



Student Handbook

*A guide for families and students on general information and policies at
Modern Montessori Charter School.*

Our Vision

To develop leaders of tomorrow with an intrinsic desire for life-long learning and independent thinking to become citizens who better our world.

Our Mission

We are a collaborative learning community rooted in Montessori principles integrated with current technology through an innovative, child-centered approach.

Belief Statements

- Offer challenging interdisciplinary curriculum combining the Minnesota State Standards with Montessori curriculum/materials.
- Present teaching materials specifically designed to provide concrete representations of the abstract within prepared learning environments.
- Empower each student to direct his/her own learning within the structure of the curriculum with close guidance from a Montessori-trained teacher.
- Utilize multiage classrooms, developed in three-year cycles, permitting children to naturally engage in peer modeling and creating a classroom and school community that accepts and values each person.
- Facilitate inquiry, exploration, critical thinking and creative problem solving in all academic areas.
- Identify, understand and capitalize on the individual student's learning style and needs.
- Educate the whole child from early childhood to adolescence by integrating self-reliance, independence and respectfulness with academic work.
- Strive to integrate current technologies as tools for learning.
- Develop learners who are technology/computer literate, but not dependent.
- Hire and support Montessori trained and Highly Qualified Teachers.
- Develop a strong team of adult guides who work well collaboratively, as well as individually.
- Commit to continuous learning and self-development in seeking best practices to cultivate student success while holding true to proven Montessori methods.
- Encourage and support family involvement by offering parent/guardian education of Montessori methods.
- Collaborate with parents/guardians through day-to-day interactions as well as structured parent/guardian organizations.
- Develop strong partnerships with community organizations.
- Recruit exemplary community members to serve on the site-council governing board.
- Empower teachers, core staff, parents/guardians and community members with a site-governing council to work together in decision making for the school.
- Give back to the community by participating in community service projects.

MMCS Early Learning Program (Pre-K) Information

Arrival/Departure

Children should arrive and be picked up on time. If an emergency occurs, and a parent/guardian cannot pick up their child, contact the office at 612-440-0681. Children can be released only to parents/guardians or adults on the Student Information Form unless the instructor is notified by the parent/guardian that there is another arrangement for pick up.

Art

The art curriculum focuses on the process used for the activity and not a specific product. Children will be exploring a variety of art materials. Play clothes are encouraged for the Children's House environment.

Birthdays

We will help children celebrate their special day with photographs of each year of their life. If your family does not celebrate birthdays, please let staff know. If your student would like to share a birthday treat (not required), please send items such as pencils, erasers, etc. Please do not bring cake, cookies, cupcakes, or other sugar heavy foods. Please refer to the homemade food and snacks details on page 9.

Class Size/Instructor-Child Ratio

Children's House classrooms with preschool aged students maintain a 1:10 instructor to child ratio.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes. Paint shirts are provided by the program and worn for messy activities. Please label personal items: backpacks, mittens, hats, and boots.

Toilet accidents are minimized when children can easily unbutton or pull down pants. Clothing that is easily managed by children encourages self-help and independence.

Fees

Full Day program: \$201.50/week

Half Day program: \$116.50/week

Invoices are generated and emailed for the forthcoming week and are due upon receipt. Payments can be turned into the office or be paid online as indicated in the email. Late fees may be assessed for past-due accounts.

Late Pick Up

Parents/guardians are expected to pick up children on time. If you will be late, call the office to let them know.

If parent/guardian has not notified staff of lateness:

- After 15 minutes emergency phone numbers will be called.
- If a child is not picked up by the time staff are scheduled to leave, police will be phoned for assistance.
- Repeat instances will necessitate a meeting between parents/guardians and administration.

Separation

The first days of preschool can be uncomfortable for some children. It is normal for children to cling to parents/guardians and not want to separate. Talk with your child about all the fun things they can do at preschool. Please talk with staff if you have questions or concerns about separation.

It also helps to talk about what you are planning to do while your child is at school. “While you are at Children’s House, I am going to pick up a few groceries. When I come to pick you up I’ll give you a big hug and you can tell me all about your day at school.”

If your child is crying when dropping off at school, a staff member can come and help with the separation. The children are usually ready to play in a short time. Having your child bring a favorite stuffed animal, family photo or special object in his or her backpack can help this transition.

