



Student and Family Handbook

2026-2027

Approved by the MCPM Board of Directors: August 5, 2026

About This Handbook

This Student and Family Handbook summarizes important policies, procedures, rights, responsibilities, and expectations for students and families at Mountain City Public Montessori.

This handbook is intended to support clear communication and a safe, equitable, and respectful school community. It does not create a contract or replace applicable federal or state law, Mountain City Public Montessori's charter, or policies formally adopted by the MCPM Board of Directors. If this handbook conflicts with applicable law or a board-adopted policy, the law or board-adopted policy will govern.

MCPM may revise this handbook when necessary to comply with changes in law, board policy, or school operations. Families will be notified of material changes.

Families are expected to review this handbook with their students in a developmentally appropriate manner. Questions about the handbook may be directed to the Education Director, Student Support Director, or Operations and Finance Director, depending on the subject of the question.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

School Governance

Mountain City Public Montessori is a North Carolina public charter school governed by the Mountain City Public Montessori Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for protecting the school's mission, adopting school policies, overseeing the school's strategic and financial health, approving the annual budget, and supervising the Directors who report to the Board.

The Board governs the school but does not ordinarily manage daily school operations or resolve concerns that are assigned to school employees or Directors. Families should use the communication, complaint, or appeal process applicable to their concern before bringing an individual matter to the Board.

Regular Board meetings are generally held on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m in Room 301. Meeting dates, agendas, locations, and access information are posted in accordance with applicable open-meetings requirements. Board meetings are open to the public except when the Board enters a lawfully authorized closed session.

Members of the public may submit comments to the Board in accordance with the Board's Public Comment Policy. Information about submitting public comment is available on the school's [website](#) or by emailing board@mountaincitypublic.org.

Public comment is not an appropriate forum for discussing confidential student information, personnel matters, or individual complaints. Such concerns will be directed to the applicable family grievance, student discipline, discrimination, Title IX,

Officers: Wren Cook , Chair	At large: Aaron Brumo
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Dr. Dawn Meskil , Vice Chair Erica Rawls , Secretary Kelly Garmon , Treasurer	Molly Cantrell Martin Jarrard Tameka King Katey McDonald Coxen Krista Odom Stella Plato Lindsey Greeson Purcell Sav Sankaran Kalyan Volpe
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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 and Enrollment

MCPM is a tuition-free public charter school open to all eligible students who are residents of North Carolina, subject to available space, lawful enrollment requirements, and the school's board-adopted [Admissions and Lottery Policy](#).

MCPM does not discriminate in admission on any basis prohibited by federal or state law and does not limit admission based on disability, prior academic achievement, language proficiency, or similar impermissible criteria.

This handbook provides a general summary of MCPM's admissions and enrollment practices. The board-adopted Admissions and Enrollment Policy governs if a conflict exists.

Kindergarten Eligibility

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

Application and Lottery

When the number of eligible applicants for a grade level exceeds the number of available seats, MCPM will conduct a randomized lottery in accordance with applicable law and the school's Admissions and Enrollment Policy.

After the lottery, applicants who are not offered admission will be placed on the waiting list for the applicable grade. If space remains available after the lottery, eligible students may be admitted in the order provided by the school's Admissions and Enrollment Policy.

A new application and lottery process is conducted for each school year. Placement on a waiting list does not guarantee admission in the current or a future school year.

Enrollment Documentation

Families offered admission must complete required enrollment documentation by the stated deadline. MCPM may request documentation

reasonably necessary to verify a student's identity, age, residency, immunization status, educational history, custody arrangements, and eligibility for enrollment.

MCPM will not unlawfully delay or deny enrollment because a student lacks records that are subject to protections under federal or state law. Students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, students with disabilities, and other protected students will be enrolled in accordance with applicable law.

Educational Records and Support Information

Families should provide MCPM with complete and accurate educational, health, custody, and student-support information necessary for the school to serve the student safely and appropriately. This includes, when applicable:

- Individualized Education Programs
- Section 504 plans
- Health or emergency action plans
- Relevant evaluation records
- Court orders affecting custody or educational decision-making
- Records from the student's previous school

Receipt of timely information helps the school prepare appropriate services and supports.

Withdrawal and Transfer

A parent or legal guardian who intends to withdraw a student from MCPM should provide written notice to the school as soon as possible and request a transfer of records from the new school. MCPM will transfer student records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other applicable laws.

Families are responsible for returning school-owned instructional materials, library materials, and other property before the student's withdrawal is completed. MCPM may seek reimbursement for property that is lost, damaged, or not returned, as permitted by law and school policy. A financial

or property obligation will not be used to prevent the lawful transfer of a student's educational records.

MCPM Staff and Administrators

Leadership Team

Education Director - Maureen Freeman, maureen.freeman@mcpublic.org

Student Support Director - Sandy Drews, sandy.drews@mcpublic.org

Finance and Operations Director - Brittany Wager, brittany@mcpublic.org

Montessori Teaching & Learning Coordinator - Nancy VanWinkle

The **Education Director** oversees the school's academic program, general education staff, academic performance, and educational concerns.

The **Student Support Director** oversees exceptional children services, Section 504 services, student support systems, and student behavior and social-emotional support.

The **Operations and Finance Director** oversees school operations, facilities, transportation, finance, food services, and related operational matters.

The **Teaching and Learning Coordinator** supports Montessori implementation, curriculum, assessment, instructional coaching, and the academic MTSS process under the supervision of the Education Director.

Families should direct questions to the staff member or Director whose responsibilities are most closely connected to the issue.

Lead Guides

- Primary (ages 3-6)
 - *Dragonflies*: Lucy MacGregor
 - *Opossums*: Alyssa Fisher
- Lower Elementary (ages 6-9)
 - *Hellbenders*: Dana Ivey
 - *Flame Azalea*: Leigh Ann Carracio
 - *Chickadees*: Vena Ramroop

- Upper Elementary (ages 9-12)
 - *Barred Owls*: Henry Blackford
 - *Rainbow Trout*: Stephanie Efird
 - *River Otters*: Jacob Bartholomew
- Adolescent (ages 12-14)
 - *Kestrels Math and Science*: Asa Shaddis
 - *Kestrels ELA and Humanities*: Connor O'Leary

Assistant Guides

- Primary
 - Sha'ketia Simpson
 - Cleo Bove
 - Terra Hynes
- Lower Elementary
 - Tanner Johnson
 - Simone Kaiser
 - Clare Simpson
 - Amber Mahler
- Upper Elementary
 - Kate Folkman
 - Karen Cox
 - Mirabel Winston

Creative Expression Guides

- Shawn Winebrenner (Visual Arts)
- Josh LeBlanc (Physical Education)

Student Support

- Student Wellbeing Coordinator
 - Molly Sackett
- Title I Interventionist
 - Eve Anderson
- Exceptional Children's Guides
 - Taylor Wootten
 - Kim Cannon
 -
- EC Assistant Guide

- Kim Prue

Custodial and Bus: Thomas Robitaille

Food Service provided by Sage and Spice Catering.

Nondiscrimination and Equal Educational Opportunity

Mountain City Public Montessori provides equal educational opportunities for all students. MCPM does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, religion, sex, disability, age, or any other status protected by applicable federal or state law in its admissions, educational programs, activities, or operations.

No student will be unlawfully excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any MCPM program or activity. This commitment applies to admissions and enrollment, academic instruction, student support services, discipline, extracurricular activities, school-sponsored events, transportation, access to facilities, and all other educational programs and services.

MCPM complies with applicable federal and state civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

MCPM prohibits retaliation against any person who makes a good-faith report of discrimination, participates in an investigation, supports another person's complaint, or exercises a right protected by law or school policy.

Title VI: Race, Color, and National Origin Discrimination

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. MCPM does not exclude any person from participation in, deny

any person the benefits of, or otherwise subject any person to discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.

Title VI protections may also apply to discrimination based on actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics. This may include discrimination against a person who is or is perceived to be Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, or a member of another religious or cultural group when the discrimination is based on ancestry, ethnicity, citizenship, or residency in a country with a predominant religion or distinct religious identity.

Prohibited conduct may include discrimination or harassment based on:

- Racial, ethnic, or ancestral slurs or stereotypes
- Skin color, physical features, hair, clothing, or other characteristics associated with a racial or ethnic identity
- A person's country or region of origin or perceived origin
- A person's name, accent, language, or English-language proficiency
- Citizenship or immigration-related characteristics when used as a proxy for national-origin discrimination

Disability Nondiscrimination

MCPM does not discriminate against qualified students with disabilities. The school identifies, evaluates, and provides eligible students with services, accommodations, and educational protections consistent with Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and applicable North Carolina requirements.

Questions or concerns regarding disability discrimination or Section 504 may be directed to:

Section 504 Coordinator: Student Support Director

Additional information is available in the **Student Support Services and Special Education** section of this handbook and in MCPM's Section 504 policies and procedural safeguards.

Sex Discrimination and Title IX

MCPM does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity it operates. Questions, reports, or complaints concerning sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, should be directed to MCPM's Title IX Coordinator:

Title IX Coordinator:

Maureen Freeman, Education Director
27 Church Street
Asheville, NC 28801
maureen.freeman@mcpublic.org

Reports may be made in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email using the contact information above. A report may be made at any time, including outside regular school hours. For more information refer to MCPM's [Title IX policy and grievance procedures](#).

Religious Accommodations

MCPM respects the religious beliefs and practices of its students and families. A student or parent or guardian may request a reasonable accommodation for a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance. Requests may relate to attendance, scheduling, dress, meals, assignments, or participation in school activities.

Requests should be submitted to the Education Director as far in advance as reasonably possible. MCPM will consider each request individually and will provide a reasonable accommodation when required by law and when the accommodation does not create an undue hardship or fundamentally alter the school's educational program.

Reporting Discrimination or Harassment

A student, parent, guardian, employee, volunteer, or community member who believes that discrimination, harassment, or retaliation has occurred is encouraged to report the concern promptly. Reports may be made orally or in writing to:

- The Education Director
- The Student Support Director
- The Title IX Coordinator, for allegations of sex discrimination or sexual harassment
- The Section 504 Coordinator, for disability discrimination or Section 504 concerns
- The Title VI Coordinator, for allegations involving race, color, national origin, or shared ancestry

Title VI and General Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Maureen Freeman, Education Director
 27 Church Street
 Asheville, NC 28801
maureen.freeman@mcppublic.org

Any MCPM employee who receives a report should promptly direct it to the appropriate Director. Reports will be addressed under the policy and procedure applicable to the nature of the allegation.

The school will respond promptly and equitably to reports, take appropriate steps to determine what occurred, and implement corrective or supportive measures when warranted. Information will be shared only with individuals who need it to investigate, respond to, or comply with legal requirements. MCPM cannot promise complete confidentiality when doing so would prevent the school from responding appropriately or fulfilling its legal obligations.

The general Family Grievance Policy does not replace the specialized procedures that apply to discrimination, Title IX, Section 504, special education, student discipline, or other matters governed by a separate policy or law. No person is required to resolve an allegation of discrimination or harassment directly with the person accused before making a report.

ACADEMICS

Grading and Progress Reports

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 support efforts at school and at home to meet the needs of each child.

