



STERLING
MONTESSORI

EST. 1997

PARENT HANDBOOK

UPDATED 12/16/25

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School follows all CDC and DHHS guidelines and requirements. This may, at times, alter the usual policies and procedures in place.

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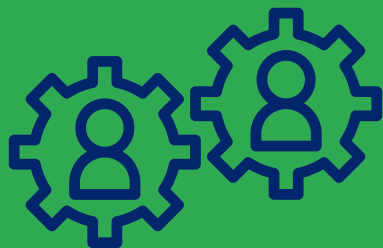


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**STERLING
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Welcome

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Sterling Montessori is to create a diverse educational community, grounded in the Montessori philosophy and teaching practices, that fosters curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking in its students. We strive to empower each student to become life-long learners who respect themselves, others and their environment.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY



Sterling Montessori follows the philosophy and teaching practices based on the Montessori Method developed by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870- 1952). Montessori education emphasizes learning through all five senses.

Children learn at their own pace with a goal of nurturing a natural desire for knowledge, understanding, and respect. A child's work at Sterling Montessori is an exciting process of discovery leading to concentration, motivation, self- discipline, and a love of learning.

Montessori classrooms have three-year multi-age groups (ages 3-6, 6-9, 9-12, and 12-15) together, forming communities in which the older children spontaneously share their knowledge with the younger children. The Montessori method of education is a child-centered educational approach based on scientific observations of children. Children develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively in order to thrive in the real world.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sterling Montessori...

- nurtures in its children a lifelong love of learning and respect for themselves and others, in a peaceful environment
- follows the philosophy and curriculum of Maria Montessori as the cornerstone of the educational programs. The Montessori curriculum is scientifically based and meets the requirements of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the Office of Charter Schools
- has an aesthetically pleasing campus and is an interactive extension of the classroom by offering a prepared and sustainable environment for children
- has prepared environments that are developmentally appropriate and provide hands-on learning, freedom of choice, a mixed-age classroom, the absence of rewards and punishments, uninterrupted work periods, and individualized instruction that supports each child's growth
- views diversity as a strength where every individual is welcomed, treated with respect, and supported in their own educational journey. Our diverse population is celebrated and enriches our students' cultural education so that they learn to value differences and listen respectfully to a variety of ideas as a step towards supporting a more peaceful world
- understands that to follow a child with learning differences might require additional expertise and implementing a specialized learning plan in addition to the Montessori curriculum
- is a community where the voices of children, parents, and staff are valued and all members are active participants in creating an ideal learning environment for all
- in pursuit of our mission and goals, is a financially sustainable institution, whose leadership models transparency, accountability, and professionalism for its staff

VISION

Sterling Montessori is a model charter school that demonstrates how the Montessori Method and a commitment to academic excellence helps students reach their full potential. We envision a sustainable, accessible, and diverse institution that graduates thriving students who are engaged in lifelong learning and are empowered to become positive, contributing members of their immediate and global communities.

HISTORY OF STERLING MONTESSORI

In 1989, Andrea Faurot and Charles Uzzell founded the Cary Montessori School, which served children ages 3-6 years old. After several site changes to accommodate growth, the school settled into a building at 201 High House Road in Cary. As parents/guardians began requesting additional grades, a temporary site was selected to accommodate elementary children. The current campus was built in 1997.

In 1997 the state of North Carolina approved the first group of charter schools. Thanks to a generous contribution by Laura Holland Uzzell (LHU), the Sterling Montessori Charter was granted by the state in the spring of 1997. We held our first attendance lottery in April of that year. The school served approximately 200 children in its first year as a combination academy and charter school.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE

Our school consists of two separate educational entities. The Academy serves preschool children ages 3-5 and is a tuition-based program. The Charter School serves children ages 5-14, which includes Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Sterling Montessori Academy is...

- an American Montessori Society (AMS) Member school. Sterling Montessori follows the AMS educational guidelines.
- licensed by the State of North Carolina, Division of Child Development and Early Education, as a private childcare and preschool facility.
- a full day, Montessori preschool program.
- overseen by the LHU Board of Directors, a non-profit organization.
- committed to offering parent education in Montessori methods and philosophies.

Sterling Montessori Charter School is...

- an AMS (American Montessori Society) Member school. Sterling Montessori follows the AMS educational guidelines.
- a full day, ten-month, Montessori kindergarten, elementary and middle school educational program.
- chartered by the State of North Carolina as a public charter school. Sterling Montessori meets or exceeds all North Carolina State Standards.
- overseen by the LHU Board of Directors, a non-profit organization.
- committed to offering parent education in the Montessori method and philosophies.

LAURA HOLLAND UZZELL (LHU) BOARD

The LHU Board meetings are open to the public. A community comment section is an item on the agenda, and anyone is welcome to address the Board. Advance notice is appreciated, but not required. In the interest of time management, the President of the Board reserves the right to limit the time granted to each individual, so that the regularly scheduled Board business can be conducted. For more extensive discussions, including those where a Board decision is requested, please contact the LHU board to request time on the agenda. If you would like to contact individual board members, please visit [Sterling's website](#) for board members contact information.

The LHU Board welcomes anyone who is interested in serving on the board to submit a letter of interest and resume or curriculum vitae to the President of the Board, president@lhuf.org, for consideration.

PARENT, FACULTY, STUDENT ASSOCIATION (PFSA)

The Parent, Faculty, Student Association (PFSA) is a very important part of Sterling Montessori. The PFSA strives to support the students, teachers and staff of the Sterling Montessori community, with the goal of enriching the children's Montessori education. Parents/guardians volunteer time and talents and, working with Sterling's Development Director, [raise funds](#) to support various programs. To stay informed and connected, visit [Sterling's Parent, Faculty, Student Association](#) page located on Sterling's [website](#).



Learn about our monthly meetings, get [event reminders](#), and remain up-to-date on Sterling-related topics.

STEWARDSHIP

Sterling's Strategic Plan outlines the importance of stewardship to support growth and sustainability through strong development and public relations in order to meet the long term needs of the community. As a charter school, our operating budget relies not just on federal and state support, but also the generous donations of our community, both individual and corporate. Throughout the school year, there will be many opportunities for all to get involved in raising funds for school-wide initiatives and classroom projects. Working with both the Development Office and PFSA, donations can be made in time, money, in-kind gifts, stock donations, corporate partnerships/sponsorships and more! We thank you in advance for your development partnership.

Our complete Donated Stock Policy (P. 25) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies Document.

The Regular School Day

CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION

Sterling Montessori's curriculum is based on the philosophy of Maria Montessori. Sterling Montessori meets and exceeds state and national standards in all curricular areas. Teachers evaluate student progress in part through careful and constant observation, one cornerstone of the Montessori Method. This allows each student's education to be individualized.

HOW DO WE PROGRESS MONITOR AND ASSESS ALL STUDENTS?

- Formal and Informal Daily Observations
- Montessori Three-Period Lessons with Materials
- iReady diagnostic and growth monitoring
- Beginning of Grade (BOG), End of Grade (EOG) and End of Course (EOC) Tests
- DIBELS for K-Reading

EVALUATION AND PROGRESS

Individual progress is monitored by each teacher. This helps inform lesson planning based upon a student's mastery of skills. Progress is reported to parents/guardians throughout the year: during fall and spring conferences with parents/guardians, and through progress reports which are sent home in January and June.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

MTSS stands for Multi Tiered System of Supports. It is a framework, a way of thinking, and a mindset through which we can highlight student needs, risks and opportunities and then identify the next steps to employ in service to the student. MTSS provides universal screening and instruction for all students as well as targeted support to struggling students. It focuses on the "whole child." MTSS supports academic growth and achievement, behavioral growth and development, social and emotional needs, and absenteeism. It is an integrated continuum that is varied, differentiated, organized and child centered. Students fluidly move between a seamless support system.

