

# Parent/Guardian Policies and Procedures Handbook

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*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.*

# **Parent Policies and Procedures Handbook Contents**

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# Handbook

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**Welcome**

**1.1**  
**Welcome**

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## **Welcome to Sterling Montessori**

### **1.1.a** **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.

### **1.1.b** **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 childcentered educational approach based on scientific observations of children. Children develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively in order to thrive in the real world.

### **1.1.c** **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/guardians, 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

#### **1.1.d**

### **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.

#### **1.1.e**

### **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.

**1.1.f**  
**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 childcare and preschool facility.
- A full day, Montessori preschool program which offers an optional summer camp.
- Overseen by the LHU Board of Directors, a non-profit organization (see below)
- Committed to offering parent education in Montessori methods and philosophies.

**1.1.g**  
**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.

### **1.1.h**

#### **LHU Board**

The LHU Board meetings are open to the public. A community comment section is one of the first items 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 see [Meet the Board page](#) on the school'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](mailto:president@lhuf.org), for consideration.

### **1.1.i**

#### **Parent and Faculty Association**

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.

### **1.1.j**

#### **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.

### **1.1.k 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 (Policy 25) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

## **1.2** **Curriculum**

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### **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 through careful and constant observation, one cornerstone of the Montessori Method. This allows each student's education to be individualized.

#### **1.2.a** **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

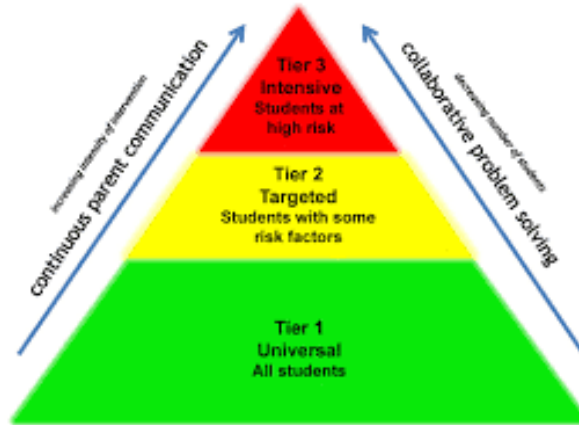
MTSS stands for Multi Tier System of Support. It is a framework, a way of thinking, a mindset through which we can highlight student needs, risks and opportunities and then identify the next steps to employ in service to the student. MTSS is used to provide targeted support to struggling students. It 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. 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?

##### **1.2.a.1** **Who is in MTSS?**

All students are considered to be in Tier One of the Multi-Tiered System of Support where high fidelity Montessori curriculum and instruction are the core focus.



### 1.2.b 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.***

### 1.2.c How Do We Progress Monitor and Assess All Students?

- Daily Observations - Formal and Informal
- Montessori Three-Period Lessons with Materials
- Easy CBM for Reading and Math

- Moby Max for Reading and Math
- Beginning of Grade (BOG), End of Grade (EOG) and End of Course (EOC) Tests

### **1.2.d English Learners**

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 will be administered an English Language screener (W-APT) within the first 30 days of the school year. The screener will assess whether the child is identified as an English Learner. If the student is identified as an English Learner (EL), the teachers will work with the child in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and how they relate to the English Language. The teacher and EL Coordinator will create a EL 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. EL Learners are administered the ACCESS test in late February/early March to assess their English language skills. The results of this test determine if a student remains an EL 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 EL program, they are monitored over a 2 year period to be sure they are being successful within their classroom and are solid with their understanding and usage of the English Language.

### **1.2.e Beginning of Grade Testing Policy**

All 3rd Grade students must take the BOG Reading Assessment which must be administered during the 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> days of the new school year.

### **1.2.f 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 four times a year; two of these are shared during fall and spring conferences with parents/guardians, and progress reports are sent home in January and June.

### **1.2.g**

## **End of Grade (EOG) Testing Policy**

All students in grades 3 through 8 must 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 must take the Math I End of Course test. Sterling Montessori sends home a test 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 test calendar is also posted on our school's website.

### **1.2.h Tutoring**

Some students may be identified as benefiting from receiving additional tutoring on individual subject topics, study skills or any other areas that will help them achieve success. In order to meet these needs, Sterling Montessori offers after-hours tutoring support provided by our qualified teachers or support staff.

*Our complete Tutoring Policy (Policy 43) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **1.2.i Credit by Demonstrated Mastery**

The purpose of Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is to allow a student that is very advanced in a subject to earn credit for a high school course without having to take the in class semester or year long course. The student already understands the concepts and content of the course and has shown they are ready to move on to a higher level. If a parent feels their child needs to go through the CDM process, they first meet with their child's teacher, section director, and CDM coordinator. If they agree that this is the right course of action, the parent fills out a CDM application. There are 2 phases to the CDM process. In phase I the student takes an assessment and must score at a required level to move on and phase II consists of the student creating an artifact that shows deep understanding and mastery of the content of the course. The student works with a CDM team through this process and if the child passes phase I and successfully completes phase II, the student passes the course.

### **1.2.j Accelerated Math Placement**

The Middle School at Sterling Montessori offers two accelerated math courses, 7+, and Common Core Math I and II for those who meet the criteria. *Our complete Accelerated Math Policy (Policy 20) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **1.2.j.1**

#### **North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS)**

If the class is currently being taught at Sterling Montessori, preference is that qualified students will take an in-person class. Students who otherwise qualify may be offered classes through NCVPS (North Carolina Virtual Public School) if placement in a middle school classroom is not appropriate. If a math class is not offered at Sterling Montessori (Common Core Math II, Common Core Math III) and a student has met all requirements to enroll in these courses, staff will make arrangements through an accredited provider and will be responsible for enrolling the student in the North Carolina Final Exams, which will be administered by a Sterling Montessori staff member.

***Sterling is not responsible for payment of NCVPS courses taken over the summer.***

### **1.2.k**

#### **Read to Achieve**

A Read to Achieve legislative initiative is a part of the Excellent Public Schools Act. 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.

### **1.2.k.1**

#### **Third Grade Reading Proficiency**

According to Statute, students in the third grade shall be retained if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency by reading at or above the third grade level as demonstrated by the results of the state-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third grade students. The charter school shall provide reading interventions to retained students to remediate reading deficiency, which may include 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted, evidence-based reading instruction, accelerated reading classes, transition classes containing third and fourth grade students, and summer reading camps.

## **1.3 Exceptional Children**

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### **Exceptional Children Services**

#### **1.3.a 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, Exceptional Children (EC) 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](#).

##### **1.3.a.1 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 Child Find Process. Child find posters and leaflets are posted at the main entryways and hallways. Please reference the [Child Find Brochure](#) for more information.

##### **1.3.a.2 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.

##### **1.3.a.3 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.

### **1.3.b**

#### **Code of Conduct and Discipline**

Sterling Montessori uses the "Pyramid of Intervention" 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. When necessary the IEP team will develop a behavior intervention plan and/or a manifestation determination meeting will be put in place.

### **1.3.c**

#### **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 sent directly to the provider by Sterling Staff.

## **2**

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# **The Regular School Day**

## **2.1** **Attendance**

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### **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](mailto:attendance@sterlingmontessori.org) as well as your child's teacher.

#### **2.1.a** **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.

#### **2.1.b** **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 (Policy 32) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

## **2.2** **Tardiness**

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### **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.

Tardiness creates stress on your child and the classroom community as a whole. Based on these well-documented facts, the faculty and Administration will make every effort to support your family's success. Should your child be chronically tardy, you should expect to be contacted by a member of the administration for remediation.

#### **2.2.a** **Tardy Procedure**

When a child is tardy, his or her parent/guardian must walk their child to the Main Office to be signed in. 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 Executive Director)
- Religious holidays
- Court appointment

## **2.3** **Arrival &** **Departure**

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### **2.3.a** **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, collecting their belongings, 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. Repeated early dismissals are not allowed.

**Parents/guardians arriving after 3:00 pm will not be granted this request.**

### **2.3.b** **A-Building Arrival and Dismissal**

No student may be on the playground before or after school hours unless they are enrolled in a Beforecare 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 3:15 pm and ends at 3:30 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.

| <b>A-Building</b> |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Arrival</b>    | 8:30 AM - 8:50 AM |
| <b>Departure</b>  | 3:15 PM - 3:30 PM |

### **2.3.c**

#### **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 Beforecare or 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.

| <b>1st - 8th Grades</b> |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Arrival</b>          | 8:30 AM - 8:50 AM |
| <b>Dismissal</b>        | 3:30 PM - 3:45 PM |

#### **2.3.c.1**

##### **Carpool**

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.

#### **2.3.c.2**

##### **Walkers**

Students in Children's House through Upper Elementary may walk home only if accompanied by an adult.

In order for students to be permitted to walk home unsupervised, the following must apply:

- Student must be in the 7th or 8th grade.
- Student must remain on the sidewalk and/or use the crossing guard at Cedar Fork Elementary on Town Hall Drive. (*Students will not be permitted to walk home if it requires crossing the street without a crossing guard.*)
- Parents/guardians must submit a signed permission slip.

### **2.3.c.3**

#### **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.

### **2.3.d**

#### **Carpool Procedures**

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 everyday. 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.

### **2.3.d.1**

#### **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.**

### **2.3.d.2**

#### **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 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 cone.

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).

### **2.3.e**

#### **Carpool Tags**

Families with students in Lower Elementary through 8th grade will receive 2 carpool tags (divorced families will receive 2 tags for each household).

If your tag becomes lost or damaged or you need to rent additional tags, you may do so through MySchoolBucks which is located on Sterling's website. Additional carpool tags are \$10.00.

Families who walk to pick up their child(ren) will also be given 2 carpool keychain tags. Additional keychain tags are not available for rent.

If a person does not have a carpool tag they must park and check-in at the Main Office.

### **2.3.f**

#### **Changes in Pick-Up Routines**

Always make sure those who routinely pick-up are on your child's Student Information Sheet 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](mailto: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.

### **2.3.g**

#### **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.

### **2.3.h**

#### **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 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 the Student Information Sheets 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 (Policy 50) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **2.3.i**

#### **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 a designated area to await their parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians will be subject to a charge of \$5.00 per minute to a maximum of \$50.00 per day. When a parent/guardian is running late, a courtesy call should be made to the Main Office and/or classroom.

## **2.4 Before & Aftercare**

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## **Before and Aftercare**

Sterling Montessori provides quality Beforecare and Aftercare programs for all enrolled students, enabling parents/guardians and family members to go to work knowing their children are in safe, caring environments.

Beforecare arrival begins each morning at 7:30 AM and Aftercare pick-up ends at 6:00 PM. The Beforecare 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 o'clock the Main Office is closed. In an emergency you can reach our aftercare staff by calling the following numbers:

| <b>Before and After Care Contact Information</b> |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Children's House</b>                          | (984) 220-1495 |
| <b>Elementary and Middle School</b>              | (984)220-1499  |

**3**

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**Student Health and Safety**

### 3.1 Student Health

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## Student Health

### 3.1.a Charter Health Requirements

Sterling Montessori is compliant with all student health and safety requirements as defined in general statute, SBE policy, or 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.

### 3.1.b Sick Protocols and Procedures

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

- 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 (a child with any nits in their hair will be sent home until they are nit-free).
- 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 DHHS.

**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 time.**

**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.

*Our complete Sick Policy (Policy 27), including guidelines for when children may return to school, can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.1.c 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 and after outdoor activities and through the day as needed.

- Sterling uses a sanitation approved, hospital grade cleaning agent that is safe to be used in school settings.
- Touch points (doorknobs, light switches, chairs, electronic devices, etc.) are cleaned regularly by staff with the hospital grade cleaning agent.

### **3.1.d 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 two current EpiPens/inhalers.**

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 after the end of school.

*Our complete Student Medical Support Policy (Policy 51) can be found in the policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.1.e Chronic Health Issues**

Please note on the Student Information Sheet, 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 (Policy 51) can be found in the policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.1.f**

## **Counseling Services**

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, click on Student Life and the school counseling tab is located there.

### **3.1.g**

## **Suicide Intervention**

We take ALL threats seriously. Student safety is our primary concern.

*Our complete Suicide Intervention Policy (Policy 22) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.1.h**

## **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.

## **3.2 Student Safety**

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### **3.2.a 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. When exiting the classroom in a line, one teacher should be at the beginning of the line and one at the end. If one teacher is escorting a smaller group, he or she should be at the back of the line. Have children stop at the corner and wait for the teacher to join them so the teacher can monitor the front and back of the line at all times.

### **3.2.b 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. It is each individual teacher's responsibility to make sure the appropriate ratio is maintained at all times. During nap time, the ratio requirement changes. As long as children are on their nap mats, there only has to be one adult in the room at a time. When any child gets up and assumes their normal activities, a second adult must be present. 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. Children may work on the patios or hallways if the windows and doors are open, so they can be properly supervised.

### **3.2.c Playground Rules & Supervision**

The Sterling Montessori playground has been thoughtfully constructed and maintained for the purpose of enriching the school experience for our students. 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 an 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 play areas 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.

### **3.2.c.1**

#### **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.
- For safety, students are to go down the slide feet first. 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.
- 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. Students unable to follow these rules lose the privilege of using the bikes for that play period.

### **3.2.c.2**

#### **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 an adult's permission to be outside the classroom or on the playground.
- 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.

### **3.2.d**

#### **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 office will attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If they cannot be contacted, emergency contacts listed on the child's Student Information Sheet 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 require that they notify the Section Director as soon as possible.

### **3.2.e**

#### **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. Sunscreen and ointments will only be administered if written permission is given by the parent or guardian. Parents/guardians will be called if their child gets splinters or ticks or need other first aid for which the faculty is unable to offer.

*Our complete Student Medical Support Policy (Policy 51) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.2.f**

#### **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 (Policy 21) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.3 Campus Safety**

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#### **3.3.a 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 background check.

*The complete Criminal History and Background Check Policy (Policy 41) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

#### **3.3.b Visitor Sign-In**

All parents/guardians and visitors to campus must go through a check-in screening upon entering the Main Office. 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 (Science Night, Rise-Up Nights, etc.). On the days you are required to sign in, please return to the office to sign out and return your badge before leaving campus.

#### **3.3.c Verification of 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 Administration is satisfied that such person has the approval of the authorized parent or guardian. 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.

*The complete Verification of Child Custody Policy (Policy 24) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.3.d 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.

### **3.3.e 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 (Policy 26) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

*The complete Classroom Pets Policy (Policy 47) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **3.3.f 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.

### **3.3.g Emergency Procedures**

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

#### **3.3.g.1 Requirements for Contacting Law Enforcement**

When a reasonable belief that any of the following acts of crime and violence have occurred on school property or at school sponsored events, you are required to call law enforcement (911). If you should have a question whether or not an incident should be reported, consult with the

Executive Director or designee. These crimes are: assault on school personnel not resulting in serious injury, assault resulting in serious injury, assault involving the use of a weapon, homicide, kidnapping, possession of a controlled substance, possession of a firearm, possession of a weapon, rape, robbery from the person, robbery with a dangerous weapon, sexual assault, sexual offense, taking indecent liberties with a minor, alcohol consumption, possession, sales or purchase, willfully burning a public school and bomb threats/bomb hoaxes.

# 4

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## **Social Interaction**

## **4.1 Social Interaction**

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### **4.1.a 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 our 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.

# 5

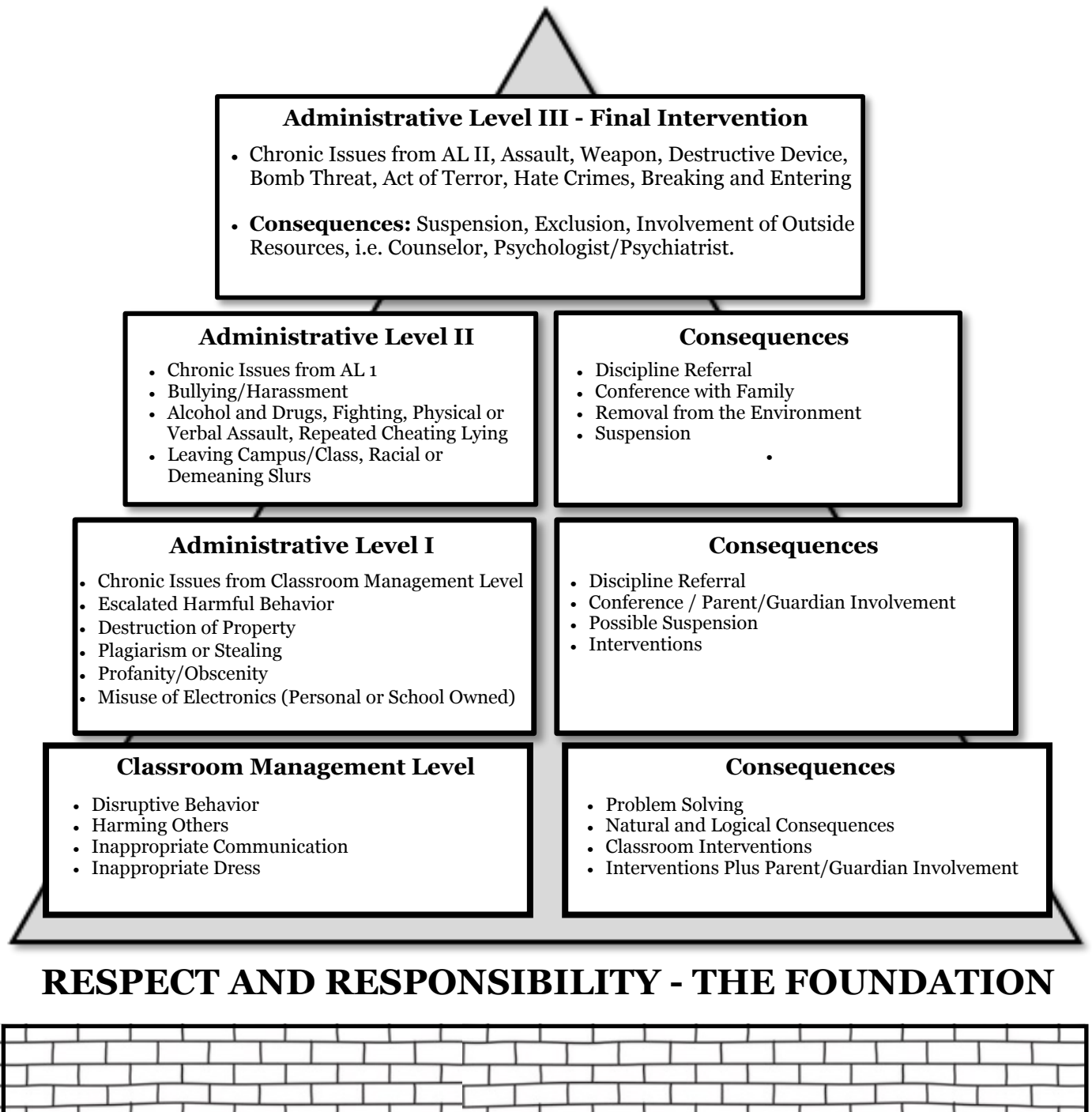
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## **Code of Conduct and Discipline**

## 5.1 Intervention Pyramid

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### The Pyramid of Intervention



## **5.2 Discipline Policy**

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### **5.2.a Philosophy of Discipline at Sterling Montessori**

When children receive positive, non-violent, and empathetic guidance from adults, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief about how children learn and develop values, Montessori will use the Pyramid of Intervention as its discipline model. This tiered model was emulated after the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in an effort to respond to a student's needs. Directors, teachers, specialists and other school staff at Sterling Montessori are members of the MTSS team. They work as a team to assess students and plan MTSS interventions. Each member has responsibilities to ensure the success of all the children at Sterling Montessori. The MTSS Core team oversees the MTSS process and procedures and ensures proper documentation. This model strives to provide a way for Sterling Montessori to support students with learning and behavior problems by systematically delivering a range of interventions based on demonstrated levels of need.