At MCPM we use Progress Reports to show the students progress towards understanding skills and concepts. We value lesson progression as a form of student assessment. This replaces the traditional report card and shifts the focus of student mastery to the reflection of the whole student and their progress within the three year curriculum cycle.

MCPM uses a curriculum-based system to document student learning and progress. Students in kindergarten through seventh grade do not ordinarily receive conventional letter grades. Instead, families receive progress reports describing the skills and concepts students are developing, practicing, and mastering within the three-year Montessori curriculum cycle. As a transition to high school, eighth-grade students receive letter grades and course records consistent with applicable requirements.

Progress reports include information about the student's academic performance, social-emotional development or conduct, and attendance. Assessment information, including available standardized-testing results, may also be shared through progress reports, conferences, or separate score reports.

Progress reports are distributed quarterly, generally within five school days after the end of each academic quarter. Final progress reports are provided within ten days after the last day of school unless a different schedule is announced.

MCPM conducts at least two family-teacher conferences each school year. Families are also encouraged to contact their student's Lead Guide when questions or concerns arise. Questions should first be directed to the Lead

Guide. If additional review is needed, the concern may be directed to the Education Director.

Grades, progress indicators, and academic records will be based on the student's demonstrated learning and performance. They will not be lowered as a disciplinary consequence unrelated to academic performance.

For a student with an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan, progress reporting will be provided in accordance with the student's plan and applicable law.

Academic Integrity

Honesty, responsibility, and respect for the work of others are essential to a Montessori learning community. Students are expected to submit work that accurately represents their own knowledge, effort, and learning.

Academic dishonesty may include:

- Copying another person's work or allowing another person to copy one's work
- Presenting another person's words, ideas, images, or creations as one's own without appropriate acknowledgment
- Using unauthorized notes, materials, devices, websites, or assistance
- Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on an assignment or assessment
- Falsifying information, sources, data, signatures, or records
- Submitting work created by another person or by an artificial intelligence tool as the student's own
- Using artificial intelligence or another digital tool when the Guide has not authorized its use
- Sharing test questions, answers, passwords, or restricted instructional materials
- Misrepresenting whether or how an assignment was completed

Expectations and responses will be developmentally appropriate and designed to help students understand honesty, responsibility, attribution, and the learning process. Responses may include reteaching, reflection, revising

or redoing work, loss of credit when appropriate, family communication, limits on technology use, and disciplinary consequences under the Student Code of Conduct.

Students will not be penalized merely for asking for appropriate help. When students are uncertain whether collaboration, outside assistance, or a technological tool is permitted, they should ask their Guide before using it.

Assessments

Assessments are one tool that teachers use to gather information and analyze a student's progress. 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 as well as weekly observation and progress monitoring.

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.

At MCPM, we approach testing results as one of many data points that inform our classroom instruction. We analyze data regularly to create a cycle of preparation over correction and to support students in learning concepts and skills concretely before moving into the abstract.

Standardized assessments are required for all North Carolina public schools. Students at MCPM will participate in the following assessments:

Assessment	Grade/ Domain	Issued
BOGs (State- Required Beginning of Grade 3 reading exam)	3rd	1st 20 days

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.	K-8/ Math and Language	Beginning, middle, end of year
EOGs (State-Required End of Grade Exams)	3rd- 8th	Last 10 days of school

Families will receive information about major assessment windows and will be provided with available student results at appropriate times. Assessment results are one source of information and will be considered alongside classroom work, Guide observations, student conferences, progress monitoring, and other evidence of learning.

Students are expected to participate in required assessments unless an exception is authorized by law. Families should avoid scheduling appointments or planned absences during state testing windows.

Testing accommodations will be provided when required by a student's Individualized Education Program, Section 504 plan, English learner plan, transitory impairment documentation, or other applicable state testing requirements. Decisions about accommodations are made through the applicable team process and may not be changed solely for a particular assessment.

Montessori Education

Who was Dr. Maria Montessori?

Dr. Maria Montessori was one of the first female Italian doctors and developed the educational method that takes her name in the first half of the 1900s. 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 them 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 every day 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.

“The teacher’s role is not to teach, but to help the child learn.”

-Maria Montessori

In the Montessori classroom teachers are referred to as “guides.” The guide's objective is to provide guidance and assistance to the child's learning journey rather than imposing rigid instructions on what and how they should learn.

Mixed-Age Groups

Montessori classrooms bring students of different ages and abilities together within developmentally appropriate learning environments. MCPM generally organizes students into Primary or Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Adolescent learning environments consistent with the school’s enrollment, staffing, and educational program.

Mixed-age environments allow students to learn at an appropriate pace while remaining part of a stable classroom community. Younger students learn through observation and interaction with older peers, while older students deepen their learning and develop responsibility by serving as classroom leaders and models.

Grade-level standards continue to apply within each mixed-age environment. A student’s classroom assignment does not change the school’s responsibility to provide instruction aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and to meet the student’s individual educational needs.

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 appropriately sized to enhance each student’s independent functioning. In the Montessori classroom, learning materials are arranged invitingly on low, open shelves. Students may choose from the materials they have had lessons on , 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 Promotion, Retention, and Classroom Placement

Mountain City Public Montessori is responsible for making educational placement decisions for its students, including grade-level, classroom, and Montessori environment assignments. These decisions are made according to the student’s academic, developmental, social-emotional, and individual educational needs; the integrity of the Montessori environment; enrollment; staffing; and applicable legal requirements.

MCPM will communicate with families and seek their input when a significant placement, promotion, or retention decision is being considered. Final decisions concerning general education grade placement and classroom assignment are made by the Education Director, subject to applicable appeal rights and the protections provided to students with disabilities.

Initial Placement

Students enrolling in or transferring to MCPM will generally be assigned to the grade level associated with their age and prior school placement. MCPM may review educational records, speak with the family and prior school, and conduct appropriate academic screening to determine the learning environment in which the student is most likely to succeed.

A classroom or Montessori environment assignment is not guaranteed based on family preference, prior classroom assignment, or a request for a particular Guide or peer group.

Movement Between Montessori Environments

Students generally remain in a Montessori environment for a multi-year developmental cycle when possible. Movement to the next environment is based on the student's grade level, developmental readiness, educational needs, and the school's program structure.

In some circumstances, a student may remain in a Montessori environment for additional time without being retained in the same official grade level. Remaining in a classroom environment longer and formal grade-level retention are separate decisions.

MCPM will ordinarily discuss a possible change of environment with the family during the second half of the school year. A different timeline may be necessary for students who enroll during the year or when unanticipated circumstances arise.

Promotion and Retention

MCPM will make every reasonable effort to provide the instruction, interventions, and supports needed for students to make appropriate progress and be promoted each year. Promotion and retention decisions are made individually and are not based on a single test score, absence, behavior incident, or other isolated factor.

Factors that may be considered include:

- Current academic knowledge and skills

- Classroom work and progress over time
- Formal and informal assessment information
- Progress in response to interventions
- Developmental readiness
- Social-emotional needs
- Attendance and access to instruction
- Previous retention
- Student conduct when it has materially affected access to instruction
- Significant circumstances affecting the student's participation or performance
- The reasonably anticipated educational benefits and risks of promotion or retention
- Family, Guide, and student input, as developmentally appropriate

The student's Lead Guide will communicate significant concerns to the family as they arise. When retention is under consideration, MCPM will conduct a team review that ordinarily includes the Lead Guide, Education Director, relevant student-support or intervention personnel, the family, and other professionals with knowledge of the student.

The Education Director will provide the family with written notice of the final promotion or retention decision. Whenever practicable, notice will be provided before the end of the school year.

Retention will not be imposed solely as punishment for misconduct, tardiness, absence, family disagreement with the school, failure to pay a fee, or failure to participate in a nonrequired school activity.

Students with Disabilities

Promotion, retention, and classroom assignment decisions involving students with disabilities will be made in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, and applicable state requirements.

The student's Individualized Education Program team or Section 504 team will participate when the decision requires consideration of the student's disability, services, accommodations, goals, or educational placement under

applicable law. MCPM will not predetermine an IEP or Section 504 placement decision outside the appropriate team process.

Grade-level retention does not automatically constitute a change in special education placement. Whether a proposed decision affects the student's placement, services, or right to a free appropriate public education will be determined individually through the applicable legal process.

Appeal

A parent or guardian who disagrees with a general education promotion or retention decision may submit a written appeal to the Education Director within five school days after receiving written notice.

The appeal should explain the reason for the disagreement and identify any information the parent or guardian believes was not adequately considered. The reviewing official will examine the relevant records, may meet with the family and school personnel, and will issue a written decision within ten school days when reasonably practicable.

Disagreements concerning an IEP, special education identification, evaluation, services, or placement must be addressed through the procedural safeguards and dispute-resolution options available under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Section 504 disagreements must be addressed through the applicable Section 504 procedures. The general Family Grievance Policy does not replace those procedures.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

At Mountain City Public Montessori we take our mission to serve the needs of all students very seriously. The Montessori method is 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 and ability classrooms present the unique opportunity for all children to access works within their zone of proximal development across curriculum areas. This approach lends itself to all students maintaining their identity as important members of their learning community.

Students generally spend 3 years in the same classroom, with the same guide when possible. 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 different ways of learning. 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. As students grow in their ability to make responsible and safe choices, they are offered increased freedoms to choose where they work, with whom they work, and what they work on.

Commitment to Student Support

MCPM is committed to identifying and responding to students' academic, behavioral, social-emotional, health, accessibility, and disability-related needs. Supports may include differentiated classroom instruction, targeted intervention, multilingual learner services, counseling or behavioral support, Section 504 accommodations, special education, related services, health plans, and coordination with families and community providers.

The type and intensity of support provided will depend on the student's individual needs, available data, applicable eligibility requirements, and federal and state law.

Participation in general education interventions or MTSS is not a prerequisite to requesting an evaluation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504. MCPM will not use MTSS to delay or deny an evaluation when the school suspects that a student may have a disability.

Child Find

MCPM has an ongoing responsibility to identify, locate, and evaluate enrolled students who may have disabilities and may need special education, related services, or protections under Section 504.

A student may be referred for an evaluation when a disability is suspected, even if the student:

- Is advancing from grade to grade
- Receives passing grades
- Has not completed every level of MTSS
- Has not previously received intervention
- Demonstrates needs primarily in behavior, communication, attention, executive functioning, mental health, physical access, or another area not reflected by grades
- Is highly mobile, experiencing homelessness, in foster care, or learning English
- Has received a medical or private diagnosis

A parent, guardian, teacher, or other person with knowledge of the student may raise a concern or request that MCPM consider an evaluation. Requests may be made orally or in writing, although a written request helps document the date and nature of the concern.

Requests and questions should be directed to:

Student Support Director: Sandy Drews

Email: sandy.drews@mcpublic.org

Phone: (828) 570-5554

After receiving a referral or request, MCPM will follow the procedures and timelines required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, and North Carolina policy. A request does not automatically result in eligibility or the creation of an IEP or Section 504 plan. Eligibility is determined by the appropriate team after reviewing relevant information and completing any necessary evaluation.

Families seeking services for a child who is not enrolled at MCPM should contact the public school unit responsible for Child Find for that child. Services for infants and toddlers from birth through age two are coordinated through North Carolina's early intervention system rather than MCPM.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities.

