



Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School

Parent Handbook

202 Treybrooke Drive
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560
Phone: (919) 462-8889 Fax: (919) 462-8890
Email- office@sterlingmontessori.org
Website- www.sterlingmontessori.org

Contact Information

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School
202 Treybrooke Drive
Morrisville, North Carolina 27560

Federal Tax ID # 56-1899973

Telephone- (919) 462-8889
Fax- (919) 462-8890

Hours of Operation-

Before School Care- 7:00 A.M. – 3:30 A.M.
School Day- 8:30 A.M. – 3:10 P.M.
After School Care- 3:10 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.
Office Hours- 8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Administrative Team

Executive Director
Bill Zajic - Ext. 204

Director of 3-6 Year Old Section
Jill Stansbury- Ext. 450

Director of 6-12 Year Old Section
Carrie Smith- Ext. 318

Director of Middle School
Matt Oberst- Ext. 413

Director of Special Education Services
Nevine Elshiekh- Ext. 459

Director of Before and After Care Programs
Gena Jallad- Ext. 298

Welcome to Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School

Mission Statement

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School is a diverse educational community built on the Montessori philosophy that fosters curiosity, creativity and critical thinking in its students. At Sterling, teachers follow students' individual needs to achieve personal academic excellence and to become life-long learners who respect themselves, others and their environment.

Philosophy

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School uses the philosophy and teaching materials of the Montessori Method developed by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Montessori education emphasizes learning through all five senses, not just through listening, watching or reading. Children in Montessori classes learn at their own pace and according to their own choice of activities from hundreds of possibilities. A student's work at Sterling is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, self-discipline and a love of learning.

Montessori education places children into three year age groups (3-6, 6-9, 9-12 and 12-15) forming communities in which the older children spontaneously share their knowledge with the younger children. This represents an entirely different approach to education. Montessori's educational philosophy is multi-sensory, multi-aged and child centered.

Sterling's program is based on children's developmental needs and creates freedom within limits through a carefully prepared environment. The environment allows exposure to materials and experiences that develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities. Montessori materials are self-correcting, interesting to children and developmentally appropriate. The prepared environment is central to the implementation of the Montessori Curriculum.

Guiding Principles

1. Sterling Montessori will nurture in its students a life-long love of learning and respect for themselves and others in a "peaceful" environment.
2. The philosophy of Maria Montessori will be the cornerstone of the educational programs at Sterling Montessori while complying with the requirements of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Office of Charter Schools.
3. The Sterling Montessori campus will be artistically beautiful and will be an interactive extension of the classroom by offering a "prepared" and sustainable environment for students.
4. Sterling Montessori will be a community where the voices of the students, parents and faculty are valued equally and all members of the community are welcomed to actively participate.
5. Sterling will have a strong management team, led by the Executive Director, who will create sound policies and procedures that ensure a safe environment for all.
6. Sterling Montessori will be committed to responsible growth driven by genuine Montessori practices, financial sustainability and the collective needs of the community.

History of Sterling Montessori

In 1989, special education teacher Andrea Faurot opened Cary Montessori out of her home with two preschool students. From this humble beginning, Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School was born. By December 1990, Cary Montessori had grown to 90 students and 14 teachers. This rapid growth necessitated a move to larger facilities - first moving in with a church on High House Road, and then in 1993 – 1994 moving into two store fronts on Old Apex Road.

As demand for a quality Montessori education and the reputation of Cary Montessori grew, Ms. Faurot was challenged to find land or facilities in Cary large enough for her growing school. Finally, using inherited money, Ms. Faurot found and purchased the first six acres in Morrisville where the Sterling Montessori campus now sits. While plans were being completed for a private school on the new grounds, North Carolina passed laws enabling the creation of Charter Schools. The match was made, and Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School became a private preschool and public K-8 charter school in 1997.

Sterling's founder, Andrea Faurot, was a teacher and visionary committed to the quality of the Montessori education her school provided. To that end, Ms. Faurot started the non-profit, Laura Holland Uzzell (LHU) foundation in 1993 to raise money for teachers and students to get a Montessori education. Named after one of Sterling's early supporters, the LHU foundation continues to operate and the Board of the foundation serves as the governing board of Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School (SMACS).

School Structure

The school is comprised of two separate educational entities. The Academy serves children ages 3 – 5 and is a tuition-based program. The Charter School serves children ages 6 - 14 which includes Kindergarten through 8th grades. Each program has different admission procedures.

Curriculum and Evaluation

Curriculum

Sterling's curriculum is based on the traditional Montessori curriculum. The implementation of which is informed by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Teachers evaluate student progress through careful and constant observation, one cornerstone of the Montessori Method. This allows each student's education to be individualized.

