



# Family Information Guide

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# Family Information Guide 2024-2025

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a superior Montessori Program of Study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences.

## Guiding Principles

- To encourage independence and self-reliance
- To honor, respect and value individual differences
- To commit to multi-age, multi-ability and multicultural classroom environments
- To provide safe, prepared environments, filled with developmentally appropriate, tactile materials
- To maintain a highly qualified staff and administration
- To recognize parents' role in our educational process
- To be a resource for our community as a center of Montessori training and awareness

## VISION

MRCS will embody the Montessori philosophy through innovative programming, teaching preparedness and student achievement. In turn, MRCS will cultivate a strong, vibrant and authentic environment by actively engaging with stakeholders in the Greater Erie Community.

## OUR CORE VALUES

Student Centered  
Montessori Philosophy  
Safety and Security  
Respect  
Achievement  
Team/Community Focused

## School Hours

8:30am - 3:00pm  
(Doors will open at 8:00am)

## Student Dismissal

***Important Note:*** *If you are having another adult pick up your child on any day, please make sure that you email [dismissal@mrcserie.org](mailto:dismissal@mrcserie.org) authorizing the pickup. That individual will be required to have a placard with the student's name. If we do not receive authorization, we will ask that the driver come into the front office so that we can contact you. ID will be required by everyone.*

We want you to know that at dismissal, your child's **safety, security and a stress free environment is our highest priority.** At MRCS we make it our business to know the dismissal plans for each and every child, every day. We need your help in fulfilling this goal! **Please take a moment to read over the following** and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at [office@mrcserie.org](mailto:office@mrcserie.org).

We know that sometimes dismissal plans will change. If you must change your end-of-day transportation plans, please talk to your child to prepare him/her for the change before your child leaves for school in the morning. Only parents or legal guardians can request a change of dismissal plan. Then, make us aware of the change by:

1. Sending an email to [dismissal@mrcserie.org](mailto:dismissal@mrcserie.org) (You will receive a confirmation email)
2. Calling the school **before 2:00 pm** at 833-7771, ext. 170 *In the case of family medical or other emergencies, please notify the school office as soon as possible to enable us to support you and your child's dismissal needs.*
3. Please know, we do not permit early dismissals of students **after 2:30pm** due to end of the day routine and heavy bus traffic in the school parking lot at that time.

## Policy Regarding Custody Orders

Montessori Regional Charter School recognizes that families have entered into custody arrangements which are subject to Court Orders. If you have a Custody Order in place, please provide a copy to the school office.

The Charter School expects that families will comply with these Court Orders without the school being asked to act as a referee if disagreements arise. Any disagreements involving custody must be resolved in the appropriate court offices.

Absent a threat of imminent harm to the student, the Charter School will not withhold a child from his/her lawful parent unless the Charter School has documentary proof that the parental rights have been terminated or that there is a protection from abuse order against the parent.

## Carpool

Every family will receive two (2) car placards to be used for any day that you are participating in carpool pickup. This placard should be placed on the driver side dashboard. A placard will be required for a staff member to release your child to you. If you do not have a placard, you will be asked to go to the front office.

Morning: 8:00-8:25 am
Afternoon: 3:00-3:30 pm

**FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM CELL PHONE USE WHILE IN THE CARPOOL LINE.**

**Please take the following into consideration regarding carpool dismissal:**

- Children under 80 lbs. /8 years of age are required by law to have car seats.

- Please restrain family pets so they will not interfere with students being assisted in or out of vehicle

## Bus Transportation

Each local home school district is responsible for transporting students residing in their district to and from Montessori Regional Charter School. Students must live within 10 miles driving distance from the school property. Transportation is provided on days that MRCS is in session, and this includes days when the local school district may be closed.

The local home school district will assign the student bus route and time to and from *one address only*. The address must be within the boundaries of the local home school district.

Please Contact Your Local School District Bus Garage:

1. If the bus is running late
2. If the bus didn't stop or
3. Regarding bus safety

School District Bus Garage	Phone Number
Erie	874-6900
Fairview	474-3171
Ft. LeBoeuf	796-2146
General McLane	273-1033
Girard	774-2100
Harborcreek	899-5681
Iroquois	899-8848
Millcreek	838-1602
Wattsburg	824-4113

Please Contact MRCS:

- If you have moved (and need a bus route change)
- If you would like to start bus service
- If your child will no longer ride the bus

Phone: 814-833-7771 X206

Email: [mreed@mrcserie.org](mailto:mreed@mrcserie.org)

## **Inclement Weather**

Families will be informed of school cancellations through ParentSquare and on the local TV stations after 5:15 am. Look for news about **Montessori Regional Charter School** – we are not associated with any other Montessori school.

### **Weather Related or Emergency Closing Procedure:**

Montessori Regional Charter School services the 14 surrounding districts, and we coordinate with transportation services from 9 of those districts. On any given day, the weather can vary widely across those districts. As the only public regional charter school in the area, MRCS must always make its own decision regarding weather related closings.

### **When there is a SNOW DAY CLOSING:**

We will not automatically follow either the Erie School District or the Millcreek Township School District.

School closings will be communicated through ParentSquare and on the following TV stations, listed as Montessori Regional Charter School. During inclement weather, please begin checking closings and delays after 5:15am.

- Channel WICU 12
- Channel WJET 24
- Channel WSEE 35
- Channel WQLN 54
- Channel FOX 66

### **If there is a SNOW 2-HOUR DELAY:**



We coordinate with other district transportation departments in this instance. This means that buses will pick up students 2 hours later than normal at their regular stops.

Our regular carpool hours will be 2 hours later: 10:00 – 10:25am

Lunch and after school activities will remain on the regular schedule

### **If there is a COLD WEATHER 2-HOUR DELAY:**

When the temperature (with wind chill) is less than -15 degrees, we may place the school on a 2-hour delay.

This means that buses will pick up students 2 hours later than normal at their regular stops.

Our regular carpool hours will be 2 hours later: 10:00 – 10:25am

Lunch and after school activities will remain on the regular schedule.

## **FID Days**

Flexible Instruction Days: The state allows public schools to offer FID Days as an alternative to regular education days in the event of inclement weather or other circumstance that prevents regular instruction. As school may use 5 per year once approved in place of a make up day.

A FID Day allows the school to develop a program for students to participate in a regular academic day while remaining at home. At MRCS we have developed the following plan for students should we need to plan use a FID Day:

**Kindergarten through 4th Grade:** Take home packets with work especially designed by their Unit.

**5 through 8 Grade students:** Will take home packets or chromebooks and utilize the google classroom for lessons designed by their teachers.

More specific information on Flexible Instruction Days can be found on our website.

## Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating and recognizing student birthdays in the classroom. Families who would like to send in a treat may send in a **non-edible item** to be shared with the class. Families are welcome to, but not required to send in a non-edible item.

Some examples of **non-edible** food items include:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- Stickers
- Bookmarks

In our continuing efforts to provide a healthy and safe environment for our students, and in recognition of the increasing number of food allergies and dietary restrictions we have updated our policy. ***MRCs does not allow edible treats/snacks in school for any reason. Any edible treat or snack sent to school will be sent home with your child.***

To avoid hurt feelings, party invitations will be passed out only if there is one for each child in the class. Privacy laws prevent the distribution of student names or home addresses.

Birthday flowers, balloons or gift bags brought or sent to the school will be kept at the office and given to the student at dismissal time.

## **Dress Code**

MRCs does not have a uniform. We ask that parents send students to school dressed neat, clean and comfortable, appropriate clothing for school. Please consider the weather since we will have outdoor recess if it is over 28 degrees (with wind chills factored in) and not raining.

If a student arrives at school wearing inappropriate clothing (t-shirts with unacceptable pictures or words, shirts that do not cover completely, exposed midriffs, shorts or skirts that are not fingertip length or shoes that are unsafe) a parent/guardian will be called to bring in alternate clothing. Students will not be allowed to wear anything provocative or disruptive to the classroom or school procedures. For the safety of all students and staff, no hats (ball cap, winter hat, etc.) or hoods will be permitted to be worn inside the school building. Refusal to comply with removal of hat and hoods will follow the behavior matrix.

GYM CLASS - For safety reasons, students must have the proper footwear to participate in gym class. Shoes with a rubber sole that fit securely on the foot (such as tennis or gym shoes) are best. Boots, flip-flops, slippers and dress flats are not allowed. Participation in gym class is an important life skill. If your child cannot participate in gym on any given day, due to illness or injury, please send in a doctor's note excusing the child from class and indicating the duration of the excuse from class.

## **Food Service Program**

***Food Service Program Information can be found on the school website at [www.mrcserie.org/parents/food-service](http://www.mrcserie.org/parents/food-service)***

## Communication

It is our intent to ensure timely and effective communication of policies, procedures and programs while being respectful of the environment and “green” practices whenever possible. Please help us stay in touch with your family by making sure that we have accurate address and phone information for all parents/guardians. If your child has multiple households, please be sure to inform the office so that we can make sure all parents/guardians are receiving timely school information.