A student may be eligible under Section 504 if the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Eligibility is determined individually by a knowledgeable team using information from a variety of sources. A medical diagnosis may be relevant but does not automatically establish or exclude Section 504 eligibility.

Eligible students receive the accommodations, services, or supports necessary to provide equal access to MCPM's educational programs and activities. Section 504 does not require that a student receive special education or have an Individualized Education Program.

A parent, guardian, or school employee may refer a student for consideration under Section 504. Requests should be directed to:

Section 504 Coordinator: Student Support Director, Sandy Drews

Email: sandy.drews@mcppublic.org

Phone: (828) 570-5554

MCPM will provide parents or guardians with notice of applicable rights and procedural safeguards. These rights include notice, participation in relevant meetings, access to records, an impartial hearing process, and a procedure for raising complaints.

Questions or complaints alleging disability discrimination, failure to implement a Section 504 plan, or retaliation may be submitted to the Section 504 Coordinator. A family may also have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

Section 504 concerns are addressed through MCPM's Section 504 procedures and are not governed solely by the general Family Grievance Policy.

MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Supports)

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports, or MTSS, is a schoolwide framework for identifying student needs, providing increasingly targeted support, monitoring student progress, and adjusting instruction or intervention based on data.

Montessori education provides a strong foundation for differentiated instruction. Guides observe students, provide individualized and small-group lessons, use hands-on materials, confer with students, and adjust work plans according to student readiness and need. These classroom practices form part of MCPM's core instruction and support for all students.

Tier I: Core Instruction and Classroom Support

Tier I includes high-quality, standards-aligned Montessori instruction and the supports available to all students. Guides use classroom observations, student work, assessment results, conferences, and progress-monitoring information to identify strengths and needs.

When a concern arises, the Guide will ordinarily communicate with the family and may consult with the Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Education Director, Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Student Support Director, or other appropriate personnel.

Tier II: Targeted Support

Students who need more support than can be provided through core classroom instruction may receive targeted intervention in a small group or individualized setting. The school will identify the skill or need being addressed, select an appropriate intervention, monitor progress, and communicate with the family.

Tier III: Intensive Support

Students with significant or persistent needs may receive more frequent, intensive, or individualized intervention. The MTSS team will review available data, evaluate the student's response to prior support, and determine appropriate next steps.

Movement between tiers is based on student need and data. It is not a disciplinary consequence, and students do not need to progress through every tier in a fixed sequence.

Relationship to Disability Evaluation

MTSS is not special education and does not determine whether a student has a disability. A student may receive MTSS interventions while also being referred for or participating in an evaluation under IDEA or Section 504.

MCPM will not require a student to complete Tier II or Tier III before considering an evaluation when the school suspects a disability or receives a request that requires a response under applicable law.

Likewise, a student's participation in MTSS does not guarantee eligibility for an IEP or Section 504 plan. Eligibility is determined through the applicable evaluation and team process.

Special Education and Individualized Education Programs

MCPM provides a free appropriate public education to eligible students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, and other applicable requirements.

Special education is specially designed instruction provided at no cost to the family to address the unique needs of an eligible student with a disability. Related services may be provided when required for the student to benefit from special education.

Eligibility is determined by an IEP team after an appropriate evaluation. A medical diagnosis, private evaluation, parent request, academic difficulty, or

participation in intervention does not automatically establish special education eligibility. The team must determine that the student meets applicable eligibility criteria and requires specially designed instruction.

Parents and guardians are important members of the IEP team. The team also includes required school personnel and, when appropriate, the student and other individuals with knowledge or expertise regarding the student.

The IEP team develops a written Individualized Education Program that identifies, as applicable:

- The student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- Measurable annual goals
- Special education and related services
- Supplementary aids, services, accommodations, and supports
- Participation in state and school assessments
- Progress-reporting methods
- The amount and location of services
- The student's educational placement
- Transition services when required

MCPM will provide parents or guardians with prior written notice and procedural safeguards as required. These safeguards explain rights concerning evaluation, eligibility, services, placement, records, mediation, state complaints, due process hearings, and other dispute-resolution options.

Questions about special education should be directed to the Student Support Director. Disagreements about identification, evaluation, eligibility, IEP services, or placement must be addressed through IDEA procedures rather than MCPM's general Family Grievance Policy.

Educational Placement and Least Restrictive Environment

MCPM educates students with disabilities alongside students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. Removal from the general education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the student's disability is such that education in the general education setting

cannot be achieved satisfactorily with appropriate supplementary aids and services.

Educational placement is determined by the IEP team based on the student's individual needs and IEP. Placement is not determined solely by disability category, staffing, available space, family preference, MCPM's Montessori model, or the services typically available in a particular classroom.

MCPM maintains or arranges access to the continuum of services required by law. Services may be provided in the general education classroom, through individual or small-group instruction, in another appropriate setting, or through an outside provider when necessary to implement the IEP.

MCPM's preference for inclusive or "push-in" support does not override an individual IEP team decision. Likewise, a student will not be removed from the general education setting solely because the student needs modifications, behavioral support, assistive technology, related services, or other accommodations.

MCPM will provide required testing accommodations, assistive technology, related services, transportation, behavioral supports, and other services when specified in the student's IEP.

For more detailed information regarding student support services, refer to MCPM's [Student Support Services Guidance Manual](#).

Students Transferring With an IEP or Section 504 Plan

Families enrolling a student who has an existing IEP, Section 504 plan, evaluation, behavioral support plan, health plan, or related educational record should provide the records to MCPM as early as possible.

MCPM will request relevant records from the previous school and will provide services consistent with applicable transfer requirements while the appropriate team reviews the student's needs and determines next steps.

A family's delay in providing records does not eliminate the student's rights. However, prompt disclosure allows MCPM to prepare staff, arrange services, obtain necessary materials, and support a safe and successful transition.

Outside Evaluations and Private Providers

Families may obtain private evaluations, therapies, tutoring, counseling, medical services, or other outside support for their student. MCPM will consider relevant information provided by a family, including a private evaluation, when making educational decisions. The school is not required to accept every recommendation made by an outside provider.

Eligibility, accommodations, special education services, related services, and educational placement are determined through the applicable MCPM team process and legal requirements.

Outside providers do not have an automatic right to observe students, provide services, or participate in school activities during the school day. Requests for an outside provider to observe or work with a student at school must be submitted to the Student Support Director.

MCPM will consider:

- The purpose of the request
- Parent or guardian consent
- The student's educational needs
- The confidentiality and rights of other students
- Safety and supervision
- Potential disruption to instruction
- Space, scheduling, and staff capacity
- Requirements of the student's IEP, Section 504 plan, or applicable law

MCPM may require an outside provider to complete confidentiality agreements, background checks, visitor requirements, and other reasonable conditions before entering the school or accessing student information.

Private services do not replace MCPM's obligation to provide services required by an IEP, Section 504 plan, or applicable law.

Support for Advanced Learners

MCPM recognizes that some students demonstrate advanced academic readiness, rapid mastery, intense interest, or a need for learning experiences beyond typical grade-level expectations.

Montessori instruction supports advanced learners through individualized lesson progression, mixed-age classrooms, student choice, independent study, extended research, leadership opportunities, and access to increasingly complex work.

Guides use classroom performance, observation, assessment information, student interest, and other relevant data to plan appropriate differentiation and enrichment. Support may include:

- Accelerated or advanced lessons within the classroom
- Work from a higher point in the Montessori curriculum sequence
- Independent or collaborative projects
- Enrichment experiences
- Flexible instructional grouping
- Consultation with the Teaching and Learning Coordinator
- Individual academic planning when appropriate

Placement in a mixed-age classroom or access to advanced work does not necessarily change a student's official grade-level assignment. Decisions about grade acceleration or other significant placement changes will be made individually by the Education Director in consultation with the family, Guide, and relevant school personnel.

This section does not create an entitlement to a specific course, program, staff member, or formal gifted designation that MCPM does not offer.

Exceptional Children Policies

- [EC Accountability](#)
- [EC and 504 Testing Accommodations](#)
- [EC Child Find](#)
- [EC Confidentiality](#)
- [EC Contingency Plan](#)
- [EC Discipline](#)
- [EC Full Continuum of Services](#)

- [EC Maintenance of Effort](#)
- [EC Professional Development Plan](#)
- [EC Security of Exceptional Children Records](#)

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Student Rights and Responsibilities

MCPM seeks to maintain a safe, respectful, inclusive, and productive Montessori learning community. Students have the right to be treated with dignity, receive equitable access to education, express concerns appropriately, and receive fair and developmentally appropriate responses when concerns arise.

Students are responsible for:

- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Participating in learning and protecting others' opportunity to learn
- Following reasonable directions from school employees
- Caring for school property and the prepared environment
- Respecting personal and physical boundaries
- Using technology safely and responsibly
- Being honest in academic and interpersonal matters
- Reporting safety concerns to a trusted adult
- Accepting developmentally appropriate responsibility for their choices
- Following this handbook and other board-adopted policies

These expectations apply during the school day, on school property, on school transportation, during field trips and school-sponsored activities, and in other circumstances in which student conduct has a direct and substantial effect on school safety or operations.

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to student learning, classroom community, and the uninterrupted Montessori work cycle. MCPM maintains attendance records and responds to excessive absences and tardiness in

accordance with North Carolina law and applicable State Board of Education requirements.

Families are responsible for ensuring that students attend school every day unless an absence is lawful and necessary. Whenever possible, appointments and family travel should be scheduled outside instructional hours and school days.

Reporting an Absence

A parent or guardian should report a student's absence by emailing attendance@mcpublic.org and the student's Lead Guide. The notice should include:

- The student's name
- The date or dates of the absence
- The reason for the absence
- Any documentation requested by the school

Written documentation should be submitted within three school days after the student returns, when reasonably feasible. Failure to provide sufficient information may result in the absence being recorded as unexcused.

MCPM may request documentation from a healthcare provider or other appropriate source when:

- An illness results in three or more consecutive absences
- Absences are frequent or follow a pattern
- Documentation is necessary to determine whether an absence is lawful
- The school needs information to support the student's safe return
- An accommodation or health plan may be needed

The school will not require documentation in a manner that unlawfully discriminates against a student or creates an unreasonable barrier to attendance.

Lawful Absences

Absences may be considered lawful for reasons recognized by North Carolina law or policy, including:

- Illness or injury that prevents the student from attending
- Quarantine or isolation ordered by an authorized health official
- Death in the immediate family
- Medical, dental, behavioral health, or other healthcare appointments
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Religious observances
- Educational opportunities approved in advance by the Education Director
- Other reasons authorized by law or State Board policy

Educational Opportunities

A family requesting an excused absence for an educational opportunity must submit a [request](#) to the Education Director at least one week in advance, except when unusual circumstances make advance notice impracticable.

The request should explain:

- The educational purpose of the opportunity
- The dates of the proposed absence
- How the experience relates to the student's learning
- Any plan for completing missed work

Approval is not automatic. Family vacations, convenience travel, or recreation will not necessarily qualify as educational opportunities.

Tardiness

Students should arrive by 8:00 a.m. so they can enter the classroom calmly and participate fully in the uninterrupted work cycle.

A student arriving after the beginning of the school day must be signed in according to school procedures. MCPM will track tardiness and may contact the family when tardiness becomes frequent, affects the student's learning, or disrupts the classroom.

