

Modern Montessori Charter School

WANDERING & ELOPEMENT POLICY

I. PURPOSE

Modern Montessori Charter School (MMCS) recognizes the fundamental dangers that are caused by wandering or elopement. MMCS recognizes the importance of safety of all clients, staff, volunteers and students/program placements and will respond promptly and sensitively to protect all from harm and to coordinate appropriate responses in line with their duty of care obligations.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The procedures required by this policy shall be separate and distinct from students' individualized Behavior Intervention plans and/or Crisis Management plans, which shall be required when a student demonstrates wandering and/or elopement behaviors on more than a single occasion within the current or prior school year.

B. All building-based staff must be provided annual training on the building's wandering and elopement plan prior to the first day that students arrive at school each school year.

C. Wandering and Elopement plans must contain the following components:

1. An explanation of any physical modifications to the building that may discourage wandering and/or elopement or facilitate notification of staff when an incident occurs, such as door alarms.
2. A protocol for notifying staff, including teachers as well as office and support staff of specific students with a history of wandering/elopement (two or more incidents within the current or prior school year) which shall include recent photographs and description of any triggers that may cause a physical reaction or further flight by the student.
3. Procedures and staff assignments for immediately notifying:
 - a. 911;
 - b. Parent/Family; and
 - c. Main Office when an incident or wandering and/or elopement

occurs.

4. Protocols for communicating with and corresponding police including practices and procedures for accessing and disseminating any available floor plans and maps of the school grounds and immediate surrounding areas
5. A school-wide communication alert system.
6. Explicit staff assignments for school building and ground searches, with a focus on areas of highest threat, such as nearby water and major intersections.
7. A protocol for ensuring the availability of recent photos of all students who have a history of wandering or elopement behavior.
8. A protocol for ensuring that students with a history of wandering or elopement incidents carry a basic identification at all times, which shall include their name, school, and any triggers that may cause physical reaction or further flight.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. "Elopement" means a student intentionally leaving an assigned area without permission from or the knowledge of responsible staff.

B. "Wandering" means a student meandering or straying, which leads to leaving a safe environment, intruding into inappropriate places or becoming lost and is often related to a physical or mental distraction.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General school-based practices for preventing occurrences of wandering and/or elopement.

1. It is the expectation that all staff will intervene when a student appears to be unsupervised and take appropriate action to ensure that the student is redirected to a supervised activity/location.
2. School administrators are expected to strategically and specifically assign staff around the school building during arrival, dismissal, recess, lunch and transition times in order to minimize the chance of a wandering and/or elopement. Such staffing assignments shall be designed in order to account for staff absences, meetings, etc.

3. Student-specific considerations should be made when determining how much direct supervision a student requires during individual transitions, such as using the restroom, attending a related service, or performing a classroom job.

B. Procedures for if a wandering/elopement occurs.

1. All staff, especially the main office will be notified immediately of the wandering/elopement through the school-wide alert system.
2. All MMCS staff who are not responsible for supervising students will search for the missing individual within the school building and on school grounds.
3. The MMCS Director or Instructional Coordinator will contact local authorities and communicate pertinent information.
4. The MMCS administrative assistant will contact the individual's Emergency Contact.
5. All MMCS staff will comply with any steps or measures needing to be taken in compliance with the law as required.
6. The MMCS Director or Instructional Coordinator will consult next steps depending on the specific facts and circumstances in the case.
7. An investigation may be conducted by MMCS within twenty four hours by the MMCS Director and/or Instructional Coordinator.

Adopted: September 16, 2020