Toileting

Children must be toilet trained to attend Children’s House. This means a child knows when he/she needs to use the bathroom and can independently take care of his /her own personal needs. Pull-up diapers are not a substitute for being toilet trained. If a child is experiencing toileting accidents in school, parents/guardians may be asked to postpone attendance in preschool until the child is completely toilet trained.

Modern Montessori Elementary Program (K-6) Information

Attendance

Regular attendance in school is essential to the success of our students. As parents/guardians, you play the most important role in your child’s education. Making sure your child arrives at school every day rested, well fed and ready to learn is a great contribution to your child’s education. Children who are well should be at school every day that school is in session. Students who are ill should not be in school. Generally, children don’t miss more than six days of school a year from illness. If there are chronic health concerns keeping your child out of school, please consult your school’s nurse.

Compulsory Education Law

Under the compulsory education law, students between the ages of seven and 17 are required to receive instruction each year. Children under age seven who are enrolled in kindergarten or a higher grade are also subject to the law. Minnesota statutes, section 120A.22 – Compulsory instruction

Subdivision 1. Parental responsibility. The parent of a child is primarily responsible for assuring that the child acquires knowledge and skills that are essential for effective citizenship.

Subdivision 5. Ages and terms. (a) Every child between seven and 17 years of age must receive instruction unless the child has graduated. Every child under the age of seven who is enrolled in a kindergarten program shall receive instruction. Except as provided in subdivision 6, a parent may withdraw a child under the age of seven from enrollment at any time.

Subdivision 6. Children under seven.

(a) Once a pupil under the age of seven is enrolled in kindergarten or a higher grade in a public school, the pupil is subject to the compulsory attendance provisions of this chapter and section 120A.34.

(b) In a district in which children under seven are subject to compulsory attendance under this subdivision, paragraphs (c) to (e) apply.

(c) A parent or guardian may withdraw the pupil from enrollment in the school for good cause by notifying the district. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, enrollment of the pupil in another school, as defined in subdivision 4, or the immaturity of the child.

(d) When the pupil enrolls, the enrolling official must provide the parent or guardian who enrolls the pupil with a written explanation of the provisions of this subdivision.

(e) A pupil under the age of seven who is withdrawn from enrollment in the public school under paragraph (c) is no longer subject to the compulsory attendance provisions of this chapter.

Absent or Late to School

If your child will be absent, arrive late, or leave early, please call the school office at 612-440-0681 or email the front desk at samantha.putnam@mm-cs.org. It is also helpful to notify or copy your child's teacher on the message. You can call 24 hours a day and leave a message. If a child is not at school, and the school has not received notice of an absence, the school will call a parent/guardian. If we don't hear from you, your child's absence will be recorded as unexcused. Absence due to weather concerns will be excused only if reported by a parent/guardian.

Absence Guidelines:

Grades K-6

- A student is considered tardy if he or she arrives up to 60 minutes late.
- A student is considered absent for a half day if he or she arrives more than 60 minutes late up to half of the school day.

- A student is considered absent for a full day if he or she arrives to school and is picked up within 90 minutes.
- A student is considered absent for a full day if he or she misses four or more hours of the school day.

Early Dismissal

Early dismissals are discouraged. Students leaving a few minutes early often miss important last minute instructions and/or reminders. Interrupting classes to call students to the office also distracts other students and interrupts end of the day classroom routines. Early dismissals should occur only in rare circumstances and requests must go through the school office. Please make every effort to schedule appointments outside of school hours. Students leaving early will be marked as early out. This is considered the same as tardy.

Unexcused Absences and Tardies

Regular attendance is a crucial part of success in school. There are consequences when students are continually absent from school. If an elementary student is absent three days within a single school year; or a secondary student is absent from three or more class periods on three days within a school year without excuse that student is considered a “continuing truant,” according to state law (section 260A.02). The school is required by law to notify a parent/guardian when a child is a “continuing truant” and if the child continues to be truant there may be juvenile court proceedings. Once a child is considered a “continuing truant”, parents/guardians are given an opportunity to explain their child’s absences. When an elementary student is absent seven or more days from school within a single school year; or a secondary student is absent from one or more class periods on seven days within a single school year without excuse, that student is considered a “habitual truant,” according to state law (section 260C.007).

Attendance letters will be issued when absences or tardies become excessive so families can take corrective action and address the issue.

If a student will not be attending school due to cold weather or other concerns, a parent/guardian must call the school to report the absence or the student will be counted as absent. Absence due to weather or other concerns will be excused if reported by a parent/guardian.