Repeated tardiness may result in a family conference and an attendance-support plan. Tardiness will not automatically be converted into an absence except as permitted by applicable student-accounting requirements.

Early Dismissal

Families should schedule appointments outside school hours whenever possible. When early dismissal is necessary, the parent or guardian must follow the school's sign-out and authorized-pickup procedures.

Students should be picked up before 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and before 12:30 p.m. on early-release Fridays. Requests made after these times may be denied because dismissal procedures have begun, except in an emergency.

An early dismissal may be recorded as a tardy or absence according to the amount of instructional time missed and applicable student-accounting requirements.

Compulsory Attendance Intervention

MCPM will provide notices, conduct conferences, and take other actions required by [North Carolina compulsory attendance law](#) when a student accumulates unlawful absences.

The school may also request a family conference for excessive or patterned absences or tardiness, regardless of whether the absences are excused. The purpose of the conference is to:

- Understand barriers to attendance
- Review the student's educational needs
- Identify available school or community support
- Develop an attendance plan
- Explain applicable legal requirements

When required by law, MCPM may refer concerns to the appropriate attendance, child welfare, court, or law-enforcement authority. Before doing so, the school will review whether the parent or guardian has made a good-faith effort to comply with compulsory attendance requirements.

Attendance may be considered when making educational decisions because prolonged absence limits access to instruction. Retention will not be imposed automatically or solely as punishment for absence or tardiness.

Work Missed During an Absence

Students will be given a reasonable opportunity to complete assignments, assessments, or other academic work missed during an absence, consistent with the nature of the learning activity and applicable law.

Families should contact the student's Lead Guide via email when an absence is expected to last two or more days or when the student needs support returning after an extended absence.

Because Montessori learning frequently involves hands-on materials, group lessons, observation, and experiences that cannot be fully recreated at home, a Guide may provide an alternative learning activity rather than the exact work missed.

The Guide will determine a reasonable completion schedule based on:

- The student's age
- The length and reason for the absence
- The amount and type of work missed
- The student's health and individual circumstances
- The need to avoid overwhelming the student upon return
- Requirements of an IEP, Section 504 plan, or other applicable plan

Students serving a suspension will receive access to assignments and instructional materials as required by law and MCPM's discipline procedures.

Parents must call before 8:00 a.m. on the day the homework is needed in order to allow the Guide adequate time to assemble the assignments. Parents may pick up the assignments after 3:15pm on the date requested.

Classroom Interruptions and Student Deliveries

The uninterrupted work cycle is central to MCPM's educational program. Families and visitors should not enter classrooms or attempt to speak with Guides or students during instructional time unless authorized by the school, including at student drop off.

Messages, forgotten items, lunches, medications, and other necessary materials should be delivered to the school office. Staff will provide them to the student when doing so will not unreasonably interrupt instruction.

The school may decline to accept or deliver nonessential items, including restaurant deliveries, gifts, balloons, flowers, and similar personal deliveries.

Families should communicate urgent information through the school office rather than contacting a student through a personal device during the school day. Students are not permitted to use personal cell phones or smart watches during school hours.

Student Technology Acceptable Use

MCPM provides students with access to computers, devices, networks, internet services, applications, accounts, and other technology to support learning and school operations. Access is a privilege accompanied by responsibilities.

School technology, accounts, networks, and data are MCPM property and are intended primarily for educational and school-related purposes. Students must follow staff directions and use technology in a safe, lawful, ethical, and developmentally appropriate manner.

For more information, refer to MCPM's [Technology Responsible Use Policy](#).

Privacy and Monitoring

Students should not expect privacy when using MCPM devices, accounts, networks, internet connections, or other technology resources. To the extent permitted by law, MCPM may monitor, access, review, preserve, restrict, or disclose activity on school technology for safety, instructional, operational, disciplinary, or legal purposes.

Monitoring does not eliminate each student's responsibility to use technology appropriately. MCPM cannot guarantee that every inappropriate or harmful item will be blocked.

Student Responsibilities

Students must:

- Use technology only for authorized educational or school-related purposes
- Follow staff instructions and classroom expectations
- Protect passwords and account credentials
- Log out of accounts or devices when finished
- Use only accounts and devices they are authorized to access
- Protect personal and confidential information
- Respect copyright, licensing, and intellectual-property requirements
- Report lost devices, security concerns, inappropriate content, or suspected misuse promptly
- Return school property when requested and in reasonable condition
- Obtain permission before photographing or recording another person

Prohibited Uses

Students may not:

- Access another person's account, files, messages, or data without authorization
- Share passwords or attempt to obtain another person's password
- Circumvent internet filters, device controls, network restrictions, or security settings
- Install unauthorized software, browser extensions, applications, or virtual private networks
- Introduce malware or attempt to damage, disable, or disrupt technology
- Use technology to bully, threaten, harass, discriminate against, impersonate, or humiliate another person
- Create, access, transmit, or display unlawful, sexually explicit, violent, hateful, or otherwise inappropriate material
- Disclose confidential student, family, or employee information
- Photograph, record, or publish another person without authorization
- Use technology for commercial activity, gambling, illegal activity, or political campaigning unrelated to an authorized instructional activity

- Falsify information or misrepresent the identity of a sender or creator
- Violate academic-integrity expectations
- Use personal or school technology in a way that materially disrupts learning or school operations

Internet Safety

MCPM uses filtering and other safeguards consistent with applicable internet-safety requirements. The school also provides instruction concerning appropriate online behavior, digital citizenship, cyberbullying awareness, information privacy, and interaction with others through digital platforms.

Students who encounter unsafe, threatening, sexually explicit, or otherwise concerning online content should stop engaging with the content and report it promptly to a trusted adult.

School-Issued Devices

Students and families are responsible for reasonable care of school-issued devices, chargers, cases, and accessories. Families should report loss, theft, or damage promptly.

MCPM may seek reimbursement for intentional damage, reckless misuse, or failure to return school property, as permitted by law and board policy. A student will not be denied legally required educational access solely because a family cannot pay for accidental damage.

Consequences

A violation may result in reteaching, restricted technology access, loss of privileges, restorative action, family communication, reimbursement for damage, or disciplinary consequences under the Student Code of Conduct.

MCPM will provide alternative access when technology is necessary for required instruction or when access is required by an IEP, Section 504 plan, or applicable law.

Wireless Communication Devices

For purposes of this policy, a wireless communication device includes a cell phone, smartphone, smartwatch, tablet, laptop, gaming device, two-way radio, paging device, or other portable device capable of voice, messaging, internet, or data communication.

In accordance with [North Carolina General Statute § 115C-76.100](#), students may not use or display a wireless communication device or have the device turned on during instructional time unless an exception below applies. MCPM may establish more restrictive expectations for particular grade levels, locations, assessments, or school activities.

Students who bring a personal device to school must keep it turned off and stored in the location designated by the school or classroom throughout the instructional day. MCPM is not responsible for personal devices that are lost, stolen, or damaged.

The restriction also applies during school-sponsored after-school programs, clubs, field trips, and activities unless the supervising employee expressly authorizes use.

Authorized Exceptions

Wireless Communication Devices are not allowed during instructional time except for the following situations:

- 1) When expressly authorized by a teacher for educational purposes.
 - a. A guide must clearly state the intended educational purpose to students and shall have documentation available to support the use (e.g., lesson plans detailing why devices would be needed).
 - b. The guide shall only allow devices for the duration and purpose allowed.
- 2) When expressly authorized by a guide for use in an emergency.
- 3) When required by the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan;

- 4) As required to manage a student's health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition.
 - a. Students who need wireless communication devices to manage health care must request access from the school and as part of that request, must provide documentation from a licensed medical professional outlining the necessity of access to the device.
 - b. If approved by administration, students with documented medical conditions shall be granted permission to use the wireless communication device only as necessary for their condition.
 - c. The school shall make accommodations as needed to ensure the student has access to their device but without compromising the educational environment.

Authorization is limited to the approved purpose and time. The student must stop using and store the device when directed.

A family requesting access for a health condition should contact the Student Support Director and provide documentation from a licensed healthcare professional when required. MCPM will develop reasonable procedures that provide necessary access without unnecessarily disrupting instruction.

Prohibited Conduct

Students may not use a personal device to:

- Photograph, record, or livestream another person without authorization
- Access social media or personal messaging during prohibited times
- Bully, threaten, harass, impersonate, or humiliate another person
- Access or distribute inappropriate content
- Compromise testing security
- Contact individuals in a way that interferes with school response to an emergency
- Engage in conduct prohibited by the Technology Acceptable Use Policy or Student Code of Conduct

Consequences

First Offense

Unauthorized devices 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.

Further Offenses

A parent/guardian will be required to come to school to retrieve the phone or device.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Student Code of Conduct

MCPM's approach to student behavior is grounded in Montessori principles, respectful relationships, restoration, explicit teaching, and reconnection to the learning community. The school will respond to behavior in a manner that considers student development, individual circumstances, safety, equity, and the effect of the conduct on others.

MCPM's Student Code of Conduct establishes developmentally appropriate expectations for student behavior and explains how the school responds when behavior interferes with safety, learning, relationships, or the prepared environment.

The Code is grounded in MCPM's commitments to:

- Respect for self, others, and the environment
- Belonging, inclusion, and equity
- Developmentally appropriate independence and responsibility
- Clear and predictable expectations
- Support, intervention, and skill development
- Accountability and repair of harm
- Protection of physical and emotional safety
- Reconnection to learning and community

The Code identifies four levels of behavioral concern and response:

1. Classroom-managed concerns
2. Concerns requiring coordinated intervention and support
3. Serious concerns requiring administrative or safety response
4. Most serious conduct potentially authorizing extended disciplinary action

The level of response is determined by the conduct's seriousness, impact, context, and relevant individual circumstances. Repeated behavior may result in a more intensive response, but it does not automatically require suspension or movement to a higher level.

The complete Student Code of Conduct appears in Appendix A and is incorporated into this handbook. It includes behavior definitions, ranges of responses, due-process requirements, suspension procedures, protections for students with disabilities, and procedures governing charter-school exclusion.

Scope

The Code applies:

- On school property
- During school transportation
- At school-sponsored activities and field trips
- Through school technology or accounts
- When a student is otherwise under school supervision
- To off-campus or online conduct when there is a sufficient connection to school and the conduct causes or is reasonably likely to cause a substantial disruption, threatens safety, or infringes on the rights of members of the school community

Prohibited Conduct

Students may not engage in conduct that threatens safety, interferes with learning or school operations, harms another person, damages the prepared environment, or violates applicable law or MCPM policy.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Repeated or substantial disruption of instruction or school activities
- Willful refusal to follow reasonable directions related to safety, instruction, or school operations
- Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation
- Threatening, intimidating, or intentionally demeaning conduct
- Fighting, assault, unwanted physical contact, or other physical aggression
- Threatening harm to another person; encouraging another person to harm themselves; or engaging in conduct that creates a substantial safety risk. Expressions or acts of self-harm will ordinarily be addressed through safety and mental-health procedures rather than discipline unless separate misconduct has occurred.
- Sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, indecent exposure, or other prohibited sexual conduct
- Possession, use, or distribution of firearms, weapons, dangerous objects, explosives, or realistic look-alike weapons
- Possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, unauthorized medication, tobacco, nicotine, or vaping products
- Theft, extortion, coercion, or possession of stolen property
- Intentional or reckless damage to school or personal property
- Arson, false alarms, bomb threats, or interference with emergency or safety equipment
- Leaving school property or an assigned area without permission
- Trespassing or entering an unauthorized area
- Academic dishonesty, including unauthorized use of artificial intelligence
- Misuse of technology, school accounts, networks, or electronic devices
- Unauthorized photography, recording, livestreaming, or distribution of recordings
- Possession or distribution of sexually explicit or otherwise prohibited material
- Violation of another person's privacy or confidentiality
- Falsification of school records, signatures, or materially important information
- Gang-related activity

- Retaliation against a person who reports a concern or participates in an investigation
- Other unlawful conduct or serious violations of this handbook, the Student Code of Conduct, or board-adopted policy

Individualized and Equitable Responses

MCPM does not impose consequences solely by matching a behavior to a predetermined number of suspension days, except when a particular response is required by law.