Evaluation and Progress

Individual progress is monitored by each teacher. This helps inform lesson planning based upon student's mastery of skills. Progress is reported four times a year; two of these are shared at fall and spring conferences.

Special Education Services

Sterling Montessori provides special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individual with Disabilities Act and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9. The school provides a continuum of services to meet the individual needs of students. The Public Schools of North Carolina, Exceptional Children Division provides local units with detailed procedures for the delivery of special education services. These rules and regulations are detailed in the 2007 Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/ec/policy/policies/2007policies.pdf>.

Children who meet all of the specified criteria outlined in the Policies may be entitled to special education services.

If you are new to Sterling Montessori and have a child who has been receiving special education services at another school, contact the Special Education Director with documentation of your child's special needs (i.e. a copy of the student's Individualized Education Program).

Regular School Day and Unexpected Closings

Attendance Policy

School starts at 8:30 A.M.. Students may begin entering classrooms then. Arriving before 8:45 A.M. allows students to gather their things and start the day in a positive way. Those students who arrive after 8:45 A.M. must be signed in by their parents in the office. Students not signed in by the parent will be considered to have an unexcused tardy for the day.

Attendance in school is central to students' educational success. To be counted as present, a student must be in attendance at least one-half of the student school day. Sterling requests that families call the office the morning that their child is to be absent for notification. Excused absences include court proceedings, a death in the family, illness or injury, medical/dental appointments, quarantine, and religious observance. If the absence is an excused absence, the family should complete an Absence Excuse Form and return it to the office within two days of the student's return to school. If the absence is for a valid educational opportunity (such as travel), the form should be turned in in advance of the travel. This form is available in the front office or online at www.sterlingmontessori.org.

Excused Absence Forms not turned in within two days of the student's return, or for excuses not listed above will result in an unexcused absence. Three (3) unexcused absences in a year will result in a notification from the school. Six (6) unexcused absences will result in a written notification and a family conference. Ten (10) unexcused absences will result in a review of the situation by the Attendance Committee to determine if the family made a good faith effort to follow North Carolina's Compulsory Attendance Law (115C-378). Students who have ten or more unexcused absences may be referred to social services and/or the court.

Excused and unexcused absences above thirty (30) are considered excessive. Students who exceed thirty (30) absences during the year will be referred to the Attendance Committee to make a recommendation on whether or not the student shall be retained. The Executive Director will have final say on the decision.

For all absences, the student shall make up all work in a timely manner at the convenience of the teacher. Excessive absences will have serious academic consequences and may result in class or grade-level retention.

Early Dismissal

Sterling Montessori is aware of the need for students to be picked up early for various appointments (i.e. doctor, dental, etc.) Please schedule these after school when possible.

At the end of the school day, students are receiving last minute instructions, copying homework and helping with the cleaning of the classroom. Dismissing students during this time causes a disturbance to teachers and students. To request early dismissal for a child, please arrive before 2:45 P.M. Parents arriving after 2:45 P.M. will not be granted this request since dismissal begins at 3:10P.M.

Unscheduled School Closings

Inclement weather is a normal part of the school year. If Sterling is to be closed or delayed, the school will follow the closings or delays of Wake County Public School Systems. Safety Net, a phone system, will alert you via telephone and Constant Contact, an email distribution list, will send out emails to notify you in the event of a closing or delay. Please be sure to provide accurate up-to-date phone numbers to the front office.

Health

Sick Policy

Sick children are brought to the office in order to keep their classmates healthy. Parents are then contacted to come to school to pick up their children as soon as possible. Children are to be kept out of school if any of the following symptoms develop at home:

- Temperature over 100 degrees underarm or 101 degrees orally
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has started
- Two or more episodes of vomiting within a 12 hour period
- A red eye with white or yellow discharge, until 24 hours after treatment
- Scabies or lice (no nits in hair)
- Chicken pox or a rash suggestive of chicken pox
- Tuberculosis, Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Pertussis, until five days after appropriate antibiotic
- Hepatitis's A viral infection, until one week after onset of illness or jaundice
- Sudden onset of diarrhea characterized by an increased number of bowel movements compared to the child's normal pattern and with increased stool water
- When a physician or other health professional issues a written order that the child be separated from other children
- Open sores that cannot be covered until a health professional states that the child is not infectious

Accidents and Incidents

All accidents and incidents requiring first aid are reported to parents in writing. Serious injury policies are regulated by the state. If a child requires treatment beyond what we can administer, the office will attempt to contact the parents. If parents cannot be contacted, emergency contacts listed in the child's student records will be called. In an extreme emergency, the school will arrange for ambulance transport to an appropriate treatment center.