We will communicate with you in several ways:

- **ParentSquare Communication** – School-to-Family communication will be delivered in a timely manner via ParentSquare (email, text and/or app). These notifications are generally sent for information that is more immediate in nature such as reminders of upcoming activities or programs, changes in time or location of various athletic events and **school closures due to weather or emergencies.** Please be sure you keep the office informed of any email or phone number changes.
- **MRCS website** – [www.mrcserie.org](http://www.mrcserie.org). Our website contains the school calendar of events, information on programs, activities and policy information. The office updates the website on a regular basis.

Email us at [office@mrcserie.org](mailto:office@mrcserie.org) and your question/concern will be directed to the correct person. Please allow 2 business days for a response. Thank you.

## Video Surveillance Policy

### Policy & Purpose:

It is the policy of Montessori Regional Charter School ("MRCS") to conduct video surveillance of all or a part of its operation, with or without notice, in order to assure a safe, efficient facility. MRCS may employ video cameras and digital recorders (DVR) on the property for purposes of quality assurance, investigations, student safety, employee safety, deterring crime, and protection of property.

Surveillance cameras will be used in a professional, ethical and legal manner. Their use will avoid unnecessary intrusion upon freedom and individual civil liberties such as privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. The surveillance system shall not be installed in, or used to monitor or record, areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy in accordance with accepted social norms, such as restrooms, locker rooms or similar facilities. Additionally, the surveillance system shall be used in a manner consistent with other policies, including those pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, privacy and freedom of expression.

### Guidelines:

- Video surveillance for the purpose of this policy is defined as continuous observation of a place, person, group, or ongoing activity in order to gather information.
- Video surveillance **will not** include areas identified as private. Private areas include but are not limited to restrooms, locker rooms or similar facilities.
- Only authorized personnel will be permitted access to the cameras and images produced in accordance with applicable law.
- Access will be permitted to:
  - Designated authorized administrative staff or official first responders
  - Solicitor

## Procedure:

- Parents/guardians will be informed of and sign the surveillance notification upon a student's enrollment at MRCS. Parents and students will also be notified of the policy by its placement in the student handbook.
- All staff will be informed of the surveillance upon hire. New hires and current employees will review and sign an acknowledgement of this policy along with other policies found in the employee handbook.
- All visitors will be informed of this policy via facility signage.
- Video surveillance will be accessed for the purposes of gathering information regarding, but not limited to, the following events:
  - Student accusations against staff members
  - Student accusations against each other
  - Student injuries
  - Staff injuries
  - Accidents that occur on the campus
  - Unknown origin of property destruction
  - Vandalism
  - Theft
  - Other illegal access or activity on school premises

## Signage

- Signs will be posted throughout the facility at common surveillance locations.

Signage will contain the following or similar language: **This area may be subject to video surveillance and recording for security/safety purposes.**

## Recorded Information Storage, Retention and Release

- Surveillance images obtained will be stored in a secure location and configured to prevent their unauthorized access, modification, duplication or destruction.
- Surveillance images will be maintained for no longer than 90 days. After an incident, images will be maintained per solicitor recommendations and applicable law.

- All requests for release of surveillance images must be made in writing. Release of surveillance imaging may only be released when authorized by the solicitor, applicable law or court order.
- Videos are exempt from the definition of a "public record" under Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law for one or more of the following reasons: the disclosure of the video would risk the loss of Federal or State funds; the video is a record relating to a non-criminal investigation; or the disclosure of the video increases the risk to the security of MRCS' building or the safety of individuals. MRCS reserves the right to assert further defenses to disclosure of the video as those defenses may be applicable to a particular situation.

## **Metal Detector Policy**

The purpose of the metal detector screening is to prevent and deter students from bringing weapons onto school property. Metal detectors may be used in all school buildings, any related school function or activity, and on a random and periodic basis.

Walk through metal detectors and/or use of hand-held metal detecting wands may be used at certain entrances of the school for security reasons. Signs will be posted to notify students of the required screening for metal as a condition of entering the school. The screenings will be conducted by the staff of Montessori Regional Charter School. Students, staff members and visitors will not be permitted to use personal video or audio recording devices while waiting for screening or in the vicinity of where screening is being conducted.

If a metal detector activates on a student, the student will be asked to remove metal objects from his/her person and walk through again or be scanned by a hand-held metal detecting wand. If the metal detector activates a second time on the student after the removal of other metal, the student will be subjected to a "pat down" search or a further search with a hand-held metal detector under the procedures set forth in the paragraphs below:

1. A "pat down" search conducted by school personnel of the same gender as the student shall be limited to a feeling of the student's outer clothing for the purpose of discovering only items which may have activated the metal detecting device.

2. If the school personnel conducting a “pat down” search feel an object which may have activated the metal detecting device or which feels like a weapon, the student will be asked to remove such object. If the student declines to remove the object, it may then be removed by school personnel.
3. If the object removed from the student could have activated the metal detector, the school personnel must cease performing the “pat down” search. In such an event, a student will be subjected to a search with a hand-held metal detector or will be asked to walk through the walk-through metal detector again. The “pat down” search will be continued only if either metal detecting device again yields a positive reading.
4. Under all circumstances, the “pat down” search will be conducted when at least two school personnel are present.
5. If individuals being screened activate the detector and they refuse to reveal the metal object, the police shall be notified.

School personnel may inspect the contents of any bookbag, bag, knapsack, purse or any other parcel which activates the metal detector for the limited purpose of determining whether a weapon is concealed therein.

All property removed from the student as a result of the above procedure, when may be legitimately brought onto school premises, will be returned to the student.

Property removed from the student, possession of which is in violation of School Policy, shall be confiscated and the student shall be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct including notifying appropriate law enforcement authorities when applicable.

Students who fail to cooperate with school personnel performing their duties under these procedures may be subject to discipline.

Random screenings – Random metal detector screenings are an effective and necessary means of detecting and deterring the possession of weapons and preventing possible student violence from occurring on school property. The Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee may authorize the use of metal detectors for random classroom screenings. These random screenings may be conducted on an entire group or by random selection. Random screenings ensure that no discrimination enters into the selection of the individuals to be screened.



Nothing in the procedures set forth above shall limit the authority of school officials to search a student or their belongings when there is individualized reasonable suspicion to believe that a particular student is in violation of any school rule or regulation or any local, state, or federal law.

## **Searches**

The building principal or his/her designee shall have custody of all combinations to all lockers or locks. School cubbies are not lockable; however, school lockers may have the ability to be locked. Pupils are prohibited from placing locks on any locker without the advance approval of the principal or his/her designee.

The school shall not be liable for theft or loss of personal property on school grounds. Students are discouraged from bringing valuable belongings to school. Valuable belongings may include cash, electronic or digital equipment, clothing attire, jewelry, etc. Should students choose to bring such items to school, they do so at their own risk.

Students shall assume responsibility for maintaining the security of their lockers/cubbies.

Prior to an individual locker/cubby search, the student shall be notified and be given an opportunity to be present. However, when school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that a locker contains materials which pose a threat to the health, welfare or safety of the school population, student lockers/cubbies may be searched without prior warning.

Illegal and prohibited materials seized during a student search may be used as evidence against the student in a school disciplinary proceeding.

Searches conducted by the administration may include but not be limited to utilization of certified drug dogs, metal detection units, or any device used to protect the health, safety and welfare of the school population.

## **Searches of Students and/or the Personal Possessions of Students**

The building principal or designee may search a student or a student's personal possessions (items such as, but not limited to, pockets, wallets, purses, and backpacks) when there is reasonable suspicion that the student is violating Board policy or school rules or poses a threat to the health, safety or welfare of the school population and when it is reasonable to believe that evidence of this violation can be found upon the student him/herself or within the student's personal possessions.

All searches will be conducted in a manner that is reasonably related to the purpose of the search and will not be excessively intrusive in light of the age or gender of the student and the nature of the suspected offense.

Student searches shall be conducted by a school employee of the same gender as the student. A witness of the same gender shall be present as well.

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Policy: Attendance Policy UPDATED August, 2022**

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>As a public school, Montessori Regional Charter School follows Public School Code of 1949 (P.S. §§ 1-101 - §§ 27-2702) which contains the state mandated attendance laws. MRCS strongly believes, and research shows that daily, on time attendance at school is critical to your child's academic, social and emotional success at school.</p> <p>The Montessori program uses "hands on" manipulatives and experiential learning on a daily basis. Therefore, it is difficult to provide homework or make up work for lost classroom time. The Montessori method requires students to be present in the learning environment. Please support your child's education by ensuring that they are at school, on time and prepared, each and every day. If you are having difficulties with attendance, please call the school immediately so that we can work together to find solutions that ensure your child's presence at school and support their academic success.</p>
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**Definitions**

1. Citation: shall mean a non-traffic citation or private criminal complaint.
2. Compulsory School Age: shall mean the period of a child's life from the time a child's parents/guardians elect to have the child enter school which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until reaches seventeen (17) years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school
3. Educational Entity: shall mean a public-school district, charter school, regional charter school, and cyber charter school or area vocational school.
4. Excused Absence: shall mean an absence from school which is permitted under section 1329. It is any absence for one of the reasons set forth below and a parent/guardian sends in a written excuse note within three (3) days:
  1. Illness
  2. Family emergency
  3. Quarantine
  4. Death of a family member
  5. Authorized school activities
  6. Educational family travel with prior approval – Please obtain an Educational Travel form from the office or from the MRCS website.
  7. Religious holidays and religious instruction not to exceed 36 hours per year.
5. Habitually Truant: shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance.
6. Person in parental relation: shall mean a:
  - a. Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
  - b. Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
  - c. Guardian of the person of a child.

d. Person with whom a child lives and who is acting in a parental role of a child.