### **5.2.b The Rules of Respect**

The primary rules at Sterling Montessori are:

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

### **5.2.c Discipline Model**

Based on the Pyramid of Intervention model (illustrated in section 6.1 of this handbook), this discipline plan reflects the graduated and documented response to a student's inappropriate choices. The items listed in this plan are examples and do not represent all possible situations. The Administration has the discretion to evaluate issues on a case by case basis in order to determine the appropriate Administrative Level and related consequences.

This plan is consistent with the Montessori philosophy that holds respect and responsibility as key elements and builds confidence, self-esteem, and leadership.

### **5.2.c.1**

#### **Classroom Management Level (Tier I)**

**Includes:** Lead Teacher, Parents/Guardians, and Student.

Eighty to ninety percent of student behaviors are addressed at the Classroom Management Level, and the Lead Teacher documents accommodations and interventions. Chronic behaviors that prove non-responsive to these strategies are moved to the Administration Level I. Incident reports are completed by the person witnessing/reporting the event and signed by the Lead Teacher and Section Director. The report is then emailed to the parent/guardian. These reports along with any documentation (eg. phone logs, behavior plans, emails, etc.) will be submitted and filed with the Section Director. Lead teachers may request the support of the MTSS team.

#### **Examples (but not limited to):**

Disruptive Behaviors: interrupting teachers, distracting during work time, being unprepared for class, misusing materials, rough play, leaving the classroom for an excessive amount of time, vandalizing, bringing inappropriate items to school or hurting others.

Inappropriate Communication: passing notes, starting rumors, calling names, being disrespectful, lying, using rude language and mimicking.

Dress: poor choices of clothing (decency)

### **5.2.c.2**

#### **Administrative Level I (Tier II)**

**Includes:** Assistant Executive Director, Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parents/Guardians, and Student.

Administration Level I behaviors generally result in interventions but may result in a suspension. This level generally accounts for 5-10% of behaviors. This level may include (but not limited to): documented chronic behaviors from Classroom Management Level and those listed on the pyramid (chronic issues from Category I, destruction of property, bullying/harassment, harmful behavior, plagiarism, stealing, profanity,

obscurity, misuse of personal or school-owned electronics, etc.). Willful harmful behavior that results in injury of a child will be considered a physical assault.

Incident reports are completed by the person witnessing/reporting the event and signed by the Lead Teacher and Section Director. These reports along with any documentation (eg. phone logs, behavior plans, emails, etc.) will be submitted and filed with the Section Director. Lead Teachers may request the support of the MTSS team.

### **5.2.c.3**

#### **Administrative Level II (Tier III)**

**Includes:** Assistant Executive Director, Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parent/Guardian and Student.

Behaviors addressed at this level may include (but not limited to): chronic behaviors from earlier levels and those on the pyramid, leaving campus or class without permission, hiding from the teacher, or skipping classes, bad language, physical assault, cheating and lying, and drugs of any sort. Physical assault or harmful behavior that results in biting another person where the skin is broken and or harming another person leaving bruises or cuts and scratches will result in immediate removal from the classroom and parents/guardians will be asked to come and pick up for the remainder of the school day. If a pattern develops, a plan will be put in place. If no progress is made, academy students may be asked to leave the program.

Administrative Level II behaviors may warrant a Short-Term Suspension, not to exceed five (5) school days. The Assistant Executive Director may recommend a Long-Term Suspension based upon aggravating factors regarding the severity of the violation or safety concerns which may warrant the recommendation of Long-Term Suspension.

The incident report is completed by the person witnessing/reporting the event, signed by the Lead Teacher and submitted to the section director with the appropriate documentation (eg. phone logs, behavior plans, emails, etc.). If a suspension is warranted, the Assistant Executive Director will write a formal notification letter to the student's parents/guardians, a copy of which will be filed in the student's Cumulative Folder and reported in Power School. In the event of escalating chronic behaviors, the support of the MTSS team is recommended.

#### **5.2.c.4 Administrative Level III (Continuation of Tier III)**

**Includes:** Assistant Executive Director, Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parent/Guardian, Student, and School Counselor or Behavior Specialist. Behaviors addressed at the Administrative Level III, including (but not limited to): Assault, weapons, destructive devices, bomb threats, act of terror, hate crimes, breaking and entering, or anything unlawful are more severe in nature and typically result in a recommendation for Suspension, Long-Term Suspension or Exclusion. Additionally, chronic behaviors in all previous levels not responsive to interventions may be elevated to this level. Referral to MTSS, alternative placement, or involvement of school counselor or other outside resources may be responses at this level.

#### **5.2.d Suspensions**

After a student receives a suspension, both the parents/guardians and student are asked to meet with the Assistant Executive Director and Section Director prior to the student returning to the classroom. The purpose of this meeting is to help the student transition successfully back into their classroom.

*You can find more information about intervention levels on the Pyramid of Intervention which can be located in section 5.1 of this handbook.*

#### **5.2.e 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 must 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. This section describes those guidelines in more detail.

#### **5.2.e.1**

##### **Children's House Level**

1. First Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent/guardian.
2. Second Incident: An Incident Report is written, a phone call is made to the parent/guardian and the report is shared with the parent/guardian.
3. Third Incident: An incident report is written, a phone call is made to the parent/guardian, the report is shared with the parent/guardian and a parent-teacher conference may be scheduled.

#### **5.2.e.2**

##### **Elementary and Middle School Levels**

1. First Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent/guardian.
2. Second Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent/guardian.
3. Third Incident: An Incident Report is written and the parent/guardian is called immediately. A parent-teacher conference may be scheduled to make sure that the family is involved in the problem-solving process.

### 5.3 Harassment & Bullying

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#### **Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying**

Bullying is conduct meant to harm, intimidate or coerce another person. Bullying can take many forms. It is our policy to prohibit 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 or 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 (Policy 3) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

## **5.4** **Suspension**

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### **5.4.a** **Long Term Suspension and Exclusion from the Charter School**

Student retention is valued. Therefore, long term suspensions and exclusions of charter students should be a very rare event. This action should be taken only when there is either a clear and present danger to the school community because of a student's actions, or as a last resort after multiple, lower level disciplinary actions have been implemented.

*Our complete Long Term Suspension and Exclusion from Charter School Policy (Policy 40) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

# 6

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## **General School Policies and Procedures**

## **6.1** **Communication**

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### **6.1.a** **Communication**

Clear communication between parents/guardians and teachers is vital to student success. Teachers will respond 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 would go 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 appropriate director.”

When setting a meeting directly 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 concern, they may bring their concern to the Director of Student Affairs.

### **6.1.b** **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 Sheets which are filled out electronically by parent/guardians. Although most communications are done electronically, we do mail some information home. Please make sure we have your most recent address on file. If your child is a member of a two-household family, please make sure both addresses are listed on their Student Information Sheets.

*If you need to update your information, please email  
[office@sterlingmontessori.org](mailto:office@sterlingmontessori.org).*

## 6.2 Field Trips

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### 6.2.a Enrichment Opportunities for Pre-Schoolers

Off Campus Field Trips are for Kindergarten through eighth grade students only. Pre-Schoolers shall not participate in Off-Campus Field Trips. Enrichment opportunities will be provided in class for all Pre-Schoolers.

### 6.2.b 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 in section 4.1a.

*Our full policy on Off Campus Field Trips (Policy 28) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### 6.2.c Going out

A Going Out is a meaningful, productive component of 'Cosmic Education' as implemented in a Montessori Elementary or Middle School classroom.

As children develop through the second plane, they realize that not all their answers can be found in the classroom environment. Going Outs are not field trips. They are small group visits to local destinations, or visits to local experts which support and are an extension of their classroom work. They are independently planned and implemented by the group of students attending.

The classroom requirements and procedure for Going Out trips are communicated by the Lead Teacher to the students and parents/guardians. In order for students to be eligible to participate in a Going Out enrichment experience, the student must meet certain classroom prerequisites. All students must have written parental consent to participate.

**Chaperones of Going Out trips will receive guidelines of their responsibilities on the trip and are required to complete a background check as stated in section 4.1.a.**

### **6.3** **Volunteering**

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#### **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.

## **6.4 Observing Classrooms**

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### **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 teacher 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.

## **6.5 Student Records**

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### **6.5.a 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 the Executive Director a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Executive 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 the Executive 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**

### **6.5.b**

## **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 (Policy 37) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

## **6.6 Appropriate Attire**

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### **6.6.a Appropriate Clothing**

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. In case of an accident, children who do not have a change of clothing will be sent home to change. 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 (Policy 38) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

#### **6.6.a.1 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.

### **6.6.b 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.

**6.6.c**

**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.

## **6.7** **Technology**

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### **6.7.a** **Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices**

The 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 (Policy 36) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **6.7.b** **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 Policies section of this handbook.*

**6.7.c**

**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.

## **6.8** **Grievance**

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### **6.8.a** **Parent/Guardian 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 (Policy 39) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

7

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# Nutrition

## 7.1 Nutrition

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### 7.1.a 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. Parents/guardians 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 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.

### 7.1.b 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.

*If and when Sterling can provide a lunch option, Sterling will follow the USDA Food Guidelines.*

### 7.1.c 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.

# 8

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## Enrollment

## **8.1 Enrollment**

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### **8.1.a 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 (Policy 11) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook. An addendum has been made to this policy.*

### **8.1.b Expectations for Incoming Academy Students**

Our expectation is that all academy children are independent in toileting. This means they are able to complete all aspects of the toileting process without the help of an adult. Accidents happen. We understand. If accidents become common, we will need to make a plan with parents/guardians to help the child be independent again. In the case of a bowel movement accident, the parent/guardian could be asked to come and change the student. Consistent, repeated occurrences will result in a meeting to discuss continued enrollment in the program.

### **8.1.c 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. The placement decision will be reevaluated with the team after a 90-day period.

### **8.1.d**

## **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 Assistant Executive Director of the school. The aforementioned team will be comprised of parents/guardians, faculty, administration, and any other involved EC/MTSS professionals.

*Our complete Student Retention Policy (Policy 34) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

*Our complete Student Policy for Acceleration (Policy 44) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **8.1.e**

## **Student Information Sheets**

Every child enrolled in the Academy and Charter program must have a Student Information Sheet on file by the first day of school. This Student Information sheet will need to be completed through the Info Snap invite that parents/guardians will receive prior to the start of school (only one parent/guardian will receive the Info Snap invitation). This necessary form collects data that is important for the school to have on file; medical issues, allergies, emergency contacts and approved pick-up list. The Information Sheet is needed for the school to send important communication via text and email to parents/guardians.

For families having more than one child at Sterling, you will have to complete a form for each child. Once you submit the information for the first child and submit it, auto-fill will allow you to fill out the same information more quickly for additional siblings.

### **8.1.f**

## **Health/Medical Records and Immunizations**

By law, the school must maintain current health and immunization records on all students. Health forms are provided by the school if needed. 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.

### **8.1.g**

## **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. We cannot admit children without a completed exam and immunization record.

- 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 Sheet
- 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)

### **8.1.h**

#### **Returned Check**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with processing and accounting for returned checks. 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 (Policy 42) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

# 9

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## Withdrawal

## **9.1** **Withdrawal**

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### **9.1.a** **Withdrawing or Exiting from Sterling Montessori**

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

1. Contact Data Manager to inform of the withdrawal from the school, complete [withdrawal form](#), and notify of new address if applicable.
2. Notify Classroom Teacher and EC or 504 Coordinator if applicable.
3. Notify Before and After Care staff if applicable.
4. Return all Carpool tags to the Main Office.
5. Reconcile all fees and outstanding balances.

# Policies

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**P.1  
Accelerated  
Math**

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## **Accelerated Math Placement Policy**

*Approved 5/2020*

At Sterling Montessori, the child-led philosophy of Maria Montessori is the cornerstone of our educational program. All Sterling Montessori students in elementary shall have the opportunity to move through the Montessori curriculum at an individualized pace that is appropriate for each child, without being constrained by the needs of other students in the class. Sterling Montessori will follow the child's individual academic needs. Substantial consideration should be given to developing a deep mathematical understanding, rather than rushing through the curriculum.

The Middle School at Sterling Montessori offers two accelerated math courses, 7+, and Common Core Math I. Consideration for placement into these accelerated courses, taught at the middle school level, is available to all Sterling Montessori students who meet the requirements stated below. A placement team will evaluate all perspectives including those of the parents/guardians, to determine the best course of action for the student. The placement team will be made up of classroom teachers and staff involved with the student, middle school math teacher(s) and administrators. The primary criteria used to evaluate students will be data driven: previous EOG scores, academic achievement in the NC state standards and Montessori curriculum progress reports, a normed placement test, and other standardized testing if applicable, however, social and emotional maturity will also be considered.

If the class is currently being taught at Sterling Montessori, preference is that qualified students will take an in-person class. Students who otherwise qualify may be offered classes through NCVPS (North Carolina Virtual Public School) if placement in a middle school classroom is not appropriate. If a math class is not offered at Sterling Montessori (Common Core Math II, Common Core Math III) and a student has met all requirements to enroll in these courses, staff will make arrangements through an accredited provider and will be responsible for enrolling the student in the North Carolina Final Exams, which will be administered by a Sterling Montessori staff member.

**To Qualify for Placement in the 7+ course taught in the Sterling Middle School (UE students & Rising 7th):**

- The student must have completed the state standards for the 6th grade math curriculum and half of the 7th grade math curriculum.
- The student must receive at least a 70% on the 7+ placement test given at the end of the school year.
- The student must be recommended by the placement team.

**To Qualify for Placement in Math I (UE students & Rising 7th):**

- The student has completed the second half of 7th grade and all of 8th grade math curriculum.
- Student must receive at least 70% on the Math 1 placement test given at the end of the school year.
- The student must be recommended by the placement team.

**To Qualify for Placement in Math I (Rising 8th graders that did not take 7+ in 7th grade):**

- The student must obtain at least a B (80% average) in 7th grade math.
- The student has completed all of the 8th grade math curriculum.
- The student must receive at least a 70% on the Math 1 placement test given at the end of the student's 7th grade year.
- The student must be recommended by the placement team.

**To Qualify for Placement in Math I (7+ Students):**

- The student who obtained at least a B (80%) in 7+ automatically qualifies for Math 1

- If the student received a C (70%-79%) average in 7+, the student can take the Math 1 placement test given at the end of the school year and must receive a 70% or higher.
- If the student received less than a C (70%) average in 7+, the student will take 8th grade math in 8th grade.

## **P.3 Harassment & Bullying**

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### **Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying**

*Approved 5/2020*

Sterling Montessori acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. Sterling Montessori prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. Sterling Montessori will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities or programs. Any violation of this policy will be considered serious and school officials shall promptly take appropriate action to address the violation.

#### **1. Prohibited Behavior**

Sterling Montessori expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying by students, employees, LHU Board members, volunteers or visitors. "Visitors" includes parents/guardians and other family members and individuals from the community, as well as vendors, contractors and other persons doing business with or performing services for Sterling Montessori.

This policy applies to unlawful discriminatory, harassing and bullying behavior that takes place: (1) in any school building or on any school premises before, during, or after school hours; (2) on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity; (3) during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity; (4) at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel; or (5) at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the school.

#### **2. Definitions**

- a. **Discrimination:** Discrimination means any act or failure to act, whether intentional or unintentional, that unreasonably and favorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their

membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age or disability.

- b. **Bullying and harassment:** Bullying and harassment means any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:
  - 1. Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
  - 2. Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits.
- c. **Hostile environment:** Hostile environment means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic or motivated by an individual's association with a person who has or is perceived to have a differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, acts of disrespect, intimidation, or threats, such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impending or blocking movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying.

Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, as described below, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students or between non-employees, including visitors or volunteers, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

- d. Cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment: Cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment are any words, actions or conduct that meet the definition of bullying or harassment as described in this policy and are conveyed via e-mail, text message, internet message boards, interactions on social media or other electronic media.
- e. Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
  - 1. Submission to the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic progress, or completion of a school-related activity;
  - 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or in the case of a student, submission to or rejection of such conduct is used in evaluating the student's performance within a course of study or other school-related activity; or
  - 3. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of (a) unreasonably interfering with an employee's work or performance or a student's educational performance, (b) limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or environment, or (c) creating an abusive, intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Sexually harassing conduct may include, but is not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats, pressure for sexual activity, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual, sexual assault, sexual violence, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures, or written materials. Acts of verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex, but not involving sexual activity or language, may be combined with incidents of sexually harassing conduct to determine if the incidents of sexually harassing conduct are sufficiently serious to create a sexually hostile environment.

It is possible for sexual harassment to occur at various levels: between peers or coworkers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, between students or imposed by non-employees on employees and/or students. Sexual harassment may be committed by members of the same sex or by members of the opposite sex.