Before determining a response, MCPM may consider:

- The student's age and developmental level
- The nature and seriousness of the conduct
- Actual or reasonably threatened harm
- The student's intent, understanding, and role
- Prior behavior and interventions
- Efforts to disengage, seek help, accept responsibility, or repair harm
- Relevant disability, health, language, cultural, or trauma-related considerations
- Whether appropriate supports were available and implemented
- The effect on the learning environment
- The need to protect students and employees
- Other mitigating or aggravating circumstances

MCPM will administer the Code without unlawful discrimination. A student will not receive a more serious response because the student or family advocated for the student, raised a concern, participated in a complaint process, or exercised a legally protected right.

School Responses to Student Behavior

MCPM recognizes that students are developing self-regulation, communication, executive-function, judgment, and conflict-resolution skills. The school will explicitly teach behavioral expectations and provide developmentally appropriate opportunities to practice them.

MCPM uses a continuum of responses so that students, families, and employees have clear guidance concerning ordinary classroom behavior, repeated concerns, serious misconduct, and conduct requiring suspension or another formal disciplinary response.

Depending on the circumstances, responses may include:

- Redirection and reteaching
- A temporary change in work location
- A regulation break
- Student reflection
- Problem-solving or conflict-resolution support
- Repair or restoration of the environment
- Family communication
- A student-family-school conference
- Targeted behavioral or social-emotional instruction
- Increased structure or supervision
- Check-in and check-out support
- MTSS review
- A behavior support or safety plan
- Temporary loss of a related privilege
- Removal from an activity
- In-school disciplinary assignment
- Short-term suspension
- Recommendation for long-term suspension
- Charter-school exclusion when authorized by MCPM's charter and imposed after due process
- Expulsion when authorized by law
- Other lawful and developmentally appropriate responses

Restorative practices may be used when appropriate, but no student who has experienced harm will be required to meet with, forgive, accept an apology from, or interact directly with the person who caused the harm.

A specific number of referrals does not automatically result in a particular consequence, suspension, disability referral, or movement to a higher response level. Continued behavior will prompt a review of the conduct, prior

interventions, student needs, safety, and the effectiveness of the current response.

Nothing in this section prevents MCPM from responding immediately to conduct involving violence, serious threats, weapons, drugs, sexual misconduct, severe harassment, or another significant safety concern.

Classroom-Managed and Office-Managed Behavior

MCPM uses two behavior-response pathways in Educator's Handbook: classroom-managed minor incidents and office referrals for major incidents. This structure supports prompt intervention, consistent documentation, appropriate administrative review, and accurate state reporting.

The pathway used depends on the nature and severity of the conduct, the degree of actual or potential harm, the student's developmental level, the surrounding circumstances, whether the behavior is repeated after appropriate intervention, and whether immediate administrative involvement is necessary. The same general type of behavior may be classroom-managed in one circumstance and require an office referral in another.

Classroom-Managed Minor Incidents

Minor incidents are behaviors that can ordinarily be addressed safely and effectively by the adult responsible for the learning environment. Examples may include:

- Off-task behavior;
- Calling out or interrupting;
- Work refusal or incomplete work;
- Classroom disruption;
- Disrespectful or hurtful language;
- Nonviolent peer conflict;
- Misuse of Montessori materials;
- Leaving the environment in disorder;
- Difficulty following routines or transitioning;
- Minor technology or mobile-phone violations;
- Minor academic dishonesty;

- Possession of an inappropriate but non-dangerous item; and
- Other developmentally typical behavioral concerns.

The adult who witnesses or addresses a minor incident will ensure immediate safety, provide a logical and developmentally appropriate response, and document the incident and response in Educator's Handbook when documentation is warranted.

Classroom responses may include connection and redirection, reteaching, practicing an expectation or routine, a regulation or movement break, a temporary change in work location, reflection, problem-solving, conflict resolution, restoration of the environment, family communication, or another response directly related to the behavior.

A classroom-managed minor incident does not result in out-of-school suspension. Repeated minor incidents do not automatically become office referrals or result in suspension. When a pattern continues, staff will review the student's needs, prior interventions, environmental or instructional factors, family input, and whether additional classroom, behavioral, MTSS, disability-related, or administrative support is appropriate.

Office Referrals for Major Incidents

An office referral is used when conduct:

- Is serious or substantially disruptive;
- Causes or creates a significant risk of physical or emotional harm;
- Requires an administrative investigation;
- May warrant removal from an activity or educational setting;
- May warrant suspension or another formal disciplinary response;
- Triggers a specialized safety, bullying, Title IX, threat-assessment, or mandatory-reporting procedure; or
- Must be documented for state disciplinary reporting.

Examples may include serious physical aggression or fighting, credible threats, bullying or cyberbullying, severe or discriminatory harassment, retaliation, sexual misconduct, possession of a weapon or dangerous object, drugs or alcohol, arson or fire-related conduct, significant theft or property

damage, dangerous elopement, and other conduct presenting a substantial safety or operational concern.

The adult who witnesses or addresses the incident will take immediate steps to protect safety and enter an objective description of the incident in Educator's Handbook. The Student Support Director or Education Director will review the referral, investigate as necessary, determine whether the reported conduct occurred, communicate with the student and family, and assign or approve the administrative response.

Only the Student Support Director, Education Director, or an authorized administrative designee may assign an out-of-school suspension.

An office referral does not automatically result in suspension. Educator's Handbook incident categories support documentation and state reporting, but they do not determine the consequence. The School will consider the individual circumstances and the response factors described in this Code before assigning a formal consequence.

Refer to the Student Code of Conduct (Appendix A) for more information.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Family and School Communication

Strong relationships between families and the School are essential to student success. Mountain City Public Montessori is committed to timely, respectful, accessible, and collaborative communication with families.

MCPM communicates through email, School and classroom newsletters, Transparent Classroom, the School website, family meetings, conferences, and other approved communication systems. Social media may be used for general announcements but should not be used to communicate confidential student information, resolve individual concerns, or submit formal grievances.

Families are encouraged to communicate directly with the staff member closest to the question or concern. Whenever possible, questions should be directed as follows:

- Questions about classroom learning, assignments, routines, or classroom experiences should begin with the student's Guide.
- Questions about curriculum, instruction, or general education should be directed to the Education Director when classroom communication has not resolved the concern.
- Questions about exceptional children's services, Section 504, student support, behavior, discipline, or social-emotional support should be directed to the Student Support Director.
- Questions about enrollment, transportation, facilities, finance, or general operations should be directed to the Operations and Finance Director.
- Questions concerning a Director should be directed to the Board Executive Committee.

Employees will make reasonable efforts to acknowledge family communications promptly. Complex concerns may require additional time to investigate or coordinate a complete response.

MCPM will provide interpretation, translation, accessible formats, or other communication assistance when reasonably available and needed for families to participate meaningfully.

Partnership in Student Learning

Families have the right to be informed about and involved in their student's educational experience. MCPM will provide families with information about student progress, learning expectations, attendance, assessment, available supports, and significant concerns affecting the student.

Families are encouraged to:

- Maintain regular communication with the student's Guide;
- Review School and classroom communications;
- Attend conferences and family-education opportunities;

- Share information that may help the School understand and support the student;
- Ask questions about instructional practices, progress, and available services;
- Participate in problem-solving when academic, behavioral, attendance, or wellbeing concerns arise; and
- Address concerns directly and respectfully through the appropriate communication or grievance process.

Family participation is welcomed and valued. A student's access to MCPM, educational program, services, activities, or opportunities will not depend on a family's ability to volunteer, contribute financially, attend events, or provide services to the School.

See MCPM's [Parental Participation Policy](#), [Parental Requests for Information Policy](#), and [Parents' Guide to Student Achievement](#) for additional information.

School-Family Organization

All families are invited to participate in the School-Family Organization. The organization supports family engagement, volunteer coordination, fundraising, family-education opportunities, community partnerships, and events that strengthen relationships among students, families, employees, and the School.

Participation is voluntary and open to parents and legal guardians of currently enrolled students and current MCPM employees, subject to the organization's established procedures.

The School-Family Organization does not supervise employees, determine student discipline, make educational decisions for individual students, or have access to confidential student, family, or personnel information. The SFO does report to and collaborate with the School's Community and Culture Committee.

Family Education Opportunities

Because Montessori philosophy, curriculum, and classroom practices may be new to many families, MCPM provides family-education opportunities

throughout the year. These opportunities may include Family Education Nights, classroom presentations, curriculum demonstrations, workshops, written resources, or conversations with Guides and other staff members.

Family-education opportunities may address:

- Montessori philosophy and child development;
- Classroom materials and curriculum;
- Independence, responsibility, and executive-function development;
- Student assessment and progress;
- Social-emotional development and behavior expectations;
- Supporting learning and independence at home; and
- School policies, programs, and student-support services.

For more information about the curriculum and learning materials, please see the [Policy on Curriculum, Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, and Library Materials](#), as required by [SB 49](#).

Service to the School

Service to the community is an important aspect of Montessori education. MCPM welcomes family participation in classroom activities, events, committees, fundraising, facilities projects, community partnerships, and other School needs.

Volunteer opportunities will be communicated throughout the year. Volunteers must follow School procedures concerning approval, supervision, safety, confidentiality, student boundaries, and background checks when applicable.

Family service is encouraged but not required. Students and families will not be penalized or denied opportunities because a family is unable to volunteer or contribute financially.

Family Involvement and 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 **Guide** in the welcome letter sent to parents and students at the start of school.
- Families have the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the education of their child by initiating conversation with the child's **Guide**.
- Families will receive regular updates via Transparent Classroom, school newsletters, and classroom communication.
- 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.
- [Parental Requests for Information Policy](#)
- [Parents' Guide to Student Achievement](#)

Family-Teacher Conferences

Family-teacher conferences are conducted face -to -face twice each school year in October and March. 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, the Guides review the student's progress and discuss their 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.

Students, as partners in their own learning, will be a part of conferences starting in Upper Elementary, and grow to leading conferences in the Adolescent classroom.

Family Grievance Policy

Purpose

MCPM is committed to fostering collaboration, mutual trust, dignity, and respect. The School recognizes that disagreements and concerns may arise and believes they are best addressed through timely, respectful, accessible, and equitable processes.