Late Arrival/Leaving Early

Students will only be released to persons other than legal parents/guardians if a verbal or written request is received directly from the parent/guardian. A valid photo ID may also be requested. If a student arrives late or leaves early, parents/guardians must sign their students in or out at the office. Please check in at the office when picking up your child.

Electronic Devices

While the school personnel understands that electronic devices, including cell phones, are prevalent, convenient and a part of day-to-day life for many students, their use by students during the school day is most often a distraction to the classroom, learning environment and the safe operation of the school. Students will be expected to keep their personal electronic devices in their lockers during the school day. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action as outlined in our Student Electronic Device Policy.

Pledge of Allegiance

MMCS staff and students recite the Pledge of Allegiance on a weekly basis in their homeroom classrooms. Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reasons may elect not to do so. MMCS respects a person's right to make this choice. Please notify your child's teacher if you do not want your child to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Behavior and Discipline

Students are expected to follow school rules, policies and procedures. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action as outlined in our Student Student Discipline Policy.

Safety Drills

Staff are sensitive to the potential anxiety children may have during these practices. They plan carefully to make the drill practices a positive experience for the children. Talk with your child's teacher if you have any questions about these drills.

- Crisis plans are reviewed and updated yearly.
- Drills will be practiced throughout the school year.
- An alarm sounds and/or an announcement is made.
- Everyone in the building participates.

➤ **Fire Drill**

- Staff, children and parents/guardians leave the building through designated exits and gather in a predetermined location.

➤ **Lockdown**

- No one is allowed to enter or leave the building until an "all clear" is issued.
- If a drill occurs during drop off, keep your child with you in your car until building doors are unlocked.
- In an actual emergency, staff will follow the direction of law enforcement.

➤ **Tornado Drill**

- Staff, children and parents/guardians move to a designated shelter area.
- Children and adults sit on the floor with their head and neck covered with their hands.

Dropping off Items

If you are dropping off an item such as lunch, water bottles, or homework, go to the office and a school staff member will deliver the item to the classroom, or call the child to the office at an appropriate time.

Cancellation of School

School is canceled only in extraordinary circumstances such as extreme winter weather, equipment failure or public crisis. In regards to extreme winter weather, Modern Montessori will follow the Anoka-Hennepin School District. If Anoka-Hennepin cancels, Modern Montessori will as well. School staff, district administration and the School Board are aware of the difficulties created by an abrupt cancellation of school. The district will post information about school closings/delayed start times through a variety of communication vehicles. The quickest ways to learn of cancellations include: District email and/or text notifications.

Weather Questions and Answers

The following questions and answers have been developed in response to common questions about the operation of school on cold days. Accommodations for children with special medical needs can be made with the Health Services office; written documentation from a doctor will be required.

1. *How cold does it have to be to close school?* The safety of all our students is our first priority when determining if schools should stay open in extreme winter weather. In making this decision, district officials use the National Weather Service's Release of students warning system.
 - a. If the National Weather Service issues a "wind chill warning" stating that exposed skin can become frostbitten in less than 15 minutes, then the district will likely make a decision to close. If a "wind chill advisory" is in effect, students who are properly dressed for the weather should be able to walk to school or wait for the bus without risking frostbite. The decision to close school is a serious one, and it affects many working families who would have to take a day off of work or find day care on short notice. Some families do not have these options and their children may be left home alone. Often, children are more at risk when we close school.
2. *What if I am concerned about the weather and school is in session?* In cases of extreme winter weather, parents/guardians have the final decision on whether to send their children to school. If school is open, students are expected to attend. However, if parents/guardians feel their children would be in danger, they may choose to keep them home. The absence will be excused if the parent/guardian calls to report it prior to the start of school. If the school is not contacted, the student will not receive an excused absence. Students who are already in school will not be excused if they choose to go home.
3. *Does the district lose money if school is closed?* No. The district does not lose state aid if school closes for weather or other emergencies. State revenue is based on the number of students enrolled in school, not on the number of days in school.
4. *Will elementary students be allowed outside when it is 25 below?* No. The guideline for keeping children inside for recess is 0 degree temperature or 10 degrees below zero wind chill.

Tips on Appropriate Dress for Cold Weather

- Wear several layers, the layer of air between each piece of clothing acts as extra insulation.
- Wear clothing that insulates, shields and breathes.
- Outer layers should be wind and waterproof.
- Wear wool socks and well-fitting waterproof boots.
- Wear a hat to prevent heat loss.
- In most cases, mittens are warmer than gloves.
- In extreme cold, cover all areas of exposed skin.

What if my bus is late? If the school bus is more than 15 minutes late, students should return home and call Northstar Bus Lines at 763-425-2542

In School Emergency

During an emergency or threat of emergency, school officials and law enforcement take specific, planned steps to keep students safe. School and district administration understand that parents/guardians may wish to take their children out of school during these times.

Unfortunately, parents/guardians' desire to take their child may create situations that further complicate an emergency. If parents/guardians choose to come to school during an emergency, they will not have the kind of access to the school and their students that they are used to. Here is what parents/guardians should know:

- Parents/guardians should refrain from coming to campus during an emergency, unless asked to do so. The school may close the campus and parking lot to everyone except police, emergency workers and school officials.
- The presence of additional people on or near campus makes it more difficult for police, emergency workers and school staff to do their jobs. Parents/guardians who do come to school will have to wait until district and law enforcement officials are certain the situation is safe.
- Until all students and the school building are safe and secure, schools generally do not release students.
- If there is an evacuation of school, all students are moved to a secure, safe location away from school under the supervision of teachers and administrative staff.
- Because of the need to maintain order, school staff may not release students even if parents/guardians have told their children to leave. Students are safer under the supervision of school staff than on their own. During an emergency, our district puts a priority on providing accurate, timely information as it becomes available. Information is shared via the school website, social media (Facebook), e-newsletters, phone calls, and local news media. School closings and instructions to parents/guardians will be provided through these outlets. The school office at 612-440-0681 also will provide as much information as possible.

Field Trips

Teachers may schedule field trips during the year to enhance the educational experience. The classroom teacher or school office will communicate information regarding any organized field trip. Parent/guardian consent is needed for a student to attend field trips. If a student is not able to attend a field trip, when possible an alternate educational experience will be provided. If you are unable to fund your child's field trip cost, please contact the school office to discuss a possible solution.

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks

Good nutrition is an essential part of a good education. It is also critical for proper childhood development. It starts with a good breakfast to give children energy and nutrition for the day. Eating breakfast and lunch makes it easier for students to concentrate on learning, think clearly and be on their best behavior. The cafeteria is an extension of the classroom. Students are expected to behave properly and obey cafeteria staff.

MMCS utilizes a catering company to provide meals at school. Our caterer delivers a cold breakfast and a cold lunch daily. These items must be pre-ordered on a monthly basis. Food for the 2021/2022 school year is free through the USDA. In years when this USDA program is not available, all food must also be pre-paid. Menus are sent out monthly on the 10th of the month and responses are due by the 20th. Responses received after the 20th may not be able to be accommodated.

Homemade Food and Snacks

There may be special occasions for students to share snacks with the class. Please send only pre-packaged snacks to school for class events; an ingredient list must be available if needed. Homemade food cannot be handed out to children. Schools may serve students only foods obtained from sources approved and inspected by federal, state or local regulatory authority.

Providing Healthy Food Options to Classrooms:

Modern Montessori promotes nutritious choices for any food that students may encounter during the school day, from the cafeteria to the classroom. To meet the goals of the district's wellness policy, parents/guardians and guardians should think of healthy options when they want to bring food to a classroom. Ultimately, we want our students to have more choices than just sweets. Regular exposure to nutrient rich foods makes it easier for children to learn how to make healthy choices. We want to teach children that the healthy choice is the better choice. Here is a list of suggestions for healthy snacks to provide to MMCS classrooms. Check with your child's teacher or the school nurse before bringing food with nuts or other potential allergens. Pre-packaged, individual portions of the foods listed below also are great snacking ideas anytime.

- Instead of soft drink/pop: 100 percent juice, low-fat or non-fat plain or flavored milk.
- Fresh fruit assortment.
- Dried fruit and 100 percent fruit snacks.
- Vegetable portions with low-fat dip.
- Whole-grain crackers with cheese.
- Pretzels, popcorn, rice cakes, bread sticks, graham crackers and animal crackers.
- Low-fat pudding, low-fat yogurt.
- Breakfast or granola bars (look for brands low in sugar, too).
- Trail mix or cereal mix (whole-grain, low sugar cereals with dried fruits, etc.).

Staying Healthy and Safe

Make sure your child is immunized. The Minnesota School Immunization Law (MN Statute 121A.15) requires all students to provide proof of childhood immunizations. Please consult with your medical provider with regard to immunizations required before entering kindergarten. Private medical providers may give the immunizations. The Health Service office at your student's school needs proof of the month, day and year your student's immunizations were given. The state law does allow a process for parents/guardians to file a legal exemption to immunizations for medical reasons or conscientiously held beliefs. The exemption must be notarized and turned into the student's Health Service office at his/her school. Please contact the Health Service at your student's school if you would like help with the exemption process.

Early Childhood Screening

In Minnesota, all children are required to complete early childhood screening before they enter kindergarten. Ideally, the screening should be completed prior to a child turning four years old, and must be completed before the child attends public kindergarten. Screening is a FREE, simple check of a young child's health and development. It does not determine kindergarten readiness. Screening includes:

- A development assessment.
- Vision and hearing checks.
- Height and weight measurement.
- An immunization and health history review.

Please contact your locally assigned school district to schedule your child's early childhood screening. MMCS does not conduct early childhood screenings.

Is My Child Well Enough for School?

Parents/guardians are frequently concerned about when students should stay home from school because of illness. It is important to have a child care plan for the days your child is ill and must stay home from school. Here is some information that can help you decide if your child should stay home:

- If a student has had a fever of 100 degrees or more, the student must stay home for 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal, without the use of prescription or over the counter medication.
- If a student has vomited or had diarrhea, the student must stay home until 24 hours after the last episode.
- If a student has had any rash that may be disease-related or the cause is unknown, check with a family physician before sending the student to school.
- If a student is ill, **please call or email the school daily** to report the illness.
- If your student has a chronic health disease that causes the symptoms of fever, vomiting, diarrhea and/or rash please check with the school nurse to discuss parameters for keeping your student home.

Remember that a child who is ill with an infectious disease can spread the disease when in contact with others in the family and community. Frequent handwashing is one of the best ways to limit the spread of disease. Set a good example by washing your hands often and helping your child develop good hand washing habits. If you have questions about these guidelines or your child's illness, please call your school nurse or family physician.

Medication

Prescription medication may be given with medical provider and parent/guardian permission.

Only FDA approved medications can be administered to students through Health Services. Herbal, dietary supplements, essential oils and alternative medications will need to be administered to students outside of the school day at home. All medications administered at school must be provided by the parent/guardian.

1. The parent/guardian shall bring all prescription medicines to the school's Health Service.
2. All discontinued medication must be picked up by the parent/guardian from Health Services or it will be disposed of appropriately.

Field Trip Medication Procedures

Schools also follow district procedures for administering medication to students while they are on field trips. Health Service personnel and teachers work together to ensure that students receive regular daily as well as emergency medication if needed while on field trips. For more information on this, please call your school Health Service office.

Can my student take medication during an after-school activity? MMCS Health Service personnel are not available to give medications after school hours during activities. Therefore, medications, including inhalers, are not accessible to students or staff after school hours. If students participating in after-school activities anticipate the need to use inhaler medicine before, during or after the activity, they may take their inhalers from Health Services at the end of school and return them the following day. Students may also bring their inhalers from home when they return to school for evening activities.

Minnesota Health Care Programs - Minnesota Health Care Programs have free and low-cost health insurance for children and families who qualify. (Medical Assistance has no monthly premium. MinnesotaCare has a monthly premium based on household income.)

For more information, call your county office or visit www.dhs.state.mn.us/healthcare. To get a Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) application: Go to: www.mnsure.org/shop-compare/financial-help/income-guidelines/index.jsp

Latex Allergies and Balloons

Because some individuals are allergic to latex, MMCS strives to minimize use of latex-containing products that commonly cause allergic reactions. Latex, a milky fluid produced by rubber trees, is processed into a wide variety of products, including latex balloons. Balloons are common causes of allergic reactions in persons sensitive to latex. The severity of the reaction depends upon the degree of sensitivity of the person. In rare instances, exposure to latex particles released when a balloon pops can include life-threatening symptoms, such as shock, severe breathing difficulties or loss of blood pressure. Due to possible allergic reactions to latex, most balloons are not allowed in school. However, Mylar balloons, which can be recognized by their silver material, are allowed in school. If you are uncertain of the material in a particular balloon, do not bring it to school. Please notify an administrator or Health Services staff member if your child is allergic to latex.

Pesticide use Notification

Schools that apply pesticides must maintain an estimated schedule of pesticide applications and make the schedule available to parents and guardians for review or copying at each school office. The state law also requires that families be told that the long-term health effect on children from application of pesticides or the class of chemicals to which they belong may not be fully understood. If you would like to be notified prior to pesticide applications made on days other than those specified in the school's estimated schedule or for other indoor air quality questions, please contact the MMCS office.

Asbestos Notification

Modern Montessori will monitor asbestos in the building and respond in a cautious and proactive manner. The district will continue with the on-going Operations and Maintenance (O&M) program including the periodic surveillance of all asbestos-containing materials as to ensure that the material remains in good condition and that appropriate precautions are followed whenever the material is disturbed.

Lead in the Water Management Plan

The 2017 Minnesota Legislature passed “Lead in School Drinking Water” legislation that requires districts across the state to test for lead in water used for drinking and food preparation every five years.

Scooters, Skateboards, In-line Skates, and Roller Tennis Shoes

Students may not use in-line skates, roller skates, skateboards or scooters on school property. Students who use any of these to travel to school must not use them once they reach school property. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to have their children wear a helmet when riding or wearing these items. Students who wear roller shoes (tennis shoes with wheels) cannot use the wheels during the school day or on school property because of the safety hazard they pose to the wearer and to other students. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items that are worn or ridden to school. Items that pose a nuisance to the school environment may be confiscated and returned at a later time.

Nuisance and Hazardous Items (toys, electronic devices, etc.)

For health and safety, and to maintain an appropriate environment for learning, the possession or use of items judged by school staff to be hazardous or a nuisance are not allowed on school property and at school-sponsored events. Examples of such items vary by school, but may include, and are not limited to: electronic devices, toys, trading cards, or other items deemed disruptive by school staff.

If you have a question about whether an item should be brought to school, contact school administration. The school is not responsible for lost, traded, stolen or damaged items that should not be in school according to this guideline. Items that pose a nuisance may be confiscated and returned at a later time. There may be additional discipline as determined by school administration. Special notice regarding electronic items: With the growing popularity of mobile phones and other electronic devices, parents and guardians should be aware that schools are not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items – no matter how expensive. Students who choose to bring these to school do so at their own risk. Keep in mind that the school does not have lockable lockers, and that any item causing a disruption may be taken away at the teacher’s (or other staff member’s) discretion to be returned at a later time. Student lockers and desks are property of the school and school district and therefore can be searched by school personnel.

Dress Code

In brief, dress and grooming must meet standards of safety, health and decency. Clothing, attire or personal grooming that disrupts the educational process or that violates common standards of decency as they apply to a school setting are not permitted. Upon approval of school administration, head coverings and hats may be worn for special events, medical or religious reasons. For physical education, students must wear tennis shoes. Also, jewelry, accessories and certain other apparel may be prohibited for reasons of safety during physical education as well as lab classes. Elementary students go outside for recess, so in the winter months it is important to dress your child in warm winter wear, such as winter coats, hats, scarves, gloves or mittens, and boots. See “Cold weather questions and answers,” on page 5.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Programs

Modern Montessori Charter School does not offer any ECSE programs. Please contact your locally assigned school district for Early Childhood Special Education programs available.

Special Education Services for Kindergarten through Grade 6

MMCS Special education services are provided for students in kindergarten through sixth grade who have been evaluated and determined as meeting one of the 13 disability categories identified by federal law.

- Developmental delays (birth to age seven)
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Blind/visually impaired
- Deaf-blind
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Developmental cognitive disabilities mild-moderate
- Developmental cognitive disabilities moderate-severe
- Emotional or behavioral disorders
- Other health disabilities
- Physically impaired
- Specific learning disabilities
- Speech or language impairments
- Traumatic brain injury

The district offers a full continuum of services for students identified as meeting special education criteria. An Individual Education Planning (IEP) meeting is held following a special education evaluation. District staff work with the student's parents/guardians/family to determine what goals and objectives are appropriate to meet the child's needs. The team determines what specialized instruction is required and what related services might be appropriate. Students who are identified as having special education needs will receive instruction from a special education teacher. Some students may require additional support in the area of motor, speech/language, vision or hearing needs.

Section 504

Some students who have a disability may not qualify as being in need of special education services. These students may qualify for support under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met. If a student has a mental or physical impairment that may be impacting him in the school setting, parents/guardians should contact their child's teacher or school director regarding their concerns.

Parents/Guardians, Visitors, and Volunteers

For everyone's safety, visitors must sign in with a valid state issued ID at the office, receive and wear a visitor badge at all times. Visitors not displaying a visitor badge will be referred to the office. Upon leaving, we ask that visitors, parents/guardians sign out in the office.

Classroom visits by parents/guardians can inform them about the learning materials and strategies used in their child's school. Arrangements should be made with the school in advance as to the date and length of visit. This will ensure that visits are informative for parents/guardians and do not disrupt learning activities, tests, and other classroom schedules and routines.

Volunteers

Volunteers help in a wide variety of ways, both in and out of the classroom. They assist students with reading and math, chaperone field trips, perform clerical work, serve on school and district committees, and much more.

- All volunteers are required to undergo a criminal record history release form for each school year before they start their volunteer assignment.
- Volunteers must sign in at the office and wear a volunteer badge at all times.

Procedures for Concerns, Complaints

We hope that your family's experience with Modern Montessori is positive and meets the needs of your child(ren). If you are unhappy, we invite you to express your concerns or complaints. Through experience we have learned that the person best able to address a concern is generally the person closest to it. With that in mind, we suggest that you start at the top of the list below. If you are not satisfied, then move to the next step and so on.

Expressing a concern:

1. If you have a concern or complaint, please talk first with your child's teacher or staff member involved.
2. If your child's teacher or other staff is not able to handle the issue, please contact one of the school directors.
3. If you feel the concern was not handled satisfactorily, you may share your concern or complaint with the School Board.

Student Information

Guidelines for use of student photos: MMCS staff, volunteers, representatives of the news media and others occasionally photograph, audio and/or video record students. The photos, audiotape and videotape may be used in school, district and community newsletters, e-newsletters, newspapers, activity programs, yearbooks, brochures, educational videos, podcasts, websites, social media sites and television, and for other appropriate uses. parents/guardians may choose to limit the use of their child's photo.

State and District Test Information

Tests and assessments are one part of the educational program provided by MMCS. Students take a variety of tests, from those given by individual teachers, to district and state standardized tests. Each test has a specific purpose designed to give the teacher, student and parent/guardian information about the academic performance and progress of the student. Explained briefly below are a few of the tests given to all MMCS students.

MMCS educators and students are expected to behave in a manner that supports academic integrity. Staff are expected to follow policies and procedures to maintain test security during classroom testing throughout the year including during standardized testing for which training is provided annually. The student code of conduct for all standardized testing promotes ethical test taking procedures expected throughout the year. Students are reminded that they should do their own best work to show what they know and can do. They should not accept help finding answers to test questions, give answers to other students, or tell others what is on the test. There may be consequences if students do not follow directions or if they behave dishonestly or are involved in cheating. Students take standardized tests throughout the school year.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) are given to all students in grades 3-8 in the spring. Assessments in reading, mathematics and science help districts and schools measure their student's progress toward proficiency on the state's academic standards. Students take these in the spring and results are mailed home in September. The reading and mathematics test is given in grades 3-8. Science MCAs are given in grade 5.

The Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) is a test that is given in grades K-12 to students qualifying for language acquisition services each winter. For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, alternate assessment(s) are available. Eligibility is based on specific criteria and IEP team determination. ACCESS for ELLs is given each year to English learners to monitor their progress in acquiring social and academic English. The test assesses the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Test items are derived from five content areas of the English Language Development standards: social and instructional language, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Test results are mailed to families in the fall.

Testing Tips

Here are some general tips on preparing for tests:

- Get a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast before taking each test.
- Become familiar with the directions and the test format by taking any practice tests that are available.
- Participate in any school-provided practice tests.
- Provide your child with a clean, quiet study area.
- Encourage your child to read daily. Discuss with your child what he or she is reading. Ask questions like: “What was the main point of the book or article? What were some important details that supported the main point?”
- Encourage your child to use math every day. Some common math activities might include: balance a checkbook, figure the miles per gallon of your car, determine the best buy among grocery items, calculate the amount saved when an article in a store is discounted, double a recipe, compute a baseball batting average or football passing rate.

Minnesota Department of Education parent/guardian guide and refusal for student participation in statewide testing The Minnesota Department of Education has published a document that provides information to help parents/guardians make informed decisions that benefit their children, schools and communities. The document can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2NgcdT2>

Thank you for reading this document. All policies and procedures cited in this document can be found on the MMCS school website under the ‘Policies and Procedures’ tab. We’re looking forward to a great school year!