Romantic or sexual advances toward students by employees or romantic or sexual relationships between school employees and students are never appropriate, whether they are consensual or otherwise outside the definition of sexual harassment. Such relationships are prohibited. Employees engaging in inappropriate relationships with students will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

- f. Gender-based harassment: Gender-based harassment means acts of verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.

### **3. Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, or Bullying**

Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied in violation of this policy by any student, employee, LHUF board member, volunteer, or visitor, or any third person who knows or suspects conduct that may constitute discrimination, harassment, or bullying, should inform the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, or any Section Director. Employees are required to report violations of this policy. Students may report any violation to any Sterling Montessori employee, and may report any violation anonymously.

### **4. Consequences**

- a. Any violations of this policy is serious and shall result in prompt and appropriate action. Students who violate this policy will be disciplined in accordance with applicable policies and procedures governing student conduct and discipline. Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and/or remedial actions ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, exclusion.
- b. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, dismissal; additionally, they may be

reported to law enforcement as appropriate. The same will apply to LHUF board members.

- c. Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement as appropriate.
- d. The actions taken in response to harassment or bullying behavior shall be reasonably calculated to end any harassment or bullying, eliminate a hostile environment if one has been created, and prevent harassment from occurring again. When considering whether a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, administrators should consider the nature and severity of the misconduct or violation to determine whether a classroom or school-wide response is necessary. Such classroom or school-wide responses may include staff training, harassment and bullying prevention programs, and/or other measures deemed appropriate by the Executive Director or designee.
- e. Nothing in this policy precludes Sterling Montessori from taking disciplinary action against a student or employee where the evidence does not establish discrimination, harassment or bullying, but the conduct violates other applicable disciplinary policies or codes of conduct.

## **5. Training and Programs**

As necessary, the Executive Director shall implement training and other programs that are designed to prevent discrimination, harassment, and bullying, and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community; additionally, to the extent necessary, the Executive Director shall request funds from the LHUF for the purposes of providing additional training for students, employees, and volunteers who have significant contact with students regarding Sterling Montessori's efforts to address discrimination, harassment, and bullying and will create programs to address these issues.

## **6. Notice**

Sterling Montessori shall provide notice to students, parents/guardians, and employees of this policy and of the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying established in the policy: Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Procedure. Sterling Montessori shall ensure

that students, employees, and parents/guardians or other responsible caregivers are provided notice of these policies at the beginning of each school year. In addition, these policies shall be posted on the school website, and copies of the policies shall be available at the school. Notice of the policies shall appear in all student and employee handbooks.

## **7. Coordinator**

The Executive Director or designee shall coordinate Sterling Montessori's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under federal non-discrimination laws. These responsibilities include investigating any complaints communicated to the school alleging noncompliance with Title VI or Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination Act, and/or the Boy Scouts Act, or alleging actions which would be prohibited by those laws.

## **8. Records and Reporting**

The Executive Director or designee shall maintain confidential records of complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying. The records must identify the names of all individuals accused of such offenses and the resolution of such complaints or reports. The Executive Director also shall maintain records of training conducted and corrective action(s) or other steps taken by the school to provide an environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

The Executive Director shall report to the President of the LHUF Board of Directors all verified cases of discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

## **9. Evaluation**

The Executive Director shall evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to correct or prevent discrimination, harassment, and bullying and shall share these evaluations periodically with the LHUF Board of Directors.

**P.10**  
**Use of**  
**Technology**

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## **Use of Technology Policy**

Sterling attempts to provide 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 Academy and Charter School (Sterling) will maintain a Responsible Use of Technology Policy that is similar to Wake County Public School System ([https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=wake\\_new](https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=wake_new)).

Sterling intends that students and employees benefit from these Technology Resources while remaining within the bounds of safe, legal, and responsible use. Accordingly, Sterling establishes this policy to govern student and employee use of Sterling Technology Resources. This policy applies regardless of whether such use occurs on or off Sterling property, and it includes all, but not limited to computer networks and connections, resources, tools, and learning environments made available by or on the networks, and all devices that connect to those networks, including personal devices.

Sterling's technology resources shall always be used in an approved, ethical, and lawful manner to avoid loss or damage to Sterling's reputation or compliance with various federal, state and local requirements.

Students, employees, visitors, and other users should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, delete, receive, or display when using Sterling's technology resources, whether the resources are used at school or elsewhere, and even if the use is for personal purposes. Sterling may, without notice,

- monitor, track, and/or log network access, communications, and use
- access, review, copy, store, delete, or disclose the content of all user files, regardless of medium, the content of electronic mailboxes, and system outputs, such as printouts, for any lawful purpose.

Such purposes may include, but are not limited to, maintaining system integrity, security, or functionality, ensuring compliance with school policies and applicable laws and regulations, protecting Sterling from

liability, and complying with public records requests. Sterling personnel shall monitor online activities of individuals who access the Internet via a school-owned device.

By using Sterling's network, Internet access, email system, devices, or other technology resources, individuals consent to have that use monitored by authorized Sterling personnel as described in this policy.

## **Expectations**

The use of Sterling's technology resources, including access to the Internet, is a privilege, not a right. Individual users of Sterling's technology resources are responsible for their behavior and communications when using those resources. Responsible use of Sterling's technology resources is use that is ethical, respectful, academically honest, and supportive of student learning. Each user has the responsibility to respect others in the school community and on the Internet. Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. General student and employee behavior standards, including those prescribed in other policies, regulations and rules, apply.

In addition, anyone who uses Sterling computers or electronic devices or who accesses the school network or the Internet using Sterling or personal resources must comply with all rules listed below. These rules are intended to clarify expectations for conduct but should not be construed as all-inclusive.

Before using the Internet, all students must be trained about appropriate online behavior and, with their parent/guardian, sign the **CONSENT FOR TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL RESOURCE USE** form.

All students and employees must be informed annually of the requirements of this policy and the methods by which they may obtain a copy of this policy. Before using Sterling's technology resources, students and employees must sign a statement indicating that they understand and will strictly comply with these requirements and acknowledging awareness that Sterling uses monitoring systems to monitor and detect inappropriate use of technology resources. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in disciplinary action, including revocation of user privileges. Willful misuse may result in disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution under applicable state and federal law.

## **Rules**

- Sterling technology resources are provided for school-related purposes only. Acceptable uses of such technology resources are limited to responsible, efficient, and legal activities that support learning and teaching. Use of Sterling technology resources for commercial gain or for profit is prohibited. Student personal use of Sterling technology resources for amusement or entertainment is also prohibited. Because some incidental and occasional personal use by employees is inevitable, Sterling permits infrequent and brief personal use by employees so long as it occurs on personal time, does not interfere with Sterling business, and is not otherwise prohibited by any other policy, procedure or guidelines.
- Under no circumstance may software purchased by Sterling be copied for personal use.
- Students and employees must comply with all applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records. Any use that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited. Plagiarism of Internet resources will be treated in the same manner as any other incidents of plagiarism.
- No user of technology resources, including a person sending or receiving electronic communications, may engage in creating, intentionally viewing, accessing, downloading, storing, printing, or transmitting images, graphics (including still or moving pictures), sound files, text files, documents, messages, or other material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive, or considered to be harmful to minors.
- The use of anonymous proxies to circumvent content filtering is prohibited.
- Users may not install or use any Internet-based file sharing program designed to facilitate sharing of copyrighted material.
- Users of technology resources may not send electronic communications fraudulently (i.e., by misrepresenting the identity of the sender).
- Users must respect the privacy of others. When using e-mail, chat rooms, blogs, or other forms of electronic communication, students must not reveal personal identifying information or information that is private or confidential, such as the home address or telephone number, credit or checking account information, or social security number of themselves or fellow students. In addition, school employees must not disclose on Sterling websites or web pages or

elsewhere on the Internet any personally identifiable, private, or confidential information concerning students (including names, addresses, or pictures) without the written permission of a parent or guardian or an eligible student, except as otherwise permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Users also may not forward or post personal communications without the author's prior consent.

- Users may not intentionally or negligently damage computers, computer systems, electronic devices, software, computer networks, or data of any user connected to Sterling technology resources. Users may not knowingly or negligently transmit computer viruses or self-replicating messages or deliberately try to degrade or disrupt system performance (e.g. consuming excessive amounts of Network bandwidth and other System resources.) Users must scan any downloaded files for viruses.
- In cases where Sterling Montessori determines that the student or faculty member has intentionally, recklessly or negligently caused damage to occur to the device, Sterling reserves the right to require full or partial payment to cover the costs associated with the repair or replacement of the device from the student or faculty member.
- Users may not create or introduce games, network communications programs, or any foreign program or software onto any Sterling computer, electronic device, or network without the express permission of the technology team or designee.
- Users are prohibited from engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as "hacking" or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems, or accounts.
- Users are prohibited from using another individual's ID or password for any technology resource without explicit authorization from the Executive Director or LHU Board.
- Users may not read, alter, change, block, execute, or delete files or communications belonging to another user without the owner's express prior permission.
- Employees shall not use passwords or user IDs for any data system (e.g., the state student information system, etc.) for an unauthorized or improper purpose.

- If a user identifies a security problem on a technology resource, he or she must immediately notify a member of the technology team or other appropriate school administrator. Users must not demonstrate the problem to other users. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access.
- Teachers shall make reasonable efforts to supervise students' use of the Internet during instructional time.
- Views may be expressed on the Internet or other technology resources as representing the view of Sterling or part of Sterling only with prior approval by the Executive Director or designee.

## **Restricted Material on the Internet**

The Internet and electronic communications offer fluid environments in which students may access or be exposed to materials and information from diverse and rapidly changing sources, including some that may be harmful to students. Sterling Montessori recognizes that it is impossible to predict with certainty what information on the Internet students may access or obtain. Nevertheless, Sterling Montessori personnel shall take reasonable precautions to prevent students from accessing material and information that is obscene, pornographic, or otherwise harmful to minors, including violence, nudity, or graphic language that does not serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose.

Sterling Montessori shall ensure that technology protection measures are used and are disabled or minimized only when permitted by law and LHU Board approved policy. Sterling Montessori is not responsible for the content accessed by users who connect to the Internet via their personal cell phone over the cellular network.

## **Parental Consent**

Sterling Montessori recognizes that parents/guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards their children should follow when using media and information sources. Accordingly, before a student may independently access the Internet, the student's parent/guardian must be made aware of the possibility that the student could obtain access to inappropriate material while engaged in independent use of the Internet. The parent/guardian and student must consent to the student's independent access to the Internet and to monitoring of the student's Internet activity and e-mail communication by school personnel. In addition, in accordance with Sterling Montessori's goals and visions for

technology, students may require accounts in third party systems for school related projects designed to assist students 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.

## **Use of Personal Technology on Sterling Property**

Refer to “Policy on Cell Phone and Other Electronic Devices.” 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.

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## **Personal Websites and Social Media**

The Executive Director may use any means available to request the removal of personal websites and social media accounts that substantially disrupt the school environment or that utilize Sterling Montessori school names, logos, or trademarks without permission.

### Students

Though school personnel generally do not monitor students' Internet activity conducted on non-Sterling Montessori devices during non-school hours, when the student's online behavior has a direct and immediate effect on school safety or maintaining order and discipline in the school, the student may be disciplined in accordance with school policy and applicable federal, state and local laws.

### Employees

Pictures that show Sterling Montessori students should not be uploaded to an employee’s social media account or personal website without the parent or guardian’s express consent.

## **P.11 Admissions & Enrollment**

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### **Charter Admission and Enrollment Policy**

*See Addendum 2 at the end of this handbook for updates made to Policy 11: Admissions and Enrollment*

Sterling Montessori is a tuition free public school. Any student who is qualified under the laws of this state for admission to a public school is qualified for admission at Sterling Montessori. According to NC G.S.115C-238.29F (g), a charter school shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national, origin, gender, or disability.

All students eligible for enrollment in a North Carolina public school are eligible for enrollment at Sterling Montessori. All students are required by 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, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

### **Enrollment Priority**

Sterling Montessori Charter School follows all rules and regulations regarding enrollment priority as specified in North Carolina Charter School Law 115C-218.45. The LHU Board of Directors has decided to offer admissions priority for the following tiers and will implement them in the manner described below:

1. **SCHOOL EMPLOYEES:** Priority is given to children of full-time Sterling Montessori employees.
2. **BOARD MEMBERS:** Priority is given to children of Sterling Montessori LHU Board Members. Total number of School employees and Board Members' children are limited to no more than 15% of the school's total enrollment, unless granted a waiver by the State Board of Education.

3. **SIBLINGS:** Once one child in the family is a member of the Sterling Montessori, siblings of enrolled students receive preferred enrollment status the following year.

**Note:** The term “siblings” applies to any of the following students who reside in the same household: half-siblings, step-siblings, and children residing together in the same family foster home.

4. **SIBLINGS OF STERLING ALUMNI:** This refers to siblings of students who have completed the highest grade offered by Sterling Montessori and attended for at least four years at Sterling.

## **Special Circumstances**

1. Multiple Birth Siblings (twins, triplets, etc.)

Multiple birth siblings applying for admission shall enter one surname into the lottery to represent all of the multiple births applying at the same time. If that surname of the multiple birth siblings is selected, then all of the multiple birth siblings shall be admitted.

- If the names are drawn and placed directly on a wait list, the parents/guardians must determine which student is placed first on the waitlist.
- If the multiple birth siblings are in different grades, the parents/guardians will need to decide at the time of applications are submitted which grade level they would like for their surname to be entered.

2. Exclusion/Suspension from a Public School:

Notwithstanding to any law to the contrary, a charter school, in this case Sterling Montessori may refuse admission to any student who has been excluded or suspended from a public school under N.C.G.S.11SC-391 until the period of suspension or exclusion has expired.

## **Application Process**

There is no application fee for charter school admission.

Prior to the application period, Sterling Montessori will announce on its website when the online application for admission will be made available

(opens in January), the deadline for submission (closes in February), and the date/time/location of the public lottery drawing (lottery drawing in March). The application period will be no less than 30 calendar days. Applications must be completed by the prospective student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal guardian.

For those without digital access, a computer will be available located in the Main Office from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on school days during the time of the application period.

For Kindergarten admissions, the student must be 5 years old on or before August 31st of the enrollment year (NC G.S. 115C-364).

Parents/guardians who accept enrollment for their child/children to attend Sterling, must be able to provide transportation to and from school, as there are no transportation services available from the school.

## **The Lottery Process**

The lottery will be conducted in the following manner:

1. Applications completed are digitally recorded and made available for the online enrollment program.
2. The online enrollment program eliminates the necessity for parents/guardians to come to campus to be notified of the results, however, anyone is welcome to attend in person should you want to witness the process. The details of this information can be found on the Sterling website.
3. The enrollment process is activated by Sterling Admissions who will then generate and record the lottery results.
4. The process is instantaneous and the results will be shared with families via the email addresses that were supplied on the digital application.
5. After the program has selected students for all available spaces and parents/guardians are notified, the drawing will continue to determine the order of a waiting list.
6. If a student has been selected in the lottery, the parent/guardian of the student will receive an acceptance notification via email. If the parent is unable to receive email, an acceptance letter will be mailed to the child's residence.

7. The school's wait list will be updated regularly and parents/guardians of students placed on the waitlist will receive periodic communication as to their student's place.

### **After Lottery Submissions**

Applications submitted after the lottery application deadline will be date and time stamped. These submissions will be placed at the bottom of the wait list according to the student's applicable grade level.

Applicants who would have received priority placement during the lottery process will still have priority placement if applications are received after the lottery drawing, if seats are available.

### **Acceptance of Enrollment**

The lottery results and waiting lists are posted on <https://www.sterlingmontessori.org>, and updates are provided as changes occur.

As stated, offers of enrollment will be delivered to lottery-selected children through the emails that were provided on their digital application. Prospective families are required to either accept or decline the offer via email or in writing, to document their response.

Parents/guardians or court appointed legal guardians of prospective students, will have 7 days to communicate their decision to either accept or decline Sterling Montessori's offer of enrollment. If Sterling Montessori does not receive a written response to the offer of enrollment by the close of business (4 PM) of the seventh (7th) day, the lack of response will be considered an effective "declining" of the offer. The student's name will be placed at the end of the waitlist for their grade level, and the offer will be presented to the next prospective student on that specific grade's waiting list.

- Thirty days prior to the first day of school, parents/guardians or court appointed legal guardians of prospective students will have 3 days to reply to an offer.
- Beginning one week prior to the first day of school and through the 35th student day, parents/guardians or court appointed legal guardians will have 24 hours to accept or decline Sterling Montessori's offer of enrollment.

Families that have accepted an offer of enrollment must then submit required enrollment documents to include a copy of their student's birth certificate, proof of residency and immunization records within 7 days after receiving the aforementioned documents. If we do not receive the enrollment documents within 7 days, the student's offer/seat is forfeited and the seat will be offered to the next student on the waiting list.

The wait list will only be applicable to the academic year that the lottery was conducted. Sterling will continue to fill open Charter seats from the waitlist as they become available for the first 35 academic days of the school year. After 35 days, no additional Charter students will be admitted to avoid disruptions to the classroom.

### **Attendance: First 20 Days of School**

Newly enrolled and returning students 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.

Parents/guardian may appeal our decision to withdraw a student due to failure to adhere to the Admission Attendance Policy. A written appeal must be sent to the Executive Director via email by close of business (4PM) the next day after receiving the withdrawal notification. The Executive Director reserves the right to grant or deny re-enrollment based on the information provided in the appeal process.

### **Sterling's Right to Refuse Enrollment**

Sterling Montessori reserves the right to refuse to enroll any student currently under a term of exclusion or suspension by his or her school until that term is over.

If we become aware of misrepresentations on the application and it is discovered prior to the public lottery drawing, we will address them prior to the lottery. Post lottery, any misrepresentation may result in this application being discarded and/or applicant's dismissal from the school. Sterling Montessori reserves the right to refuse to enroll a student if a

parent/guardian willingly and knowingly provided incorrect information on either the student's application for admission, or on the documents submitted at the time of enrollment.

## **P.21**

### **Concussion**

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## **Concussion Policy**

*Approved: 3/2019*

*This policy is mandated by North Carolina Statute GS 115C-12(12) titled Return-to-Learn After Concussion.*

## **Head Injury Protocol**

911 should immediately be called for any injury resulting in loss of consciousness, significant neck pain, significant changes in mental state, severe headache, or uncontrolled bleeding or vomiting. A seriously injured child should not be moved.