It is a data-based problem-solving process to make educational decisions regarding student outcomes across levels, content areas and tiers (core, supplemental, intensive). It is a Four Step Problem Solving Rubric:

1. Defining goals and objectives: What is the problem?
2. Identification of obstacles: Why is it occurring?
3. Developing an evidence-based plan and strategies to meet goals: What are we going to do about it?
4. An evaluation plan to monitor effectiveness: Is it working?

WHO IS IN MTSS?

All students receive Multi-Tiered Systems of Support through high fidelity Montessori curriculum and instruction as the core focus.



SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments ACT of 2008 prohibits discrimination against students and employees on the basis of a disabling condition. All individuals determined to have a disability are protected by this law. 504/ADA cases in schools involve students who are not found to be in need of special education, but, instead, have various types of diagnosed physical or mental impairments that are shown to substantially limit one or more of the student's major life activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, areas such as learning, concentration, walking, seeing, breathing, hearing, lifting, bending, and performing manual tasks. Additionally, the major life activities include the operation of "major bodily functions/systems" such as the immune, neurological, or respiratory system. Review Board Policy: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disabilities for issues of concern.

If you are new to our school and your child has a 504 Plan, please contact our 504 Coordinator in order to share and discuss their plan.

MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS (ML)

Any new student enrolled in Sterling Montessori's Charter School will have a Primary Language Survey filled out for them by their parent/guardian. If a language other than English is listed on the survey, then the student may be administered an English Language screener (W-APT) within the first 30 days of the school year, with the parent/guardian's consent. The screener will assess whether the child is identified as a Multilingual Learner with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). If the student is identified as a Multilingual Learner (ML), the teacher and ML Coordinator will create a ML Plan for the student which will focus on specific areas of English Language development and skills for the school year. This plan will be shared with the parents/guardians. The teachers will work with the child in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as they relate to the English Language. MLs are administered the ACCESS test in late February/early March to assess their English language proficiency. The results of this test determine if a student remains an ML or exits the program. The school receives the ACCESS scores at the end of May/early June. Once scores are returned, they are shared with the teachers and parents/guardians. If a child is exited from the ML program, they are monitored over a 4 year period to be sure they are successful within their classroom and are solid with their understanding and usage of the English language.

BEGINNING OF GRADE 3 (BOG 3) TESTING POLICY

All 3rd Grade students take the state-mandated BOG 3 Reading Assessment which must be administered within the first fifteen days of the new school year.

END OF GRADE (EOG)/END OF COURSE (EOC) TESTING POLICY

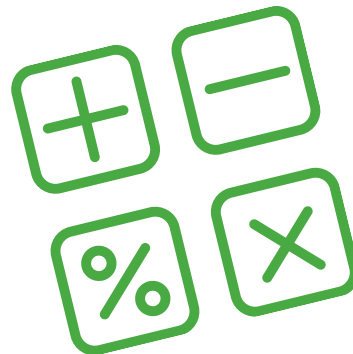
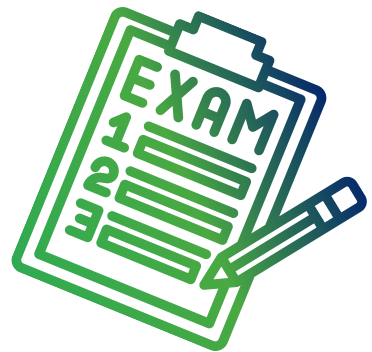
All students in grades 3 through 8 take state-mandated EOG tests in math and reading each year. These tests are administered during the last 10 days of the school year. Students in grades 5 and 8 will also take a science EOG. Students who take NC Math I take the state-mandated Math I End of Course test.

Sterling Montessori posts a testing calendar for the school year in August, so parents/guardians are aware of all the test dates for the school year and can plan accordingly. This testing calendar is also posted on our school's website.

$$y = mx + b$$



$$V = \frac{4}{3} \pi r^3$$



READ TO ACHIEVE



Article 8 Chapter §115C of the General Statutes includes [Part 1A](#), the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program. The goal of this program “is to ensure that every student reads at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continues to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply complex texts needed for secondary education and career success.” Under this state law, third grade students who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade will receive special assistance, including summer reading camp and other interventions to make sure that they can achieve their reading goals in preparation for fourth grade.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN SERVICES

Sterling Montessori provides special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 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, Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) Division, provides local units with detailed procedures for the delivery of special education services. These rules and regulations are detailed in the [Parents Right Handbook](#).

PROJECT CHILD FIND

Under the IDEA Child Find mandate, all school districts including Charter schools must identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. After identifying children who may need services, all necessary evaluations must be completed.

Sterling Montessori Academy participates in the Child Find Process. Child Find posters and leaflets are displayed on the bulletin boards outside each building.

Please reference the [Child Find Brochure](#) for more information.

IN-STATE STUDENTS WITH A CURRENT IEP

In accordance with Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Sterling Montessori will implement an IEP from a student’s previous school upon their admission to Sterling. The EC team will develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP, if necessary, that better meets the needs of the individual student.

OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS WITH A CURRENT IEP

In accordance with Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Sterling Montessori will implement an IEP from a student’s previous out- of-state school upon their admission to Sterling. The EC team will conduct an evaluation process to develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP, if necessary, that better meets the needs of the individual student.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Sterling Montessori uses the **Student Handbook** as its discipline model. Sterling takes a team approach in decision making for disciplinary action. When an in-school or out-of-school suspension takes place for an EC student who is removed for more than ten days, the IEP team meets and ensures a continuum of services. An individualized approach addresses student’s needs.

TEACHER EVALUATION FORMS FOR OUTSIDE SERVICES

Any teacher evaluation needed for outside services will require the following steps to be followed:

1. Parents/guardians must fill out the Exchange of Information Form.
2. Give prior notice to teachers and allow at least five days to complete.
3. **All teacher evaluation forms will be forwarded to the provider by Sterling Staff following review by the Director.**



ATTENDANCE

Attendance in school is central to a student's educational success. In addition to being a statutory requirement, regular attendance fosters a more cohesive classroom community and increases student performance and success. Families are requested to plan vacation trips and absences for personal reasons to correspond with school holidays so that the education process is not disrupted.

On days your child is absent, or to let the school know ahead of time that your child will be absent, email the school at attendance@sterlingmontessori.org as well as your child's teacher.

THE FIRST TWENTY DAYS OF SCHOOL

All students, both returning and newly enrolled, are expected to be in attendance each day for the first 20 days of school.

Once a parent/guardian accepts a seat, the student must attend school immediately. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying our staff in advance if their student will not be in attendance at once. If a student does not attend school within the first three (3) days of school, the Admissions staff will email and call the parent/guardian of the admitted student. If the student does not attend school by the close of business on the third (3rd) day of school, that student will be automatically un-enrolled and the seat will be offered to the next person on the wait-list.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

School principals are required to authorize a minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by faith of a student or a student's parents/guardians. The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to this excused absence. (S.L.2010-112)

Our complete Attendance Policy (P. 32) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies Document.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

TARDINESS

Getting to class on time has a significant impact on your child's instructional and social experience at school. During the 15-20 minute arrival window, your child is set up for a successful day by greeting and being greeted by teachers and peers, receiving important start-of-the-day information and directions, and settling into the daily routine.

Should your child be chronically tardy, you should expect to be contacted by a member of administration for remediation.