First Aid

Members of our faculty are trained in CPR, First Aid and have knowledge of blood-borne pathogens. The faculty is permitted to perform the following procedures for First Aid: wash or direct a child to wash an abrasion or cut with soap and water, apply a bandage, take an ancillary temperature, offer ice for bumps and bruises and call the parents or other adults.

Faculty members are not permitted to remove splinters or ticks, or administer non-prescription medication, including sunscreen, ointments or painkillers without the consent of a physician. Parents will be called if their children get splinters or ticks or need other First Aid which the faculty is unable to offer.

Medicine

All medicines are stored in and administered from the school office, with the exception of inhalers and Epi-Pens which are kept in a secure area of the child's classroom. The school endeavors to make sure children receive medicine when required and may only administer labeled prescription medicines and over the counter medication. All medication must be accompanied by a note from the physician.

Chronic Health Issues

Please note on your child's health form AND notify the main office AND your child's teacher(s) if they have a chronic health condition. Chronic health conditions include asthma, allergies or anything that requires continuous medication or special considerations. Sterling complies with FERPA regarding matters of confidentiality.

Please make sure all emergency information is correct in the main office. Should any information change throughout the year, please notify the classroom teacher AND the main office.

Safety

Pets

For the safety of everyone, personal pets are not permitted on campus at anytime.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Sterling Montessori School complies with all local and state laws regarding any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect. All employees are required to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate local and/or state authorities.

General School Rules

The Rules of Respect

The school rules at Sterling Montessori are:

- Respect yourself
- Respect others
- Respect the materials and the environment

These rules are easy for children to understand and help children build self-confidence in their ability to successfully function in the school environment.

Safe Arrival and Departure Procedures

- Upon arrival, an adult must accompany all children inside the Academy. This includes Kindergarten students.
- Staff must be notified of the child's arrival. (Sign in for before school care)
- **Make sure your child shakes hands with the teacher upon arrival.**
- Upon the child's departure, an adult must come inside the Academy and notify staff that the child is leaving.
- **Make sure your child shakes hands with the teacher before leaving. (Sign out from after school care.)**
- Authorization is required in writing when anyone other than the designated adult arrives to pick up the child.
- Children must never be left unattended in the building, on the playground or in the parking lot.

Minors that are 13 and older are allowed to escort Academy students to and from the building if the students are on time. Academy students will not be allowed to enter or to leave the building without an escort.

Appropriate Clothing and Bedding

Make sure children are dressed appropriately in school clothes which can get dirty. Teachers cannot guarantee that children will return home in clean clothes and cannot be responsible for soiled clothing.

Academy/Kindergarten students are required to provide a spare change of clothing that is seasonally appropriate. In case of an accident, children who do not have a change of clothing will be sent home to change. Sterling does not have spare clothing or laundry at our facilities and also requires that parents provide children with two fitted crib sheets for school provided rest mats. Please take sheets home on Friday for cleaning and return them on Monday.

Shoes

For safety reasons Sterling suggests that students in the Academy/Kindergarten wear closed toe, rubber-soled shoes. Sandals and flip-flops tend to cause accidents for these students. All students must wear shoes while on campus due to fire and health regulations.

Charter School students must wear appropriate shoes in order to participate in physical education. Sandals, high-heeled shoes and flip-flops are neither appropriate nor safe. Students may bring a pair of shoes for physical education to school and keep them in their cubby or locker. Those without proper shoes will not be able to actively participate in physical education.

Jewelry and Toys

Please do not send your child to school with jewelry, toys, pacifiers or other personal items. Please only allow your child to bring in items of educational value. No toys will be permitted in the classroom. If your child has an attachment to a stuffed animal blanket or other item, please only allow them to bring in one item for naptime. Sterling is not responsible for items that are lost, stolen or damaged.

Sterling requires that all items be labeled with child's name or initials. This includes car seats, water bottles and clothing.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a part of our daily schedule. Sterling does not take children outside for long periods of time when the temperature is above 90 degrees or below 30 degrees. All children attending school go outside with their class. Children who cannot go outside should remain at home. If a child has an illness or injuries that prevent play (such as asthma) there are places outdoors for children to sit with the teachers. The school cannot make provisions for students to remain indoors.

Nutrition

Snack

A balanced morning snack is provided for Academy and Kindergarten students and an afternoon snack is provided to the after school children. The \$100.00 annual snack fee covers this nutritious and convenient option for Kindergarteners. Parents are asked to look at the posted snack menu to determine whether or not the food being served is appropriate for their child. The school does not offer substitutes to foods on the menu and is not a peanut free environment. If a child has a food allergy or dietary restriction, it is the family's responsibility to provide substitutes that are nutritionally balanced.

Charter students in 1st-8th grades may bring a snack, if so desired.

Lunch

Currently Sterling does not provide a lunch program for its students. The Executive Director is continuing to research vendors for a program here at the school.

For the time being, parents will need to provide their students with a nutritious well-balanced lunch. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Birthday Celebrations

Montessori birthday celebrations are very special. Parents may provide a special snack with the necessary paper goods on that day. Please notify the classroom teacher in advance of any planned celebration or snack at school so that the class can plan accordingly. Parent provided snacks in the 3-6 year old Section must come from a state approved source such as a bakery, grocery store or be prepackaged for retail sale [Child Care Rule .0901]. All celebrations are planned independently by each classroom. Teachers have the final approval of snacks served in their classrooms.

Enrollment

Enrollment Requirements

Students at Sterling Montessori Academy are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis according to available space and age. All Academy children must be three years of age before beginning classes at Sterling Montessori Academy. All Kindergarten students must be five years old prior to October 16. To be eligible for the 2009-2010 lottery, all Kindergarten students must be five years old prior to August 31.

Students must be completely toilet-trained and able to clean themselves in all areas associated with the bathroom to gain enrollment. Students that have continual accidents are not considered toilet-trained and therefore cannot remain in the program. Diapers and pull-ups are not permitted.

Academy Application/Enrollment

A non-refundable application fee is due upon receiving all preschool Academy applications; a non-refundable tuition deposit fee is due upon receiving a signed contract. A one time non-refundable family enrollment fee is paid by each family enrolled in Sterling Montessori Academy. A signed application must be on file for each child.

Children entering Kindergarten- 8th grades are admitted through Charter School admissions. Admissions are handled by State Law, and therefore Academy students are not guaranteed a seat. All children are required to fill out an application for lottery process.

Charter Enrollment- Student Funding and The First Days of School

Sterling parents should be aware of the impact of their child's attendance in the Charter School during the first twenty days of school. As far as state and school district funding for each Charter student, children are not counted as an enrolled student until they attend their first full half-day of instruction.

Full funding for the year requires that your student be in attendance on the first day of school. 1/20th of the full year funding is deducted each day your child is not enrolled. For example, if your child misses the first 5 days of school consecutively, he/she is considered enrolled on the sixth day and the school loses 1/4 of the funding for your child for the year.

We believe parents want Sterling Montessori Charter School to receive the full annual funding for their student. Thus parents should have their child in attendance on the first day of school

Health Records and Immunizations

By law the school must maintain current health and immunization records on all students. Proper health records are provided by the school. Medical forms require a signature and date of examination from a health provider. Physical exams must be dated no more than six month's prior to enrollment.

Please note on children's health forms AND notify your children's teacher(s) AND the school office if your students have chronic health conditions. Chronic health conditions include asthma, allergies or anything that requires continuous medication or special considerations. Sterling complies with FERPA regarding matters of confidentiality.

Three and four year olds are required to have the following documents in their student file before they can attend school:

- Application for Enrollment (must be signed and dated by parent or guardian)
- Emergency Information (must be local emergency contacts)
- Copy of Original Birth Certificate
- Student Permanent Health Record (medical report)
- Current Immunization Record
- Chronic Health Information
- Patio Permission Forms
- Discipline Policy
- Parent Handbook
- Daycare Summary
- Primary Language Survey
- Application for Enrollment (must be signed and dated by parent or guardian)
- Emergency Information (must be local emergency contacts)

Kindergarten Students are required to have the following documents in their student file before they can attend school:

- Copy of Original Birth Certificate
- Kindergarten Health Assessment Form (PP2K). Children's physician must complete this form. *
- Chronic Health Information
- Patio Permission Forms
- Discipline Policy
- Parent Handbook
- Daycare Summary
- Primary Language Survey

**Occasionally, parents experience difficulty scheduling a school physical with the children's regular pediatrician. Unfortunately, we still cannot admit children without a completed exam record and immunization record. Parent's have up to 30 days of enrollment to fulfill this requirement.*

Parent Faculty Association (PFA)

The PFA is a very important part of our school's success. It is made up of parent and faculty and is a membership organization which requires dues. It builds community through social events and supports the school through fundraising. Please join and become involved in PFA activities.

Additional Sources of Information

Texts and websites you may find useful as a parent of a Montessori student:

The Secret of Childhood by Maria Montessori
The Absorbent Mind by Maria Montessori
Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work by E.M. Standing
Montessori Today by Paula Polk Lillard
A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom by Aline D. Wolf

Some useful websites:

www.montessori-namta.org
www.montessoriconnections.com
www.montessori.org
www.amshq.org