## **Concussion Defined**

A concussion is defined as an alteration in mental state, with or without loss of consciousness that occurs immediately after a head injury. Symptoms of concussion may include: loss of consciousness, headache, nausea, vomiting, disorientation, visual changes, disorientation, or slowed cognition. Long-term consequences of concussion can include cognitive impairment, mood changes, declining academic performance, and more severe brain injury.

### **Exclusion from Physical Activity / Intramurals / PE**

If any significant symptoms listed above occurs after a head injury, the student will be prohibited from participating in physical activity until he/she is cleared for participation in writing by a healthcare professional.

### **Classroom Accommodations**

Students who show significant symptoms of concussion, should be excluded from school until written clearance is received from a health care professional.

### **Medical Care Plan/ Educational Care Plan**

When a student returns to school following a concussion, Return-to-learn accommodations may include, but are not limited to: monitoring of learning, emotional functioning and behavior across all school settings, targeted strategies to support learning and behavior - including reasonable periods of cognitive rest and physical restrictions, a Medical Care Plan, or other interventions, as deemed necessary for the student by the health care professional.

### **Employee Resources**

The Executive Director or designee shall arrange for information and professional development annually to all employees regarding topics on return-to-learn issues and other concerns related to concussion and brain injuries.

## P.22 Suicide

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### **Suicide Intervention Policy**

*Approved 10/2019*

We take **ALL** threats seriously. In the case of a suicide threat, the school's counselor and appropriate administrator should be notified. They will assess all cases in order to evaluate the student's risk level. Take all necessary steps to keep the student safe. **Do not leave the student alone at any time or permit them to leave campus without an adult present.**

Once the risk level has been evaluated, the school's counselor or administrator will contact the student's parents/guardians and a conference will be planned. During the conference, staff members will link the student's parents with the appropriate resources, i.e. mental health professionals.

Parents/guardians may also need to sign a release of information to allow teachers and staff members to speak with the student's therapist. Staff members may need to communicate with health professionals for suicide assessment or other needed services.

Once a high risk student is cleared by qualified health professionals, another conference will be held with the school counselor, Assistant Executive Director and Section Director before the student returns to school.

After a high risk student returns to school, appropriate school staff will continue to monitor the student. While monitoring the student, notes should be taken that detail any actions taken and the the names of any staff members involved.

### **Suicide Attempt at School**

The following notifications should be made immediately:

1. Call (911). Do not communicate the incident as a suicide attempt, but as a serious injury.
2. Notify the Director or designee.

3. Contact the parent(s)/guardian(s).
4. Keep all students and uninvolved school staff away from the scene.
5. Notify the school Counselor in order to activate the intervention plan.

**P.23**  
**Student**  
**Release**

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## **Student Release Policy**

Parents/guardians must provide the school with a list of people authorized to pick up the student on their Parent's Authorization for Release Form. No child will be dismissed to any unauthorized person at any time. Even persons authorized to pick-up but unknown to the school may be asked to identify themselves with a valid picture ID. Sterling Montessori requires a written, signed note from the parent or guardian indicating any and all changes to this list of authorized persons. The school will not under any circumstances release a child to an unauthorized person on the strength of a telephone call or third-party request. To avoid frustration and inconvenience, parents/guardians must keep their forms up-to-date and on file in the School office.

If a student is to be released to a person other than someone named on the Parent's Authorization for Release Form, the following procedure will be followed:

- Sterling Montessori requires a written and signed notification from the parent or guardian. A note must be sent naming the person who will pick up the Student; phone calls and messages from a third party will not suffice.
- A staff member must call the parent/guardian and verify the dismissal;
- Person picking up child must show pictured driver's license

Student is then released to the person who must sign the dismissal log. If, in an emergency, someone other than a pre-authorized person needs to pick up the student, the parent or guardian must call the school with the name and description of that person and wait for a call back from the School.

The legal guardian is responsible to advise the school of court restraining or custody orders and must submit copies of such, for the child's file. Under no circumstances will a student be released to someone who is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.

## **Expectation of Privacy**

It is the responsibility of every employee to protect the school's and each student's confidential information. The business affairs of the school should not be discussed outside the organization except when required in the normal

course of business. Information concerning students should be regarded as confidential information. Access to any sensitive school or student information and operating procedures will be limited to those employees on a “need to know” basis only. Unauthorized employees are prohibited from attempting to obtain or observe this information.

Any employee in the possession of confidential information is responsible for their security and extreme care must be taken to ensure that this information is safeguarded to protect the school, its students, and its employees.

**P.24**  
**Custody**

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## **Verification of Child Custody Policy**

It is the responsibility of Sterling Montessori to determine that any person appearing at the school requesting permission to take a student from the school be properly identified and approved before allowing that person to do so. For this reason, any person other than an authorized parent, guardian, or legal custodian, will not be permitted to take a student from school unless the Administration is satisfied that such person has the approval of the authorized parent or guardian. A Custodial Release Form is available to parents/guardians who would like to submit documentation prohibiting the release of their children to other family members.

If there is a legal custody order attesting legal guardianship/custodial proceedings, parents/guardians must notify the school and provide the school with a copy of the following:

- Any binding court orders or separation agreements
- Sterling Montessori Custodial Release Form, which is available upon request in the front office.

Please note: Custody orders obtained in another state are not valid. Parents/guardians must have out of state orders registered in North Carolina. If a parent cannot provide the school with a court order or separation agreement concerning custody, the school assumes that both parents/guardians have equal access to the child(ren). If the school does not have the proper documentation either parent or legal guardian will be able to see the child(ren) at school and have the child(ren) released to them.

**P.25**  
**Donated**  
**Stock**

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**Acceptance of Donated Stock/Marketable  
Securities Policy**

*Approved 2/2020*

Donations of stock or marketable securities to the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation (LHU) shall be immediately liquidated and converted into cash.

LHU's brokerage account(s) shall maintain a minimum balance of cash required by the account(s) to facilitate donations of stock or marketable to LHU and subsequent liquidation of the donation; however, all cash exceeding the minimum balance shall be transferred into the LHU development bank account.

The maintenance of the LHU development bank account and brokerage account(s) shall be the responsibility of the LHU Treasurer or his/her designee in conjunction with the Development Committee and the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee shall conduct an internal audit of the development bank account and brokerage account(s) on or before the last Finance Committee meeting prior to LHU's annual meeting to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the account balance(s). The Finance Committee shall then report the verified balance(s) to the LHU Board at the annual meeting.

Donated stock and marketable securities and any sales proceeds resulting from the sale of these donations are considered unrestricted contributions to LHU; however, if the donor imposes a restriction as a condition of the donation, procedures for accounting of the restricted contribution shall be determined by the Finance Committee.

**P.26**  
**Service**  
**Animals**

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## **Service Animals Policy**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Rehab Act”), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), and state law, Sterling Montessori may be required to accommodate an otherwise qualified individual with a disability by making a reasonable modification in its services, programs, or activities. Sterling Montessori acknowledges the health and safety interests of the general community. This policy addresses the use of service animals on campus by qualified individuals with disabilities. Pets and therapy animals are not considered service animals and therefore are not covered by this policy.

This policy applies to any guide animal, signal animal, or other approved animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, pulling a wheelchair, fetching dropped items, or other tasks that are directly related to the individual’s disability. The animal must be a dog or in limited circumstances, a miniature horse. No other type of service animal will be permitted. An animal must meet this definition to be considered a service animal for purposes of this policy, regardless of whether it has or has not been licensed or certified by a state or local government, or by a private agency. Animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, therapeutic benefits, to promote emotional well-being, or to act as a deterrent to crime are not service animals.

Sterling Montessori adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act and state laws permitting the use of service animals by individuals with disabilities. When not readily apparent, school officials may inquire as to whether the service animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the service animal has been trained to perform. School officials and staff are not allowed to request any documentation for the service animal, require that the service animal demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of an individual’s disability; however, the individual with disability or his/her parent or guardian may wish to share information about the nature of the disability to assist Sterling Montessori in providing accommodations.

## **Requirements**

The use of service animals by staff or students with a disability is subject to the following requirements:

1. Service animals must be housebroken; must have received all vaccinations as required by state law; must wear a rabies tag; must be free of parasites, must be kept clean and groomed, and otherwise in good health; must be under the control of its handler; and must be on a harness, leash or other tether, unless the service animal is required to perform a task that it could not accomplish while on a leash/lead or the handler is otherwise unable to maintain the service animal on a leash/lead due to a disability. In such a case, the handler still must be able to maintain control over the service animal through other means.
2. All costs related to the handling and care of the service animal are the responsibility of the staff member or the parent/guardian of the student for whom the service animal provides service.
3. Sterling Montessori is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal, including walking the service animal or responding to the service animal's need to relieve itself. A student or employee with a service animal is expected to care for and supervise the service animal. In the case of a young child, or a student with disabilities who is unable to care for or properly supervise a service animal, the parent/guardian is responsible for providing a handler to care for and supervise the service animal. Any handler provided for a service animal must be able to meet all statutory and day care licensing regulations (background check, fingerprinting, etc.) in order to be in the presence of students, including the requirements set forth in other Sterling Montessori policies. The handler for the service animal is not allowed to interact with the students, other than to inform them of the needs of the service animal, and the handler shall not interfere in any way with the functioning of the classroom. If the handler is unable to meet the applicable statutory, day care licensing regulations, and/or other Sterling Montessori policies related thereto, or if the handler's behavior interferes with the proper functioning of the classroom environment, then Sterling Montessori has the right to exclude that particular handler.
4. A designated area for the service animal to eliminate will be identified. Any solid waste deposited by the service animal must be immediately removed by the student or employee with a service

animal or the handler and disposed of properly in the garbage. If the service animal eliminates inside, the urine or stool must be cleaned promptly, and the area properly disinfected. Any elimination on carpet must be steam cleaned before students can be exposed to the carpet, and that cost shall be the sole and exclusive responsibility of the staff member (when the service animal is required by a staff member) or the parent/guardian of the student for whom the service animal provides service.

5. The use of a service animal on Sterling Montessori property by a student or employee will be subject to a Service Animal Plan, which covers the introduction of the service animal to the school environment, and any appropriate training for staff and students regarding interaction with the service animal.
6. For students, the need for a service animal may require a specific classroom placement, in order to accommodate the allergies/fears of the existing students or faculty. Final decisions on classroom placement are within the sole discretion of the Executive Director, and those decisions are not eligible for appeal to the LHU Board. If there are staff or students at the school with severe allergies to, or severe phobias of, the service animal, the service animal may be restricted from that particular classroom, but service animals will not be excluded from the common areas of the school.
7. The owner or handler of a service animal shall be solely and exclusively liable for any damage to Sterling Montessori or personal property to the same extent required by other regulations that impose liability for property damage. The owner or handler of a service animal shall also be solely and exclusively liable for any physical damage or injuries caused by the service animal. The student and parent/guardian of a student or the staff member (when the service animal is required by a staff member) who uses a service animal on Sterling Montessori property shall hold Sterling Montessori harmless from any and all liability and indemnify the school from any such damages and liability.

## **Grounds for Removal of Service Animal**

Any service animal that causes injury to staff or students or that demonstrates any form of aggression no matter how mild (e.g. growling, lunging forward, biting or snapping, etc.) shall be immediately isolated and permanently removed from Sterling Montessori premises. In addition, Sterling Montessori may also remove or exclude a service animal for any of

the following reasons:

1. If the service animal is out of control and/or the service animal's handler does not effectively control the service animal's behavior, the service animal may be removed from the premises, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the severity of the behaviors. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director.
2. All service animals must be properly housebroken. Any service animal that eliminates inside the building more than once in a school year will be considered not properly housebroken and may be removed from Sterling Montessori premises. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director.
3. If the service animal poses a direct threat (perceived or real) to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications, the service animal may be removed from Sterling Montessori premises. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director. The presence of students or staff members with allergies or fears of animals is not sufficient grounds for the exclusion of a service animal.
4. If the service animal's presence or behavior fundamentally interferes in the functions of Sterling Montessori, the service animal may be removed from Sterling Montessori premises. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

Decisions regarding the use of service animals may be appealed through the process identified in the Sterling Montessori Parent/Guardian Grievance Policy.

## P.27 Sick Policy

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### Sick Policy

*Approved 5/2020*

*Sterling will follow all CDC and DHHS guidelines. These guidelines, may at times, differ from those found in the policy below.*

Sick children in grades 1-8 are brought to the office. Parents/guardians are then contacted to come to school to pick up their children during the day. 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 (a child with any nits in their hair will be sent home until they are nit-free)
- 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 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
- Open sores that cannot be covered, until a health professional states that the child is not infectious
- COVID symptoms according to CDC and DHHS

**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 for a period of 24 hours after being sent home due to fever, vomiting or diarrhea.**

**P.28**  
**Off-Campus**

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## **Off-Campus Field Trip Policy**

Field Trips apply to Kindergarten through Middle School Aged Children.

The purpose of this policy is not only to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and volunteers, but also to enhance the classroom educational experience. All off-campus field trips require pre-approval from the Section Director. Only curriculum-related study and trips in adherence to the safety precautions outlined below will be approved.

### **Definitions**

#### Off-Campus Field Trip

An off-campus field trip is one that requires students to leave the school grounds for an educational purpose and/or to take part in co-curricular activities.

Types of field trips include:

- Day field trips
- Recurring field trips (such as participation in annual events for co-curricular activities)
- Overnight field trips

### **Approval Process**

Section Directors must approve all field trips before making arrangements. A full description of the proposed arrangements and activities shall be included on the Field Trip Approval Form and submitted to the Section Director. The form shall be submitted before reservations are made and at least two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of the field trip.

### **Parental Information and Consent**

Information about the trip should be completed by the teacher on the parent field trip permission form (available in the Appendix of the Employee handbook). A signed parent permission form from the student's

parent/guardian is required before the student can participate. Verbal consent from the parent/guardian is not acceptable.

## **Pre-Trip Preparation of the Student**

Attending a school field trip is considered a privilege for students who are in good academic and behavioral standings for the current school year. A student's eligibility is determined through advanced discussion and partnership with Lead Teacher, Section Director, Assistant Executive Director and parents/guardians.

Preparing the students in advance is a key component to the success of any field trip. Below is list of several items to discuss with students:

- The school's Code of Conduct and Behavioral Model applies while on all field trips.
- Highlight itinerary, activities and special hazards in which the students will be participating. This includes the type of clothing and equipment needed.
- Health and Safety procedures, e.g. hand washing, staying with the group, the buddy system and what to do if a child is separated from the group.
- The Cell Phone/Device Policy applies on field trips
- For all trips, teachers will approve final room/group assignments and plans.

## **Teacher Preparation and Responsibilities**

Ensuring the safety of all Sterling Montessori students is a priority during any and all trips. In this regard, the following safeguards are followed:

- Make arrangements for students who do not attend field trips
- All overnight school trips that include male and female students shall have male and female chaperones.
- Ensure chaperones complete the required paperwork. This includes: copies of their current driver's license and a completed criminal background check. In addition, all chaperones who are driving are required to have completed the current Approved Field Trip Driver form.

- All teachers should bring red bags with them on trip. This bag includes Student information sheets and accident/Incident reports.
- Chaperones should be given a copy of emergency information of students in their group.
- Students must notify the adult if they leave the group and should travel in pairs when leaving the group.
- Any vitamins, supplements, prescription or non-prescription medications will need to be turned into classroom teacher before the day of the trip in a zip-locked bag clearly labeled with child's name including all required medical forms. Teachers are not able to administer any medication without the necessary forms.
- Students are not to be in opposite gender specific areas (such as tents or restrooms) unsupervised at any time.
- Arrangements will be made to provide secure storage and administration of medication.
- Teacher will alert administration of their arrival
- For overnight trips: teacher will notify parents/guardians of arrival
- Receipt of Funds: As money comes in to pay for field trips with fees, place it in an envelope with your room number amount and field trip location on it. Then deposit it in the locked tuition box in the main office on a daily basis. Money should not be kept in your room. You will receive a receipt once the money is deposited.
- Check Request: Two weeks prior to your trip, request a check from the Data Manager using the Check Request Form regardless of whether all the money has been collected. If the check ends up being for more money than is necessary, ask the field trip site to mail a refund to the school.

## **Chaperone Preparations and Responsibilities**

It is essential that staff coordinate a meeting with chaperones in order to review what is required of them for the duration of the trip. These expectations include the following:

- A detailed itinerary

- Review Supervision, Medication and Emergency procedures including sleep expectations during overnight trips
- Rules of conduct: explain the “School Code of Conduct Discipline Model” including student expectations regarding cell phones/technology.
- It is necessary for chaperones to be aware that the school does not allow: alcohol consumption, illegal substances, weapons, driving while texting or talking on a cell phone, sleeping arrangements where men and women share the same room on extended stay field trips.
- To ensure the safety of the chaperones and students, chaperones should not be alone with any individual student. Any individual interactions with students should take place in open, visible public spaces.
- If it is necessary for adults to sleep in the same room as students, the adult should never share a bed with any student unless it is their own child. There should be two adults in each room with students.
- Chaperones are permitted to use phones for instructional or medical purposes. They are encouraged to carry a cell phone with them and share that number with office administration and attending faculty as an added security resource. When possible, chaperones should avoid reading or sending personal text messages when with students. If this is not possible, we ask that chaperones notify another adult who can assume responsibility for their students, and step away to use their phone.
- All issues of discipline of students and communication with parents/guardians will be handled by the classroom teacher.

## **Handling Emergencies**

All Sterling Montessori employees are First Aid/CPR certified. In the event of any minor injuries or accidents teachers will administer First Aid as outlined in their training and will follow Sterling Montessori Employee Handbook Protocols.

### Types Of Emergencies That Can Occur While On Field Trip

- Life Threatening emergencies
- Lost or missing student

- Natural disasters, i.e. inclement weather
- Physically dangerous acts, illegal acts, overt defiance, or serious disciplinary problems

Actions That Should Be Taken When an Emergency Occurs on A Field Trip

- In the event of a life-threatening emergency, 911 will be called immediately then parents/guardians will be notified.
- The teacher will notify Sterling Montessori's front office, who will then call parents/guardians if not already contacted
- Complete necessary Accident/Incident Reports within 24 hours.

## **Transportation Information for All Drivers and Chaperones**

Private Vehicles

- It is most important to ensure the safety of students by making sure drivers:
- Are at least 21 years old
- All Drivers/chaperones must have submitted a copy of a valid driver's license, insurance Declaration Page, current background check
- It is recommended that all drivers have a fully charged electronic device in order to communicate with staff and other drivers on the trip
- Necessary to have emergency contact information of the children being transported.
- Ensure that all drivers have knowledge of North Carolina State Law regarding child restraints and that this statute has been applied:
- Children age 5 (or 40 pounds) to age 8 (or under 80 pounds) require a booster seat.
- According to N.C. law, children less than age 5 and less than 40 pounds must sit in the back seat of any vehicle with passenger-side airbags. Safety organizations advise leaving kids in the back until they are 13

- Children age 6 to age 15 and adult passengers/driver require both lap and shoulder belts secured to the framework of the seat

#### Charter Bus Services

If a charter bus service is used, the school must ensure the safety of its students by:

- Adhering to North Carolina Motor Vehicle laws in addition to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR). North Carolina Law requires that a driver of a bus designed to transport more than 15 passengers including the driver have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with a passenger endorsement. North Carolina requires that buses be registered properly and that a carrier transporting passengers for hire must have a for-hire license.
- The company hired must be approved by administration and be able to provide all documentation to show that it is compliant with all applicable FMCSR's – certificate of insurance in which the school is named as an additional insured.
- A staff member must be present on the bus with the students during the trip.

## P.32 Attendance

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### **Attendance Policy**

*Approved 7/2019*

#### **The following policy applies only to Charter students:**

In accordance with North Carolina's compulsory attendance law, G.S. 115C-378, the school shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of his or her child's excessive absences after the child has accumulated 3 unexcused absences in a school year. After 6 unexcused absences, the school shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian that he or she may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of the State and Sterling Montessori. Once the parents/guardians are notified, the school shall work with the child and the child's family to analyze the causes of the absences and determine steps to eliminate the problem.

After 10 accumulated unexcused absences in a school year, the school shall review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 and shall confer with the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian has received proper notification and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the school determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the school shall notify the district attorney and the director of social services of the county where the child resides. If, however, the school determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian has made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the school may file a complaint with the juvenile court counselor pursuant to Chapter 7B of the General Statutes that the child is habitually absent from school without a valid excuse. Upon receiving notification by the Executive Director, the director of social services shall determine whether to undertake an investigation under G.S. 7B-302.

The NC Department of Public Instruction defines excused absences as:

- Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
- Quarantine ordered by the local health official or the State Board of Health.

- Death in the immediate family (includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters).
- Medical or Dental appointments
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Religious observance
- Educational opportunity (approval must be granted by the Executive Director one week prior to the absence).
  - Educational opportunities will be limited to ten (10) academic days in one academic calendar.
  - Educational opportunity will not be approved as an excused absence within the first 20 school days of an academic year or during testing days, except under special circumstances at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- Absence related to deployment activities: A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone.

Any absence not falling into one of these exceptions will be determined to be an unexcused absence.

Attending school on the first day is crucially important. Sterling Montessori receives full state funding for a student ONLY if the student is present on the first day of school, at the minimum 3.5 hours. Charter schools in North Carolina are funded through a formula that's based on average daily membership, or ADM. 1/20th of the full year funding is deducted each day your child is not enrolled. The state reviews Sterling Montessori's ADM for the first 20 days of school and determines the school's per-student funding based on that number. The higher our average membership, the more state funding Sterling Montessori receives.

If a student does not attend school on the first day, the school will contact the student's parent or guardian. If an enrolled student does not attend Sterling Montessori by the close of business on the third (3rd) day of school, the school's funding will be negatively affected. Sterling Montessori requires written explanation for the reason of the student's absence as well as confirmation of the intent to remain enrolled.

**Twenty (20) absences of any kind, including whole day absences, tardy absences, early dismissal absences (excused and unexcused combined) may be considered as a criteria for retention.**

## **P.34 Retention**

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### **Student Policy for Retention**

*Approved 4/2019*

Montessori instruction accommodates the varying interests and academic development of individual students. Students will progress each year by completing the Montessori and State Standard curriculum necessary to support their success at the next grade level.

Retention (remaining at the same grade level for a second year) is an action that may be taken to assist a student to be more successful in their learning. Risk for retention should be identified as early in a child's school career as possible. As soon as identified, the staff should begin interventions to assist the student in areas of concern. The retention team, made up of parents/guardians, teachers, MTSS, and administration will determine if this is the best course of action for the student by using criteria such as intellectual maturity, academic achievement, including standardized testing, physical, social, psychological, and emotional considerations.

The demonstration of individual student learning is to be measured by, but not limited to, the following:

- Student progress in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level below)
- Assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level below)
- State testing scores in Language Arts and Math (assessing below or far below basic in all subject levels)
- Conclusion of intervention goals determined by the MTSS team

### **Timeline**

Discussions for promotion and retention should take place all throughout the student's school year. Promotion and Retention decisions must be made by the end of the child's school year.

## **Criteria to Consider:**

### Social

- Who is the child's peer group/who do they relate to?
- What is their ability to express their needs?
- Are they able to work well with adults?
- How do they work in a group? Are they willing to participate in small group/large group?
- Does the child have behavior problems? (Retention will not usually help the child with behavior problems to improve. Again, efforts need to be made to find the causes of the misbehavior and to intervene accordingly).
- Is the student socially/emotionally immature? (Social/emotional maturity is a significant factor. Students need to be ready to learn the curriculum for that grade and to fit in socially with the peer group. This factor becomes significant when presented with other symptoms. Students at this age who appear immature may only be slower to mature and may "catch up" later (it is "normal", during the middle school years, for different students who are the same age to be two or three years apart in maturity). Retention for this reason alone is not recommended.

### Emotional

- Do they have the stamina to work for longer periods of time?
- Do they meet the expectations for emotional maturity that is needed for the next level?
- Are they able to handle transitions with little to no adult redirection or support?

### Academic/Work Habits

- Are they able to work in a group and to sustain attention for at least 20 minutes in a large group?
- Are they able to choose work independently and sustain attention for a developmentally appropriate amount of time?

- Are they able to start and finish tasks?
- Do they have good attention span?
- Do they show appropriate application and interest in doing the academic works?
- Are they demonstrating steady progress in curricular areas?
- Are they able to follow 2-3 step directions?
- Is the child getting additional support or services? If so, in what areas?
- Does the child have average to above average ability? (Lower ability students are less likely to benefit from retention. Lower ability students may benefit more from other interventions in the classroom.
- Is the child developmentally young, or delayed? (A developmentally young child may experience difficulties learning and may be unable to meet the demands of the current grade. This child may certainly be a candidate for retention, particularly in the primary grades)

#### Physical

- What is the child's physical size (small or large for their age?)

#### Birthdate

- What is the child's birthdate?

\*\* If transitioning child meets 4 of the 5 criteria the child is ready to move to next level.

\*\* If transitioning child meets 3 of the 5 criteria success in transition would be questionable.

\*\* If transitioning child meets 2 or less criteria transitioning to next level is NOT recommended.

### **Other Questions to Consider**

#### Attendance

- Does the child have attendance problems? (The cases of poor attendance need to be addressed. However, at this level this is not an

area to consider for retention unless linked to maturity or peer relationships).

- Has the child changed school frequently? (Transience can be a temporary factor in poor school performance. Students who have changed schools frequently should be given time to adjust. Retention will not usually help unless other factors are present, (e.g. chronologically ore developmentally young or immature).

**P.36**  
**Cell**  
**Phone Use**

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## **Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices Policy**

*Approved 4/2019*

The purpose of this policy is to regulate the use of cell phones and other electronic devices by students while on campus. This ensures that lessons and student work will not be interrupted, safeguards students against cyber bullying, and prevents theft of such devices.

“Other electronic devices” refers to any device (such as computers, smartwatches, tablets, etc.) that can be used for oral conversation, and other means of communication, such as texting and emailing.

The term “misuse” as it is used in Sterling Montessori’s Code of Conduct And Discipline policies includes, but is not limited to, the disruption of classroom instructional activities, the use of inappropriate language, the sharing of inappropriate content, harassment, bullying, and/or communicating threats or violation of this policy.

During the school day, cell phones or other electronic devices must be stored in the student’s locker, backpack, purse, or tote, hidden from view and turned completely off.

Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted on any field trips and shall be subject to immediate confiscation by staff or administration unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director. Should cell phones or other electronic devices be permitted on a school trip, the classroom teacher will set guidelines specific to that field trip’s needs to be approved by the Executive Director. All students must adhere to these guidelines.

Cell phones and other electronic devices are subject to confiscation by the staff or administration if any of the following occur:

- The cell phone or other electronic device is visible.
- The cell phone or other electronic device rings or vibrates during the school day.

- The cell phone or other electronic device's use during an emergency inhibits the safety or rescue efforts of emergency crews and/or violates safety regulations.
- The cell phone or other electronic device is used for plagiarism or other academic dishonesty, is used to view inappropriate content, or is used to bully, harass, and/or threaten others.

Any cell phone or other electronic device that is confiscated will only be returned to the student's parent or guardian. Sterling Montessori shall not be liable for any damage to any student's cell phone or other electronic device.

### **Disciplinary Measures**

If a student violates this policy two (2) or more times during an academic calendar year, the student shall be prohibited from possessing any cell phone or other electronic device while on school property.

If a student is found in violation of both this policy and the Sterling Montessori conduct guidelines outlined in the "Sterling Montessori Discipline Model" (Parent Handbook), it shall be taken into consideration with regard to disciplinary measures.

### **Responsibility**

All students who bring cell phones or other electronic devices to Sterling Montessori are doing so at their own risk. Sterling Montessori shall not be held responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones or other electronic devices.

## **P.37 Student Records**

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### **Student Records Policy**

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. Each student's official record must be maintained permanently and must include: the student's date of birth, attendance data, grading and promotion data. Student official record will also contain any notice and notice of any suspension of more than 10 days (long-term suspension) or exclusion and the conduct for which the student was suspended or excluded.

The Executive Director may expunge a notice of long-term suspension or exclusion from the student's record if the following criteria are met:

- The student graduates from high school or is not suspended or excluded during a two-year period following the student's return to school after the suspension or exclusion.
- The Executive Director determines that maintenance of the record is no longer required to maintain safe and orderly schools.
- The Executive Director determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the student.

The Executive Director shall expunge a notice of long-term suspension or exclusion from the student's record if all of the above criteria are met and a request for expungement is made by a parent, legal guardian, custodian, student who is at least 16 years old or student who is emancipated.

Additional rights of parents/guardians and eligible students concerning a student's special education records are explained in the *Handbook on Parents' Rights* and the *North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*.

## **Student Records Request Policy**

North Carolina Public Schools, along with Sterling, use an electronic student database. Once a student signs up for another school, a request is sent to Sterling, and records are released to the school. Once we receive a student record request, the student is dropped from our enrollment and the position is filled with another student.

## **Expungement of Disciplinary Information From Student Records**

The official record of each student enrolled in Sterling Montessori shall be permanently maintained in the files until after the student graduates, or should have graduated, from high school.

The official record shall contain, as a minimum, adequate identification data including date of birth, attendance data, grading and promotion data, and such other factual information as may be deemed appropriate by the school. Each student's official record also shall include notice of any long-term suspension or exclusion imposed pursuant to G.S. 115C-390.7 through G.S. 115C-390.11 and the conduct for which the student was suspended or excluded. The President of the LHU Board shall expunge from the record the notice of suspension or exclusion if the following criteria are met:

- One of the following persons makes a request for expungement:
  - The student's parent, legal guardian, or custodian.
  - The student, if the student is at least 16 years old or is emancipated.
- The student either graduates from high school or is not excluded or suspended again during the two-year period commencing on the date of the student's return to school after the exclusion or suspension.
- The President of the LHU Board determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to maintain a safe and orderly school.
- The President of the LHU Board determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the child.

The President of the LHU Board may opt to expunge the disciplinary record even if not requested by the parent, legal guardian, custodian, or student, if all the other provisions have been met.

The official record of each student is not a public record as the term "public record" is defined by G.S. 132-1. The official record shall not be subject to inspection and examination as authorized by G.S. 132-6.

The actual address and telephone number of a student who is a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the General Statutes or a student with a parent who is a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the General Statutes shall be kept confidential from the public and shall not be disclosed except as provided in Chapter 15C of the General Statutes.

## **P.38 Dress Code**

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### **Sterling Montessori Dress Code**

*Approved 5/2020*

The purpose of this policy is to make sure children are dressed appropriately in clothes that allow for safe movement, independence and the possibility of getting dirty. We discourage distracting clothing such as those with lights, or which squeak, etc.

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 Montessori does not have spare clothing or laundry at our facilities.

### **Prohibited Attire**

Prohibited attire includes, but is not limited to, that which involves:

- Exposed undergarments, buttocks, chest, or pubic areas (includes see-through clothing) at any time while walking, running, sitting, standing, squatting and bending over.
- Exposed midriffs.
- Messages or illustrations that are lewd, indecent or vulgar or that advertise any product or service not permitted by law to minors.
- Chains, spikes or other apparel reasonably perceived to be weapon.
- Clothing with images or language of hate groups or clothing or symbols worn with the intent of intimidating or oppressing other students.

### **Dress Code Violations**

Administration may use their discretion in implementing the dress code. If a student is found in violation of the Dress Code they may be asked to:

- Turn offensive clothing inside out.
- Remove offensive clothing (if possible).

- Change their clothing.
- Students will be sent home or parents/guardians could be contacted to bring in appropriate clothing if they are unable to change, or remove the clothing that is in violation of the Dress Code.

**P.39**  
**Grievance**

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## **Parent & Guardian Grievance Policy**

*Approved 8/2018*

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School (“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.

The LHU Board believes that effective school governance requires that the primary responsibility for grievances involving the day-to-day management and decisions regarding school management remains with the Administrative team. Examples of day-to-day management and decisions include, but are not limited to, student discipline, curriculum, assessment and promotion. Day-to-day management and decisions should be made by the staff and the Executive Director (“ED”), as these individuals are best equipped to resolve grievances that arise with respect to these issues.

It is in direct violation of this policy for anyone to retaliate against a parent, guardian, or student who files a grievance under this policy.

If the grievance is against any Director of the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation, then please see LHU Board Grievance section below for the applicable procedure.

### **Informal Grievance**

#### **Step One:**

Any grievance of a student and/or a student’s parent or guardian shall begin with an open and respectful dialogue by bringing the matter to the attention of those involved. If the issue involves another student, the Lead Teacher should be the first point of contact. The involved parties shall use their best efforts to reach a satisfactory resolution of the grievance.

### **Formal Grievance**

If Step One does not result in a satisfactory resolution of the grievance(s), then please proceed as set forth in this section.

If the grievance is against a teacher, then please bring the grievance directly to the attention of the Section Director pursuant to the procedure set forth in Step Two below.

If the grievance is against the Section Director, then please bring the grievance directly to the attention of the ED pursuant to the procedure set forth in Step Three below.

If the grievance is against the ED, then please see the Executive Director Grievance section below for the applicable procedure.

### **Step Two:**

If Step One does not result in a satisfactory resolution of the grievance(s), an aggrieved person shall bring the grievance directly to the attention of the Section Director through a formal written notice and may request a conference with the Section Director to address the grievance(s). If the aggrieved person is a student, then the student's parent or guardian shall submit the written notice. The notice shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated. Following receipt of the written notice, the Section Director, if requested by the parent or guardian, will conduct a conference with the aggrieved student and his or her parent or guardian within five working days of the written notice (or with just the parent or guardian if the aggrieved person is the parent or guardian). Within five working days following the conference, or, if no conference is requested within five working days of receipt of the written notice, the Section Director shall issue a written decision on the grievance and provide a copy of the written decision to the parent or guardian.

### **Step Three:**

The parent or guardian may appeal the Section Director's decision directly to the Executive Director through a formal written appeal. The appeal shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated, and (assuming the grievance is not directly against the Section Director as noted above in Step One) shall describe why the parent or guardian believes the Section Director's decision should be reviewed, changed, modified, vacated, or overturned. The ED shall review the grievance and (if applicable) appealed Section Director's decision and conduct an informal hearing within five working days following receipt of the written appeal when feasible or as soon as reasonably practicable

thereafter with the aggrieved student and his or her parent or guardian (or with just the parent or guardian if the aggrieved person is the parent or guardian). The ED shall issue a written decision within five working days following the hearing, create a written record of the evidence received, and provide a copy of the written decision to the parent or guardian.

Decisions of the ED are final, and not subject to further appeal, except in the following instances:

- Decisions involving an alleged violation of a contractual right;
- Decisions involving an alleged violation by Sterling Montessori of state or federal law; or
- Decisions based on allegations of conduct by the ED in violation of law or school policy.

#### **Step Four:**

If the ED's written decision involves one of the three exceptions noted above, then the parent or guardian may appeal the ED's written decision to the President of the LHU Board of Directors through a formal written appeal. The appeal shall include a description of the specific grievance(s) and related details, all rationales for concern, a description of the steps taken to resolve the grievance(s), a description and/or argument why the parent or guardian believes the ED's written decision should be reviewed, changed, modified, vacated, or overturned, any and all other evidence that the parent or guardian wishes for the Board to consider on appeal (in addition to the evidence presented throughout the foregoing process), and the remedy sought. Upon the receipt of a written appeal, the President shall take the matter under advisement and, in his or her discretion, bring the appeal to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for final adjudication and provide notice to the parent or guardian of the Executive Committee meeting, add the appeal to the agenda of the next Board meeting and provide the parent or guardian with notice of the addition of the appeal to the agenda, and/or convene a committee of the Board to review the appeal and issue a recommended final adjudication for the Board's review and consideration and provide notice to the parent or guardian of the committee meeting. Decisions by the LHU Board shall be the final step in the grievance process. The decision shall be made in writing, and it shall be issued by the Board and provided to the parent or guardian within sixty days of the President's receipt of the written appeal.

### **Executive Director Grievance**

If the student or the student's parent or guardian has a grievance or grievances against the ED, then the parent or guardian shall bring the grievance directly to the attention of the President of the LHU Board through a formal notice. The notice shall describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation, or law believed to have been violated, shall include any and all evidence that the parent or guardian wishes for the Board to consider, and shall set forth a statement of the remedy sought and any and all rationale and argument supporting the remedy sought. Upon receipt of the notice, the President shall instruct the Secretary to add the grievance to the agenda of the next Board meeting for review and consideration by the Board. The President shall ensure that all Directors have a complete copy of the notice and accompanying documents in advance of the Board meeting. Within fifteen days after the Board meeting where the Board reviewed the notice, the President shall issue a written decision and provide a copy of the decision to the parent or guardian. The President's decision shall be final and not subject to further appeal to the LHU Board.