TARDY PROCEDURE

When tardy, parents/guardians of kindergarten through 8th grade must walk their child to the Main Office to sign-in and ensure their child arrives at the classroom. After 8:45 AM, adults are required to check-in and must bring a photo ID. Parents are required to wear a visitor's badge when walking students to class and while on campus at all time. Tardies are excusable under the following circumstances:

- Student illness
- Serious illness or death in the immediate family
- Student medical appointment (parent/guardian phone call or note from a provider is needed to verify)
- Family emergency (approved by Section Director)
- Religious holidays
- Court appointment

EARLY DISMISSAL

Sterling Montessori is aware of the occasional need for students to be picked up early for various appointments (i.e. doctor, dentist, etc.). Please schedule these after school when possible. At the end of the school day, students are receiving last-minute instructions, packing up and helping with the cleaning of the classroom. Dismissing students during this time causes a disturbance to teachers and classmates. Please go to the Main Office to request early dismissal from class and when possible email office@sterlingmontessori.org as well as the classroom teacher ahead of time. Repeated early dismissals are discouraged. Parents/guardians arriving after 2:30 pm may be asked to wait.

After a Children's House student is picked up from our program, they will not be permitted to return for the rest of the day. This policy helps ensure the success and well-being of our youngest students by maintaining a consistent and stable environment throughout the day.

A-BUILDING ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

No student may be on the playground before or after school hours unless they are enrolled in a Before care or Aftercare Program.

Upon arrival, 3 year-olds, 4 year-olds and kindergarten aged children must be accompanied by an adult, or minor 13 years and older, to and from their individual classroom. Make sure the teacher personally greets your child for safety and in order to record attendance.

Minors 13 years and older are allowed to escort students to and from the building if the students arrive at school on time. Otherwise, if students are late, parents/guardians must park, bring their child to the Main Office for a tardy slip and then accompany their child to their classroom.

Dismissal of all A-building students (3 to 6 year-olds) begins at 3:00pm and ends at 3:20 pm. Parents/guardians are required to park their cars, collect their children from their classroom's outer doors, and escort their children back to their cars.

Authorization is required in writing when anyone other than the parent or guardian is picking up a student. For non-routine departures, we ask that parents/guardians email both the teacher and the Main Office. In order for your child to be released, the person must be listed on your child's approved pick up list and be prepared to present a photo ID.

Children aged three and four in the Children's House must be signed in by 10:00 AM if arriving late to ensure their participation in school and aftercare for the day. Arrival after 10:00 AM disrupts the Children's House program for students.

B, C & D BUILDING ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

No student may be on the playground before or after school hours unless they are enrolled in a Before/Aftercare Program.

Authorization is required in writing when anyone other than the parent or guardian is picking up a student. For non-routine departures, we ask that parents/guardians email both the teacher and the Main Office. In order for your child to be released, the person must be listed on your child's approved pick up list and be prepared to present a photo ID.

MORNING DROP-OFF FOR B, C & D BUILDING STUDENTS

There are three drop-off zones during morning carpool: Main Parking Lot (sidewalk only), Behind "C" Building at the sidewalk, and the Back Parking Lot. Children dropped off behind C building should exit on the driver's side, since that side faces the sidewalk.

We will have sidewalk monitors to ensure children safely walk to their classroom patio doors. As a reminder, please use the crosswalks and do not leave children unattended in your vehicle.

AFTERNOON PICK-UP FOR B, C & D BUILDING STUDENTS

The "C" Building zone will be blocked off. All families will have a carpool tag. Please make your tag is visible to staff during carpool, or if you are a walker, that you have your tag ready to present to staff. Students will wait in their classroom to be called before they make their way to the drop off zone. All B, C, & D building siblings of preschoolers and kindergartners who are not going to routinely go through the carpool process will need to be picked up at the designated zone. You must present your tag and verify that it matches the dismissal tag on your child's backpack before your child will be released to you.

All parents/guardians of Lower Elementary students must pick up from the main parking lot zone (Treybrooke).

Lower elementary students who have Upper Elementary and Middle School siblings will also be picked up at the main parking lot zone (Treybrooke).

All Middle School Students and Upper Elementary students who do not have a younger sibling at Sterling will be picked up at the back parking lot zone (Town Hall Blvd).

CARPOOL PROCEDURES

Every effort is made by staff to keep carpool lines flowing and crosswalks safe. Parents/guardians shall wait in the carpool line of their youngest attending child. Parents/guardians who wait for their child(ren) from B, C and/or D Buildings must wait in the assigned area. Any children with them must be supervised and remain with their parents/guardians.

Safety and security of your child is our first priority. The following guidelines and procedures shall be followed:

- Follow all signs and arrows in the parking lot.
- The right lane is for carpool and the left lane is for parking.
- Cell phone use is prohibited in the carpool line.
- Slow down in the parking lot.
- Only allow children to enter or exit the side of the car facing the sidewalk.
- Parents/guardians can only park in the main parking lot.
- The back parking lot is staff parking only.
- If you are waiting for your child in the carpool lane, pull to the front of the circle and put on your blinkers.



You must have a carpool tag to pick up a student in the carpool line. Please show your tag to the carpool staff every day. Adults without a tag will be asked to go to the Main Office before picking up any students.

Because parking is limited at Sterling, we ask that you do not use our lot to park your vehicle unless you are on campus.

CARPOOL TAGS

Families with students in Lower Elementary through 8th grade will receive 2 carpool tags. Additional carpool tags are \$10.00 and can be purchased through the School Store. Families who walk to pick up their child(ren) will also be asked to use carpool keychain tags. If a person does not have a carpool tag they must park and check-in at the Main Office.

WALKERS

Students in Children's House through Upper Elementary may walk home only if accompanied by an adult. Parents of unaccompanied walkers must be subject to all of the following terms:

- Students must be in the 7th or 8th grade.
- Parents/guardians must submit a signed permission slip documenting they approve their child walking home two weeks prior to the first day of unaccompanied walking.
- Students will be expected to walk to their home located no more than 2 miles from Sterling or to the Morrisville Library.
- Students may also walk to the community public transportation shuttle stop adjacent to the community library, for further transportation as approved by the parent.
- All walkers will be dismissed as a group **at 3:45** following the afternoon carpool rush and in order to reduce crossing during highest traffic times.
- Sterling staff may accompany the walkers to the edge of Sterling property but will not leave property or act as crossing guards.
- Students are expected to use crosswalks where available and only cross when safe. If it is learned or seen that a student is crossing a roadway unsafely, the student's permission slip to walk may be suspended or revoked by school leadership due to unsafe choices.
- If applicable, students are strongly encouraged to use the crossing guard at Cedar Fork Elementary on Town Hall Drive.
- Finally, the Board and Sterling's administration recognizes the responsibility of parents/guardians in deciding whether to allow a student to walk to or from school.

CHANGES IN PICK-UP ROUTINES

Always make sure those who routinely pick-up are listed in your child's file as an approved person. Teachers and administrators make note of each student's typical dismissal routines and typical pick-up person or people at the start of the school year. Changes to these normal pick-up routines and authorized pick-up person must be made in writing in advance by emailing the Office Manager at office@sterlingmontessori.org **AND the classroom teacher**. Include your child's name, student they are going home with and the person authorized to pick-up. This will help us shift your child's carpool procedure if necessary.

SITUATIONS WHICH REQUIRE A MAIN OFFICE CHECK-IN DURING DISMISSAL

Any last-minute changes to routine which have a non-authorized person picking-up your child will require that person to park and check-in at the Main Office. This will enable us to confirm and verify the information you provided in email. Any situation or change in pick-up routines that is not covered in this information will also require the person picking up to park and check in at the Main Office.