MCPM seeks to resolve concerns informally and collaboratively whenever possible. When informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, a parent, guardian, or student may use the formal grievance process described below.

Definition of a Grievance

A grievance is a significant concern, dissatisfaction, or sense of injustice raised by a parent, guardian, or student regarding a School decision, action, condition, or practice.

A formal grievance must identify:

- The person, action, decision, or condition at issue;
- The relevant incident or circumstances, including dates and approximate times when known;
- Any policy, procedure, regulation, or law believed to have been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated;
- Steps already taken to resolve the concern; and
- The specific resolution requested.

Scope and Relationship to Other Procedures

This grievance process applies to family concerns that are not governed by another MCPM policy or legally required complaint procedure.

A concern may be redirected when it involves:

- Student discipline or an appeal provided by the Student Code of Conduct;

- Bullying, harassment, or retaliation;
- Title IX or sex discrimination;
- Disability discrimination or a Section 504 complaint;
- Exceptional children's identification, evaluation, placement, services, or due process;
- Student records;
- Employee grievances or other internal employment matters;
- Admissions or enrollment;
- A public-records request;
- A concern for which state or federal law establishes a separate process; or
- An immediate safety or mandatory-reporting matter.

The appropriate Director will determine which procedure applies. If the concern involves a Director, the Board Executive Committee will make that determination.

Personnel decisions, employee evaluations, student discipline involving another student, and other confidential matters may be reviewed through the grievance process, but the family filing the grievance may not be entitled to receive confidential details about the resulting action.

Guiding Principles

The grievance process will be administered according to the following principles:

- **Informal resolution:** Concerns should ordinarily begin with the person closest to the issue.
- **Direct communication:** Concerns should be addressed with the appropriate person rather than through rumor, public discussion, or triangulation.
- **Timeliness:** Concerns should be raised promptly, ideally within 15 calendar days.
- **Equitable access:** Translation, interpretation, disability access, and reasonable assistance with written submissions will be provided when needed and reasonably available.
- **Impartiality:** A person with a material conflict of interest will not facilitate, investigate, or decide the grievance.
- **Documentation:** Formal grievances and outcomes will be documented in a confidential Family Grievance Log.
- **Confidentiality:** Information will be shared only as permitted by law

and as reasonably necessary to review and resolve the concern.

- **No retaliation:** MCPM prohibits retaliation against a student, family member, employee, or other person for raising a concern in good faith or participating in the grievance process.

Stage 0: Informal Resolution

Whenever appropriate, the parent or guardian should first discuss the concern directly with the employee involved.

If direct communication is uncomfortable, inappropriate, or unsuccessful, the family may request assistance from the Director responsible for the subject of the concern:

- Education Director for instructional or general education concerns;
- Student Support Director for exceptional children, Section 504, behavior, discipline, or student-support concerns; or
- Operations and Finance Director for operational, enrollment, transportation, facilities, or financial concerns.

The Director may facilitate a conversation, clarify expectations, identify applicable policies, or assist the parties in developing an agreed resolution.

The Director will maintain a brief record identifying the concern, steps attempted, agreed outcome, and any follow-up timeline. If the concern is resolved, no formal grievance is necessary.

Informal resolution is not required when the concern involves alleged discrimination, harassment, retaliation, serious misconduct, immediate safety, mandatory reporting, or another matter for which direct discussion would be inappropriate.

Stage 1: Written Grievance and Initial Resolution

If the concern is not resolved informally, the parent or guardian may submit a written grievance using MCPM's Family Grievance Form.

The grievance should ordinarily be submitted within 15 calendar days of the incident or conclusion of the informal-resolution effort. A grievance will not automatically be rejected because of a missed deadline when there is good cause for the delay or when review is otherwise required by law or policy.

The appropriate Director will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the grievance;
2. Determine whether this or another complaint procedure applies;
3. Review relevant information;
4. Meet with the family and other appropriate individuals within 10 calendar days when reasonably practicable; and
5. Provide a written summary of the outcome within five calendar days after the meeting.

The written response will describe the concern reviewed, applicable policy or procedure, conclusions, and any corrective or follow-up action that may lawfully be disclosed.

Stage 2: Administrative Review

If the family remains dissatisfied, the family may request Administrative Review in writing within five calendar days after receiving the Stage 1 response.

The review will be conducted by a Director who did not make the original decision whenever practicable. The reviewing Director may:

- Review documents and other relevant information;
- Meet separately or jointly with involved individuals;
- Request additional information;
- Facilitate further problem-solving;
- Affirm or modify the prior response; or
- Issue an administrative directive within the Director's authority.

The reviewing Director will ordinarily provide a written decision within 10 calendar days after receiving the review request. If additional time is necessary, the family will be notified of the reason and anticipated response date.

Stage 3: Mediated Resolution

If the grievance remains unresolved, the family may request mediated resolution within five calendar days after receiving the Stage 2 decision.

At least two neutral members of the Advisory Council may facilitate the mediation when:

- The members have no conflict of interest;
- The matter is appropriate for mediation;

- The parties agree to participate; and
- Participation will not require disclosure of protected student or personnel information.

When the Advisory Council cannot appropriately serve, MCPM may designate another neutral facilitator.

Mediation is intended to support communication and voluntary resolution. It does not authorize the mediator to override a lawful administrative, personnel, special-education, Section 504, Title IX, safety, or Board decision.

A written summary of any agreement or conclusion will ordinarily be provided within seven calendar days after mediation.

Stage 4: Board Review

If mediation does not resolve the concern, the family may submit a written request for Board review to **board@mountaincitypublic.org** within five calendar days after receiving the Stage 3 summary.

A grievance concerning a Director may proceed directly to the Board Executive Committee without completing the earlier stages when appropriate.

Board review is limited to determining whether:

- The applicable procedure was followed;
- The decision was supported by the information considered;
- MCPM acted consistently with applicable law and policy;
- A material conflict of interest affected the process; or
- Corrective action or reconsideration is warranted.

The Board or Executive Committee may:

- Affirm the prior decision;
- Remand the grievance for additional review;
- Direct corrective action within the Board's authority; or
- Refer the matter to another procedure required by law or policy.

The Board will protect confidential student and personnel information and may conduct portions of its review in closed session when permitted by North Carolina law.

A written decision will ordinarily be issued within 10 calendar days after the

Board completes its review. The Board's decision is final unless another appeal or complaint right is provided by law.

Special Routing

- A grievance concerning a Director should be submitted to the Board Executive Committee.
- A grievance concerning the Board Chair should be submitted to the Board Vice Chair.
- A grievance concerning another Board member should be submitted to the Board Chair.
- A grievance concerning the Board as a whole or an official Board decision should be submitted to the Board Chair and will be addressed through the procedure applicable to Board action.
- The Advisory Council and Leadership Team will not review confidential personnel or student matters unless specifically authorized and legally appropriate.

Recordkeeping and Annual Review

The Directors will maintain a confidential Family Grievance Log identifying:

- The general nature of the concern;
- The applicable grievance stage;
- Dates and timelines;
- Individuals responsible for the response;
- Actions taken; and
- The outcome.

Grievance records will be maintained separately from student education records unless a record directly relates to an individual student and is required to be maintained as part of that student's record.

The Directors will periodically provide the Advisory Council and Board with aggregate or anonymized information about grievance patterns, response timelines, and opportunities for systemic improvement. Confidential student, family, and personnel information will not be included.

GENERAL SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Student Health and Illness

MCPM is committed to maintaining a healthy learning environment. Families should keep students home when illness prevents meaningful participation in the school day, requires a level of care the School cannot reasonably provide, or presents a risk of spreading a communicable illness.

When a Student Should Stay Home

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.

A student should remain home when the student:

- Has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher;
- Has experienced vomiting or diarrhea that is not attributable to a known, noninfectious medical condition;
- Has symptoms of a communicable illness for which exclusion is required or recommended by a healthcare provider, the local health department, or the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services;
- Has an unexplained rash accompanied by fever, behavior change, pain, drainage, or other signs of illness;
- Has respiratory symptoms that are severe, worsening, or prevent the student from participating comfortably;
- Is unable to participate in regular School activities; or
- Requires care or monitoring beyond what School personnel can safely provide.

A student will not be excluded solely because of a chronic or disability-related symptom addressed by an IEP, Section 504 Plan, Individual Health Plan, or other approved medical documentation.

Returning to School

Unless different instructions are provided by a healthcare provider or public-health authority, a student may ordinarily return when:

- The student has been free of fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication;
- At least 24 hours have passed since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea;
- Symptoms are improving;
- The student can participate in the regular school day; and
- Any applicable communicable-disease exclusion period has ended.

MCPM may request medical documentation when necessary to determine whether a student may safely return, when symptoms are prolonged or recurring, or when required by public-health guidance. The School will not require documentation in a manner that unlawfully discriminates against a student with a disability or creates an unnecessary barrier to attendance.

Families should refer to MCPM's [Health](#) and [Communicable Disease](#) Policies for additional information.

Illness or Injury During the School Day

Employees will remain attentive to changes in a student's health, behavior, or appearance. Signs that may require assessment include:

- Fever or chills;
- Vomiting or diarrhea;
- Significant pain;
- Unusual fatigue or behavior change;
- Difficulty breathing;
- Eye drainage;
- A concerning rash;
- A significant injury; or
- Other symptoms suggesting that the student cannot safely or comfortably remain at School.

When a student becomes ill or injured:

1. Staff will assess immediate needs and provide first aid or emergency assistance within the scope of their training.
2. The student may be moved to a supervised location away from the classroom.
3. The School will contact a parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact when pickup, medical care, or additional family direction is needed.
4. Emergency medical services will be contacted when warranted.
5. The School will document significant illness, injury, and family communication as required.

Families must maintain current emergency-contact information and make arrangements for prompt pickup when the School determines that a student cannot remain safely at School.

Please refer to the [Student Health Policies](#) for more information.

Medication and Health Plans

Medication may be administered or self-carried only in accordance with MCPM's Medication Administration Policy and applicable law. Families should contact the School regarding prescription medication, emergency medication, allergies, chronic health conditions, or other needs that may require an Individual Health Plan, Section 504 Plan, or emergency action plan.

Students may not possess, share, or use medication outside the School's approved procedures.

Reporting Student Absences

Families should notify MCPM whenever a student will be absent.

Absences should be reported by emailing attendance@mcpublic.org as early as possible. Families may also notify the student's Lead Guide, but notice to the Guide does not replace notice to the attendance office.

The message should include:

- The student's name;

- The date or anticipated dates of absence;
- The general reason for the absence; and
- Any request for make-up work or additional support.

Families should provide documentation required by MCPM's Attendance Policy. Planned educational absences must receive advance approval when required by that policy.

Students will be allowed to make up work following excused absences and suspensions as provided by law and School policy.

Transportation and Car Line

Bus Transportation

Mountain City Public Montessori offers free school bus transportation to any student with an *essential transportation need* who lives within the Asheville City School district limits. Current routes, eligibility, stops, schedules, and application deadlines will be communicated annually. 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.

Transportation changes need to be sent to transportation@mcppublic.org by noon on the day of the change.