### **LHU Board Grievance**

If the student or the student's parent or guardian has a grievance or grievances against one or more of the Directors of the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation, then the parent or guardian shall bring the grievance directly to the attention of the President of the LHU Board through a formal notice. The notice shall describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated, shall include any and all evidence that the parent or guardian wishes for the Board to consider, and shall set forth a statement of the remedy sought and any and all rationale and argument supporting the remedy sought. Upon receipt of the notice, the President shall instruct the Secretary to add the grievance to the agenda of the next Board meeting for review and consideration by the Board. The President shall ensure that all Directors have a complete copy of the notice and accompanying documents in advance of the Board meeting. Within fifteen days after the Board meeting where the Board reviewed the notice, the President shall issue a written decision and provide a copy of the decision to the parent or guardian. The President's decision shall be final and not subject to further appeal to the LHU Board.

If the grievance or grievances is/are against the President of the LHU Board (or the President and any one or more Directors other than the Vice President), then the foregoing procedure shall apply, except that the Vice President of the LHU Board shall issue a written decision within fifteen days after the Board meeting where the Board reviewed the notice and provide a

copy of the decision to the parent or guardian. The Vice President's decision shall be final and not subject to further appeal to the LHU Board.

If the grievance or grievances is/are against the President of the LHU Board and the Vice President, then the foregoing procedure in the first paragraph of this section shall apply, except that a written decision, signed by all Directors of the LHU Board, shall be issued within fifteen days after the Board meeting where the Board reviewed the notice and a copy of the decision provided to the parent or guardian. The decision shall be final and not subject to further appeal to the LHU Board.

**P.40**  
**Suspension**  
**& Exclusion**

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## **Long Term Suspension and Exclusion from the Charter School**

Sterling Montessori is a close-knit community, where student retention throughout the entire K-8 school pathway is valued. Therefore, long term suspensions and exclusions from the Charter School should be a very rare event. This action should be taken only when there is either a clear and present danger to the school community because of a student's actions, or as a last resort after multiple, lower level disciplinary actions have been implemented. The procedure leading up to a decision for a long-term suspension (defined as a suspension lasting more than 10 instructional days), or exclusion from Sterling Montessori is outlined as follows:

1. The Assistant Executive Director will collaborate with the MTSS Committee, consisting of, at a minimum, the student's Lead Teacher and the Section Director, to discuss the proposed long-term suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori. This committee will make a recommendation regarding whether a long-term suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori is appropriate.
2. If the committee recommends a long-term suspension or exclusion from the charter school, the Assistant Executive Director shall give written notice to the student's parent. The notice shall be provided to the student's parent by the end of the workday during which the suspension was recommended when reasonably possible or as soon thereafter as practical. The written notice shall provide at least the following information:
  - A description of the incident and the student's conduct that led to the long-term suspension recommendation.
  - A reference to the offense that the student is alleged to have committed.
  - The specific process by which the parent may request a hearing to contest the decision, including the number of days within which the hearing must be requested.
  - The process by which a hearing will be held.

- Notice that the parent is permitted to retain an attorney to represent the student in the hearing process.
- Notice that Sterling Montessori permits the parent to have an advocate, instead of an attorney, accompany the student to assist in the presentation of his or her appeal.
- Notice that the parent has the right to review and obtain copies of the student's educational records before the hearing.
- A reference to the G.S. 115C-402, which covers the process for the expungement of discipline records.

Written notice may be provided by certified mail, fax, e-mail, or any other written method reasonably designed to achieve actual notice of the recommendation for long-term suspension. When school personnel are aware that English is not the primary language of the parent or guardian, the notice shall be written in both English and in the primary language of the parent or guardian when the appropriate foreign language resources are readily available.

No long-term suspension shall be imposed on a student until an opportunity for a formal hearing is provided to the student. If a hearing is timely requested, it shall be held, and a decision issued before a long-term suspension is imposed. The student and parent shall be given reasonable notice of the time and place of the hearing.

If no hearing is timely requested, the LHU Board will review the decision of the committee, and issue a final, written decision, either upholding, modifying, or rejecting the Assistant Executive Director's recommendation of suspension and containing at least the following information:

1. The basis for the decision, including a reference to any policy or rule that the student is determined to have violated.
2. Notice of what information will be included in the student's official record pursuant to G.S. 115C-402.
3. The student's right to appeal the decision and notice of the procedures for such appeal.

If the student or parent requests a postponement of the hearing, the hearing shall be scheduled, but the student shall not have the right to return to school pending the hearing. If neither the student nor the parent appears for the scheduled hearing, after having been given reasonable notice of the time and

place of the hearing, the parent and student are deemed to have waived the right to a hearing.

If a formal hearing is requested, the hearing will be conducted by the LHU Board of Sterling Montessori, who shall determine the relevant facts and credibility of witnesses based on the evidence presented at the hearing. Following the hearing, the LHU Board shall make a final decision regarding the long-term suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori. The formal hearing will follow North Carolina General Statutes concerning due process for the student, including the following:

- The right to be represented at the hearing by counsel, or a non-attorney advocate.
- The right to be present at the hearing, accompanied by his or her parents/guardians.
- The right of the student, parent, and the student's representative to review before the hearing any audio or video recordings of the incident and, consistent with federal and state student records laws and regulations, the information supporting the suspension that may be presented as evidence at the hearing, including statements made by witnesses related to the charges.
- The right of the student, parent, or the student's representative to question witnesses appearing at the hearing.
- The right to present evidence on his or her own behalf, which may include written statements or oral testimony, relating to the incident leading to the suspension, as well as any other factors to be considered, including the student's intent, disciplinary and academic history, the potential benefits to the student of alternatives to suspension, and other mitigating or aggravating factors.
- The right to have a record made of the hearing.
- The right to make his or her own audio recording of the hearing.
- The right to a written decision, based on substantial evidence presented at the hearing, either upholding, modifying, or rejecting the Assistant Executive Director's recommendation of suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori, and containing at least the following information:
  - The basis for the decision, including a reference to any policy or rule that the student is determined to have violated.

- Notice of what information will be included in the student's official record pursuant to G.S. 115C-402.
- The student's right to appeal the decision and notice of the procedures for such appeal.

Following the issuance of the decision, the Executive Director shall implement the decision of the LHU Board by authorizing the student's return to school or by imposing the suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori that is reflected in the decision.

**P.41**  
**Background**  
**Checks**

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## **Criminal History and Background Check Policy**

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School strives to provide the safest possible learning environment for all students, teachers, staff, employees, and parents/guardians. Sterling Montessori requires compliance with this Criminal History and Background Check Policy to achieve this goal.

### **ACADEMY**

**“Academy Personnel” means any:**

- Employee of Sterling Montessori, including, but not limited to, administrators, lead teachers, teacher’s aides or assistants, custodians, clerical staff, before and after school care employees, floaters, and substitute teachers, whether full time or part time, who are in contact with Academy students on a regular basis.
- Independent contractor or employee of independent contractor of Sterling Montessori, if the independent contractor or employee of independent contractor has significant access to Academy students, including tutors.
- Volunteers or club vendors of Sterling Montessori who are or will be in contact with Academy students in conjunction with roles, duties, or any other matter relating to volunteering or providing services as a club vendor.

If classification as Academy Personnel is disputed, the Director of Academy shall have the final decision-making authority to determine whether an employee, independent contractor, employee of independent contractor, volunteer, or club vendor of Sterling Montessori, or a potential employee, potential independent contractor (or employee of independent contractor), potential volunteer, or potential club vendor of Sterling Montessori, shall be classified as Academy Personnel and thus subject to this policy. The Director of Academy’s determination is non-appealable.

**“Criminal History” means:**

A county, state, or federal criminal history of conviction or pending indictment of a crime or criminal charge, whether a misdemeanor or a felony,

that bears upon an individual's fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children. Such crimes include, but are not limited to, the following North Carolina crimes contained in any of the following Articles of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes:

- Article 6, Homicide
- Article 7B, Rape and Other Sex Offenses
- Article 8, Assaults
- Article 10, Kidnapping and Abduction
- Article 13, Malicious Injury or Damage by Use of Explosive or Incendiary Device or Material
- Article 14, Burglary
- Article 15, Arson and Other Burnings
- Article 16, Larceny
- Article 17, Robbery
- Article 19, False Pretenses and Cheats
- Article 19A, Obtaining Property or Services by False or Fraudulent Use of Credit Device or Other Means
- Article 19C, Identity Theft
- Article 20, Frauds
- Article 21, Forgery
- Article 26, Offenses Against Public Morality and Decency
- Article 26A, Adult Establishments
- Article 27, Prostitution
- Article 29, Bribery
- Article 35, Offenses Against the Public Peace
- Article 36A, Riots and Civil Disorders
- Article 39, Protection of Minors
- Article 40, Protection of the Family
- Article 52, Miscellaneous Police Regulations
- Article 59, Public Intoxication
- Article 60, Computer-Related Crime.

Such crimes also include cruelty to animals in violation of Article 3 of Chapter 19A of the General Statutes, possession or sale of drugs in violation of the North Carolina Controlled Substances Act, Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, and alcohol-related offenses such as sale to underage persons in violation of G.S. 18B-302 or driving while impaired in violation of G.S. 20-138.1 through G.S. 20-138.5. In addition to the North Carolina crimes listed herein, such crimes also include similar crimes under federal law or under the laws of other states.

**“Criminal History Records Check” means:**

Mandatory Criminal History Record Check as required by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 110-90.2 pursuant to and in accordance with “CHILD CARE PROVIDER

MANDATORY CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK” set forth in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 110-90.2. This check must be completed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Criminal Background Check Unit (or its successor). Please see <https://ncchildcarebc.nc.gov/> for more information.

### **Requirements**

- Per N.C. Gen. § 110-91, no person shall be Academy Personnel who has been convicted of a crime involving child neglect, child abuse, or moral turpitude, or who is an habitually excessive user of alcohol or who illegally uses narcotics or other impairing drugs, or who is mentally or emotionally impaired to an extent that may be injurious to children.
- All Academy Personnel who have been arrested and/or incurred pending charges, indictments, or convictions (other than minor traffic offenses i.e. speeding, parking, or a lesser violation), including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, since the date of his or her most recent Qualification Letter must notify the Director of Academy within five (5) business days of the arrest and/or pending charges, indictments, and/or convictions prior to returning to work (or resuming role as volunteer, etc.), whichever occurs first. A qualification letter is written notification, provided by DHHS, qualifying an individual to be employed as a child care provider as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 110.90.2.
  - Notice must be in writing, must include all pertinent facts, and must be delivered to the Director of Academy no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge, indictment, or conviction (unless said person is hospitalized or incarcerated, in which case said person must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his or her release).
  - Upon judicial action in the matter, said person must report the disposition and pertinent facts, in writing, to the Director of Academy no later than the next business day following adjudication.
- Prior to commencing employment as Academy Personnel, statewide criminal records checks will be conducted by NCDHHS for employees who have lived and worked within the state of NC for the five years before the date of application; and record checks in all states identified for individuals who have lived or worked outside of North Carolina during the five years before the date of application.
- All Academy Personnel must have a Qualification Letter that is no more than three years old. It is recommended that, prior to the expiration of the Qualification Letter (i.e. prior to three years from the date of issuance from

DHHS), Academy Personnel renew his or her Criminal Background Check through DHHS and secure a new Qualification Letter.

- A completed Child Care Provider Mandatory Notice Criminal History Check, and a completed Prior Conviction/Pending Indictment Statement, shall be provided by Academy Personnel to the Director of Academy and placed in the Academy Personnel's file at Sterling Montessori.
- A check of sex offender registries shall be conducted on all applicants seeking to become Academy Personnel.

### **Costs**

- a. Except as otherwise provided below, Sterling Montessori shall reimburse Academy Personnel one hundred percent (100%) of the cost charged by DHHS for the process and background check associated with obtaining a Qualification Letter and all renewals thereof, including fingerprinting fees.
- A copy of the receipt evidencing the cost submitted for reimbursement must be provided by the person requesting reimbursement from Sterling Montessori. Tutors and substitute teachers shall be responsible for fifty percent (50%) of the cost charged by DHHS for the process and background check associated with obtaining a Qualification Letter and all renewals thereof, including fingerprinting fees. Sterling Montessori shall reimburse tutors and substitute teachers fifty percent (50%) of the cost charged by DHHS for the process and background check associated with obtaining a Qualification Letter and all renewals thereof, including fingerprinting fees. A copy of the receipt evidencing the cost submitted for reimbursement must be provided by the person requesting reimbursement from Sterling Montessori.
- Volunteers and club vendors shall be responsible for the cost charged by DHHS for the process and background check associated with obtaining a Qualification Letter and all renewals thereof, including fingerprinting fees.

## **CHARTER SCHOOL**

### **Definitions:**

#### **“Academy Personnel” means:**

See definition provided above in the Academy Section of this Policy.

#### **“Charter Personnel” means:**

- Any employee of Sterling Montessori not classified as Academy Personnel.

- Any independent contractor or employee of independent contractor of Sterling Montessori not classified as Academy Personnel, and who carries out duties customarily performed by school personnel, whether paid with federal, State, local, or other funds, who has significant access to students. School personnel includes teachers, assistants, substitute teachers, driver training teachers, bus drivers, clerical staff, and custodians.
- Any volunteer or club vendor of Sterling Montessori not classified as Academy Personnel who has or will have significant access to Sterling Montessori students in conjunction with roles, duties, or any other matter relating to volunteering.

**“Criminal History” means:**

A county, state, or federal criminal history of conviction of a crime, whether a misdemeanor or a felony, that indicates the employee (i) poses a threat to the physical safety of students or personnel, or (ii) has demonstrated that he or she does not have the integrity or honesty to fulfill his or her duties as public school personnel.

Such crimes include the following North Carolina crimes contained in any of the following Articles of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes:

- Article 5A, Endangering Executive and Legislative Officers
- Article 6, Homicide
- Article 7B, Rape and Kindred Offenses
- Article 8, Assaults
- Article 10, Kidnapping and Abduction
- Article 13, Malicious Injury or Damage by Use of Explosive or Incendiary Device or Material
- Article 14, Burglary and Other Housebreakings
- Article 15, Arson and Other Burnings
- Article 16, Larceny
- Article 17, Robbery
- Article 18, Embezzlement
- Article 19, False Pretense and Cheats
- Article 19A, Obtaining Property or Services by False or Fraudulent Use of Credit Device or Other Means
- Article 20, Frauds
- Article 21, Forgery
- Article 26, Offenses Against Public Morality and Decency
- Article 26A, Adult Establishments
- Article 27, Prostitution
- Article 28, Perjury
- Article 29, Bribery

- Article 31, Misconduct in Public Office
- Article 35, Offenses Against the Public Peace
- Article 36A, Riots, Civil Disorders, and Emergencies
- Article 39, Protection of Minors
- Article 60, Computer-Related Crime.

Such crimes also include possession or sale of drugs in violation of the North Carolina Controlled Substances Act, Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, and alcohol-related offenses such as sale to underage persons in violation of G.S. 18B-302 or driving while impaired in violation of G.S. 20-138.1 through G.S. 20-138.5.

In addition to the North Carolina crimes listed herein, such crimes also include similar crimes under federal law or under the laws of other states.

**Requirements for Applicants and Employees of Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School:**

- Prior to commencing employment, all Charter employees, independent contractors, or employees of independent contractors (or applicants to be employed) (hereinafter referred to collectively as “Charter Employees”) classified as Charter Personnel shall conduct a statewide criminal records checks by NCDHHS for employees who have lived and worked within the state of NC for the five years before the date of application; and record checks in all states identified for individuals who have lived or worked outside of North Carolina during the five years before the date of application.
- A Charter Employee checked by the Department of Public Safety shall be fingerprinted and provide any additional information required by the Department of Public Safety to the local sheriff or the municipal police, whichever is more convenient for the employee, and sign a form consenting to the check of the criminal record and to the use of fingerprints and other identifying information required by the State and National Repositories of Criminal Histories. The Executive Director shall consider refusal to consent when making employment decisions. All Charter Employees shall provide the results of his or her criminal history check to the Executive Director.
- A check of sex offender registries shall be conducted on all Charter Employees.
- The Executive Director shall review the criminal history it receives on Charter Employees and determine whether the results of the review indicate that the person (i) poses a threat to the physical safety of students or personnel, or (ii) has demonstrated that he or she does not have the

integrity or honesty to fulfill his or her duties as public school personnel and shall use the information when making employment decisions for Charter Employees. The Executive Director shall make written findings with regard to how it used the information when making employment decisions and decisions with regard to independent contractors.

- After the expiration of two (2) years from the date of his or her last criminal history check, and every two (2) years thereafter, each Charter Employee shall secure a background check and provide the results to the Executive Director. The background check shall be conducted by Castle Branch. The link to Castle Branch is [https://mycb.castlebranch.com/online\\_submission/package\\_code.php](https://mycb.castlebranch.com/online_submission/package_code.php). Sterling Montessori's package code is ST74. If the background check through Castle Branch causes any concern of the Executive Director, then the Charter Employee shall secure a new criminal history check through the North Carolina Department of Public Safety as soon as reasonably practicable and provide the results to the Executive Director. The Executive Director may require that the Charter Employee not return to work at Sterling Montessori until the Executive Director has reviewed the new criminal history check and made written findings with regard to how he or she used the criminal history check to determine whether employment at Sterling Montessori should be continued or terminated.
- The Executive Director may provide to the State Board of Education the criminal history it receives on a person who is certificated, certified, or licensed by the State Board of Education if required by law.
- The Executive Director may require a Charter Employee to provide a current background check through Castle Branch within a reasonable time period if the Charter Employee has not completed one within the past two years prior to the date this of this Policy's adoption by the LHU Board.
- It is recommended that, prior to the expiration of the two-year period since a Charter Employee's last background check, the Charter Employee obtain a new background check through Castle Branch.

**Requirements for Volunteers of Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School:**

- All Charter Personnel who are volunteers shall secure a background check and provide the results to the Executive Director. The background check shall be conducted by Castle Branch. The link to Castle Branch is [https://mycb.castlebranch.com/online\\_submission/package\\_code.php](https://mycb.castlebranch.com/online_submission/package_code.php). Sterling Montessori's package code is ST74.

- If the background check through Castle Branch causes any concern of the Executive Director, then the Executive Director shall, in his or her discretion, is authorized to refuse to allow the person seeking to volunteer at Sterling Montessori to be permitted to volunteer. No written findings are required, and the Executive Director's decision is final and non-appealable.
- A check of sex offender registries shall be conducted on all Charter Personnel who are volunteers.
- Each contract executed by the Board with an independent contractor or for services of independent contractors must require the contractor to conduct a sex offender registry check.

**Costs:**

- Except as otherwise provided below, Sterling Montessori shall reimburse Charter Personnel one hundred percent (100%) of the cost charged by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety for obtaining a criminal history check and all renewals thereof, including fingerprinting fees and fees charged by Castle Branch for a background check. A copy of the receipt evidencing the cost submitted for reimbursement must be provided by the person requesting reimbursement from Sterling Montessori.
- Volunteers and club vendors shall be responsible for the cost charged by Castle Branch for obtaining a background check and all renewals thereof.

**Other:**

- All Charter Personnel who have been arrested and/or incurred pending charges, indictments, or convictions (other than minor traffic offenses i.e. speeding, parking, or a lesser violation), including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, since the date of his or her most recent criminal history check or background check (whichever check was most recently submitted to the Executive Director) must notify the Executive Director of the arrest and/or pending charges, indictments, and/or convictions. Notice must be in writing, must include all pertinent facts, and must be delivered to the Executive Director no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge, indictment, or conviction (unless said person is hospitalized or incarcerated, in which case said person must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his or her release). Upon judicial action in the matter, said person must report the disposition and pertinent facts, in writing, to the Executive Director no later than the next business day following adjudication.
- Sterling Montessori shall not require Charter Personnel or Charter Personnel applicants to disclose any expunged criminal records.

**Any information obtained by Sterling Montessori through the implementation of this Policy shall be kept confidential as provided by North Carolina law.**

**P.42**  
**Returned**  
**Checks**

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## **Returned Check Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with processing and accounting for returned checks. 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.

## P.43 Tutoring

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### **Tutoring Policy**

*Approved 7/2019*

#### **On-Campus Tutoring**

Sterling Montessori provides academic and positive behavior support to all students during the regular school day. Each teaching staff member provides direct instruction using the Montessori materials to meet the N.C. State Standards. Accommodations, interventions and modifications are incorporated in the curriculum for those students who require additional support.

Some students may be identified as benefiting from receiving additional tutoring on individual subject topics, study skills or any other areas that will help them achieve success. In order to meet these needs, Sterling Montessori offers after hours tutoring support provided by our qualified teachers or support staff from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. OR from 3:45 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.. Any request to make adjustments to tutoring times other than what is already stated will be denied.

If parents/guardians are requesting for their child to receive additional support, it is required that they contact the Section Director and their child's Lead Teacher for information and assistance. If all parties agree that it would be beneficial for their child to be tutored by a Sterling staff member it is important to note that the student will not be tutored by their own classroom teacher and will be assigned to another teacher or support staff. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians and the general education teacher to communicate with one another regarding the days and times that a student will be on campus tutoring.

External tutors are not permitted on Sterling Montessori's campus at any time. Teachers or support staff who are interested in tutoring must notify their Section Director and be approved to be added to the **Sterling Tutoring Staff Approved List**. Teachers will follow the After School Activity/Clubs Policy as stated in the handbooks. **Teachers shall not tutor any pupil for pay during regular class hours.**

## **Off-Campus Tutoring**

All requests from parents/guardians regarding off-campus tutoring and/or part day school options needs to be approved by the administration. Parents/guardians must contact the Section Director with the request outlining the reasoning for outside services during school hours for their child. The Section Director, Assistant Executive Director and classroom teacher will review the request and make a decision if they feel it is in the best interest of the student. Many factors are considered when making the decision to approve the off-campus tutoring request during school hours including but not limited to, the time needed to be dismissed, how the tutoring will affect the classroom instruction and meeting N.C. State Standards and evaluating the student's needs. We take each request on a case by case basis.

**Off-Campus tutoring is not permitted before 2:30 under any circumstances. It is required for all students to attend school a minimum number of hours to meet all Attendance requirements.**

## **P.44 Acceleration**

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### **Student Policy for Acceleration**

Montessori instruction accommodates the varying interests and academic development of individual students. Students will progress each year by completing the Montessori and State Standard curriculum necessary to support their success at the next grade level.

Acceleration (accelerating a student an additional grade level) is an action that may be taken to assist a student to be more successful in their learning. The Acceleration Team, made up of parents/guardians, teachers, MTSS, and administration will determine if this is appropriate by using criteria such as intellectual maturity, academic achievement, standardized test results, physical, social, psychological, and emotional development.

#### **Criteria to Consider**

The demonstration of individual student learning is to be measured by, but not limited to, the following:

#### **Social**

- Who is the child's peer group/who do they relate to?
- What is their ability to express their needs?
- Are they able to work well with adults?
- How do they work in a group? Are they willing to participate in small group/large group?
- Does the child have behavior problems?
- Is the student socially/emotionally mature? Social/emotional maturity is a significant factor. Students need to be ready to learn the curriculum for that grade and to fit in socially with the peer group.

#### **Emotional**

- Do they have the stamina to work for longer periods of time?

- Do they meet the expectations for emotional maturity that is needed for the next level?
- Are they able to handle transitions with little to no adult redirection or support?

### **Academic/Work Habits**

- Are they able to work in a group and to sustain attention?
- Are they able to choose work independently and sustain attention for a developmentally appropriate amount of time?
- Are they able to start and finish tasks?
- Do they show appropriate application and interest in doing the academic works?
- Are they demonstrating accelerated progress in curricular areas?
- Are they able to follow multi-step directions?
- Is the child getting additional support or services? If so, in what areas?
- Does the child have average to above average ability?
- Student progress in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level ahead)
- Assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level ahead)
- State testing scores in Language Arts and Math (assessing above in all subject levels)
- Conclusion of goals determined by the MTSS team

### **Birthdate**

- What is the child's birthdate?

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be included as a part of the criteria in considering acceleration.

*Our complete Attendance Policy (P.32) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

### **Timeline**

Discussions for acceleration will take place all throughout the student's school year. Acceleration decisions will be made by the end of the child's school year.

### **Appeals Process**

When the recommendation for acceleration is not agreed upon by the parents/guardians, they have the right to appeal to the Executive Director.

**P.45**  
**Enrichment**

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**After School Activities/Clubs Enrichment Policy  
for Outside Vendors**

*Approved 2/2020*

**Procedure:**

Anyone interested in providing an after school or enrichment program at Sterling Montessori must submit an application for consideration. The Supervisor of After School Activities/Clubs will review all applications and choose programs based on what is deemed the best use of space and resources that will most benefit students. After school programs are only permitted on campus with the approval of the Executive Director.

The daily usage fees for outside vendors is set at \$15 per classroom rented, per day for 10 or fewer students in the class. The charge will be \$30 per classroom rented, per day, if there are 11-25 students in the class.

**Vendor Policies:**

1. All adults on campus for enrichment programs must have current criminal background checks (this includes instructors, volunteers, substitutes etc.). A copy of all background checks must be filed in the HR office of Sterling Montessori before the first meeting date.
2. You must submit a complete roster of all student participants to the After School Activity/Club Supervisor before the first day of the program.
3. Children's House and Lower Elementary students must be collected from their classrooms at 3:45pm and taken to their enrichment classrooms. Upper Elementary and Middle School students will be permitted to walk to their enrichment classrooms at 3:30pm. A list of classrooms will be provided to you by the After School Supervisor.
4. You are responsible for informing families and students of class cancellations or date changes. For day of cancellations, you must receive confirmation from each family that they will pick up their child from carpool. You must maintain updated contact information for all participants.

5. Enrichment programs may not use items on the school/classroom property. This includes but is not limited to computers, books, Montessori materials, art supplies and audiovisual equipment.
6. The space your program uses must be left as you found it (cleaned, organized etc.).
7. You must obtain prior approval from Sterling Montessori before storing any materials at the school between meetings.
8. Students must remain in your assigned classroom/ field, students are not permitted to wander around campus unattended.
9. Any late student pick-ups are your responsibility, you are permitted to charge a predetermined "late pickup fee" but children may not be left unattended or dropped off in on-campus after care. Buildings close at 5:50pm, all buildings will be locked no later than 6:00pm by the Before and After Care Director.
10. Non-Sterling Montessori students are not permitted to participate in on-campus after school enrichment programs.
11. A program may be canceled in its entirety due to lack of enrollment or unforeseen circumstances. In this case, a full refund will be granted to all participants.
12. You must maintain a student to teacher ratio of 15:1 with a maximum of 25 students for A building and lower elementary age students and 30 students for upper el/middle school.
13. Contracts are issued by the semester, and fees are due by the end of the second week of the program. Checks should be made payable to Sterling Montessori and turned into the front office.
14. Sterling Montessori requires a minimum insurance policy carried by all outside vendors. A COI Certificate of Insurance must be submitted to the office before your first meeting. The policy must be written for \$2 million dollars, \$1 million per occurrence with 2 occurrences allowed, with \$5,000 coverage for medical expenses. "The Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation doing business as Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School" needs to be listed as an additional insured.
15. Students must provide their own snack and water refillable water bottle. No food or drink may be provided by an outside vendor.

## **Policies for Parents/Guardians:**

1. **Code of conduct:** Students are expected to maintain the same behavioral standard that they would have during the formal school day. If a child is consistently disruptive and prevents the instructor from conducting class, the Enrichment provider/instructor reserves the right to ask the child to drop the class. Parents/guardians will be given a formal warning before these measures are taken. There will be no refunds if a child is asked to leave for behavior.
2. **Pick up policy:** For after-school activities, parents/guardians are expected to arrive by the end of the enrichment program for pickup. If you are going to be late, contact the activity provider directly as soon as possible. Fees may apply for late pick-ups.
3. **Medication:** Parents/guardians of students participating in after school activities that require medication are responsible to notifying the activity's coordinator of their child's medical needs. The activity coordinator must know where a student's medication can be found and what procedures must be followed in case a medical need should occur.

**P.47**  
**Pets**

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## **Policy on Classroom Pets**

*Approved 7/2019*

Sterling Montessori allows the appropriate and safe inclusion of some live animals in instructional programs and as classroom pets, in accordance with this policy. The teacher is directed to develop and distribute procedures governing the use of animals in class as part of the curriculum or as classroom pets, including procedures to prevent the transmission of animal-borne diseases, proper handling of animals and their waste, and protocols for preventing and responding to injuries. This policy only addresses animals used for curricular or classroom purposes, and it does not create a right for staff, students, or others to bring non-service animals onto school property.

The use of live animals, as part of the curriculum or as classroom pets, requires authorization from the Executive Director prior to introduction.

Use of animals by staff or students for instructional purposes is subject to the following requirements and to adherence to approval procedures:

1. Staff must investigate any known student or staff allergy problems in advance.
2. Parental notification and an opportunity to object or opt out of participating in the activity with the animal will be required prior to the use of animals for classroom or instructional purposes.
3. Animals must be kept clean and groomed, and otherwise in good health. Animals can be displayed in enclosed cages or tanks.
4. Staff are responsible for the care or supervision of any animals used as part of the curriculum or as classroom pets and are expected to practice humane treatment at all times.
5. Cages and dishes must be kept clean at all times. Students and teachers must wear gloves when cleaning the equipment and wash hands and surfaces when finished.
6. Any animal that causes injury to staff or students or that demonstrates aggression or a safety risk of any kind, or interferes with orderly school operations, will be immediately isolated and removed from the school premises.

**Examples of classroom pets to be approved may include:**

- Frogs
- Gecko
- Snails

- Fish
- Hermit Crabs

**All of the guidelines set forth by the North Carolina Sanitation Department will be adhered to.**

## **P.48 Discipline**

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### **Philosophy of Discipline at Sterling Montessori**

*Approved 7/2019*

When children receive positive, non-violent, and empathetic guidance from adults, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief about how children learn and develop values, Montessori will use the Pyramid of Intervention as its discipline model. This tiered model was emulated after the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in an effort to respond to a student's needs. Directors, teachers, specialists and other school staff at Sterling Montessori are members of the MTSS team. They work as a team to assess students and plan MTSS interventions. Each member has responsibilities to ensure the success of all the children at Sterling Montessori. The MTSS Core team oversees the MTSS process and procedures and ensures proper documentation. This model strives to provide a way for Sterling Montessori to support students with learning and behavior problems by systematically delivering a range of interventions based on demonstrated levels of need.

### **Discipline Model**

Based on the Pyramid of Intervention model (illustrated in section 6.1 of this handbook), this discipline plan reflects the graduated and documented response to a student's inappropriate choices. The items listed in this plan are examples and do not represent all possible situations. The Executive Director has the discretion to evaluate issues on a case by case basis in order to determine the appropriate Administrative Level and related consequences.

This plan is consistent with the Montessori philosophy that holds respect and responsibility as key elements and builds confidence, self-esteem, and leadership.

### **Classroom Management Level (Tier I)**

**Includes:** Lead Teacher, Parents/Guardians, and Student.

Eighty to ninety percent of student behaviors are addressed at the Classroom Management Level, and the Lead Teacher documents accommodations and interventions. Chronic behaviors that prove non-responsive to these strategies are moved to the Administration Level I. Incident reports are completed by the person witnessing/reporting the event and signed by the Lead Teacher and Section Director. The report is

then emailed to the parent. These reports along with any documentation (eg. phone logs, behavior plans, emails, etc.) will be submitted and filed with the Section Director. Lead teachers may request the support of the MTSS team.

**Examples (but not limited to):**

- Inappropriate Dress: poor choices of clothing (decency)

*Our complete Dress Code Policy (P.38) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

- Disruptive Behaviors: arriving late to class, interrupting teachers, being a distraction during work time, being unprepared for class, misusing materials, rough play, leaving the classroom for an excessive amount of time, vandalizing, or hurting others
- Inappropriate Communication: passing notes, starting rumors, calling names, threatening others, being disrespectful, lying, using rude language and mimicking
- Disobedience: failure to comply with a reasonable request from the teacher or administrative staff

**Administrative Level I (Tier II)**

**Includes:** Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parents/Guardians, and Student.

This accounts for 5-10% of behaviors. This level may include documented chronic behaviors from Classroom Management Level and those listed on the pyramid (chronic issues from Category I, destruction of property, bullying/harassment, plagiarism, stealing, profanity, obscenity, misuse of personal or school-owned electronics, etc.).

Administration Level I behaviors generally result in interventions but may result in a suspension.

Incident reports are completed by the person witnessing/reporting the event and signed by the Lead Teacher and Section Director. These reports along with any documentation (eg. phone logs, behavior plans, emails, etc.) will be submitted and filed with the Section Director. Lead Teachers may request the support of the MTSS team.

**Administrative Level II (Tier III)**

**Includes:** Assistant Executive Director, Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parent and Student.

Behaviors addressed at this level may include chronic behaviors from earlier levels and those on the pyramid.

Administrative Level II behaviors may warrant a Short-Term Suspension, not to exceed five (5) school days. The Assistant Executive Director may recommend a Long-Term Suspension based upon aggravating factors regarding the severity of the violation or safety concerns which may warrant the recommendation of Long-Term Suspension.

The incident report is completed by the person witnessing/reporting the event, signed by the Lead Teacher and submitted to the section director with the appropriate documentation (eg. phone logs, behavior plans, emails, etc.). If a suspension is warranted, the Assistant Executive Director will write a formal notification letter to the student's parents/guardians, a copy of which will be filed in the student's Cumulative Folder and reported in Power School. In the event of escalating chronic behaviors, the support of the MTSS team is recommended.

### **Administrative Level III (Continuation of Tier III)**

**Includes:** Assistant Executive Director, Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parent, Student, and School Counselor or Behavior Specialist

Behaviors addressed at the Administrative Level III, including hate crimes, are more severe in nature and typically result in a recommendation for Long-Term Suspension or Exclusion. Additionally, chronic behaviors in all previous levels not responsive to interventions may be elevated to this level. Referral to MTSS, alternative placement, or involvement of school counselor or other outside resources may be responses at this level.

After a student receives a suspension, both the parents/guardians and student, are asked to meet with the Assistant Executive Director prior to the student returning to the classroom.

*You can find more information about intervention levels on the Pyramid of Intervention which can be located in section 6.1 of this handbook.*

## **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 must 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. This section describes those guidelines in more detail.

### **Children's House Level**

1. First Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent at dismissal.
2. Second Incident: An Incident Report is written, a phone call is made to the parent/guardian and the report is shared with the parent/guardian at dismissal.
3. Third Incident: An incident report is written, a phone call is made to the parent/guardian, the report is shared with the parent/guardian at dismissal and a parent-teacher conference may be scheduled.

### **Elementary and Middle School Levels**

1. First Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent.
2. Second Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent.
3. Third Incident: An Incident Report is written and the parent/guardian is called immediately. A parent-teacher conference may be scheduled to make sure that the family is involved in the problem-solving process.

**P.50**  
**Unexpected**  
**Closings**

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## **Unexpected Closings, Delays and Early Dismissals Policy**

*Approved 11/2019*

Severe weather, including hurricanes and winter storms, is a normal part of the school year. A determination will be made by the administration in the event of a weather related closing, delay or early dismissal.

- All weather closings, delays and early dismissals will be posted on WRAL and the school's website.
- Sterling Montessori staff members will also receive alerts via text messaging, email and/or voicemail.
- Sterling Montessori will not provide Before Care when operating on a delay and will not provide After Care when operating with an early dismissal.
- Sterling Montessori staff members live in multiple counties surrounding the school location, and thus conditions may differ from county to county. Staff members are encouraged and should use their own judgement and discretion about the safety of the roads during and after severe weather.
- Staff members shall contact their direct supervisor to let them know if they are not able to come in due to weather. Staff may take an annual leave day or a non-paid day.