UNEXPECTED CLOSINGS, DELAYS AND EARLY DISMISSALS

Severe weather, including hurricanes and winter storms, is a normal part of the school year. A determination will be made on a case by case basis by the Executive Director or designee in the event of an unscheduled closing, delay or early dismissal. Sterling Montessori will not provide Beforecare when operating on a delay and will not provide Aftercare when operating with an early dismissal. All weather closings, delays and early dismissals will be posted on WRAL and the school's website. Sterling Montessori families will also receive alerts via text messaging, email and/or voicemail. Contact information is taken from Infinite Campus and is the responsibility of the family to keep this information updated. Families and staff are expected to make their own judgements and use their discretion about the safety of the roads during inclement weather. Families and staff should inform the school if they are not able to make it to school. Our complete policy on Unexpected Closings, Delays and Early Dismissals (P. 50) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies Document.

BEFORECARE, AFTERCARE AND CLUBS

BEFORE & AFTERCARE

Sterling Montessori provides quality Beforecare and Aftercare programs for all enrolled Pre-K through Kindergarten students at an additional cost, enabling parents/guardians and family members to go to work knowing their children are in safe, caring environments.

Before care arrival begins each morning at 8:00 AM and Aftercare pick-up ends at 6:00 PM. The Before Care and Aftercare programs are offered 5 days a week. Sterling does not offer individual days or single hours for these programs. Registration information for both programs can be [found on our website](#). After 4:00 PM the Main Office is closed.

**Students attending Children's House must arrive at school no later than by 10:00 am to attend aftercare services on that day.

UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

Sterling Montessori prohibits unsupervised children on campus at any time before or after school hours. Children who arrive earlier than their scheduled arrival time will be escorted to the Beforecare Program. Likewise, children who remain on campus after the scheduled pickup time will be escorted to the front office to await for their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians will be subject to a charge of \$5.00 per minute to a maximum of \$100.00 per day. When a parent/guardian is running late, a courtesy call should be made to the Main Office and/or classroom. Parents/guardians will receive a 1st time warning. The 2nd time the parents/guardians are late, there will be a late fee pick up charge.

AFTERCARE AND CLUBS

Students attending the Aftercare Program, or who are engaged in other after school activities, will be escorted to designated areas to wait for the start of the program or activity.





Student Health & Safety

CHARTER HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Sterling Montessori is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in general statute, SBE policy, and the signed charter agreement. Sterling Montessori is required to annually report all immunizations. All immunization records and health assessments must be in the student's file.

SICK PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

Sick children are brought to a designated area in order to keep others healthy. Parents/guardians are 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:

- Fever: Fever is determined by a thermometer reading 100.4 or higher or by subjective signs such as flushed cheeks, fatigue, extreme fussiness, chills, shivering, sweating, aches, headache, not eating or drinking.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has started.
- If the child has vomited within a 24-hour period.
- A red eye with white or yellow discharge, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Scabies or lice.
- Chicken pox, or a rash suggestive of chicken pox.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Tuberculosis, until 2 weeks after treatment.
- Pertussis, until five days after the appropriate antibiotic has been taken.
- Hepatitis 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.
- When a physician or other health professional issues a written order that the child should be separated from other children due to a contagious illness.
- Open sores or fungal infections that cannot be covered, until a health professional states that the child is not infectious or is safe to return to school.
- COVID symptoms according to CDC and NCDHHS.

When necessary, classroom communities will be notified of a spreading illness. CDC and DHHS requirements for reporting to the health department will be followed at all times. Children may not return to school until they are fever, vomiting or diarrhea free for 24 hours without needing any medication.

In addition, we may ask that you come to pick up your child if they are unwell and unable to participate in community routines. This includes, but is not limited to, extreme irritability and fatigue.

SANITATION PROCEDURES

In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment, we adhere to the following procedures:

- Tables are washed by staff prior to class beginning, before and after any food consumption and at the end of the day.
- Students and staff members wash their hands at the beginning of the day, before and after any food consumption, after bathroom use, after outdoor activities and throughout the day as needed.
- Sterling uses a sanitation approved, hospital grade cleaning agent that is safe to be used in school settings.
- PreK3, PreK4 and Kindergarten lunches must be stored in a refrigerator at the start of the day.
- All uneaten food must be discarded after lunch and cannot be sent home.
- Touch points (doorknobs, light switches, chairs, electronic devices, etc.) are cleaned regularly by staff with the hospital grade cleaning agent.

MEDICINE

All medicines are stored in and administered from the Main Office, with the exception of inhalers, diphenhydramine (Benadryl), and epinephrine injectors (EpiPen), which are kept in a secure area of the child's classroom. **In order to be admitted into class on the first day of school, students requiring EpiPens or inhalers must have the necessary paperwork and a current EpiPen/inhaler.** The school endeavors to make sure children receive medicine when required and may only administer labeled prescription medicines or over-the-counter medication in its original/most recent container. All prescription medication **must** be accompanied by a signed permission form. Prescription authorization must be renewed every year. **The same forms must be filled out and turned in at least 1 day prior to departure for overnight field trip medications.** A parent/guardian must pick up medication at the end of the school year or they will be properly disposed of within a week of the end of school. Our policy on over-the-counter topical medication prohibits the use of bug spray. However, we do permit sunscreen in stick form only. Sunscreen will be applied to students enrolled in our Aftercare program before they engage in outdoor activities in the late afternoon, ensuring their protection. To uphold the safety and welfare of all students, we kindly ask parents to contact the Director at least 24 hours in advance for any requests regarding over-the-counter medication or topical ointments. Completion of the required paperwork and adherence to instructions are mandatory to comply with our protocols and maintain accurate records.

CHRONIC HEALTH ISSUES

Please note on the student enrollment forms, and notify the Main Office and all the child's teachers, if your child has a chronic health condition. Chronic health conditions include asthma, allergies, or anything that requires continuous medication or special considerations. Many of these chronic health conditions (allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizure) also require an action form to be completed and turned in to the Main Office. These forms can be found on both our website and in the Main Office. Sterling Montessori complies with FERPA regarding matters of confidentiality. Parents/guardians should report any new medications or health issues to their child's teachers and Section Director in a timely manner. Our complete Student Medical Support Policy (P. 51) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Sterling employs a full-time K-8 counselor. Services provided are to offer guidance and resources during school hours. Services are not provided after hours. Please know if you send an email or leave a phone message at the end of the school day or on the weekend, you will not receive an answer until school is back in session. To learn more about the counseling services at Sterling, go to our website.



SUICIDE PREVENTION

We take ALL threats seriously. Student safety is our primary concern. Our complete Suicide Prevention Policy (P. 22) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.

SAY SOMETHING ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM (SSARS)

This program, which fulfills the mandate requirement under 115C-105.51 of NC Law, teaches students, teachers, and administrators how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, of individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and Say Something to a trusted adult OR use its anonymous reporting system. Specifically, the program educates participants to:

- Recognize the signs and signals of at-risk behaviors – especially within social media.
- Take every sign and signal seriously; act quickly to get help by talking to a trusted adult OR report it anonymously through SS-ARS 24/7 Crisis Center, mobile app, or website.
- Respond to and manage the submitted tip via multi-disciplinary educator and administrator teams.
- Sustain the curriculum and awareness via student clubs, in-school activities and call-to-action weeks.

CHILD SUPERVISION

It is important children are supervised indoors and outdoors while at school. Elementary and middle school children may run errands in pairs. Children's House students must have an adult with them at all times. Upper elementary and middle school children may go to the restroom in their own building alone.