Car Line

Car Line opens at 7:45 am each morning (families may queue up at 7:40 am) and at 2:45 pm each afternoon (12:45 pm on Fridays). Please show grace and courtesy for neighboring businesses, through-traffic, guests of CUMC, one another, and the MCPM staff. While waiting in line, please pull as far to the right side of the street as possible to allow room for through-traffic.

For younger students, ensure that they have time to practice buckling themselves into their seats prior to the beginning of the school year, so they are able to independently do so in the car line. If your child needs help

buckling please pull to a parking space on the left to assist your child and ensure that the car line moves quickly and efficiently.

Parents, guardians, and other drivers are responsible for ensuring that each child is transported in a legally appropriate seat belt, booster seat, or child-safety restraint. Under current North Carolina law, children under age eight who weigh less than 80 pounds generally must be secured in an appropriate child-passenger restraint system. [North Carolina Department of Transportation](#)

MCPM employees will not enter vehicles to buckle students. If a student needs help, the driver may be directed to park in a parking space on the left of the street, so the adult responsible for the vehicle can assist without delaying the car line.

MCPM may decline to place a student in a vehicle when employees reasonably believe that the available restraint is unsafe or legally inadequate. The driver will be asked to park and make safe arrangements before the student is released.

Families must follow posted traffic patterns, staff directions, arrival and dismissal times, and restrictions on queuing or blocking neighboring streets and properties.

Walk Up

For families who prefer to walk their child(ren) to the front door, please park temporarily on Aston Street or walk your bike from the sidewalk to the front of the school. Parking on Aston Street for more than a few minutes may result in a city parking fine. The school staff in the parking lot are ensuring the safety and efficiency of the car line, so please keep your interactions brief to allow them to keep all students safe.

Lunch

MCPM works with approved providers to make school lunch available to students. Lunch will be provided without charge or at a reduced price to students who qualify under the applicable meal program. Families are encouraged to complete the household meal-benefit application at the

beginning of each school year and whenever household circumstances change.

Families are responsible for meal charges unless the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals or another arrangement has been approved. MCPM will communicate meal balances privately and will not publicly identify, stigmatize, or deny respectful treatment to a student because of an unpaid balance.

Students may bring a packed meal from home. Families should inform the School about food allergies, dietary restrictions related to disability, or other medically necessary meal accommodations. Medical documentation may be required when permitted by law.

Food may not be shared when doing so would violate classroom, allergy, health, or safety procedures.

Structure and Length of the School Day

MCPM's daily schedule is designed to preserve the uninterrupted Montessori work cycle while providing supplemental instruction, social-emotional learning, creative expression, physical activity, meals, and additional instructional opportunities.

The Board adopts the annual School calendar. The Directors establish the daily schedule and may make operational adjustments consistent with the approved calendar, MCPM's charter, instructional requirements, and applicable law.

MCPM's calendar will provide at least the number of instructional days or hours required by [North Carolina law](#). The official calendar will identify instructional days, holidays, workdays, scheduled closures, early-release days, and procedures for making up instructional time when necessary.

Regular School Hours

- Monday through Thursday: 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
- Friday: 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
- Morning drop-off begins at 7:45 a.m.

Students may not be released from a vehicle until an MCPM employee is present to receive them. Families should not queue before the time communicated by the School and must keep entrances, parking spaces, fire lanes, neighboring properties, and public streets accessible.

School hours and arrival or dismissal procedures may be adjusted through the annual calendar or written notice to families.

2026-2027 School Calendar



August						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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30	31					

September						
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27	28	29	30			

October						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November						
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29	30					

December						
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27	28	29	30	31		

January						
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31						

February						
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28						

March						
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28	29	30	31			

April						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

May						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

School hours are 8am to 3pm Monday through Thursday, 8am to 1pm Fridays.

Calendar includes 1042 instructional hours.

Full day weather events (up to 5) will be counted as virtual learning days. Additional full day weather events will be made up on February 12 and / or April 30.

August

August 6-18 - Teacher Work Days
August 19 - First day of School

September

September 4 - Teacher Workday / No school for students
September 7 - Labor Day Holiday

October

October 9 - Teacher Work Day / No school for students
October 12 - Indigenous People's day holiday
October 29-30 - Fall Conferences / No school for students

November

November 11 - Veterans Day holiday
November 25-27 - Thanksgiving break

December

December 21-31 - Winter Break

January

January 1 - Winter Break
January 4 - Optional Teacher Work Day / No school for students
January 18 - Martin Luther King Day Holiday

February

February 12 - Teacher Work Day / No school for students
Inclement Weather make up day (if needed)
February 15 - Presidents' Day holiday

March

March 12 and 15 - spring conferences
March 22-26 - Spring Break
March 29 - Optional Teacher Work Day / No school for students

April

April 30 - Teacher Work day / No school for students
Inclement Weather make up day (if needed)

May

May 28 - Last day of school
May 31 - Memorial Day Holiday

June

June 1 - 4 - Teacher Work Days
June 18 - Juneteenth Holiday (12 month staff)

Emergency Closures and Schedule Changes

MCPM may close, delay opening, dismiss early, or modify operations because of severe weather, facility conditions, utility failure, public-health concerns, transportation conditions, or another emergency.

Families will be notified through the School's designated communication systems. Families are responsible for maintaining current contact information and having an emergency dismissal plan.

When School closes early, students will be released according to the authorized emergency dismissal information on file. Families should not call the School repeatedly during an emergency unless they have information necessary to protect a student's safety.

Visitors

MCPM welcomes approved visitors whose presence supports the educational program and School community. All visitors must:

- Report directly to the front office;
- Present identification when requested;
- Sign in and out;
- Wear a visitor badge;
- Remain in approved areas;
- Follow employee instructions and all School policies;
- Maintain student and personnel confidentiality; and
- Avoid disrupting instruction or School operations.

Visitors may not enter a classroom, meet with a student, or move through the building without authorization. Classroom observations must be scheduled and approved by the Education Director or designee.

MCPM may limit, supervise, or deny access when necessary to protect safety, confidentiality, instruction, student wellbeing, or orderly operations. Parent and guardian access remains subject to applicable law, custody documents, and MCPM policy.

Volunteers

Volunteers serve under the direction of MCPM employees and must complete the School's approval process before beginning an assignment. Depending on the nature of the assignment, approval may include:

- A volunteer application;
- Identity verification;

- A criminal-background check initiated or approved by MCPM;
- A confidentiality agreement;
- Orientation or training;
- Review of student-safety and professional-boundary expectations; and
- Placement on the School's authorized-volunteer list.

A volunteer who may be alone with students, transport students, accompany an overnight trip, or have recurring or substantial student contact must receive the level of screening and approval required by MCPM. Volunteers who wish to volunteer 1:1 with students are required to complete a county and federal level background check from www.clearchecks.com and send the resulting report to info@mcpublic.org.

Classroom visitors are allowed for a limited time and must have the Education Director's permission.

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers must:

- Sign in and out and wear the required identification;
- Follow the directions of employees supervising the activity;
- Maintain appropriate adult-student boundaries;
- Protect all confidential student, family, and personnel information;
- Avoid photographing, recording, or posting information about students unless expressly authorized;
- Avoid using information learned through volunteering for a personal, political, commercial, or social purpose;
- Refrain from administering discipline;
- Refer student behavior concerns to the supervising employee;
- Avoid corporal punishment, humiliation, shaming, threats, or coercion;
- Maintain religious neutrality while acting on behalf of the School;
- Dress and communicate appropriately;
- Avoid possessing or using tobacco, vaping products, alcohol, illegal drugs, or weapons on School property or during School activities; and
- Report safety, abuse, harassment, bullying, or other serious concerns promptly.

The supervising employee remains responsible for students and the activity. Volunteer status may be limited or revoked at any time when the School determines that doing so is in the best interest of safety, confidentiality, students, or School operations.

Classroom visitors and volunteers should enter quietly and avoid interrupting lessons, conferences, or the uninterrupted work cycle. Questions for the Guide should be saved for an appropriate break or scheduled conversation.

Visitors and volunteers may not:

- Redirect or discipline students unless immediate intervention is necessary to prevent harm;
- Discuss another student's learning, behavior, disability, family, or disciplinary information;
- remove a student from the classroom;
- Photograph, record, or post student information without authorization; or
- Use a classroom visit to evaluate, confront, or investigate an employee.

Concerns should be directed privately to the Guide or appropriate Director after the visit.

Field Trips and Volunteer Drivers

Field trips are extensions of the educational program. Students, employees, volunteers, and chaperones remain subject to MCPM policies throughout the activity.

Volunteer drivers must:

- Receive advance approval;
- Hold a valid driver's license;
- Provide current proof of insurance;
- Use a safe and legally compliant vehicle;
- Provide an appropriate seat belt or child-restraint position for every passenger;
- Complete any required background check or driver-record review;
- Follow the approved route and itinerary;
- Avoid unauthorized stops;
- Refrain from using a handheld device while driving;
- Avoid transporting unauthorized passengers;
- Follow all employee instructions; and
- Refrain from possessing or using alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, illegal drugs, or impairing substances.

The driver is responsible for properly securing passengers and complying with traffic and child-passenger safety laws. Students may not be transported in a vehicle or seating position that does not meet safety requirements.

Chaperones must maintain supervision, confidentiality, appropriate boundaries, and communication with the trip leader. Student behavior concerns should be referred to the responsible MCPM employee.

Recognition of Holidays and Cultural Traditions

MCPM may teach about holidays, observances, and cultural traditions as part of an educational program that supports inclusion, historical understanding, cultural literacy, community, and respect.

Holiday-related learning may include literature, music, art, history, cultural studies, classroom discussions, or community activities. Such instruction will be educational rather than devotional and will not promote or disparage a particular religion or nonreligious belief.

In selecting activities, Guides will consider:

- The students and cultures represented in the classroom;
- The broader community;
- Developmental appropriateness;
- Curriculum connections;
- Accuracy and avoidance of stereotypes;
- Inclusion of multiple perspectives; and
- The amount of instructional time devoted to the activity.

Families will be informed of significant celebrations or activities when appropriate. A family with a concern based on a sincerely held religious or cultural belief should contact the Guide or Education Director to discuss an appropriate alternative consistent with law and School policy.

Items Brought from Home

Families should clearly label coats, outerwear, water bottles, lunch containers, and other personal items.

Unclaimed items will be placed in the School's lost-and-found area in the entry foyer. MCPM will make reasonable efforts to reconnect items with their owners. Items remaining unclaimed may be donated or discarded at the end of each quarter after reasonable notice to families.

Students should not bring toys, trading cards, stuffed animals, electronic entertainment devices, or other distracting items unless expressly authorized for an educational purpose, School activity, health need, disability accommodation, or approved support plan.

Unauthorized items may be collected and held for return to the student or family under School procedures. Repeated or serious violations will be addressed under the Student Code of Conduct.

MCPM is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage of unnecessary or unauthorized personal property brought to School. This does not limit responsibility otherwise imposed by law. NOTIFICATIONS

Annual Notice of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") gives parents and eligible students certain rights concerning student education records. These rights transfer from the parent to the student when the student reaches 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution.

Right to Inspect and Review Records

A parent or eligible student has the right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 calendar days after MCPM receives a written request.

The request should be submitted to the Education Director and should identify the records the parent or eligible student wishes to inspect. MCPM will make arrangements for access and provide notice of the time and location at which the records may be reviewed.