7. School Attendance Improvement Conference: shall mean a conference where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance, with or without additional services. The following individuals shall be invited to the conference:

- a. The child (if applicable)
- b. The child's person in parental relation.
- c. Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
- d. Appropriate school personnel
- e. Recommended service providers.

8. School Attendance Improvement Plan: shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C.

9. School: shall mean the educational entity in which the child is enrolled.

10. School Days: shall mean the length of time that a child that is subject to compulsory school attendance is expected to be receiving instruction during a calendar day, as determined by the governing body.

Governing Body: shall mean the board of school directors at a school district or any other governing entity of a school.

11. Truant: shall mean having three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a compulsory school aged child.

12. Unexcused Absence: shall mean an absence from school which is not permitted by the provisions in section 1329 and for which an approved explanation has not been submitted within the time period and in the manner prescribed by the governing body. An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

13. Student Assistance Program: The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a team process used to mobilize school

	<p>resources to remove barriers to learning. SAP is designed to assist in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student's success. The primary goal of the Student Assistance Program is to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, advance, and remain in school. (PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS) Interagency Committee <a href="http://www.pnsas.org">www.pnsas.org</a> 7/2019)</p>
<p><b>Delegation of Responsibility</b></p>	<p>The CEO or designee shall notify students, parents/guardians, and staff about Montessori Regional Charter School's attendance policy by publishing such policy in the Family Information Guide, school's website, and other efficient communication methods.</p> <p>The CEO or designee shall be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.</p> <p>The CEO or designee shall develop administrative regulations for the attendance of students which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure the maintenance of attendance records are in accordance with the PA Attendance Laws.</li> <li>2. Create a procedure for the Parent Sponsored Education Trip request form and all excuses relating to student absences.</li> <li>3. Detail the process for written notices, School Attendance Improvement Conferences, School Attendance Improvement Plans, referrals to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, the local children and youth agency if warranted, and citation to the appropriate judge.</li> </ol>

**Guidelines**

Please read the following outline of Pennsylvania law regarding attendance. A complete copy of **Public School Code of 1949 (P.S. §§ 1-101 - §§ 27-2702)** may be found on our website.

All students of compulsory school age who attend Montessori Regional Charter School or alternative educational placement shall be subject to the compulsory attendance requirements. Attendance will be taken each day. (Attendance Policies will apply to all phases and models of instruction).

*Excused/ Lawful Absences*

An Excused absence is any absence for one of the reasons set forth below **and** a parent/legal guardian sends in a written excuse note within three days.

1. Illness
2. Family emergency
3. Quarantine
4. Death of a family member
5. Authorized school activities
6. Parent Sponsored Educational Trip – Please obtain an Educational Travel form from the office or from the MRCS website.
7. Religious holidays observed by bona fide religious groups and religious instruction not to exceed 36 hours per year.

*Excuses from Attending School*

According to Section 1329 of the Public School Code of 1949 a student shall be excused from the requirements of attendance at Montessori Regional Charter School for the following reasons:

1. If a student is dismissed from school during school hours for health-related reasons by a certified school nurse, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse or a school administrator or designee employed by MRCS, the student’s absence from school shall be deemed excused.
2. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a student shall be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.

3. The Department of Education shall provide guidance, resources and strategies for families, schools and students related to students with chronic health conditions which shall be posted on the department's publicly accessible internet website.

*Temporary Excusals*

**Pennsylvania School Code Chapter 11 Student Attendance**

**§ 11.25. Temporary excusals due to illness or other urgent reasons**

1. CEO or designee, upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical or other urgent reasons, excuse a student for nonattendance during a temporary period, but the term "urgent reasons" shall be strictly construed and does not permit irregular attendance. A school district shall adopt rules and procedures governing temporary excusals that may be granted by principals and teachers under this section. Temporary excusals may not exceed 3 months.
2. A school district, area vocational technical school, charter or independent school may provide students temporarily excused under this section with homebound instruction for a period not to exceed 3 months. A school district, area vocational technical school, charter or independent school may request approval from the Department to extend the provision of homebound instruction, which shall be reevaluated every 3 months. When a student receives homebound instruction, the student may be counted for attendance purposes as if in school. A school district shall be reimbursed for homebound instruction provided to a student under section 2510.1 of the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § 25-2510.1).
3. A school district shall adopt policies that describe the instructional services that are available to students who have been excused under this section. The policies must include statements that define the responsibilities of both the district and the student with regard to these instructional services.

*\*See homebound instruction policy\*\**

### **Parent Sponsored Educational Trip**

Montessori Regional Charter School recognizes that there may be educational family travel during the academic year. The parent/legal guardian must complete a written request at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip and submit to the CEO or designee for approval. The CEO or designee shall only approve one (1) educational trip per student per school year. The trip may not exceed ten (10) school days. These absences will count towards the ten (10) parental excused absences as outlined in the PA attendance laws.

The CEO or designee will review the student's records. The Parent Sponsored Educational Trip form can be found on our website or obtained through the school office.

Approval may be denied for reasons such as:

- During the standardized testing window (PSSA)
- Student identified as Truant or Habitually Truant
- Trip planned out of state on PA Quarantine List
- Trip taken without prior approval

Trips that are not pre-approved or are denied approval from the CEO or designee will result in the student's absences on those days being recorded as unexcused absences.

### ***Unexcused/ Unlawful Absences***

An Unexcused absence is any absence that would be considered excused but the school does not receive a note within 3 days, or any absence in excess of 10 days (cumulative for the school year) that is not accompanied by a physician's note.

A maximum of **ten (10)** days of cumulative absences per school year will be considered lawful **if the school receives written parental notification within three days of the absence.**

### **Absence**

If your child is absent please contact the school **by email** to let us know the reason for your child's absence. The email should state:



1. your child's name
2. teacher's name
3. date of absence
4. reason for absence

Phone calls/voicemails do not count as a written excuse for your child.

Truant and Habitually Truant (Reference Act 138 2016)

**Truant**

"Truant" shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When the child is truant, the school will send home information and a parent consent for the Student Assistance Program (SAP), a voluntary service to encourage linkage to supports to reduce possible barriers to attendance, along with notification in writing to the child's parent or legal guardian of the child's violation of compulsory school attendance within 10 school days of the child's third unexcused absence. The notice will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant and an offer to attend a school attendance improvement conference. If the child continues to incur unexcused absences after the school has issued the notice the school will offer by advance written notice a school attendance improvement conference to the child and the parent/ guardian of the child. The conference will occur even if the parent/ guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference. The outcome of the conference will be documented in a written school attendance improvement plan.

**Habitually Truant**

"Habitually truant" shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When a child is habitually truant, the school will:

1. Refer the child to either of the following:
  - A. Student Assistance Program for further information gathering, identifying barriers to attendance, needs of the student/family, and development of a support-based action plan to increase student and family success in relation to

school attendance. Community based programming may be recommended and parents will be assisted with referrals.

B. A Community based attendance improvement program

C. The county children and youth agency for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child under the provisions of 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to juvenile matters).

1. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the child.
2. When referring a habitually truant child to the county children and youth agency or filing a citation with the court because a child has been habitually truant, the school shall provide verification that a school attendance improvement conference was held.

### **Tardy**

If for any reason, a student arrives at school after **8:30 am and before 10:30am** accompanied by an adult, the student will be considered tardy.

A student who arrives after 10:30 am will require a parental note or doctor's note. **This will count towards your ten (10) parental excuses allowed by law.** If no parental note or doctor's note is provided after 10:30am your child will be marked as an unexcused absence for the whole day.

### **Tardy Procedures:**

- If you arrive after 8:30 you will enter through the 8th street gates, park your vehicle in the parking lot and walk your child into the office. For the safety and security of your child, parents must sign their children in after 8:30. We cannot allow students to walk into the school unaccompanied by an adult.
- After your third tardy, you will be asked to stay for a meeting with an administrator.

### **Early Dismissals**

If for any reason, a student leaves school before 1:00pm for an early dismissal, the student must have a parental note or doctor's note. **This will count towards your ten (10) parental excuses allowed by law.** If

no parental note or doctor's note is provided within three (3) days of the early dismissal, your child will be marked as an unexcused absence for the whole day.

**A student must be in school for 4.5 hours a day for the student to be marked present for the full day.**

*Filing a Citation*

Under Section 1333.2 of the Public School Code of 1949 the venue and corresponding judge for the filing of a citation under section 1333.1 shall be based on the location of the school in which the child is enrolled or shall be enrolled except for section 1327.2(b) applies.

The citation will be filed by the CEO or designee.

**Accumulated Absences**

A notice will be sent to your home after a student has incurred 3 or more unexcused absences (Truant) and will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant and an offer to attend a school attendance improvement conference. A notice will also be sent home when the student has 6 unexcused absences (Habitually Truant).

A notice will be sent to your home after a student has incurred seven (7) (excused or unexcused) absences, and when a student reaches 10 excused absences.

Montessori Regional Charter School will report unexcused absences directly to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**Unaccounted Absences (Reference 55 Pa. Code§ 11.24.)**

Students whose names are on the active membership roll, who are at any time in the school term absent from school for 10 consecutive school days, shall thereafter be removed from the active membership roll unless one of the following occurs:

(1) The district has been provided with evidence that absence may be legally excused. (2) Compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued.

	<p><b>Special Needs and Accommodations</b></p>
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If a student with a disability or who may qualify with a disability, is truant or habitually truant, the CEO or designee and the appropriate team will be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with the applicable laws.

## **(Student Assistance Program)**

The MRCS Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a program for students who demonstrate a need for support in academics, attendance, and/or mental health counseling. The MRCS Team is comprised of trained school staff who work alongside parents/guardians to discuss resources and establish a plan to maximize the student's success.

MRCS Teachers and Administrators get to know our students on a personal level and are often at the forefront of discovering their personal challenges- referrals may come from school staff. However, students may also be referred by parents/guardians, or by self or peer referral. If your child has a problem, it is important to remember they are not alone, help is available. Allow the MRCS Care Team to be a part of your child's support system. **If your child needs support please find the Parent Referral link on Parent Square, or contact Caitlin Lovey, 814-833-7771, ext. 152 or [clovey@mrcserie.org](mailto:clovey@mrcserie.org). Paper referrals are available at the Front Office.**

As part of the process, standardized questionnaires will be completed by the building administrator, teachers, nurse and other relevant persons. Parents are asked to complete a form and be a part of the process. Requested data will include information about a student's behavior, academic performance, health, and attendance. The MRCS Team can assist students by connecting them and their families with resources that meet their specific needs. These resources are available through the School Psychologist, Mental Health Therapist, and School Counselor. The Team can also recommend outside resources for more intense needs. Administrators, teachers and the school nurse are also available for support.

## **Code of Conduct**

Montessori Regional Charter School is committed to providing a superior Montessori Program of study that will develop lifelong learners in a safe, respectful environment. MRCS takes a proactive approach to student discipline based on the Montessori philosophy of education. All school discipline is based on improving the whole child and addressing the core reasons for the improper behavior. This process is designed to empower the child, with the ultimate goal of having the child use their skills and talents in a positive and productive manner.

The MRCS Code of Conduct is applicable to students on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, and school-sponsored transportation.

The MRCS School Wide Discipline Matrix procedure will be presented to and discussed with students annually. Teachers will review the Montessori Pride Values with the students and set clear expectations surrounding the Montessori Pride Values.

## **Montessori Pride Values**

Montessori Pride Values were developed by a Montessori team to provide structure to support each classroom in defining their class responsibilities with their students. The four Pride Values are listed below.

- Be Respectful of People and Property
- Move Safely Through the Environments
- Be Ready to Listen and Learn
- Understand, Ask, Do Your Best

The first value is respect for people and property; students are expected to treat the school materials, building, adults and fellow students with respect.

The second value is moving safely through the environment; students should be in control of their bodies, following rules to ensure the safety of themselves, as well as others.

The third value is that all students should be ready and listening to adults in the building to ensure that learning can take place.

The final pride value of understand, ask, and do your best encourages students to take an active role in their learning by asking questions when they don't understand. It also is a reminder that they should always give their best.

## **SPARK**

**Safe**

**Prepared**

**Accountable**

**Respectful**

**Kind**

## Student Responsibilities

Each MRCS student will:

- Understand and utilize Positive Action Curriculum:
  - Self Concept & managing responsibility
  - Respect
  - Trustworthiness
  - Fairness
  - Caring
  - Citizenship
- Use self-control and behavior management techniques
- Use strategies for positively responding to and reporting bullying
- Use Appropriate problem solving techniques inside and outside of the classroom
- Follow the expectations for appropriate student behavior as explained in the MRCS School Wide Discipline Matrix as well as the Montessori Pride Values.
- Follow the consequence process for inappropriate student behavior as explained in the MRCS School Wide Discipline Matrix.

## Parent/ Family Responsibilities

Each parent / family will:

- Provide physical, emotional, and academic support for his/her student
- Explain and discuss The MRCS School Wide Discipline Matrix and behavior expectations and consequences to his/her student
- Instill in his/her student the obligation to demonstrate appropriate behavior and comply with the MRCS School Wide Discipline Matrix
- Fully cooperate with MRCS school personnel whenever support services and/or disciplinary consequences are indicated for his/her student with the understanding that communication will occur via phone call and/or Parent Square
- Understand and utilize the Montessori Pride Values with his/her student

***Due to federal confidentiality laws, schools cannot share with parents/guardians disciplinary consequences given to students other than their own child.***



## **MRCS Staff Responsibilities**

Each staff member at MRCS is committed to implementing The MRCS School Wide Discipline Matrix with fairness, fidelity, and consistency. Each staff member will honor, respect, and value the individual differences of every student. At the same time, problem solving strategies will be taught to empower each student to become independent and self-reliant as they interact appropriately in the school environment.

Each staff member will:

- Maintain a positive learning environment with meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences during the school day.
- Model respectful, positive, appropriate behavior when interacting with students and peers.
- Explain, discuss, and model the difference between inappropriate and appropriate school behavior to the students.
- Support and reinforce the appropriate behavior strategies taught to the students using the Montessori Pride Values
- Be consistent in explaining and enforcing the MRCS School Wide Discipline Matrix to every student.
- Communicate minor infractions to parents/ guardians within 24 hours
- Communication of major infractions will be completed by administrative staff.

Students, Parents, and MRCS staff working cooperatively as partners; will empower our students to choose positive, appropriate behaviors that will result in a safe, productive learning environment with high academic expectations.

## Student Discipline

MRCS takes a proactive approach to facilitating appropriate and positive student behavior, ensuring that every student has access to a safe, meaningful learning environment for in person and online learning. Each behavior will be aligned with our Montessori Pride Values and progress will be reviewed quarterly. Student behaviors are defined as below:

### **Minor Infraction:**

Minor behavior infractions are addressed by a **classroom teacher or teaching assistant** and through classroom management techniques. The student is often redirected so that the behavior does not interfere with student learning or safety. **Please reference the Behavior Matrix for information of consequences.**

### **Major Infraction:**

Major infractions are addressed at the **administrative level**. Administration will communicate with parents/guardians directly. Major infractions result in suspensions, parent conference and/or contact with Law Enforcement. **Please reference the Behavior Matrix for information of consequences. (See Appendix A)**

Items that are confiscated from a student during a search or through the course of an investigation will be disposed of in an appropriate and safe manner. Weapons and or drug paraphernalia will be turned over to Local Law enforcement or as school policy dictates.

***This policy outlines possible steps to be followed. Alternative disciplinary procedures may be followed at the discretion of The Board and Administration.***

## Discipline of Special Education Students

Montessori Regional Charter School will comply with all Federal and State regulations. MRCS will continue to provide Free and Appropriate Public Education to students requiring special education services as deemed necessary by their Individualized Education Program. MRCS will make every effort to work collaboratively with families to ensure that special education services are provided.

*In accordance to 22 Pa.Code §§ 14.143 & 711.61 an intended disciplinary exclusion of a student eligible for special education is a change in educational placement in any of these three situations:*

- *The disciplinary exclusion is for more than 10 consecutive school days;*
- *The disciplinary exclusion, when cumulated with other disciplinary exclusions in a single year, exceeds 15 school days; or*
- *The disciplinary exclusion (for any length of time) involves a student with an intellectual disability*

**The following infractions to the MRCS Code of Conduct will be handled for special education students**

- All Minor Infractions will be handled the same as their non-disabled peers
- Major infractions that result in a short term-suspensions ,less than three days, will be handled the same as their non-disabled peers, except for students with an Intellectual Disability .
- Suspensions for special education students must be no more than 10 consecutive days or no more than 15 cumulative days in a single school year.

**Manifestation Determination:**

The LEA must first conduct a manifestation determination for a disciplinary change in educational placement. An eligible student may be removed to a 45-school-day interim alternative educational setting without the require manifestation determination if the student:

- Carries a weapon or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function;
- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function;
- Inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function. 34 C.F.R§300.530(g)

**Manifestation Determination Process:**

- If the suspension is more than 10 consecutive days, the school must first conduct a Manifestation Determination.
- IDEA 2004 requires the LEA, parent, and relevant members of the student's IEP team to determine whether the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability.

- The Manifestation Determination must be conducted within 10 school days of the decision to change the educational placement with a disability due to a violation to the Code of Conduct.
- At the manifestation determination meeting the team will ask:
  - What was the student behavior that violated the school's Code of Conduct?
  - What were the circumstances surrounding the incident?
  - What is the student's disability?
  - Was there a causal relationship between the behavior and the disability?
  - Was the IEP being implemented properly? If not, did the school fail to implement the IEP which caused the violation of the Code of Conduct?
  - Was the student's behavior which resulted in a violation of the Code of Conduct a manifestation of the student's disability?
- The regulation at 34 C.F.R § 300.530 (f)(1) requires that If the LEA, parent, and IEP team members determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability and the IEP team must either conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless one had previously been conducted prior to the behavior resulting in the change of educational placement, and implement a behavior intervention plan for the student; or if a behavioral intervention plan has already been developed, the IEP team must review the behavioral intervention plan and modify it, as necessary to address the behavior.
- If the LEA determines that the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be excluded from school.
- If a LEA determines that a student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the LEA may proceed with the disciplinary exclusion via the procedures for changing educational placement.
- IDEA 2004 provides that parents may discount the manifestation determination by requesting a due process hearing, thereby invoking pendency. Such hearing, as well as parent-requested hearings regarding disciplinary exclusions which are changes in educational placement, must be expedited.
- 34 § C.F.R 300.530 (e)(1)(ii) states that if during the manifesting determination, the LEA determines that the conduct was the direct result of a failure to implement the IEP, the LEA must take immediate steps to remedy the deficiencies. For children placed in a 45-school day interim alternative education setting under 34 C.F.R § 300.530(g), there is no requirement for a manifestation determination.

### **Exclusions from school (Reference 22 Pa.Code § 12.6)**

(a) The governing board shall define and publish the types of offenses that would lead to exclusion from school. Exclusions affecting certain students with disabilities shall be governed by § 14.143 (relating to disciplinary placements) and 34 CFR 300.519—300.529 (relating to discipline procedures).

(b) Exclusion from school may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

(1) Suspension is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.

(i) Suspensions may be given by the principal or person in charge of the public school.

(ii) A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.

(iii) The parents or guardians and the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended.

(iv) When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements in § 12.8(c) (relating to hearings).

(v) Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period.

(vi) Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the governing board.

(2) Expulsion is exclusion from school by the governing board for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing under § 12.8.

(c) During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the governing board in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his normal class except as set forth in subsection (d).

(d) If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.

(e) Students who are under 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled and shall be provided an education.

(1) The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the district's superintendent.

(2) Within 30 days of action by the governing board, the parents or guardians shall submit to the school district written evidence that the required education is being provided as described in paragraph (1) or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, the school entity shall, within 10 days of receipt of the notification, make provision for the student's education. A student with a disability shall be provided educational services as required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. §§ 1400—1482).

(3) If the approved educational program is not complied with, the school entity may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See § 12.1(b) (relating to free education and attendance).

#### **In-School Suspension (Reference 22 Pa.Code § 12.7.)**

(a) A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.

(b) Communication to the parents or guardian shall follow the suspension action taken by the school.

(c) When the in-school suspension exceeds 10 consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the principal shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th school day in accordance with the procedures in § 12.8 (relating to hearings).

(d) The student's school entity has the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension.

#### **Hearings (Reference 22 Pa. Code § 12.8.)**

(a) *General.* Education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.

(b) *Formal hearings.* A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the governing board or an authorized committee of the board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the board. When a committee of the board or

a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire governing board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:

- (1) Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
- (2) At least 3 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
- (3) The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
- (4) The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.
- (5) The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
- (6) The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
- (7) The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf.
- (8) A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.
- (9) The proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:
  - (i) Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
  - (ii) Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his rights under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).
  - (iii) In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.
- (10) Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.

(c) *Informal hearings.* The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the

event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended.

(1) The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.

(2) The following due process requirements shall be observed in regard to the informal hearing:

- (i) Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.
- (ii) Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.
- (iii) A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
- (iv) A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf.
- (v) The school entity shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.



# **Academics**

## **Philosophy**

The Montessori Method of Education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori; Dr. Montessori observed children from birth to adulthood, recorded her observations and developed a child-centered educational approach. The development of the whole child (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) is carefully considered as the learning environment is prepared to encourage students to become independent, self-reliant, life-long learners and problem solvers.

## **MRCS Curriculum**

The MRCS Montessori curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies including Language (Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening), Mathematics, and Cultures (History, Geography, and Science) and is fully aligned with Pennsylvania State Standards. All students in grades 3 through 6 participate in the state required PSSA Assessment administered each Spring. Mathematics and Language assessments are administered to grades 3 through 8 with grades 4 and 8 receiving a Science Assessment.

## **7th and 8th Grade:**

The Montessori Adolescent Program and curriculum is carefully designed to prepare students for high school, while giving them opportunities to make decisions on their learning and become active engaged citizens. Students participating in the Adolescent Program will receive percentage grades unlike our K-6 program. The grade scale established by MRCS is in line with middle schools in the area.

**90-100 - Mastery**

**80-89 - Developing**

**70-79 - Practicing**

**69 and Below - Needs Improvement**

## Summer School

*MRCS provides summer school for students receiving cumulative grades below 70% in core subjects.*

*Students will need to pass 3 out of 4 core subjects in order to move to the next grade level.*

## MRCS Teachers

All MRCS classroom teachers are Pennsylvania State Certified elementary education teachers and have completed training for and received a Montessori Teaching Credential for the age group they instruct. In addition, each classroom has the academic support of a Teaching Assistant. The Specials teachers (Music, Art, Physical Education/Health, Career Connections, and Library Science) are certified teachers as well.

## Homework

MRCS believes that homework should be academically meaningful and support independence and self-reliance in our students. Certain grade levels will receive homework on an age appropriate, regular schedule.

### Homework is not optional

- Homework assignments are critical to practice and understanding..
- Homework assignments will support your student's academic foundation.
- Homework assignments need to be done completely and turned in when due.

### Homework will:

- Reinforce a previously taught lesson or reinforce basic concepts..
- Students will have learned the fundamental skills needed to complete the assignment.
- Have clear instructions.
- Be corrected and returned with constructive feedback to each student.

## Conference/Progress Reports

Families will receive detailed progress reports for their students four times per year. MRCS schedules two conferences per year – Fall and Spring – to discuss with parents/guardians their student's progress.

During the conferences, teachers will:

- Review the student's Progress Report.
- Explain specific components and academic requirements of each subject area in the curriculum.
- Discuss any areas of concern about the student's academic progress and behavior.
- Listen to parent's concerns about the student's academic progress and behavior.
- Explain and share the results of available assessments used to monitor student progress.

*Attendance at conferences is extremely important for facilitating the home to school connection. If you are unable to attend a conference, the progress report will be sent to your home.*

## Parent/Teacher Communication

- Teachers may contact parents as needed to discuss concerns and issues affecting their academic needs.
- Please **do not** use Back to School night, school social events, or arrival and dismissal carpool times to ask teachers or teaching assistants for updates or to discuss specific issues about your child.
- Parents may **e-mail** or message teachers via ParentSquare (not teaching assistants) to schedule an appointment to discuss and resolve specific academic issues.

## **Classroom Placement**

Montessori classrooms are small communities where students work respectfully and harmoniously together as they learn independence and creative thinking. The student placement process at MRCS is thoughtfully done by the academic staff.

The classroom placement will reflect:

- The students' academic needs
- The students' ages
- Social dynamics
- Family relationships
- Ratio of boys/girls
- Personalities of the students and teachers
- Teacher input

***The students' classroom placements are made with each student's individual needs in mind to facilitate a balanced, safe, empowering classroom environment.***

## **Health Policy**

The purpose of our health program during school hours is to provide first aid and medical care for injuries and illnesses. School nurses perform state mandated health screenings for all students and provide support for those with special needs. School nurses cannot diagnose, prescribe treatment, or give medications without parental permission and doctors orders.

Your child should be kept home or will be sent home if they have:

- Fever of 100.4 or greater in the past 24 hours without medication
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Live head lice
- Severe, persistent cough
- Communicable disease - flu, COVID or chicken pox
- Contagious skin condition - ringworm, impetigo and scabies
- Pink eye with drainage or crusting

\*Any child who is sent home with a fever, vomiting or diarrhea must remain home for 24 hours from the last time they vomited/had diarrhea or had a fever without medication.

In case of a medical emergency:

- You will be contacted at the emergency number that you have provided. If we are unable to reach you, and it is medically necessary, we will contact 911.
- Please notify the office immediately if there is a change in your contact information.
- Non-emergency communications will be made through Parent Square.

Student Health Conditions:

- If your child has a chronic condition (Asthma, allergies, Seizures, Diabetes, etc.) please contact me to ensure we have updated information on file. A health plan will be created for your child and it will be shared with their teachers. If your child requires medication (EpiPen, insulin, inhaler, etc.) please refer to the medication section below.

Medication:

- If at all possible, medications should be administered at home. If it is medically necessary for a child to take medication at school, an authorization form must be filled out by both their parent and doctor. These forms must be completed each school year. Once completed, the medication must be hand delivered by an adult to the main office in its original container.
- Students are not permitted to carry any medications with them during school hours, including “over-the-counter” medications. For the safety of your child and others, please never send your child to school with medication. If your child brings medication to school, it will be held in the nurse’s office until it can be picked up by an adult.
- If you would like your child to be able to take over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen or Tums throughout the school year, you must also complete a medication authorization form. You would also be notified prior to your child receiving the medication.

Health Screenings:

- Height, Weight and BMI: All students
- Vision: All students
- Hearing: K - 3rd and 7th grade students
- Scoliosis: 6th and 7th grade students

- Any abnormalities will be communicated to you via Parent Square and a referral letter will be mailed home.

#### Physical & Dental Examinations:

- Students entering the following grades (as indicated below) must have a dental or physical exam on file at school. Physical exams must include immunization records, immunization records alone do not count as a physical exam. Exams within the past year (July of the prior year - present) are acceptable for this requirement. Forms should be turned in as soon as possible, but no later than the first day of school.

- Dental: Kindergarten, 3rd & 7th
- Physical: Kindergarten & 6th

#### Immunizations:

-All students must be up-to-date with immunizations or have an exemption letter on file at school. Any student who is not up-to-date or does not have an exemption letter risks being excluded from school.

- K-6th students must have the following immunizations:
  - 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis
  - 4 doses of polio
  - 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella
  - 3 doses of hepatitis B
  - 2 doses of varicella or evidence of immunity
- Students entering 7th grade must also have:
  - 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap)
  - 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV)
- Students entering 8th grade must have all of the above immunizations.

## Electronics Policy

The use by students of digital media devices (see definition below) shall be prohibited during the school day, or during school activities and programs. Devices that are brought to school must be turned off and made inoperable and stored in a personal backpack or locker at all times. Parents should be aware that the school will not be responsible for, nor will investigate any lost or stolen digital media device. High value items should not be brought to school.

Violation of this policy will result in confiscation of the device. Only a parent or guardian may retrieve the item upon notification.

Definition of digital media device:

Any item that can store information in a digital format, including but not limited to: cell computerphones, cameras, computers, recorders, smart watches, and gaming devices etc.

## Field Trips

Field Trips are designed to support classroom learning and are an important part of the Montessori Curriculum. All Field Trips are staffed by our highly qualified academic personnel, which ensures that MRCS policies and conduct are maintained. Since students on field trips are representing Montessori Regional Charter School they should dress appropriately and behave according to school conduct code at all times.

**If students are traveling to a field trip destination, all students must have a parent completed permission slip that will be posted on ParentSquare prior to the day of the trip in order to participate.** Permission slips will be posted on ParentSquare a minimum of one week prior to the trip. Students who elect not to participate in a field trip are expected to report to school and will be given alternate assignments.

Please note that in order to ensure student safety, parents or other relatives are not permitted to meet students at the field trip location.

## **Lost and Found**

Lost and Found shelves are located on the first floor near the office and in each common area on each floor of the academic wing. Cell phones, jewelry, money, and electronics will be turned into the office for safekeeping. As a reminder, please refrain from sending money or valuables to school.

## **Fire and Safety Drills**

Fire and safety drills are conducted at least once a month. When the alarm signals a fire drill, all students will leave their room in single file and walk out of the building through the prescribed exit. Students will not have an opportunity to take personal items or coats with them. Complete directions for the fire and safety drills and proper exits are posted in each room throughout the building.



## **PIAA Athletics, Intramural Sports and After School Activities**

Throughout the school year, various after school programs will be offered to the students. These programs may include options ranging from athletics, academics, service groups and visual and performing arts. Please watch your ParentSquare throughout the year to sign your child up for an activity. Sign-ups will come as a first come, first serve basis, and will be offered through ParentSquare.

### **How to sign up**

Sign-ups will be through ParentSquare. All activities will be posted at 5pm in the 2nd week of the month. To ensure the safety of all students, we can only offer enough sign ups per staff ratio. Once an activity sign-up is full, there will be a waitlist. Please comment on the post if you would like to be added to the waitlist. It will be run on a first come basis. Payment and permission slips will be required prior to the start of the program. Failure to do so will result in removal from the program.

### **Dismissal**

Programs will be held right after school and will typically end at 4:30 or 5:00pm. There will be a ParentSquare post with additional detailed information for each program that is being offered. It is extremely important that transportation for your child is here at the given dismissal time. Late pick ups will result in removal from the program.

### **Behaviors**

The duration of after school programs are not very long and it is important for the teachers and students to stay on task. The school's Code of Conduct applies to after activities and programs - disciplinary action may be taken when behavioral infractions occurs. Repetitive negative behaviors will result in removal from the program. There will not be a refund if a student is removed for disciplinary reasons.

### **PIAA Athletics**

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association is for our Middle School Students in 7th and 8th grade. It allows our school to participate in competitive sports with surrounding schools in Erie and Crawford County. All sign-ups will be posted on our ParentSquare. There is potential for try-outs in some sports. A schedule of the practices and games will be sent out during the season of the sport being played. MRCS will be competing in Cross Country and Basketball for both boys and girls in 7th and 8th grade; Volleyball for 7th and 8th grade girls.

## **Intramural Sports**

There will be various opportunities to sign up for club sports teams. These Intramural Sports are an entry level program that will develop and work on skills, while learning the rules of the game. Intramural sports will hold practices and games where they will only be playing against students from our own school. A variety of sports will be offered to our students in grades K-8th grade.

## **After School Activities**

There will be different opportunities to sign up for our after school activities. These programs will run on a month by month basis. There will be a program geared towards all grade levels at different times in the school year. After school activities will consist of programs from academics, service groups and visual and performing arts.

## **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

Montessori Regional Charter School is an equal opportunity education institution and does not discriminate in employment, education programs or activities based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, because a person is disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam Era or any other legally protected class, or for engaging in any other protected activities. This policy of non-discrimination extends to all other legally protected classifications. Publication of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Inquiries may be made by contacting the School at 814-833-7771.

Montessori Regional Charter School is obligated, pursuant to various federal and Pennsylvania laws, to notify the parents/guardians of District students of their rights regarding various issues. The following information will explain these important concepts and give required notifications of student and parent/guardian rights on the various topics set forth below.

### **1. Right to request teacher and paraprofessional qualifications**

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that parents/guardian be notified they have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher/s including, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Whether their child's teacher has met state qualification or licensing criteria for their child's grade level and subject matter in which the teacher provides instruction.
- b. Whether their child's teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which Pennsylvania qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- c. What baccalaureate degree major their child's teacher has earned and any other graduate certification or degree held by their child's teacher and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- d. Whether their child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and, if so, their qualifications. Parents/guardians shall be notified by the District administration if or when their child is taught by a teacher who is not "highly qualified" for four consecutive weeks.

## **2. Homeless children and youth**

The No Child Left Behind Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act require that homeless children and youth have full and equal access to an appropriate public education and that they experience success in school. Homeless students shall have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other students. Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated, or stigmatized based on their status as homeless. The District administration shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education.

Students enrolling in the charter school who are, or become, homeless students should notify the District of that fact so the District can better ensure the student's rights under federal and Pennsylvania law are explained to him/her and to his/her parents. "Homeless students" are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, which includes the following conditions:

- a. Sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
- b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- c. Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- d. Abandoned in hospitals.
- e. Awaiting foster care placement.
- f. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
- g. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
- h. Living as migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

## **3. Migrant student education**

Pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act and Pennsylvania's Migrant Education Program, the Charter school cooperates and participates in the Northwest Pennsylvania Tri-County Intermediate Unit's ("IU") migrant education program for the benefit of migrant children attending the school. The school works in conjunction with the IU to improve and coordinate the educational continuity for the children of migratory workers who attend the school and encourages the

parents/guardians of migrant children to inform the school of that status so the school can better ensure the student's rights under federal and Pennsylvania law are explained to him/her and to his/her parents.

**4. Limited English proficient students**

The school complies with the language instruction for limited English proficient ("LEP") student provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. If your child is identified to participate in the school's LEP program, you will be notified of further details about your child's rights and participation in the LEP program at that time. Additionally, if your child participates in the school's LEP program, you will receive notice of opportunities to attend meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of students who are limited English proficient and identified for participation in the LEP program.

**5. Adequate Yearly Progress/school improvement/school choice**

Charter school students will be notified of their educational options and rights should the school fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act and relevant Pennsylvania standards.

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

## Notice for Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Montessori Regional Charter School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the Montessori Regional Charter School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without prior written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with school procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Montessori Regional Charter School to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill showing your student's role in a drama production
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets
- Musical concert programs

**Directory information**, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's/eligible student's prior written consent unless the parent or eligible student has advised the charter school that they do not want the information disclosed without their prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class pictures, etc...

MRCS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Photographs used to promote the charter school
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed

Directory information does not include a student's:

1. Social Security number, or
2. student identification (ID) number, user ID, or other unique personal identifiers used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, except those identifiers may be included in "directory information" if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

Questions or written requests should be directed to:

Montessori Regional Charter School

Krystal Wright, Enrollment

[kwright@mrcserie.org](mailto:kwright@mrcserie.org)

2549 W. 8th St.

Erie, PA 16505-4401

\* This notice is available in several languages-Please contact the Office of Student Services

## **Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

**1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the Charter School receives a request for access.**

Parents or eligible students should submit to the CEO (or other designated school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

**2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate or misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.**

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask MRCS to amend a record should write to the CEO (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed.

If the charter school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the charter school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

**3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. While you may request a listing of all of the exceptions, the three most common of these exceptions to the prior consent rule are as follows:**

- a. The charter school may disclose education records to “school officials” with “legitimate educational interests” without obtaining the prior consent of parent(s). A “school official” is a person employed by the charter school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a



person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, insurer, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a “legitimate educational interest” if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

- b. Upon request, the school will disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
  - c. Unless directed otherwise in writing by eligible students or parents, the charter school may disclose without consent “directory information,” which consists of the following information: the student’s name, address, telephone number (unless indicated as unlisted), date and place of birth, electronic mailing address, dates of attendance, grade level, photograph, major field of study, awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. For further information regarding directory information, see below.
- 4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Charter School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:**

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

\*This note is available in several languages-please contact the Office of Student Services

## **Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family
3. Sex behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

**Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:**

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

**Inspect, upon request, and before administration or use:**

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

*These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.*

The charter school will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The charter school will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The charter school will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the charter school has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and are provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

***Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:***

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by MRCS.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

# **Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services & Programs, Services for Gifted Students, & Services for Protected Handicapped Students**

The Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit and its Member School Districts, Charter Schools and Private Rehabilitation Residential Institution (PRRI)

Conneaut School District  
Corry Area School District  
Crawford Central School District  
Erie's Public Schools  
Fairview School District  
Fort LeBoeuf School District  
General McLane School District  
Girard School District  
Harbor Creek School District  
Iroquois School District  
Millcreek Township School District  
North East School District  
Northwestern School District  
PENNCREST School District  
Union City Area School District  
Warren County School District  
Wattsburg Area School District  
Montessori Regional Charter School  
Perseus House Charter School of Excellence  
Tidioute Community Charter School  
Robert Benjamin Wiley Community Charter School  
Harborcreek Youth Services

## **Notice to Parents**

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding child find

responsibilities. School districts, intermediate units and charter schools are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled Implementation of Chapter 15. Also, school districts are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via 22 PA Code Chapter 16. For additional information regarding gifted services, the parent may refer to 22 PA Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedure in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district, intermediate unit, and charter schools of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children. In addition to this public notice, each school district, intermediate unit and charter schools shall publish written information in the handbook and on the website. Children ages 3-21 can be eligible for special education programs and services.

If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the school district where the child attends or the Director of Special Education for the NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit identified at the end of this public notice. Children age three through the age of admission to first grade are also eligible if they have developmental delays and, as a result, need special education and related services. Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners and at least three years of age and is considered to have a developmental delay when one of the following exists: (i) The child's score, on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25 percent of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas, or (ii) The child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized tests.

Developmental areas include cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional and self-help. For additional information you may contact the Early Intervention Department at the Intermediate Unit. (See Evaluation Process below for contact info.)

## **Evaluation Process**

Each school district, intermediate unit and charter schools have a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about procedures applicable to your child, contact the school, which your child attends. Parents of preschool age children, age three through age of beginner, may request an evaluation in writing by addressing a letter to the Early Intervention Supervisor, NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5, 252 Waterford St., Edinboro, PA 16412 or call 1-800-677-8461 or email [eireferral@iu5.org](mailto:eireferral@iu5.org).

## **Consent**

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of the parents. For additional information related to consent, please refer to the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net). Once written parental consent is obtained, the school district, intermediate unit, charter schools, or PRRIs will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

## **Program Development**

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and the parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the individualized education program (IEP) team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, school district staff, intermediate unit staff or charter school staff will issue a notice of recommended educational placement/prior written notice. Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

## **Confidentiality of Information**

The school districts, intermediate units, charter schools and PRRIs maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your consent, or consent of an

eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the agency who have access to personally identifiable information.

For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to the FERPA at the following URL: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

This notice is only a summary of the special education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents. For more information or to request evaluation or screening of a preschool or school aged child, public or private, contact the school or district where your child attends. Additionally one may contact the name and number or e-mail listed below:

Brad Whitman  
Executive Director  
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 252 Waterford Street  
Edinboro, PA 16412  
1-800-677-5610  
[brad\\_whitman@iu5.org](mailto:brad_whitman@iu5.org)

The school district, intermediate unit and charter school will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status or because a person is a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. No preschool, elementary or secondary school pupil enrolled in a school district, intermediate unit, or charter school program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status or financial hardship.

## **Programs for Eligible or Protected Handicapped Students**

In compliance with Pennsylvania (22 Pa. Code 14.121) and federal (34 C.F.R 300.111) law, notice is hereby given by Montessori Regional Charter School (MRCS) that it conducts ongoing identification activities as a part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services (eligible students) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. If your child is identified by MRCS as possibly being in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures. Special Education services are available, at no cost to parents, for children with disabilities, ages 3-21 years.

### **Services and Programs**

Individualized services and programs are available for children ages 3 through 21 years who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to one or a combination of the following conditions:

#### **Developmental Delays (Early Intervention)**

**Autism**

**Orthopedic impairment**

**Multiple disabilities**

**Deafness**

**Specific learning disability**

**Other health impairment**

**Mentally gifted**

**Intellectual Disability**

**Emotional disturbance**

**Traumatic brain injury**

**Speech or language impairment**

**Deaf-blindness**

**Hearing impairment**

**Visual impairment, including blindness**

**Potential Signs of Developmental Delays and Other Risk Factors This Could Indicate a Need For Special Education Services**



Some indications that your child may be a child with a disability who is in need of special education are:

- Exhibition of an emotional disturbance over a long period of time which affects your child's ability to learn
- Consistent problems in getting along with others
- Difficulty communicating
- Lack of interest or ability in age-appropriate activities
- Resistance to change
- Difficulty performing tasks that require reading, writing, or mathematics; and
- When a child who is at least 3 years of age but before s/he has started school as a beginner, scores on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, which score indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas or if the child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized test.

## **Gifted Education**

In compliance with state law, MRCS provides services designed to meet the unique needs of gifted students. The school identifies "gifted" students on a case-by-case basis based on state law and school policy. Such students may possess superior IQ scores or meet multiple criteria indicating gifted ability. If your child is believed to be in need of such services, you will be notified of evaluation procedures. If you believe your school-age child may qualify for gifted education services, you may contact the office of Student Services at any time to request a determination of eligibility. Please note that entitlement to gifted services includes only those rights proved for Pennsylvania law.

## **Screening and Evaluation**

If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost upon your request. You may request a screening and evaluation at any time. Requests for evaluation and screening should be made to the Principal and/or School Psychologist via Services Office, 2549 W. 8th Street, Erie PA 16505, at 833-7771. Parents of children ages 3 to school age, with requests for early intervention programs/services may request screening and evaluation by contacting the

Early Intervention off of their home school district. Details regarding time and location of screening and evaluation activities conducted by MRCS for school children are available from these sources.

## **Protected Handicapped Children**

In compliance with state and federal law, MRCS will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. . In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to tan aspect of the school program. These services and protections for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

## **I.D.E.I.A.**

MRCS complies with the recent reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Procedural safeguards for students' ages 3 through 21 are available through the Student Services Department, 2549 W. 8th St., Erie, PA 16505.

## **What's Next?**

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time, and location), and rights to due process procedures, you may contact the Charter School, or Department of Student Services.

## **Confidentiality**

All information gathered in the evaluation, identification, and programming of children who may require special education services is governed by confidentiality requirements under Pennsylvania and federal law, specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Records generated by this process as well as records sought from non-school agencies are confidential and protected by both federal and Pennsylvania legislation. Information to/from outside

sources cannot be requested/released without written parental consent and the Charter School does not disclose personally identifiable information about students except as when so authorized under these laws. Information about confidentiality and access to your child's education records is available from the Charter School CEO or the Office of Student Services and is also described in this Parent Information Packet.

***Esta informacion es disponible en Espanol. Pongase en contacto MRCS.***

## Code of Conduct Matrix

Code/Pride Value	Category	Infraction	Definition	Possible Actions
<b>Be Ready to Listen and Learn</b>	<b>Tardy</b>			
		General Tardy	See attendance policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- School Attendance Improvement Plan</li> <li>- Detention</li> </ul>
		Tardy for class	See attendance policy	
<b>Be Ready to Listen and Learn</b>	<b>Truancy</b>			
		Unlawful Truancy	See attendance policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- School Attendance Improvement Plan</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>
		Skipping Class	Failure to show up and/or attend class-missing more than 15 minutes of class without proper excuse	
		Leaving School w/o Permission	Leaving school building and/or school property without staff, parent. Eloping.	
		Over 10* unlawful absences	See attendance policy	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>	<b>Failure to Comply with Disposition</b>			

		Excessive lunch detentions (over 5 in one month)	More than 5 detentions within 1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>
		Failure to attend detention	Failure to attend assigned detention without notice to administration	
<b>Move Safely Through the Environment</b>	<b>Inappropriate Behaviors</b>			
		Inappropriate behavior on the bus	Failure to remain in assigned seat. Inappropriate language. Excessive volume. Throwing of objects. Refusal to comply with driver/aide directions. Inappropriate touching of other students. Bullying/fighting(see fighting disposition). Body parts out of windows. Opening back bus door. Property destruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>Move Safely Through the Environment</b>		Disorderly conduct	Engaging in any of the following: threatening, excessive noise, inappropriate or obscene language/gestures. Creating a hazardous environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>Be Ready to Listen and Learn</b>		Inappropriate use of computers/technology	See technology policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> </ul>

<b>Be Ready to Listen and Learn</b>		Disruptive/inappropriate behaviors (classroom, cafeteria, hallways, afterschool activities)	Including but not limited to: excessive talking/calling out. Excessive volume. Running/horseplay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property and Move Safely Through the Environment</b>		Disrespectful behavior/insubordination	Refusal to comply with staff directives.	
		Dress Code	See student dress code policy	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>		Electronic Device	See electronics policy	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>		Use of Cell phone/earbuds on during school hours	Cell phones/earbuds will be turned into homeroom teachers at the beginning of the day and will be returned at the end of the day. Students are found with their cell phones during school hours.	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>		Falsifying information	Forging parent/guardian/teacher signatures/communications. Including improper use of Safe2Say.	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>		Cheating/Plagiarism	Taking ownership for others' work.	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>		Inappropriate locker use	See locker policy	

<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>		Rioting	Engaging in disorderly conduct with 2 or more others.	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>		Vandalism	Intentional destruction of school property. Destruction of teacher/student property.	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>	<b>Theft</b>			
		Under \$50	Taking items/materials that belong to staff/school/peers. Items costing less than \$50 market value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> </ul>
		Over \$50	Taking items/materials that belong to staff/school/peers. Items costing more than \$50 market value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> </ul>
		Being the "Look out" for theft	Aiding fellow student in acts of theft- watching for staff/student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>

<b>Move Safely Through the Environments</b>	<b>Fire Code</b>			
		Arson	Intentional fire starting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>
		Pulling fire alarm	Setting off fire alarm	
		Tampering with extinguishers	Touching, removing, altering appearance or function of extinguishers	



<b>Be Respectful of People and Property &amp; Move Safely Through the Environment</b>	<b>Assault/ Fighting</b>			
		Minor altercation	Single student involvement- who commits minor physical act towards another including but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, tripping, slapping, biting, scratching, striking. Does not include fighting or assault.	
		Fighting (mutual action)	a student confrontation with another student in which the altercation is mutual between the two, the altercation requires physical restraint and/or results in personal injury or property damages. This definition does not include minor disorderly conduct or verbal confrontations. It is within a School District employee or administrator's discretion to determine whether confrontations amount to "fighting."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> </ul>
		Simple assault (student)	Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury or serious bodily harm to a School District employee or another person. By definition, the School District does not recognize attempted assaults, only completed assaults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> </ul>
		Simple assault (teacher)	Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury or serious bodily harm to a School District employee or another person. By definition, the School District does not recognize attempted assaults, only completed assaults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>

		Aggravated assault (student)	an attempt to cause serious bodily injury to another or an attack that causes such injury to a School District employee or another person. Included in this definition are attacks in which the offending attacker uses a weapon.	
		Aggravated assault (teacher/staff)	an attempt to cause serious bodily injury to another or an attack that causes such injury to a School District employee or another person. Included in this definition are attacks in which the offending attacker uses a weapon.	
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>	<b>Harassment/ Bullying/ Threats/Hazing</b>	Bullying/Cyberbullying	an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or a series of severe, persistent or pervasive acts: a) directed at another student or students, and b) which occurs in a school setting, which shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity, sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school, and c) inflicts or attempts to inflict discomfort upon another through a real or perceived imbalance of power and d) that has the effect of doing any of the following: i. substantially interfering with a student's education; ii. creating a threatening environment or iii. substantially disrupting the disorderly operation of the school "Bullying" includes both genders, can be direct or indirect, and can be physical and/or psychological in nature. This definition includes individual and group bullying as well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>

			as cyber bullying. This definition does not include mutual confrontation between two individuals or two groups of students.
		Threatening staff or student	Making statements (verbal or written) indicating intention of harming another person. Using one's body to intimidate or indicate intention of harming another person
		Terroristic Threats	the communication, either directly or indirectly of a threat to do any of the following: a) Commit any crime of violence with intent to terrorize another; b) Cause evacuation of a building, place of assembly, facility, or on public transportation; or c) Other cause serious public inconvenience or public terror with reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience.
		Falsifying S2SS Tips/Threats	Intentionally falsifying threats with the intent of causing harm to another individual.
		Bomb threats	Communication of threat indicating use of bomb
		Sexual harassment	See Title IX policy
		Racial/ethnic intimidation	- any other offense committed under this section that includes an action with malicious intention toward the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity of another individual or group of individuals.

		Stalking	the participation in either of the following: a) engaging in a course of conduct or repeatedly committing acts toward another person, including following the person without proper authority, under circumstances which demonstrate either an intent to place such person in reasonable fear of bodily injury or to cause substantial emotional distress to such other person; or b) engaging in a course of conduct or repeatedly communicating to another person under circumstances which demonstrate or communicate either an intent to place such person in reasonable fear or bodily injury or to cause substantial emotional distress to such other person.	
		Hazing	occurs when a person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a student with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a student to do any of the following regardless if consent of the student was sought: a) Violate federal or state criminal b) Consuming anything causing physical or emotional harm c) Brutality of a physical, mental, sexual nature or other activity that creates likelihood of injury	
<b>Move Safely Through the Environments</b>	<b>Weapons</b>			

		<p>Possession of weapon</p>	<p>Possession of any of the following on school grounds, school sponsored event, and/or on school provided transportation. guns; firearms; knives; cutting instrument; cutting tool; nunchaku; metal knuckles; straight razors; razor blades; noxious, irritating or poisonous gases; poisons; bombs; missiles; chains; metal objects; replica of a weapon; or any other tool, instrument, implement or object capable of doing bodily injury.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>
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<b>Move Safely Through the Environments</b>	<b>Drugs/Alcohol</b>			
		Possession	Possession of illegal substances on school grounds, school sponsored events and/or school provided transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy</li> </ul>
		Use/intoxication	Use or intoxication while on school grounds, school sponsored events and/or school provided transportation	
		Intent to sell/distribute to minors	Possession with the intent (or reasonably suspected intent) of illegal substances.	
		Inappropriate possession/use of prescribed medications	Possession of prescribed medications by students- medications need to be provided directly to staff/school nurse. Possession of medications prescribed to another individual.	
Possession of OTC medications	Possession of OTC medications by students- medications need to be provided to school staff/nurse directly from parent.			
<b>Be Respectful of People and Property</b>	<b>Tobacco/Vaping</b>			
		Possession	Possession of tobacco and/or vaping products on school grounds, school sponsored events and/or school provided transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>
		Use	Use of tobacco and/or vaping products on school grounds, school sponsored events and/or school provided transportation.	
Intent to sell/distribute to minors	Possession with the intent (or reasonably suspected intent) of tobacco and/or vaping products.			
<b>Be Respectful of</b>	<b>Sexually</b>			

<b>People and Property</b>	<b>Based Offenses</b>	Inappropriate sexual language	Discussion of body parts covered by a bathing suit. Reference to sexual acts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warning to Student</li> <li>- Parent Notification</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Peer Mediation</li> <li>- Behavioral Contract</li> <li>- Detention</li> <li>- In-School Suspension</li> <li>- Out of School Suspension</li> <li>- Suspension of Transportation Privileges</li> <li>- Referral to Alternative Education Placement</li> <li>- Exclusion from School Activities or Loss of Privileges</li> <li>- Referral for Expulsion</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Referral to Local Law Enforcement</li> <li>- SAP Referral</li> <li>- Reference Related School Policy if Applicable</li> </ul>
		Inappropriate sexual touching	Touching of others' body parts covered by bathing suit.	
		Sexual harassment	See Title IX policy	
		Rape	Forcible sexual contact.	