CHILD SUPERVISION IN THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE

In the Children's House, state law requires two adults with a group of 25 children. If there is only one adult present with Children's House children, the ratio must not exceed 1 to 15. Children must be where they can be seen and heard at all times. They may not be left alone with volunteers in hallways or spare rooms unless that volunteer meets licensing requirements.

PLAYGROUND RULES & SUPERVISION

The Sterling Montessori playground has been thoughtfully constructed and maintained for the purpose of enriching the school experience for our students. Playgrounds are for student use only and are not available for before and after school use. It is important that during outside time, teachers and students model appropriate behaviors in problem-solving skills and conflict resolution strategies through the use of the Grace and Courtesy curriculum, Positive Discipline techniques and Restorative Practices. According to state law, children may not lose their playtime as a consequence. Texting, talking, and browsing on a cell phone while supervising children is prohibited unless there is a student emergency.

At Sterling, we believe in the importance of safe, unstructured free play. It is the job of teachers on the playground to keep the big picture at all times. Teachers should be aware of the location of all children and should be up and moving at all times. The playgrounds and fields are large and it is important that teachers spread themselves out to ensure child safety. If a teacher has to leave the playground to take a child to the bathroom, they must let other adults know and remain within ratio.

CHILDREN'S HOUSE PLAYGROUND SAFETY RULES

- Rocks, sand and wood chips are to stay on the ground. The wood chips belong in the wood chip area. The sand and the digging tools stay in the sandbox.
- Students are to stay on the inside of climbing structures.
- The clubhouse is for walking through. Its windows are for looking through.
- Use the stairs to access the slide. When sliding, students must be seated in a forward position. Slide down the slide feet first while sitting up. When they reach the bottom, students need to get off and move away from the slide. Only one person may use the slide at a time.
- Students using the swing should sit on their backside, keep their bodies in the seat until the swing comes to a complete stop, swing back and forth only. No twisting and/or standing on swings. Students are not to jump off swings. Only one student on a swing at a time.
- Adults must check that all gates are closed after anyone goes out or comes in as it is not spring-mounted.
- The tricycles are to be ridden on the sidewalk by seated students. There should only be as many students on the tricycle as there are seats. Non-riders should keep their hands to themselves. Tricycle traffic goes clockwise at all times. Riders are expected to be respectful of other tricycles, people or structures when passing. Pedestrians have the right of way. All tricycles are to be parked on the porch outside of A-10 when any group leaves the playground.



ELEMENTARY PLAYGROUND/OUTDOOR SAFETY RULES

- Balls are to be used on the designated fields only.
- Treat the plants and trees with care.
- Students need to have Sterling Staff permission to be outside the classroom.
- Shoes are to be worn at all times.
- Students should play away from entrances, exits and recycling areas.
- Ask an adult for help if there is a problem or if someone is hurt.
- All wood chips and rocks are to be kept on the ground.
- Use the stairs to access the slide. When sliding, the student must be seated in a forward position. Slide down feet first while sitting up. When they reach the bottom, students need to get off and move away from the slide.
- Up to three (3) people allowed on the tire swing at a time. Students must be seated on the tire swing with hands and feet inside. Only one student pushes the tire swing.
- No twisting and/or standing on swings. Students are not to jump off swings. Only one student on a swing at a time.
- Tag games should be played in an open space away from all playground equipment.
- Students must obtain permission from the teacher before retrieving balls from the parking lot.
- Patios and gardens are extensions of the classroom and students on the playground must refrain from playing on them while at recess.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

All accidents and incidents requiring first aid are reported to parents/guardians in writing. Any incident involving the head requires a call to the child's parents/guardians. If a child requires treatment beyond what the school is able to administer, the teacher or school will attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If they cannot be contacted, emergency contacts listed in the student's file will be called. In an extreme emergency, the school will arrange for ambulance transport to an appropriate treatment center. If parents/guardians elect to seek medical care for their student after an accident occurs at school, we ask that they notify the Section Director as soon as possible.

FIRST AID

All members of our faculty are trained in CPR and first aid and have knowledge of blood-borne pathogens. The faculty is only 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, and offer ice for bumps and bruises. Faculty members are not permitted to remove splinters or ticks, or administer non-prescription medication, including painkillers and cough drops, without the consent of a parent/guardian. We request that sunscreen and ointments be applied at home before your child comes to school. Parents/guardians will be called if/when a child encounters an injury (i.e. tick, splinter, etc.) that Sterling staff are unable to address.

CONCUSSIONS

This policy is mandated by North Carolina Statute GS 115C-12(12) titled Return-to-Learn After Concussion. After a head injury, 911 will be immediately called for any incident resulting in loss of consciousness, significant neck pain, significant changes in mental state, severe headache, or uncontrolled bleeding or vomiting. Parents/guardians are always called when an incident involves the head. In addition, parents/guardians must inform the school when their child has had a concussion. Any paperwork provided by the doctor, in regard to their child's transition back to school, should also be shared with the child's teacher and the appropriate section director. *The complete mandated Concussion Policy (P. 21) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

CRIMINAL HISTORY AND BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS, CHAPERONES AND SUBSTITUTES

Sterling Montessori strives to provide the safest possible learning environment for all students, employees, and parents/guardians. Sterling Montessori requires all volunteers, chaperones and substitutes to secure a valid background check. *The complete Criminal History and Background Check Policy (Policy 41) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

VISITOR SIGN-IN

All parents/guardians and visitors to campus must go through a check-in screening upon entering the Main Office and have a current driver's license ready to scan before proceeding to the student's exterior classroom door. This includes appointments, observations, volunteering, classroom presentations, and birthday celebrations. Sign-in is not required on whole-school Parent/Teacher Conference days and evening events. On the days you are required to sign in, please return to the office to sign out and return your badge before leaving campus.

VERIFICATION OF COURT ORDER CHILD CUSTODY

Any person, other than an authorized parent, guardian, or legal custodian, will not be permitted to take a student from school unless the Executive Director has the appropriate court documents. In cases of custodial dispute or other extenuating circumstances, a Custodial Release form and necessary court documents are required to prohibit the release of a child to a parent/guardian. This form is available upon request at the Main Office. **All child custody verification forms should be submitted to the Executive Director.**

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Sterling Montessori 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.

PETS

For the safety of everyone, personal pets are not permitted on campus at any time. This policy does not apply to service animals. *The complete Service Animals Policy (P. 26) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document. The complete Classroom Pets Policy (P. 47) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

ASBESTOS INFORMATION

In compliance with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response (AHERA), the Asbestos Management Plans are on file at the school. Sterling Montessori has a plan for ensuring no hazardous asbestos materials are present.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. We will have regular practice drills so that each child knows what to expect in the event of a real emergency. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. In the event of a real emergency, we will contact all parents/guardians through our alert messaging system as soon as possible.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTACTING LAW ENFORCEMENT

When a reasonable belief that any acts of crime and violence have occurred on school property or at school sponsored events, you are required to call law enforcement (911).

Social Interaction

PEACE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Behavior at Sterling Montessori is based on a positive attitude toward children, an awareness of the developmental psychology of children, and the unique ability to view and address each child's needs as an individual. Montessori educators seek to create respectful, inclusive classrooms, which celebrate diversity, cross-cultural boundaries, and provide opportunities for learning about how communities and individuals establish and maintain consensual peace. Beginning in Children's House, children are learning what it means to be a member of a larger community outside of their home. They are learning that their actions or inactions have an impact on their community. Individuals and groups interact with one another and have the opportunity to build positive relationships with each other. When internal or external conflicts arise, students learn the tools necessary to self-reflect, take another's perspective and communicate respectfully and effectively. They are learning how to engage in peer mediation to resolve their differences constructively.