MCPM will respond to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of education records. If circumstances effectively prevent a parent or eligible student from inspecting records in person, MCPM will provide copies or make other appropriate arrangements.

MCPM may charge a reasonable fee for copies unless the fee would effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the records. MCPM will not charge a fee to search for or retrieve education records.

Right to Request Amendment

A parent or eligible student may ask MCPM to amend an education record believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

The written request should be submitted to the Education Director and must clearly identify:

- The portion of the record to be amended;
- The requested change; and
- Why the information is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights.

If MCPM decides not to amend the record as requested, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and the right to request a FERPA hearing.

A FERPA amendment hearing addresses whether information in the record is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of privacy rights. It may not be used to challenge a substantive educational judgment, grade, disciplinary decision, or other decision accurately documented in the record.

If the record is not amended after the hearing, the parent or eligible student may place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information or explaining the disagreement. The statement will be maintained and disclosed with the contested portion of the record.

Right to Consent to Disclosure

A parent or eligible student generally has the right to provide written consent before MCPM discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

Written consent must:

- Identify the records that may be disclosed;
- State the purpose of the disclosure; and
- Identify the person or organization to whom disclosure may be made.

FERPA permits disclosure without prior written consent in certain circumstances, including disclosure:

- To School officials with legitimate educational interests;
- To another school or educational institution in which the student seeks, intends, or is already enrolled when the disclosure relates to enrollment or transfer;
- To authorized federal, state, or local officials for audit, evaluation, enforcement, or compliance purposes;
- In connection with financial aid;
- To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of MCPM;
- To accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a lawfully issued subpoena or judicial order after any notice required by FERPA;
- In connection with a health or safety emergency;
- Concerning directory information after the required annual notice and opportunity to opt out; or
- As otherwise permitted by FERPA.

School Officials and Legitimate Educational Interests

For FERPA purposes, a School official may include:

- A member of the Board of Directors;
- A Director, Guide, teacher, instructional assistant, support employee, contractor, consultant, therapist, volunteer, attorney, auditor, healthcare provider, or other person performing an institutional service or function for MCPM; or
- A person serving on an official committee or assisting another School official in performing School responsibilities.

An outside contractor, consultant, volunteer, or service provider will be treated as a School official only when the person:

- Performs a service or function for which MCPM would otherwise use employees;
- Is under MCPM's direct control concerning the use and maintenance of education records; and

- Is subject to FERPA restrictions concerning use and redisclosure.

A School official has a legitimate educational interest when access to an education record is reasonably necessary to fulfill the person's professional, contractual, supervisory, instructional, administrative, safety, support, or legal responsibilities for MCPM.

MCPM will use reasonable methods to ensure that School officials access only records in which they have a legitimate educational interest.

Right to File a FERPA Complaint

A parent or eligible student may file a complaint concerning an alleged FERPA violation with the:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Information about filing a complaint is available through the [U.S. Department of Education's Student Privacy Policy Office](#). Complaints ordinarily must be filed within 180 days of the alleged violation or the date the complainant knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation.

MCPM will provide FERPA notices in a manner reasonably likely to inform families, including families who need translation, interpretation, or disability-related access. [Official FERPA requirements](#)

Directory Information

FERPA permits MCPM to designate certain information as "directory information." Directory information may be disclosed without prior written consent unless a parent or eligible student submits a timely written opt-out request.

MCPM designates the following as directory information:

- Student name;

- Grade level;
- Participation in officially recognized activities;
- Honors and awards received;
- Student work selected for public display; and
- Photographs, video, or audio recordings depicting participation in ordinary School activities, performances, celebrations, publications, or public events, provided the recording is not maintained for disciplinary, security, medical, or other confidential purposes.

MCPM does not designate a student's home address, personal telephone number, personal email address, date of birth, student identification number, disability status, disciplinary record, academic grades, or family information as directory information.

A parent or eligible student who does not want MCPM to disclose some or all directory information must provide written notice to the Education Director within 10 school days after receiving this annual notice or within 10 school days after enrollment, whichever is later.

The opt-out remains in effect until the parent or eligible student withdraws it in writing. MCPM will continue to honor a valid opt-out after a student leaves the School unless it is rescinded.

A directory-information opt-out does not prevent MCPM from:

- Using a student's name or identifier within a class in which the student is enrolled;
- Requiring a student to display an authorized School identification card;
- Sharing information under another FERPA exception; or
- Using student information internally for legitimate educational purposes.

MCPM may request separate permission for promotional, fundraising, news-media, or other uses that extend beyond ordinary School communications.

For more information, refer to MCPM's [Confidentiality and FERPA Policy](#).

Notice of Nondiscrimination and Equal Educational Opportunity

MCPM provides equal educational opportunity and does not unlawfully discriminate in its programs, activities, admissions, or operations.

MCPM prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, disability, age, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable law or School policy.

Questions or complaints should be submitted under MCPM's Nondiscrimination and Equal Educational Opportunity Policy. Reports involving sex discrimination or sexual harassment should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator.

Nothing in this notice prevents a person from filing a complaint with an appropriate state or federal agency.

Title IX Notice

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

MCPM does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, admissions, or employment. MCPM prohibits sexual harassment and retaliation. MCPM's broader policies also prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and other protected characteristics under applicable law and School policy.

MCPM's Title IX Coordinator is:

Maureen Freeman

Education Director and Title IX Coordinator

Mountain City Public Montessori

Phone: (828) 570-5554

Email: maureen.freeman@mcpublic.org

Address: 27 Church Street, Asheville, NC 28801

Any person may report sex discrimination or sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator in person, by telephone, by mail, by email, or through any other method that results in the Coordinator receiving the report. Reports may be made at any time, including outside regular School hours.

Students may also report to any trusted MCPM employee. Employees who receive a report or otherwise have notice of possible sexual harassment must promptly notify the Title IX Coordinator.

MCPM will respond under its Title IX Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedure. Conduct outside the federal Title IX process may still be addressed under MCPM's Nondiscrimination Policy, Student Code of Conduct, bullying policy, employee policies, or other applicable procedures.

The U.S. Department of Education is currently enforcing the 2020 Title IX regulations. [U.S. Department of Education Title IX information](#)

For more information, refer to MCPM's [Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures](#).

Parents' Right to Know Under ESSA

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA"), gives parents of students attending a school receiving applicable Title I funds the right to request certain information about the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers.

A parent may request information concerning:

- Whether the teacher has met applicable state qualification and licensing requirements for the grade levels and subject areas taught;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency, provisional, or other status through which applicable state requirements have been waived;
- The teacher's college major;
- Any graduate degree or certification held by the teacher and the field of discipline; and

- Whether the student receives services from a paraprofessional and, if so, the paraprofessional's qualifications.

MCPM will provide applicable information in a timely manner after receiving a written request. Requests should be directed to the Education Director.

When required by ESSA, MCPM will notify a student's family if the student has been assigned to or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements for the assigned grade level and subject area.

This notice concerns professional qualifications and does not provide access to confidential personnel records, evaluations, employment deliberations, or information protected by law.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment ("PPRA") provides parents and eligible students with rights concerning certain surveys, physical examinations or screenings, instructional materials, and the collection or use of student information for marketing purposes.

Prior Written Consent

MCPM will obtain prior written parental consent before requiring a student to participate in a survey funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education that concerns one or more of the following protected areas:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, including relationships with attorneys, physicians, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine eligibility for a program.

Notice and Opportunity to Opt Out

MCPM will provide reasonable advance notice and an opportunity for a parent to opt the student out of:

- A protected-information survey not requiring prior written consent under the provision above;
- A nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by MCPM or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health or safety of the student, except for screenings permitted or required by law; and
- An activity involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing, selling, or otherwise distributing the information to others for a marketing purpose.

Right to Inspect

Upon request and before administration or use, a parent may inspect:

- A survey created by a third party before it is administered or distributed to students;
- An instrument used to collect personal information from students for marketing or sales purposes; and
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum, subject to applicable procedures and protections.

MCPM will protect student privacy in administering protected surveys and collecting, disclosing, or using personal information.

When a covered activity is scheduled, MCPM will provide notice of the specific or approximate date and explain the applicable consent, inspection, or opt-out procedure.

Questions or requests should be directed to the Education Director.

A parent or eligible student may file a complaint concerning an alleged PPRA violation with the Student Privacy Policy Office using the [U.S. Department of Education's complaint process](#). The Department provides current [PPRA notices and model forms](#).

Child Find Notice

MCPM has an ongoing responsibility to identify, locate, and evaluate children who may have disabilities and may need special education or related services.

Families or others who suspect that a student may have a disability should contact the Student Support Director. A parent may request an evaluation at any time. Participation in MTSS or another intervention process may provide useful information but may not be used to delay or deny an evaluation required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504.

The complete Child Find notice and information about referrals, evaluations, IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and student-support services appear in the Student Support Services and Special Education section of this handbook.

Students Experiencing Homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness have the right to immediate enrollment, educational stability, and assistance under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

A student may qualify when the student lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including when temporarily sharing housing because of loss of housing or economic hardship, living in a motel, hotel, shelter, campground, vehicle, public place, or other setting not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.

Families who may qualify should contact MCPM's McKinney-Vento Liaison: **Molly Sackett, Student Wellbeing Coordinator, 828-570-5554, molly.sackett@mcpublic.org**

Additional rights and the dispute-resolution procedure appear in MCPM's McKinney-Vento Policy.

Asbestos Management Plan

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act requires MCPM to maintain an asbestos management plan and provide annual notice of its availability.

MCPM's Asbestos Management Plan is available for inspection during regular business hours by contacting the Operations and Finance Director. Copies may be provided subject to reasonable copying procedures.

MCPM will provide additional notice of asbestos inspections, response actions, or related activities when required by law.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The official MCPM calendar is adopted and published separately. It identifies instructional days, holidays, employee workdays affecting students, early-release days, scheduled closures, and other important dates.

MCPM may revise the calendar when necessary because of weather, emergencies, instructional requirements, or other operational needs. Families will receive notice of material changes through the School's regular communication systems.

Annually, staff, families, and board members are invited to join the school calendar committee that determines the next academic year's calendar. Watch for the invitation in the school newsletter if you are interested in joining.

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

A FINAL NOTE

Mountain City Public Montessori is more than a place of instruction. It is a community built through relationships, meaningful work, shared responsibility, curiosity, care, and respect for the dignity of every person.

This handbook is intended to help students and families understand MCPM's educational approach, expectations, procedures, supports, and commitments. No handbook can anticipate every circumstance. When questions or situations arise that are not specifically addressed, MCPM will respond in a manner consistent with its mission, Board policies, charter, and applicable law.

The Board of Directors may revise this handbook when necessary to reflect changes in law, policy, School operations, or community needs. Families will be notified of material revisions. If handbook language conflicts with controlling law, MCPM's charter, or an officially adopted Board policy, the controlling authority will apply.

Strong school communities depend on direct communication, mutual trust, appropriate boundaries, and a shared willingness to solve problems. We encourage families to ask questions, share relevant information, participate in School life, and use the communication and grievance processes described in this handbook when concerns arise.

Thank you for entrusting MCPM with the education and care of your child. We value your partnership and look forward to learning, growing, and building our community together.

APPENDIX A: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT