-needed basis including but not limited to: assistive technology tools, assessment accommodations, etc. Related services not offered by MCPM will be provided by an outside service provider during regular school hours.

"Push-in" refers to the practice of delivering English language learner (ELL) or special education services inside the regular / core education setting rather than "pulling out" identified students for services in a separate setting. Montessori programs are ideally suited for supporting this service model.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Make Up Work

In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the student's teachers should be called, so necessary arrangements can be made to have assignments picked up. At the request of the parents, the teachers may provide assignments for a student who is absent two or more days. Parents must call before 8:00 a.m. on the day the homework is needed in order to allow the teachers adequate time to assemble the assignments. Parents may pick up the assignments after 3:15pm on the date requested.

Technology Use

Students are offered access to the school's computer network for creativity, communication, research, and other tasks related to the MCPM academic program. All use of computers, furnished or created data, software, and other technology resources as granted by MCPM are the property of MCPM and are intended for school business and educational use. Students are to use the computer network responsibly. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and using the MCPM computer network and the school's technological resources.

The school educates students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response.

Zero tolerance cell phone / smart device policy

Student cell phone use is prohibited during the school day as well as at any MCPM sponsored after-school programs or clubs. If a student is required to have a cell phone at school for health monitoring or other special circumstances, a cell phone permission form may be requested and completed by the parent. Unauthorized cell phones will be confiscated by the school, families will be notified, and the phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Prohibited Usage: During school hours, including classroom sessions, study periods, and breaks, the use of cell phones and smart devices are strictly prohibited. Watches may be worn so long as smart features are not accessed. This includes, but is not limited to, making or receiving calls, texting, using apps, browsing the internet, and taking photos or videos. Any violation of this usage policy will result in the device being confiscated for the remainder of the day and the guardian signing this policy being contacted.

Safe Storage: All cell phones and smart devices must be powered off and stored in the student's bag or designated area provided by the school. The school is not responsible for any loss, theft, or damage to electronic devices. Watches may be worn so long as smart features are not accessed.

Emergency Contact: In the case of an emergency, parents/guardians should contact the school's main office at 828-570-5554 to relay messages to their child. The school will ensure that the student receives the message promptly.

Student Code of Conduct

Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct when

- on school property;
- in a motor vehicle being used for a school related purpose;
- at a school-related activity, function or event;
- at any time or place (including en route to or from school) when the student's behavior has a direct or immediate effect on maintaining order, safety, health and discipline in the school.

Acts of misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to cooperate or comply with directions of school personnel and volunteers
- False allegations against staff, volunteers, or students
- Falsification of records or scholastic dishonesty (including cheating and plagiarism)
- Misuse of copyrighted materials
- Improper or disrespectful communications to staff, volunteers, or students
- Use of profane and/or inappropriate language

- Disruption of school
- Bullying and harassment
- Cyber-bullying pursuant to state law
- Criminal Sexual Conduct as defined by state law
- Indecency (either with clothing/exposure, pictures or public display of affection)
- Any public display of affection having sexual connotations
- Violations of building rules and regulations
- Violations of rules or policies as set forth in the Student and Family Handbook
- Smoking, tobacco possession or use
- Trespassing, loitering
- Suspended or expelled student on school property or attending school activities
- False alarms
- Defacement/Damage of property or theft/possession of stolen property
- Coercion, extortion or blackmail
- Arson
- Possession of firework(s), explosive(s) and/or chemical substance(s)
- Possession and/or sale of alcohol and/or drugs (narcotic drugs, look-a-like substances and illegal chemical substances)
- Possession of look-a-like weapons
- Possession of dangerous weapons as defined by state law and dangerous weapons or instruments not otherwise enumerated herein
- Possession of personal protection devices (such as tasers, mace, pepper-spray, etc.)
- Fighting, assault and/or battery on another person
- Participating in gang-related activity
- Violation of Technology Use and Internet Safety Practices and Procedures
- Persistent disobedience
- Verbal assault
- Malicious or willful types of behavior that endanger the safety of others
- Extreme acts of defiance and/or threats toward teachers/other adults/fellow students
- Criminal acts other than as enumerated herein
- Excessive tardiness or absences as defined in the Attendance Policy

Below is a list of practices that we see as important. We work to define and train all employees and students on the following:

- Belonging, Identity and Inclusion - Mirrors and Windows
- Community and Unity
- Nature Connection
- Purpose
- Exploration, Discovery, Adventure
- Equity and Social Justice
- Service
- Joy
- Shared Power/Voice - Healthy Relationships - Collaborative Leadership
- Autonomy and Self-Direction and Trust
- Place-based Learning - immerses children in local cultures, landscapes, opportunities, and experiences.
- Inquiry
- Creativity
- Respect and Responsibility for self, others, and environment
- Lifelong Learning
- Kindness and Justice

Discipline Policy

At Mountain City Public Montessori, effective discipline will be promoted first and foremost by establishing a community based on respect and engagement in meaningful work. We will be implementing the Nautilus Approach developed by Public Montessori in Action.

“The Nautilus Approach is a framework for proactive and responsive support for the whole school through fidelity to the Montessori method, respectful relationships with children, and support for children who need it most. It offers step-by-step guidance to reconnection to work through set phases during which the child is always welcome to return to their work. [...] Like the Montessori method, it is a constructivist approach, focuses on the whole-human (rather than other discipline policies or systems which use a behaviorist approach), and aims to reconnect the child to their environment.”

- Public Montessori in Action

Building relationships with students and families that are based on trust and respect forms the foundation of our discipline practices. It is critical that each child and family feels that they belong in the school and are a valued member of the community. Each classroom establishes community agreements at the beginning of the school year. These are a set of behavior standards that the students, teacher, and instructional assistant agree to uphold throughout the year. They are posted in the classroom so that they can be referred to whenever a child needs to be redirected.

As Montessorians we firmly believe that all children have the desire and ability to learn and it is the teacher's responsibility to connect each child to learning opportunities. Students are able to take ownership of their learning, set academic and social-emotional goals for themselves, and are presented with leadership opportunities when they demonstrate responsibility and care for others. Learning happens with the materials in a Montessori classroom, rather than with worksheets or textbooks that can be taken elsewhere, so the primary goal of the educator is to address behavior in a way that reconnects students to the material in the place of learning, the classroom.

When actions or words present obstacles to learning or show a lack of respect in the environment, the teacher and classroom assistant will first seek to resolve conflicts within the classroom community. These actions include purposefully disrupting others from their learning; destruction of materials or other property, including writing on the walls or furniture; and demeaning language or actions that are intended to harm another person's sense of self. Strategies for addressing this behavior in the classroom include the use of a Peace Table, community meetings, and one-on-one or small group conflict resolution. The Peace Table in a Montessori classroom is a place with explicit calming and centering activities where children can take time to de-escalate and prepare themselves to reconnect with the learning environment. Methods for conflict resolution are explicitly taught to all students and practiced in role-plays throughout the year. When individual students have a conflict, they are encouraged to have a conversation at the peace table in which they each have a turn to speak and listen to the other and come to a resolution. Disruptive, destructive, and demeaning behaviors that require

adult intervention in the classroom will be documented using a Nautilus referral form. This form includes space for the adult to describe the behavior in objective terms and for the child to reflect on their actions and what could be done differently.

A student may be removed from the classroom for behaviors that are dangerous, such as potential or actual physical harm to self or others; or distress at a level that is disturbing others in the learning environment and cannot be addressed with time at the peace table, such as yelling, banging, hitting objects, etc. Students in these situations will first be escorted by an adult to a calming place outside of the classroom. When they have de-escalated, they will be guided through a reflection process to determine why they got into that state and how they could have responded differently. A Nautilus referral form will be completed by a classroom-based adult, the adult who worked with the child outside of the classroom, and the child.

If a student has three Nautilus referrals, they go to the next tier of support: Child Study. This process begins with a meeting between the classroom teacher, the family of the child, Montessori Coach and Curriculum Director. In this meeting the problematic behaviors are discussed in objective language and the child's family member(s) are asked for their insights. The adults brainstorm solutions and develop a plan for addressing the behavior in school and at home. If the behavior continues after 4-6 weeks, the classroom teacher and Montessori Coach or Curriculum Director will take the next step in the process: conducting a Child Study meeting with the other classroom teachers at the same level. This meeting follows a protocol for investigating the behavior, sharing what has been tried and other ideas for solutions, and developing a plan. If the behavior continues to not improve after the plan has been in place for 4-6 weeks, the child is referred to assessment for special education or other specialists.

Actions that result in meetings with parents, before three referrals have been completed and can lead to suspension are: bringing weapons or illegal substances to school or school events, violence that causes physical harm, physical fighting, and demeaning behavior that is not resolved through in-classroom strategies.

When school leadership decides that a student needs to be suspended, the student will serve an in-school suspension that includes intensive mental health support, community service, and restorative justice opportunities. If dangerous or demeaning behaviors continue after serving several suspensions, the case will be discussed with the MTSS team and Board. If the student is 14 years of age or older whose presence in school threatens the safety of other students or school staff, then a hearing will be conducted to determine the possibility of expulsion.

Short-term suspension

- (a) The Advisory Council shall have authority to impose short-term suspension on a student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the Code of Student Conduct authorizing short-term suspension.
- (b) If a student's short-term suspensions accumulate to more than 10 days in a semester, to the extent the Advisory Council has not already done so, they shall invoke the mechanisms provided for in the applicable safe schools plan adopted pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.47(b)(5) and (b)(6).
- (c) A student subject to short-term suspension shall be provided the following:
 - 1. The opportunity to take textbooks home for the duration of the suspension.
 - 2. Upon request, the right to receive all missed assignments and, to the extent practicable, the materials distributed to students in connection with the assignment.
 - 3. The opportunity to take any quarterly, semester, or grading period examinations missed during the suspension period. (2011-282, s. 2.)

All short term suspensions shall follow the procedures outlined in § 115C-390.6.
- Short-term suspension procedures.

Long-term suspension

- (a) The Advisory Council may recommend the long-term suspension of any student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the

Code of Student Conduct that authorizes long-term suspension. Only the Advisory Council has the authority to long-term suspend a student.

(b) Before the imposition of a long-term suspension, the student must be provided an opportunity for a hearing consistent with G.S. 115C-390.8.

(c) If the student recommended for long-term suspension declines the opportunity for a hearing, the Advisory Council shall review the circumstances of the recommended long-term suspension. Following such review, the Council (i) may impose the suspension if it is consistent with board policies and appropriate under the circumstances, (ii) may impose another appropriate penalty authorized by board policy, or (iii) may decline to impose any penalty.

(d) If a teacher is assaulted or injured by a student and as a result the student is long-term suspended or reassigned to alternative education services, the student shall not be returned to that teacher's classroom unless the teacher consents.

(e) Disciplinary reassignment of a student to a full-time educational program that meets the academic requirements of the standard course of study established by the State Board of Education as provided in G.S. 115C-12 and provides the student with the opportunity to make timely progress towards graduation and grade promotion is not a long-term suspension requiring the due process procedures described in G.S. 115C-390.8. (2011-282, s. 2.)

All long term suspensions shall follow the procedures outlined in § 115C-390.8.
- Long-term suspension procedures.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Family and School Communication

In order to create and sustain an effective and inviting school environment, effective and efficient communication is essential. Mountain City Public Montessori will make continual, consistent communication with families and stakeholders through multiple and varied media.

Parental involvement is a significant determinant in student achievement. Mountain City Public Montessori will make every effort to involve parents as partners in their child(ren)'s learning. Mountain City Public Montessori encourages an atmosphere in which parents, administration and faculty join in a partnership to foster the mission of the school. This partnership offers an environment for collaboration and exchange of information between school and parents.

All families are invited to join monthly Family-Teacher Collective (FTC) meetings to facilitate family engagement through volunteering, fundraising, and establishing community partnerships. The FTC aids in such things as planning and execution of fundraising events, sponsorship of school clubs and organizations, assisting in the organizing of special events, assisting in the sponsorship and running of after-school activities and Family Education Nights, and assisting with school-wide events that are accessible to all families to build relationships between families and the school. The FTC reports to the Directors and teacher liaison. All interested parents or legal guardians of current MCPM students, as well as currently employed MCPM staff are invited to be a part of the FTC. The FTC acts as an independent entity with its own elected leadership body, but may be assigned tasks or duties by the school leadership.

Family Education Opportunities

We are aware that the Montessori curriculum may be new to many families. The teachers and staff will hold Family Education Nights in the evenings where teachers, staff, and family members will come together to discuss Montessori theory, the work your children are doing in the classroom, and

strategies for continuing this work at home. These events will provide a great opportunity for parents to get to know one another and gain additional insight into Montessori teaching methods.

Service to the School

Service to the community is another aspect of the Montessori curriculum that can be modeled by its adult members. MCPM gratefully acknowledges all of its members who have offered to volunteer time, energy, and skills to initially organize and create it. MCPM will thrive through the years as each family adds its own energy to its growth. By participating in service to the school, families become a part of the school's community and a practical piece of their child's education. It is expected that most families will help the school in whatever way they can.

Communication Policy

Following are guiding principles of Mountain City Public Montessori Family Involvement Policy:

- Families have the right to be involved and participate in their child's educational experience.
- Families will be informed of their rights under Title I.
- Families will receive the email address of their child's teacher in the welcome letter sent to parents and students at the start of school.
- Families have the opportunity to make decisions regarding the education of their child by initiating conversation with the child's teacher.
- Families will be informed of teacher professional development days through regular communications. Professional Development of teachers includes ways to build a successful communication bridge between the school and home.
- Families that need documents written in Spanish will have the opportunity to select "Spanish Materials" on the registration forms at Mountain City Public Montessori.

Family Grievance Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and directions for the resolution of grievances. In this regard, the objective is to perpetuate a climate of collegiality, mutual trust, and respect by resolving differences in a timely, objective and equitable manner. When informal resolution is unsuccessful, the student or parent or guardian may file a grievance. Grievances must be filed in writing, as close as possible to the time of the originating circumstances and include (1) the name of the school employee or other individual whose decision or action is at issue; (2) the specific decision(s) or action(s) at issue; (3) any board policy, state or federal law, state or federal regulation, or procedure that the parent or guardian or student believes has been misapplied, misinterpreted or violated; (4) and the specific resolution desired.

DEFINITION

A grievance is a significant feeling of dissatisfaction or injustice in connection as a parent or guardian, teacher, or volunteer that is brought to the attention of the School Leadership (Operations or Curriculum Directors), or if the grievance is with a Director, directly to the Advisory Council.

SCOPE

This procedure deals with grievances that are not covered by other school policies or practices, such as the Employee Handbook or the Student Code of Conduct. Conflicts are often interpersonal in nature and usually fall into one of the following categories:

- Family conflicts with: another parent or guardian, a teacher, a student, or a staff member
- Teacher conflicts with: another teacher, a parent or guardian, a student, or a staff member
- Student conflicts with: another student, a parent or guardian, a teacher, or a staff member
- Staff member conflicts with: another staff member, a parent or guardian, or a teacher

Note that grievances involving established school policy are routinely referred to and handled by the School Leadership. This Grievance Policy is intended to apply to situations that are not to be addressed pursuant to other established policies.

In cases where it is unclear whether this grievance policy should apply or another policy should apply, the School Leadership shall make the

determination, unless the grievance is with a Director, in which case it will be referred to the Advisory Council. In the event the Advisory Council requires more support, they may refer the grievance to the Board of Directors.

BACKGROUND

Disagreement may arise in any community; such differences are an inevitable consequence of human interaction. In a majority of these situations, the parties involved resolve the problems. This procedure is designed to assist in the resolution of disagreements in those instances where the parties are unable to settle their differences.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the process for resolution of grievances is followed. Individuals with grievances should proceed through the grievance process starting with Level 1 and without skipping a level, unless approved by the Advisory Council. However, if the grievance is with a Director the matter may be taken directly to MCPM Board of Directors (Level 4).

PROCESS

All levels of grievance resolution shall be documented.

Level 1: Direct Resolution

The administrative resolution process begins with a meeting between the parties involved with at least one Director in attendance, serving only as the facilitator of the process.

Level 2: Administrative Resolution

At least one of the involved parties must request administrative resolution in writing and state explicitly that it is being requested under the grievance policy. The Advisory Council facilitates the meeting between the involved parties and may propose solutions. In the event that consensus is not reached on a proposed solution, the Directors/Advisory Council may issue a directive in order to resolve the matter.

Level 3: Mediated Resolution

The mediated resolution process consists of a meeting or meetings between the parties involved with a neutral third party (Advisory Council) in attendance. At least one of the involved parties must request Mediated Resolution in writing and state explicitly that it is being requested under Level

3 of MCPM Grievance Policy. All or most members of the Advisory Council will serve as mediator.

Level 4: Board Mediation

Complaints directed to the Board must be made in writing to the Board Co-Chairpersons, and must specify the individual(s) involved, details of incidents giving rise to the complaint (dates, approximate times), efforts taken to resolve the problem, and the requested solution. The Board will hear from all the involved parties either separately or together, at their discretion, at the next regular Board meeting and may take whatever action they deem appropriate. The Board may decide to refer the parties back to a lower level of resolution, or work with the Advisory Council on a resolution of the issue that may include directives issued by the Advisory Council.

Mountain City Public Montessori Grievance Policy Adopted on September 21, 2022

Family-Teacher Conferences

Family-teacher conferences are conducted face to face twice each school year in October and February. In addition, guardians are encouraged to inquire about their child's progress any time during the school year. We believe that by continually monitoring students' progress, the family-teacher conferences will serve as a review with very few surprises.

During each conference, teachers review the student's progress and discuss his/her strengths and opportunities. Families are encouraged to ask questions in order to learn as much as possible about their child's performance. We aim to make family-teacher conferences a positive experience for everyone involved.

GENERAL SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Illness policy - When to Stay Home, When to Return

The health and well-being of our school community is a high priority for us. We take every effort to maintain a healthy learning environment, and we ask for your assistance in keeping our school illness-free.

Children should not come to school when experiencing any of the following:

- Fever of 100 degrees or greater
- Any instance of vomiting or
- Any instance of diarrhea (unless caused by a medication, and/or as explained by a doctor's note)
- Communicable diseases- chickenpox, strep throat, etc. (see exclusion policy)
- Chronic and excessive runny nose with thick mucus (unless caused by allergies, and/or as explained by a doctor's note.)
- Persistent cough, especially with the presence of phlegm
- Pink eye
- Rash

Children with these symptoms should be kept home to rest and recover. We understand that keeping a child home when they are ill may present a hardship for working adults, however, we ask that you make every reasonable effort to keep children home when they are unwell to prevent the spread of germs.

Sending a Sick Child Home

Staff are expected to do daily health screenings of children, along with a record of any concerns. The daily screenings include the following:

- Changes in usual behavior or appearance;
- Taking the child's temperature with a thermometer if there are changes in the child's behavior or appearance
- Skin rashes, itchy skin, or lice/nits (during a lice outbreak);

- Complaints of pain or not feeling well;
- Other signs or symptoms of illness (including drainage from eyes, vomiting, and diarrhea); and
- Reported illness or injury to the child since the last day of attendance.

Children presenting signs of illness as listed above should be dismissed from school. Staff will contact parents/guardians to pick up a child who is not feeling well. The child may be removed from the classroom while they wait to be picked up.

How to Notify the School of Planned or Unplanned Absences

Please notify us if your child will be absent from school. You may choose any of the following:

- Send a message through the Transparent Classroom app to your child's classroom teacher and/or to the school's Director
- Email your child's classroom teacher
- Call the school phone number and speak with the Director or leave a voicemail
- Email info@mcpublic.org

Transportation

Mountain City Public Montessori plans to offer free school bus transportation to any student that needs it who lives within the Asheville City School district limits. The school is also a block from the central downtown bus hub, making it easily accessed by public transit, on foot, or by bicycle.

Bus transportation requests must be submitted two weeks prior to the start of school each year. Mid-year bus transportation requests will be accepted at the discretion of the Operations Director.

Meals

MCPM works with local agencies to provide nutritious and delicious breakfast and lunch for all students. Meals will be provided for free for all qualifying students, and for a small fee for those who do not qualify. Please complete

the school's Free and Reduced Meal form at the start of each school year, or if your family experiences a change in household income.

Students who do not qualify for free meals will maintain an account with MCPM for the cost of meals.

Students are welcome to bring packed lunches from home.

Structure and Length of the School Day

Mountain City Public Montessori will adhere to the rules outlined by the North Carolina General Assembly. The typical school day at MCPM will consist of a three-hour uninterrupted work cycle in the morning (two hours for adolescents), supplemental instruction (SEL, art, music, etc.), outside/physical activity, lunch, and an afternoon work period. The start and finish times of each school day, and the daily schedule of instruction and events, shall be determined by the Advisory Council.

North Carolina General Statute § 115C-84.2.

The number of instructional hours in an instructional day may vary according to local board policy and does not have to be uniform among the schools in the administrative unit.

Local boards may approve school improvement plans that include days with varying amounts of instructional time. If school is closed early due to inclement weather, the day and the scheduled amount of instructional hours may count towards the required minimum to the extent allowed by State Board policy. The school calendar shall include a plan for making up days and instructional hours missed when schools are not opened due to inclement weather.

North Carolina state law requires a minimum of 185 days or 1,025 hours of instruction per academic year. Mountain City Public Montessori will exceed the minimum required number of instructional hours each academic year.

School Hours:

Monday through Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m, Friday: 8:00am to 1:00pm
Students may be dropped off starting at 7:45am. Please do not release students from your vehicle until a staff member is there to receive them.

At pick up time, please do not queue on Church Street until 2:45pm.

The daily schedule that includes a three hour work period is a hallmark of Montessori education. This extended time allows children to truly focus on their activities and enter a “flow” state. In optimal experience theory, psychologists describe "flow" as the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity (Kahn; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi). Children working in flow exhibit spontaneous discipline, concentration and deep engagement. This extended time gives children the autonomy to choose the order of their learning activities, from the guidance of the work plan they developed with their teacher, as well as multiple opportunities to develop executive function skills.

Rather than being ushered through subject-based learning blocks according to the teacher's schedule, students are able to determine what they most want to work on for themselves or with their peers, increasing motivation and engagement in their learning. Students practice from a very young age how to manage their time and prioritize their activities so that they complete everything they have planned for the week, building important skills for college and career success. The extended work time also allows for students to learn from the corrective feedback of the materials. Students are able to check and correct their work, leading to deeper learning.

As students complete activities, they have a sense of accomplishment, can see what they have learned, and build their confidence and respect for themselves.

Incorporating time each day to gather as a class community is also critical to our goals of building an environment where all children feel connected and valued. In class meetings, students and teachers acknowledge each other for the work they see them doing and the ways in which they have been helpful to the community. A land acknowledgement and centering activity in the meeting provide students time to connect to the history of the place and to their inner selves. Students have opportunities to perform classroom jobs such as sharing the upcoming weather forecast (meteorologist), recording important events from the past day (historian), sharing upcoming astronomical events (astronomer), and several others.

Class meetings can also be used to address problems that arise in the community, giving the children a forum to engage in group problem solving and build their skills as peacemakers. Class meetings are opportunities for the children to speak and listen to each other as a group, building their respect for others.

The final critical component of the daily schedule is time to care for the classroom environment. Students do jobs that benefit the community such as sharpening pencils, dusting materials, tidying books, caring for classroom plants and animals, etc. This gives them ownership in their classroom and a sense of responsibility and pride in the ways in which they contribute. Students are able to see the impact of their work as the classroom becomes more organized and understand how their efforts support their peers, for

example when all the children have a sharp pencil to use and can find the book they are looking for. Intentionally caring for the classroom builds students' connection to the community and their respect for the environment.

School Calendar



**MOUNTAIN CITY
PUBLIC MONTESSORI**

**ACADEMIC CALENDAR
2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR**

AUGUST 2023				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

SEPTEMBER 2023				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

OCTOBER 2023				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

NOVEMBER 2023				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

DECEMBER 2023				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

JANUARY 2024				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

Total Instructional Days:	173
Instructional hours:	1064.5
Total Instructional Days + Staff Dev:	195

AUGUST	
7-11,14-18	Staff Development Teacher Workday 1 Open House First Day of School

SEPTEMBER	
1	Early Departure Day 1
4	No School (Labor Day)
8	Early Departure 2
15	Early Departure 3
22	Early Departure 4
29	Early Departure 5

OCTOBER	
6	Early Departure 6
9	No School
13	Early Departure 7
20	No School (Conference Day)
27	No School (Conference Day)

NOVEMBER	
3	Early Departure 8
10	No School (Veterans Day)
17	Early Departure 9
22-24	No School (Thanksgiving)

DECEMBER	
1	Early Departure 10
8	Early Departure 11
15	Early Departure 12
18-29	Winter Break

JANUARY	
1	Winter Break/New Year's Holiday
2	Teacher Workday 2 (optional)
5	Early Departure 13
12	Early Departure 14
15	No School (MLK, Jr. Holiday)
19	Early Departure 15
26	Early Departure 16

FEBRUARY	
2	Early Departure 17
9	Early Departure 18
16	Early Departure 19
19	No School (Presidents' Day)
23	Early Departure 20

MARCH	
1	No School (Conference Day)
8	No School (Conference Day)
15	Early Departure 21
22	Early Departure 22
29	Early Departure 23

APRIL	
1-5	No School (Spring Break)
8	Teacher Workday 3 (optional)
12	Early Departure 24
19	Early Departure 25
26	Early Departure 26

MAY	
3	Early Departure 27
10	Early Departure 28
17	Early Departure 29
24	Early Departure 30
27	No School (Memorial Day)
31	Last Day for Students (Full Day)

FEBRUARY 2024				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

MARCH 2024				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

APRIL 2024				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

MAY 2024				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2024				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

JULY 2024				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

JUNE	
3-7	Teacher Workdays-2/ Staff Development Days-3
19	Juneteenth (12-month holiday)

 Non-school Day/Holiday	 Staff Dev. Day (No School)	 Teacher Workday (No School)	 Conference Day (No School)	 First/Last Day for Students
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Adopted by MCPM Board of Directors: March 1, 2023

Visitor and Volunteer Guidelines

Visitors and volunteers are expected to review and honor the following guidelines while visiting or volunteering for the school. Violation of these guidelines endangers the safety of students and their right to an education. Those not abiding by these guidelines may be barred from the building and/or prevented from participating in future volunteer opportunities. Please contact the school's office for information on becoming a volunteer.

General

1. Potential volunteers are required to complete the appropriate level of background check before a volunteer assignment begins. Parents and guardians may complete the online Volunteer Authorization and Release form on the parents' form site to begin the background check process. Individuals who do not have access to the parents' form site may obtain a Volunteer Authorization and Release form in the school office.
2. All visitors and volunteers must be processed through the electronic visitor management system, using their driver's license and must wear a form of identification provided by the school. They may also be required to submit to a criminal background check.
3. All visitors and volunteers must sign both in and out in the school office. They may not walk directly to any classroom unless given permission by the office staff.
4. The distribution of literature, without prior approval from the classroom teacher or the principal, is prohibited.
5. Visitors and volunteers must abide by staff instructions, asking for clarification if necessary.
6. Corporal punishment is prohibited.
7. The school is a public school with a Board policy of neutrality regarding religion. Visitors and volunteers may neither show preference for any one religion over any other religion nor share their personal religious views with students.
8. Visitors and volunteers must maintain confidentiality of student information.
9. Volunteers must follow school photography guidelines and may not post photos of children on their personal social media accounts, unless the only face shown is that of their own child.
10. Appropriate dress is required at all times.

11. Smoking, tobacco, and alcohol use are prohibited anywhere on school property, in all indoor facilities, and in the presence of students.

Classroom

1. The teacher is ultimately responsible for the students and activities in his/her classroom.
2. Volunteers should enter classrooms quietly and wait for a break in the activity before communicating with the teacher and students.
3. Student infractions must be addressed by the classroom teacher.
4. Classroom issues regarding students are confidential. Visitors and volunteers may not talk with others about the learning or disciplinary needs of any child other than their own.
5. Classroom visitors are allowed for a limited time and must have the Curriculum Director's permission.

Field Trips

1. Volunteer drivers must provide a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, and a sufficient number of seat belts to transport their assigned students. Volunteer drivers, overnight chaperones, and anyone in attendance of a field trip may be required to submit to a criminal background check.
2. Volunteers should follow all instructions provided by the teacher or school.
3. Smoking is prohibited in the presence of students.
4. Volunteer drivers must drive directly to the event and return directly to school (or pre-approved location) immediately after the activity. "Side trips" are prohibited.
5. Volunteer drivers should leave radios off and avoid playing music.
6. Volunteers should behave appropriately when participating on field trips.

Holiday Celebrations

Definition of Holiday Activities

Holiday activities can be as simple as reading a book about a holiday and as elaborate as having a party in the classroom. Activities often involve a group discussion, art- or music-related projects.

Why teach and celebrate holidays?

Some of the reasons we teach and celebrate holidays are:

- To make all children feel accepted and to validate the cultures and experiences of their homes.
- To teach about time and cycles of life.
- To have fun.
- To teach diversity and tolerance by learning about other cultures, traditions and religions.
- To teach the virtues associated with particular holidays- peace, friendship, love, etc.
- To create a sense of family or community within classrooms and within our school.

Time spent on holidays

The amount of time spent on holidays will vary according to the age, interests and needs of the children and be determined by the grade level teams to best fit their curriculum and classes. Teachers may recognize or teach holidays in a brief manner, such as simply reading a book on Presidents' Day or in a more in-depth manner such as teaching about civil rights around Martin Luther King Day.

Deciding Which Holidays to Include

As our school decides on which holidays to include, we will want to think about our actual students and families. Families will be asked to complete a family traditions survey to help guide the school's decision making around holidays and celebrations. Teachers may also want to consider including holidays that are outside of the knowledge base or experiences of their class and themselves to include those that are important to our larger community and city.

We will involve families as much as possible and as is age-appropriate in the implementation of holiday activities. We will keep families informed of upcoming holiday activities and events.

Plan for Working with Children and Families Who Don't Celebrate Holidays

If a child in a classroom does not celebrate a particular holiday, the teacher(s) will work with an administrator and the family to devise a plan so that the child does not feel left out or uncomfortable during the holiday teaching or celebration. Families should contact their child's teacher in advance to let them know of any issues.

NOTIFICATIONS

Student Records and Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents certain rights with respect to their child's education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents should submit a written request to the school principal clearly identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. A school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parents of the time and place the records may be inspected.
- The right to seek an amendment of the student's education records that the parent believes are inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's rights of privacy. Parents should submit a written request to the school principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they want amended and specifying its inaccuracy. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, it will notify the parents of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing to challenge the content of the student's education records. Hearing procedures will be provided to the parents when a hearing is requested.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The school does not need written consent to disclose a student's education records if the disclosure meets one or more of the following conditions and the disclosure is to or for: (see 20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99.31):
 1. School administrators, teachers, support staff, CSA personnel and other school officials which have a legitimate educational interest
 2. Persons or organizations with whom the school or CSA has outsourced services or functions and which have a legitimate educational interest (e.g., attorneys, auditors, medical consultants, special and supplemental education providers, therapists)
 3. Officials of another school where the student seeks or intends to enroll or where the student is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment, and as long as a proper records release request is received by the sending school

4. Certain federal and state officials and educational authorities (for audit, evaluation, reporting, or compliance purposes) or state and local authorities concerning the juvenile justice system in accordance with state statute
 5. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
 6. Organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school or CSA to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests, administer student aid programs, or improve instruction
 7. Accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions
 8. Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena after the school makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent of the order or subpoena
 9. Appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA:

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

Gender Equity Policy (Title IX)

The school certifies compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C 1681 et seq. (Title IX), and its implementing regulation, at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, which prohibits discrimination based on sex. The school, as a recipient of federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education, is subject to Title IX and does not discriminate based on gender or gender identity in employment or any educational program or activity it operates.

Complaints or grievances regarding discrimination based on gender or gender identity should be delivered in writing to the school's Advisory Council and should provide specific details regarding the event, the date of the event, and the parties involved. The complaint will be considered confidential and

will be expeditiously investigated by the principal with the assistance of MCPM legal counsel as necessary and appropriate.

Right to Know Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Parents of students have the right to know the professional qualifications of the school's classroom teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 governs elementary and secondary education, allows parents to ask for certain information about their child's classroom teachers, and requires the school to give this information to parents in a timely manner if they ask for it.

Specifically, parents have the right to ask for the following information about each of their child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the State Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he/she teaches
- Whether the State Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances
- The teacher's college major
- Whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees
- Whether any teachers' aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services to their child and, if they do, their qualifications

Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights concerning student privacy, parental access to information, and administration of physical examinations to minors. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey, which is funded in part or in whole by a program of the U.S. Department of Education, that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey"):
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
 - Sexual behavior or attitudes
 - Anti-social, demeaning, illegal, or self-incriminating behavior

- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close familial relationships
- Legally-recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
- Religious affiliations, beliefs, or practices of the student or parent
- Income, other than as required by law, to determine program eligibility
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following:
 - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
 - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student (except for hearing, vision, scoliosis, or any other physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law)
 - Any activity involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information or the marketing, selling, or distributing of such information to others
- Inspect the following, upon request and before administration or use:
 - Surveys created by a third party before their distribution by a school to its students
 - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
 - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

The school protects student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The school will also both directly notify parents through U.S. Mail, e-mail, parent meetings, or the Parent and Student Handbook of the specific or approximate dates (if such events are planned and/or scheduled) of the above activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in them. Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

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

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Mountain City Public Montessori will comply with 2012 Senate Bill 187 (Session Law 2012-145) which became effective July 1, 2013.

MCPM Calendar will meet all requirements:

1. Start date no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and end date no later than the Friday closest to June 11 (unless a weather related calendar waiver has been approved, year-round school, charter school or cooperative innovative high school.) If waiver is approved the start date can be no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19. **MCPM is not a year-round school.**
2. There are no educational purpose waivers for exemption of the opening and/or closing dates.
3. All schools within the district must be closed all day for purposes of determining eligibility for a weather related waiver (delayed starts or early dismissals of two or more hours no longer apply). **MCPM is an independent tuition-free charter school. Weather related closing decisions will be made locally and will not purposefully mirror the decisions of any districts.**
4. Covers at least nine calendar months.
5. Must have a minimum of 185 days OR 1,025 hours of instruction.
6. Must have at least nine (9) teacher workdays. **MCPM will provide professional development days at the beginning and end of the school year with additional days built into the calendar.**
7. Local Boards shall designate two (2) workdays on which teachers may take accumulated vacation leave. Local Boards may designate the remaining workdays as days teachers may take accumulated vacation leave.
8. Have a minimum of ten (10) annual vacation leave days.
9. Have the same or an equivalent number of legal holidays occurring within the school calendar as those designated by the State Personnel Commission for State employees.
10. School shall not be held on Sunday.
11. Veterans Day shall be a holiday for all public school personnel and for all students enrolled in the public schools.