Teachers model appropriate behaviors, and teach students problem-solving skills and conflict resolution strategies through the use of Positive Discipline techniques and restorative practices. The goal is to help children learn to evaluate, make choices and arrive at inner discipline through concentrated work. Natural and/or logical consequences are used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits. Teachers explain the reasons for limits or rules to be sure children understand the need for them, and strive to create an environment to promote learning, where children feel safe and secure.

At each level, the school's focus, based on Montessori pedagogy, is on nurturing and encouraging positive behavior. Beginning in Children's House through Middle School, children are explicitly taught the following lessons on how to:

- Be caring and courteous
- Cooperate with others
- Process a wide variety of feelings and emotions
- Self-Advocate in respectful ways
- Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person
- Make appropriate behavioral and academic choices

By employing the Peace Education strategies rooted in Maria Montessori's philosophy and methods, our faculty and staff develop and nurture the following skills and characteristics:

- To learn to recognize oneself as being a unique individual. To learn to be self-evaluating, to have realistic knowledge of one's own strengths and weaknesses, while not ignoring or dwelling on them.
- To develop a personal code of ethics, to have a sense of right and wrong, and to remain true to these values under emotional or group pressures.
- To be able to work with others to accomplish a goal, to learn to contribute ideas, to listen to others, and to compromise.
- To learn to be responsible, not only in the sense of being reliable, but also being able to understand the effect of an action before performing it, and being answerable for it afterwards.
- To experience balanced development across emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical areas, not neglecting any for the others.
- To understand the interdependence of humans, animals, plants and the natural resources of the earth.
- To have knowledge of and respect for the different ways humans have met their physical and spiritual needs over the ages.
- To be able to communicate clearly and comfortably with individuals of all ages and backgrounds.
- To be able to use a variety of effective nonviolent techniques for resolving conflict.
- To accept the responsibility of making a contribution for the benefit of future generations.
- To be self-directed, to be able to initiate activities, set goals, organize time, and complete projects.
- To be determined to try, and to be capable of working to the limit of, one's ability in everything one does.
- To develop persistence, to be allowed to struggle with difficult work, and to learn to take disappointment in stride.
- To think logically and rationally, and to evaluate information and seek out different opinions and facts before making a decision.
- To be creative, using his or her imagination to generate fresh and new ideas in all areas.
- To love learning, to find knowledge interesting in itself, to pursue interests with enthusiasm, and for fun.



Code of Conduct and Discipline

PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE AT STERLING MONTESSORI

At Sterling Montessori, we believe a safe, orderly, and welcoming school environment is essential for student learning. This Code of Student Conduct is intended to (1) create clear standards and expectations for student behavior; (2) promote integrity and self-discipline among students; (3) encourage the use of behavioral supports and interventions as alternatives to exclusionary discipline; and (4) provide clear guidance to teachers and administrators on how, when, and to what extent disciplinary actions may be taken if students violate conduct rules.

The complete Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy can be found in the comprehensive policy document and the [Student Handbook](#).

THE RULES OF RESPECT

The primary rules at Sterling Montessori are:

- Respect yourself.
- Respect others.
- Respect the environment.



INCIDENT REPORTS

Incident reports are used at Sterling Montessori to document certain situations and behaviors. It is important to have clear lines of communication between staff and families about things that occur during the school day. In general, the following situations require a written report:

- A non-accidental act that damages or destroys materials
- A non-accidental act that results in harm of another, or in the need for first aid of any kind
- An act of excessive disrespect

When an incident occurs, families of all children involved in the incident will be notified with either an accident or incident form. Each age level has their own guidelines based on the developmental capacity of the children enrolled for when Incident Reports and the involved procedures are used.

General School Policies and Procedures

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Bullying is conduct meant to harm, intimidate or coerce another person. Bullying can take many forms. Our policy prohibits bullying of any kind.

Sterling Montessori recognizes the impact that bullying has on health, welfare, safety and the learning environment. Bullying is prohibited on Sterling Montessori property, activities, field trips and events.

All administrators, teachers, staff and students share the responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur at Sterling Montessori or at any Sterling Montessori-sponsored activities or events.

Our complete policy on the Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying (P. 3) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.

TOBACCO USE

Sterling Montessori prohibits the use or display of any tobacco product by any person on school property. For the purpose of this Policy, “tobacco product” is defined to include cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products. “Tobacco use” includes smoking, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products. “Display” is defined as having any tobacco product in a location or position that is visible to children to school personnel.

COMMUNICATION

Clear communication between parents/guardians and teachers is vital to student success. Teachers will respond to communication within 48 hours. Drop-Off and Pick- Up are not the appropriate times for conferences, as this interferes with safety and smooth transition into and from the classroom. Teachers will make every effort to respond during non-instructional time.

If a member of the community does not know who the best person is to answer their question or concern, they should ask a member of the administrative staff, beginning with the Office Manager. Addressing concerns on social media should be avoided to maintain a positive and respectful atmosphere.

If a parent has a question related to instruction or that relates to the classroom in any way, the classroom teacher should be the first person whom the parent goes to for information and/or resolution. If, after a period of problem solving, the parent does not feel their concern has been resolved by the teacher, they should ask the teacher for a meeting with the section director.

When setting a meeting with the director, parents should have already tried to address the issue with the teacher and should feel comfortable asking the teacher for an administrative conference. If the parent feels the teacher and director have not sufficiently resolved their concerns, they may reach out to the Executive Director.

WEEKLY MESSAGE, TEXTS AND UPDATES

Sterling Montessori uses digital communication to send updates through our weekly messages, text messaging, and emergency alerts. Email and phone information is obtained from the Student Information System and are updated electronically by parent/guardians. Although most communications are done electronically, we do mail some information home. Please make sure we have your current address on file. If your child is a member of a two-household family, please make sure both addresses are listed in the Student Information System.

If you need to update your information, please email office@sterlingmontessori.org.

FIELD TRIPS

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Off Campus Field Trips are for fourth through eighth grade students only. Preschooler and Kindergarten students shall not participate in Off-Campus Field Trips. Enrichment opportunities may be provided in class for all Children's House students.

OFF CAMPUS FIELD TRIPS

Curriculum related field trips occur throughout the year. All field trips require parent/guardian permission. Chaperones of Field Trips will receive guidelines of their responsibilities on the trip and are required to complete a background check as stated on page 46.

Our full policy on Off Campus Field Trips (P. 28) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.



VOLUNTEERING

Sterling Montessori is aware of the importance of parent/guardian involvement in the overall success of the school. There are many opportunities for volunteering in all aspects of Sterling Montessori's operations. Contact a teacher, administrator, and / or the Parent, Faculty, Student Association (PFSA) to find out more.

FIELD TRIP ASSISTANCE

Given the importance of attending field trips, we never want cost to be a barrier. Field trip assistance is available for families who need it. Families may confidentially request full or partial assistance by filling out the forms on our website. These decisions are made in a timely manner and communicated to the requesting family only.

OBSERVING CLASSROOMS

Observation is part of the scientific method upon which Montessori philosophy is based. Sterling Montessori welcomes parent/guardian observers.

Classroom observations start after the first six weeks of school and end six weeks prior to the last day of school. Please contact your child's Section Director to make an observation appointment. Upon arrival, check into the Main Office to sign in and get a visitor's badge. When observing in the classroom, it is important to sit quietly and unobtrusively in a chair designated by the teacher. Parents/guardians may take notes. Please do not speak to the children in the class unless they speak to you first. Feel free to follow up with questions and comments to your child's teacher via email or phone. Teachers are not available to discuss an observation during class hours.

STUDENT RECORDS

All student records shall be up-to-date and shall be maintained with appropriate measures of security and confidentiality. Sterling Montessori abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) with regard to the procedures for inspection, review and disclosure of student records as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 C.F.R. Part 99. Records protected by this policy include any recorded information directly related to a student and maintained by Sterling Montessori. Student records do not include the records of school personnel that are in the sole possession of the maker and which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the person who made the record. *Our complete policy on Student Records (P. 37) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

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

- The right to inspect and review your educational records within 45 days of the request for access. Parents/guardians or eligible students should submit to their Section Director a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Section Director will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of your child's educational records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate.
- Parents/guardians or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. Parents/guardians should write their Section Director, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the School will notify the parent/guardian 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/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; 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, or therapist); or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official 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. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. **The office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington DC 20202-5901**

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Make sure children are dressed appropriately in school clothes that allow for safe movement, independence and the possibility of getting dirty. We discourage distracting clothing such as those with lights or which make noise, etc. Academy/Kindergarten students are required to provide a spare change of clothing that is seasonally appropriate. Sterling Montessori does not have spare clothing or laundry at our facilities. Sterling Montessori prohibits disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene or unsafe clothing. *Our complete Dress Code Policy (P. 38) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a part of our daily schedule. Sterling Montessori takes ALL children outdoors in most weather conditions. Increased caution is taken during days of extreme heat or cold. It is very important for students to come to school every day with the appropriate clothing for outside activities. The school cannot make provisions for students to remain indoors unless stated in a 504 Plan due to medical conditions.

APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR

For safety reasons, we require that all students in the Children's House through Upper Elementary wear closed toed, rubber-soled shoes while playing on the playground. All students and adults must wear shoes at all times while on campus due to fire and health regulations. Charter School students must wear appropriate shoes in order to participate in physical education. Those without proper shoes will not be able to actively participate in physical education.

TOYS, JEWELRY, WATCHES, MONEY, AND ELECTRONICS

Personal items can be a distraction to the child and others in the class. When lost or broken, it can ruin the rest of the day, making it difficult for the child's focus to remain on their work. Unless permitted by the classroom teacher for a special event or for rest time, please refrain from personal items being brought to school. Sterling Montessori is not responsible for items that are lost, stolen or damaged.

TECHNOLOGY

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The student use of cell phones and other electronic devices is prohibited while students are on campus. This ensures that lessons and student work will not be interrupted, safeguards students against cyber bullying, and prevents theft of such devices. *Our complete policy on Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices (P. 36) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*



RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Sterling Montessori provides an extensive technology infrastructure toward the purpose of improving the School's educational, administrative, and clerical functions. The significant ongoing investment in technology prepares students for life and work and increases the productivity of current and future faculty and staff. Sterling Montessori intends that children and employees will remain within the bounds of safe, legal and responsible use of technology. The parent/guardian and child must consent to the child's independent access to the Internet and to the monitoring of the child's Internet activity and e-mail communication by school personnel. In addition, in accordance with Sterling Montessori's goals and visions for technology, children may require accounts in third party systems for school related projects designed to assist children in mastering effective and proper online communications or to meet other educational goals. Parental permission will be obtained when necessary to create and manage such third-party accounts. Though school personnel generally do not monitor children's internet activity conducted on non-Sterling Montessori devices during non-school hours, when the child's online behavior has a direct and immediate effect on school safety or maintaining order and discipline in the school, the child may be disciplined in accordance with school policy and applicable federal, state and local laws. *Our complete Use of Technology Policy (P. 10) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

USE OF PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY ON STERLING MONTESSORI PROPERTY

Sterling Montessori assumes no responsibility for personal technology devices brought to school. To prevent the introduction of malicious code and protect the integrity of Sterling Montessori's information resources, Sterling Montessori's technology team may restrict the use of any hardware or software it deems inappropriate.

Nutrition



SNACK

All students, PK3-8th grade, may bring a healthy snack to school. An afternoon snack is provided to the students enrolled in our Aftercare program. The school is not a peanut-free environment. If your child has a food allergy or dietary restriction, it is the family's responsibility to provide substitutes that are nutritionally balanced. Reach out to your student's classroom teacher for suggestions if needed.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Parents/guardians should send a lunch from home. We do not allow daily drop off of lunches by parents/guardians as this interrupts the classroom schedule. Please visit [Kids Health](#) for nutritional guidelines. Due to sanitation regulations, any food students do not consume during the lunch period must be discarded. Academy/Kindergarten students are required to store their lunches in the classroom refrigerator.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Montessori classrooms, Children's House through Upper Elementary, celebrate the life story of a child. This is a Montessori educational experience showing the passage of time and growth of the child from birth to present day. **For all levels snacks and party favors are prohibited.**

Enrollment

EXPECTATIONS FOR INCOMING ACADEMY STUDENTS

At Sterling Montessori Academy, we value the development of independence as a core part of the Montessori philosophy. This includes independence in toileting, which allows each child to fully participate in the classroom environment with confidence and dignity. All children enrolled in the Academy program are expected to be fully independent in toileting. This means they are able to complete all steps of the toileting process on their own — including recognizing the need to use the toilet, managing clothing, wiping, flushing, and washing hands — without adult assistance.

Sterling Montessori Academy is not licensed to provide toilet training, and staff members are unable to assist with this process. Children must attend school in regular underwear (no pull-ups or training underwear). If a child arrives in pull-ups or training underwear, families will be contacted and asked either to 1) Pick up the child, or 2) Bring regular underwear for the child to change into before joining the classroom.

We understand that occasional accidents can occur. If a child has a bowel movement accident, a parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to come to school to change the child. If accidents become frequent or consistent, the classroom teacher and Section Director will contact the family to schedule a conference. The purpose of this meeting is to review the child's current level of independence, identify potential causes or stressors, and develop a collaborative plan to help the child regain toileting independence. This plan may include a temporary break from school to focus on toilet training at home. Once the plan is in place, both home and school will closely monitor the child's progress.

If, after implementing the plan, the child continues to have frequent accidents, it may be determined that the child is not yet ready for the Sterling Montessori preschool environment. In that case, the Sterling team will work closely with the family to help identify alternative childcare options that better meet the child's developmental needs at this time. Our goal is to partner with families in a respectful and compassionate way to support each child's growth toward independence and readiness for success in the classroom. If a parent or guardian refuses to meet with the Sterling team or participate in the planning process to support toileting independence, Sterling Montessori will determine that the partnership necessary for the child's success cannot be maintained, and the child will be asked to withdraw from the program.

STERLING MONTESSORI CHARTER ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Sterling Montessori is a tuition-free public school. Any student who is qualified under North Carolina law for admission to a public school is qualified for admission at Sterling Montessori. All students are required by the NC Charter School law to complete an application for admission. All applicants to the lottery must be North Carolina residents at the time of the application process with a physical North Carolina address. However, North Carolina county boundaries or school attendance areas do not affect charter school enrollment. In addition, Sterling does not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

Our complete Charter Admissions and Enrollment Policy ([Page 29](#)) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Class Placement is a collaborative, involved process aimed at maintaining well-balanced, successful classrooms. The needs of each child over a three-year cycle are considered and weighed in an effort to meet individual and group needs.

Reassignment during the three-year cycle is a rare occurrence, happening only when it is deemed to be in the child's best interest, after sustained collaboration and problem-solving among parents/guardians, teachers, and administration. Specific classroom requests are not permitted. Requests for re-assignment for the following year must be submitted during the academic school year. It is not recommended that multiple-birth siblings be considered for placement together in the same classroom, however, if requested, a team approach will be used to determine if being in the same classroom is in the best interest of each child. This placement decision will be reevaluated with the team after a 90-day period.

STUDENT RETENTION AND ACCELERATION

The question of retention or acceleration is a collaborative effort. The ultimate decision for both of these special cases will rest with the Section Director. The aforementioned team will be comprised of parents/guardians, faculty, administration, and any other involved EC/MTSS professionals. *Our complete Student Retention Policy (P. 34) and Student Policy for Acceleration (P. 44) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

STUDENT INFORMATION

Every child enrolled in the Academy and Charter program must have all required paperwork on file by the first day of school. These forms collect data that is important for the school to have on file, such as medical issues, allergies, emergency contacts and approved pick-up list. Once in the system, parents/guardians will receive invitations to the parent portal, which is needed for the school to send important communication via text and email.



For families having more than one child at Sterling, you will have to complete a form for each child.

HEALTH/MEDICAL RECORDS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

By law, the school must maintain current health and immunization records on all students. Preschoolers, Kindergarteners, and 7th graders must have required immunizations or medical/religious exemptions on file by the 30th day of school or they may be excluded from school until this information is provided. Health forms are provided by the school. Medical forms require a signature and date of examination from a health provider. Physical exams must be completed and dated no more than six months prior to enrollment and must be submitted no later than 30 days from the start date. Sterling Montessori complies with FERPA regarding matters of confidentiality.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS: PRESCHOOLERS THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

Preschoolers-8th-grade students are required to have the following documents in their student file. NOTE: Because it can sometimes be difficult to schedule a school physical with the children's regular pediatrician prior to the start of school, the Medical Form (for preschoolers) and the Health Assessment Form (for K-8) can be submitted no later than 30 days following the start of school, or they may be excluded from school until this information is provided.

- Academy Application for Enrollment (preschoolers)
- Lottery Application for Enrollment -must be signed and dated by parent or guardian (K-8th grade)
- Copy of Original Birth Certificate (K-8th grade)
- Proof of Residence (one of the following: NC Driver's License, Deed of Trust, Rental Lease Agreement or Utility Bill no more than 30 days old) (K-8th grade)
- Student Information Form
- Current Immunization Record (7th grade students must have TDAP booster)
- Medical Form (preschoolers only)
- Health Assessment Form (K-8th grade)
- Parent Permission Form (image and grounds permissions, receipt of Parent Handbook acknowledgement)
- Primary Language Survey
- Shaken Baby Head Trauma Policy Form (preschoolers)
- Student Records Request Form (K-8th Grade if applicable)
- Medical Action Plan (if applicable)
- Custodial Form (if applicable)

RETURNED CHECK

A \$25 fee for each check returned by the bank for any reason shall be remitted by the check issuer to Sterling Montessori. The check issuer shall be notified and informed that they have 10 days to make payment to Sterling Montessori in the amount of the returned check along with the \$25 fee and any applicable late fees via certified funds or money order. *Our complete Returned Check Policy (P. 42) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.*

Withdrawal

WITHDRAWING OR EXITING FROM STERLING MONTESSORI

When your child withdraws or graduates from Sterling Montessori, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Contact Enrollment Manager to inform of the withdrawal from the school, complete withdrawal form, and notify of new address if applicable.
2. Notify the Section Director.
3. Notify the Classroom Teacher. If applicable, notify EC or 504 Coordinator.
4. Notify Before care and Aftercare teacher if applicable.
5. Return all Carpool tags to the Main Office.
6. Reconcile all fees and outstanding balances.

Grievance

Sterling Montessori encourages resolutions of any grievance through informal means, however it recognizes that, at times, a formal process may be necessary for certain types of grievances or if the informal process did not produce satisfactory results. Grievances will be dealt with in accordance with all applicable laws, policies, and regulations. Grievance proceedings and all information pertaining to them shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent feasible and permitted by law. Our complete policy on Parent/Guardian Grievances (P. 39) can be found in the Comprehensive Policies document.

STERLING MONTESSORI

APPENDICES CONTENTS

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- [Appendix C](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)



STERLING
MONTESSORI

EST. 1997

APPENDIX A

Guide to Commonly Used Initialisms and Acronyms

AHERA	Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act
BOG	Beginning of Grade
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
EOG	End of Grade
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
LHU	Laura Holland Uzzell
MTSS	Multi-Tier Systems of Supports

APPENDIX B

Montessori Information and Resources Print

Montessori Today by Paula Polk Lillard

A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom by Aline D. Wolf

The Secret Childhood by Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work by E.M. Standing

The Montessori Way: An Education for Life by Tim Seldin and Paul Estein, PhD.

Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents by Maureen Schmidt M.Ed.

Digital

North American Montessori Teachers' Association

American Montessori Society

Montessori Connections

Montessori Family Alliance

Association Montessori Internationale

APPENDIX C

Related Documents and Forms

All necessary documents and forms can be accessed via Sterling's website at <https://www.sterlingmontessori.org/parents/forms-and-documents/>

DATES OF INTEREST
August

- 5-7 Director-Designated Work Days
- 10-14 Teacher Work Week Days
- 18 Open House
- 20 First Day of School

September

- 7 Holiday - Closed
- 16 LHU Board Meeting
- 21 Teacher Work Day

October

- 12 Teacher Work Day
- 14 LHU Board Meeting
- 15 Charter Lottery Opens
- 29 Conference Day-No School
- 30 Conference Day-No School

November

- 11 Holiday (observed) - Closed
- 18 LHU Board Meeting
- 23-27 Vacation/Holiday- Closed

December

- 21-31 Vacation/Holiday - Closed

January

- 1 Vacation/Holiday- Closed
- 4 Teacher Work Day
- 14 Charter Lottery Closes
- 18 Holiday- Closed
- 20 LHU Board Meeting

February

- 11 Public Charter Lottery
- 12 Optional Teacher Work Day
- 15 Holiday- Closed
- 17 LHU Board Meeting

March

- 11 Conference Day-No School
- 12 Conference Day-No School
- 17 LHU Board Meeting
- 26 Holiday - Closed
- 29-31 Vacation/Holiday- Closed

April

- 1-2 Vacation/Holiday- Closed
- 5 Teacher Work Day
- 14 LHU Board Meeting

May

- 17 Teacher Work Day
- 17 Alumni Day
- 19 LHU Board Meeting
- 31 Memorial Day - Closed
- 27 Begin EOG Testing

June

- 10 Last Day: Student 1/2 Day
- 11 Teacher Work Day
- 14 Director-Designated Workday
- 16 LHU Board Meeting
- 21 Summer Camp Starts
- 21-24 RTA Summer Camp
- 21-24 ESY

- ★ First/Last Day of School
- ⬆ Open House/Lottery Dates
- Vacation/Holiday
- Teacher/Staff Work Day
- Dir-Designated Work Day
- Optional Teacher Work Day
- Conference Day
- Summer Camp
- EOG EOG Testing

FEBRUARY 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	1	2	3	4	5	6

MARCH 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

APRIL 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

MAY 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	EOG	EOG	28
30	31					

JUNE 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	EOG	EOG	EOG	EOG	5
6	EOG	EOG	EOG	★	10	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	26
27	Camp	Camp	Camp	1	2	3

JULY 2027

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	Camp	Camp	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	17
18	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	24
25	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	Camp	31

AUGUST 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	★	20	21
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

OCTOBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

DECEMBER 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

JANUARY 2027						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						