**Sterling Montessori will operate under regular hours unless otherwise announced.**

**P.51  
Medical  
Support**

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## **Student Medical Support Policy**

*Approved 1/2020*

### Overview

All staff are required to be first-aid and CPR trained; however, complex medical care often requires school personnel to undertake specific training to meet a student's individual health needs. The purpose of this policy is to detail requirements of school personnel for the medical care of students. There are circumstances in which Sterling employees, including substitutes and student teachers, will be responsible for life saving techniques beyond the school's required training. It is the expectation that these caretakers will administer life saving techniques when reasonably apparent that delaying to do so would seriously worsen the physical condition or endanger the life of the student. However, if a caretaker is unable or unwilling to administer life saving techniques, it is their responsibility to call 911 and seek help. Life saving techniques may include, but are not limited to:

- seizure management
- tracheostomy care
- medication by injection or rectal suppository
- administering suction
- tube feeding
- specialized medical procedures
- asthma management

Any training required of school personnel to provide complex medical care to students to meet a student's individual needs shall be paid for by Sterling Montessori.

### **Administering Medicines to Students**

Sterling Montessori recognizes that students may need to take medication during school hours. School personnel may administer medication prescribe

Authorized school personnel may administer medication to a student when all of the following conditions are met. These conditions must be

met and renewed annually in order to permit authorized school personnel to administer medication to a student. These conditions apply to all medications, including those available over-the-counter without a prescription.

- A. Parental Consent: The student's parent must make a signed, written request that authorizes school personnel to administer the medication to the student.
- B. Medication Authorization/Order: For prescriptions, a health care practitioner must prescribe the medication for use by the student and provide explicit written instructions for administering the medication.
- C. Certification of Necessity: The student's parent must alert school personnel to any possible adverse reaction to the medication.
- D. Proper Container/Labeling: If the medication to be administered is available by prescription only, the parent must provide the medication in a pharmacy-labeled container with directions for how and when the medicine is to be given. If the medication is available over-the-counter, it must be provided in the original container or packaging, labeled with the student's name. All such containers must also include the medication's expiration date and the name of the child.

*Sterling Montessori, the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation, and school personnel assume no liability for complications or side effects of medication when administered in accordance with the instructions provided by the parent and health care practitioner.*

## **Procedures for Administering Medications**

- A. Except for specific cases in which the Executive Director and teacher agree that classroom administration is preferable or required, school personnel shall administer medication from the office.
- B. Medicines kept at school for a student must be kept in a locked and secure place. An exception to the requirement for locked storage may be made for emergency medications that must be immediately accessible and as otherwise provided for herein.
- C. All school personnel who will be administering medications must receive appropriate training.

- D. The Executive Director shall designate school personnel to maintain proper documentation of the time and dosage of medications given.
- E. At the end of the school year or once the administration of the medication is discontinued, any medication not picked up within two weeks by the parent shall be destroyed by school personnel.
- F. Although efforts should be made not to disrupt instructional time, a parent has the right to administer medication to his or her child at any time while the child is on school property.
- G. Written information maintained by school personnel regarding a student's medicinal and health needs is confidential. Parents/guardians and students must be accorded all rights provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and state confidentiality laws. Any school personnel who violates the confidentiality of the records may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Emergency Medication

Students who are at risk for medical emergencies, such as those with diabetes, asthma or severe allergies, must have an emergency health care plan developed for them to address emergency administration of medication. Students must meet the requirements of subsection A.1, above, including providing authorization and instructions from the health care practitioner and written consent of the parent, in order for emergency medication to be administered by school personnel while the student is at school or at a school sponsored activity.

## **Student Self-Administering Medications**

Sterling Montessori recognizes that some students may need to possess and self-administer medication on school property, including insulin or a source of glucose prescribed for the treatment of diabetes or an asthma inhaler prescribed for the treatment of asthma.

### **1. Authorization to Self-Administer Medication**

Before a student will be allowed to self-administer medication pursuant to this section, the student's parent must provide to the Executive Director or his or her designee all of the documents listed below:

- A. Written authorization from the student's parent for the student to possess and self-administer the medication;
- B. Written statement from the student's health care practitioner verifying that:

1. The student has a diagnosis that could result in an adverse reaction needing medication.
  2. The health care practitioner prescribed the medication for use on school property during the school day or at school-sponsored activities;
  3. The student understands, has been instructed in self-administration of the medication by the parent and/or health care practitioner, and has demonstrated the skill level necessary to use the medication and any accompanying device to the satisfaction of the health care practitioner;
- C. A statement provided by Sterling Montessori and signed by the student's parent acknowledging that Sterling Montessori, school personnel, and the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation and agents are not liable for injury arising from the student's possession and self-administration of the medication or liable for loss or theft of self-administered medication.
- D. Any other documents or items necessary to comply with state and federal laws.

Prior to being permitted to self-administer medication at school, the student also must demonstrate to the Executive Director or his or her designee (which may include a health care practitioner selected by the Executive Director) the skill level necessary to use the medication and any accompanying device.

The student's parent must provide to the school backup medication that school personnel are to keep in a location to which the student has immediate access in the event the student does not have the required medication.

All information provided to the school by the student's parent must be kept on file at the school in an easily accessible location and reviewed by the Executive Director or his or her designee. Any permission granted by the Executive Director or his or her designee for a student to possess and self-administer medication will be effective only for the academic year during which permission is granted. Such permission must be renewed each academic year.

## **2. Responsibilities of the Student**

A student who is authorized in accordance with this policy to carry medication for self-administration must carry the medication in the original labeled container with the student's name on the label.

## **3. Consequences for Improper Use**

A student who uses his or her medication in a manner other than as prescribed or who permits another person to use the medication may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school disciplinary policy. However, school officials shall not impose disciplinary action on the student that limits or restricts the student's immediate access to the medication.

Sterling Montessori, school personnel, and the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation and agents do not assume any responsibility or liability for the administration of medication to a student by the student, the student's parent, or any other person who is not authorized by this policy to administer medications to students.

## **Complex Medical Care**

**The following must be in place for a student to receive medical support at Sterling Montessori:**

- The Medical Action Plan for students needing complex medical care, guided by the student's health care practitioners.
- Explicit and express designation of school personnel to provide complex medical care.
- Designated school personnel shall receive specific training, including, training from a licensed nurse or health care practitioner to allow school personnel to meet the student's individual health care needs. To the extent possible, the student's health care practitioner shall provide guidance as to the training school personnel shall undergo.
- The student's parent shall, in writing with a copy to the Executive Director, request the student's health care practitioner to provide Sterling Montessori with a list of training that school personnel should undergo in order to be properly trained to provide and meet the student's complex medical care needs.

### Emergency Epinephrine Auto-Injector Devices

Anaphylaxis is a severe systemic allergic reaction from exposure to allergens that is rapid in onset and can cause death. Many severe allergies are undiagnosed, and students or others may experience their first severe allergic reaction while at school. Epinephrine auto-injector devices can be used to administer epinephrine to provide rapid, convenient first aid for persons suffering a potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction. This policy

addresses the use of emergency epinephrine auto-injector devices administered under a non-patient specific prescription.

Epinephrine auto-injector devices provided by the school are intended for unforeseen emergencies. Students known to have medical conditions requiring the availability of an epinephrine auto-injector device are expected to provide such devices for their use at school. Parents/guardians of students with known life threatening allergies and/or anaphylaxis should provide the school with written instructions from the student's health care provider for handling anaphylaxis and all necessary medications for implementing the student specific medical plan.

**The following must be in place for students who have severe allergies and require medication for anaphylactic reactions:**

- The Food Allergy and Anaphylactic Action Plan for students needing complex medical care should be guided by medical services and on record at the school.
- Designated trained school personnel are authorized to use emergency epinephrine auto-injector devices to deliver emergency medical aid to any person suffering from an anaphylactic reaction during the school day or at a school-sponsored event on school property. The school shall provide a supply of emergency epinephrine auto-injectors on school property for use by trained school personnel to provide emergency medical aid to persons suffering from an anaphylactic reaction during the school day and at school-sponsored events on school property. The school shall store in a secure but unlocked and easily accessible location a minimum of two epinephrine auto-injectors. For purposes of this section, "school property" does not include transportation to or from school; additionally, this policy does not require emergency epinephrine auto-injector devices to be available at activities held off school grounds during or after the school day, including field trips, except as may be required pursuant to an individual student's IEP, Section 504 Plan, or health or emergency plan.
- The Executive Director shall designate one or more school personnel to receive initial training and annual retraining from a qualified representative of the local health department regarding the storage and emergency use of an epinephrine auto-injector. Only such trained personnel are authorized to administer epinephrine to persons believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction. The Executive Director shall make reasonable efforts to notify other school personnel as to

which employee(s) has received this training in order to facilitate a prompt emergency response.

- The school will develop a plan for the use of epinephrine auto-injectors in an emergency that complies with state law. The plan shall include at least the following components: (1) Standards and procedures for the storage and emergency use of epinephrine auto-injectors by trained school personnel. (2) Training of school personnel in recognizing symptoms of anaphylaxis. (3) Emergency follow-up procedures, including calling emergency services and contacting a student's parent and physician. (4) Instruction and certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- A supply of emergency epinephrine auto-injectors provided in accordance with this section shall not be used as the sole medication supply for students known to have a medical condition requiring the availability or use of an epinephrine auto-injector.

**The following must be in place for students who have diabetes and require medication or complex medical care:**

- Students with diabetes require the implementation of the procedures set forth in the Diabetes Action Plan.

**The following must be in place for students who have seizures and require medication or complex medical care:**

- Students with seizures require the implementation of the procedures set forth in the Seizure Action Plan.

**Automated External Defibrillator**

Sterling Montessori is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for its students, employees, and visitors. To provide opportunities for assistance to individuals who experience sudden cardiac arrest on school property, Sterling Montessori authorizes the placement of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in designated locations in school and at school-sponsored events to be accessed by medical practitioners and other trained persons.

All such AEDs and any program developed must comply with the requirements of state and federal law.

Choice and placement of AED devices will be made by the Executive Director or his or designee in consultation with a health care practitioner.

Preference will be given to machines that offer both adult and child settings. The type of AED product must be one that is approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

CPR and AED use training for anticipated responders: Training for anticipated responders will be completed in accordance with nationally recognized training programs including those approved and provided by the American Heart Association or American Red Cross. Appropriate records of training will be maintained.

Appropriate local EMS officials must be notified of the location and most recent placement of AEDs within a reasonable period of time of placement. The AED device shall be appropriately maintained and tested. Nothing in this policy should be construed to require the presence or use of an AED on school property or at school sponsored events, unless otherwise required by law. Sterling Montessori cannot and does not guarantee that an AED or a person trained in its use will be available at school or school sponsored events.

Sterling Montessori, its employees, and the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation expressly reserve all immunities from civil liability which are available to them under state or federal law, including governmental immunity and the statutory immunities set forth in the North Carolina General Statutes.

## **Liability**

Sterling Montessori, its employees, and the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation, designees, or volunteers, and a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner of the local health department shall not be liable in civil damages for any authorized act or for any omission relating to that act unless the act or omission amounts to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing.

# Appendices

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## **Appendix A**

| <b>Guide to Commonly Used Initialisms and Acronyms</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>AHERA</b>   | Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act      |
| <b>BOG</b>   | Beginning of Grade                          |
| <b>CPR</b>   | Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation               |
| <b>EOG</b>   | End of Grade                                |
| <b>EPA</b>   | Environmental Protection Agency             |
| <b>FERPA</b>   | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act   |
| <b>IDEA</b>  | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| <b>LHU</b>   | Laura Holland Uzzell                        |
| <b>MTSS</b>  | Multi Tier Systems of Supports              |

## Appendix B

| Montessori Information and Resources   |
|--|
| Print  |
| <b><i>Montessori Today</i></b> by Paula Polk Lillard                                       |
| <b><i>A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom</i></b> by Aline D. Wolf                |
| <b><i>The Secret of Childhood</i></b> by Maria Montessori                                  |
| <b><i>Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work</i></b> by E.M. Standing                         |
| <b><i>The Montessori Way: An Education for Life</i></b> by Tim Seldin and Paul Estein PhD. |
| <b><i>Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents</i></b> by Maureen Schmidt M. Ed.      |

| Digital  |
|--|
| <a href="#"><u>North American Montessori Teachers' Association</u></a> |
| <a href="#"><u>American Montessori Society</u></a>                     |
| <a href="#"><u>Montessori Connections</u></a>                          |
| <a href="#"><u>Montessori Family Alliance</u></a>                      |
| <a href="#"><u>Association Montessori Internationale</u></a>           |

## **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/>

# Addenda

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### ***Addendum 1: Changes to Sterling's Tardy Policy***

*These additions were made to the 2021-2022 Parent Handbook after its release so appears as an addendum.*

#### **Addendum to Section 2.2.a:**

When tardy, parents/guardians of kindergarten through 8th grade must walk their child to the Main Office to sign-in. After 9:00 AM, adults are required to check-in and must bring a photo ID.

#### **Addendum to Section 2.3.a:**

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](mailto:office@sterlingmontessori.org) as well as the classroom teacher ahead of time. Repeated early dismissals are not allowed. Parents/guardians arriving after 3:00 PM will not be granted this request.

## ***Addendum 2: Updates to The Charter Admission and Enrollment Policy***

*The updates made to this policy were adopted after the release of the 2021-2022 Parent Handbook and so appear as an addendum.*

*Approved 8/2021*

### **P.11 Admissions & Enrollment**

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#### **Charter Admission and Enrollment Policy**

*Approved 7/2019*

Sterling Montessori is a tuition free public school. Any student who is qualified under the laws of this state for admission to a public school is qualified for admission at Sterling Montessori. According to NC G.S.115C-238.29F (g), a charter school shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, national, origin, gender, or disability.

All students eligible for enrollment in a North Carolina public school are eligible for enrollment at Sterling Montessori. All students are required by 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, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

#### **Enrollment Priority**

Sterling Montessori Charter School follows all rules and regulations regarding enrollment priority as specified in North Carolina Charter School Law 115C-218.45. The LHU Board of Directors has decided to offer admissions priority for the following tiers and will implement them in the manner described below:

1. **SCHOOL EMPLOYEES:** Priority is given to children of full-time Sterling Montessori employees.

2. **BOARD MEMBERS:** Priority is given to children of Sterling Montessori LHU Board Members. Total number of School employees and Board Members' children are limited to no more than 15% of the school's total enrollment, unless granted a waiver by the State Board of Education.
3. **SIBLINGS:** Once a child in a family is enrolled at Sterling Montessori Charter School, any siblings applying for admission will receive priority enrollment status for the current school year. If there are no openings for their respective grade level, they will be placed at the bottom of the sibling waitlist. If Sterling is not able to offer a seat to a sibling for the current school year, the sibling will receive priority enrollment status when they apply for the following year's lottery.

**Note:** The term "siblings" applies to any of the following students who reside in the same household: half-siblings, step-siblings, and children residing together in the same family foster home.

4. **SIBLINGS OF STERLING ALUMNI:** This refers to siblings of students who have completed the highest grade offered by Sterling Montessori and attended for at least four years at Sterling.

## **Special Circumstances**

### 1. Multiple Birth Siblings (twins, triplets, etc.)

Multiple birth siblings applying for admission shall enter one surname into the lottery to represent all of the multiple births applying at the same time. If that surname of the multiple birth siblings is selected, then all of the multiple birth siblings shall be admitted.

- If the names are drawn and placed directly on a wait list, the parents/guardians must determine which student is placed first on the waitlist.
- If the multiple birth siblings are in different grades, the parents/guardians will need to decide at the time of applications are submitted which grade level they would like for their surname to be entered.

### 2. Exclusion/Suspension from a Public School:

Notwithstanding to any law to the contrary, a charter school, in this case Sterling Montessori may refuse admission to any student who has been excluded or suspended from a public school under N.C.G.S.11SC-391 until the period of suspension or exclusion has expired.

## **Application Process**

There is no application fee for charter school admission.

Prior to the application period, Sterling Montessori will announce on its website when the online application for admission will be made available (opens in January), the deadline for submission (closes in February), and the date/time/location of the public lottery drawing (lottery drawing in March). The application period will be no less than 30 calendar days. Applications must be completed by the prospective student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or legal guardian.

For those without digital access, a computer will be available located in the Main Office from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on school days during the time of the application period.

For Kindergarten admissions, the student must be 5 years old on or before August 31st of the enrollment year (NC G.S. 115C-364).

Parents/guardians who accept enrollment for their child/children to attend Sterling, must be able to provide transportation to and from school, as there are no transportation services available from the school.

## **The Lottery Process**

The lottery will be conducted in the following manner:

1. Applications completed are digitally recorded and made available for the online enrollment program.
2. The online enrollment program eliminates the necessity for parents/guardians to come to campus to be notified of the results, however, anyone is welcome to attend in person should you want to witness the process. The details of this information can be found on the Sterling website.
3. The enrollment process is activated by Sterling Admissions who will then generate and record the lottery results.
4. The process is instantaneous and the results will be shared with families via the email addresses that were supplied on the digital application.
5. After the program has selected students for all available spaces and parents/guardians are notified, the drawing will continue to determine the order of a waiting list.

6. If a student has been selected in the lottery, the parent/guardian of the student will receive an acceptance notification via email. If the parent is unable to receive email, an acceptance letter will be mailed to the child's residence.
7. The school's wait list will be updated regularly and parents/guardians of students placed on the waitlist will receive periodic communication as to their student's place.

## **After Lottery Submissions**

Applications submitted after the lottery application deadline will be date and time stamped. These submissions will be placed at the bottom of the wait list according to the student's applicable grade level.

Applicants who would have received priority placement during the lottery process will still have priority placement if applications are received after the lottery drawing, if seats are available.

## **Acceptance of Enrollment**

The lottery results and waiting lists are posted on <https://www.sterlingmontessori.org>, and updates are provided as changes occur.

As stated, offers of enrollment will be delivered to lottery-selected children through the emails that were provided on their digital application. Prospective families are required to either accept or decline the offer via email or in writing, to document their response.

Parents/guardians or court appointed legal guardians of prospective students, will have 7 days to communicate their decision to either accept or decline Sterling Montessori's offer of enrollment. If Sterling Montessori does not receive a written response to the offer of enrollment by the close of business (4 PM) of the seventh (7th) day, the lack of response will be considered an effective "declining" of the offer. The student's name will be placed at the end of the waitlist for their grade level, and the offer will be presented to the next prospective student on that specific grade's waiting list.

- Thirty days prior to the first day of school, parents/guardians or court appointed legal guardians of prospective students will have 3 days to reply to an offer.
- Beginning one week prior to the first day of school and through the 35th student day, parents/guardians or court appointed legal guardians will have 24 hours to accept or decline Sterling Montessori's offer of enrollment.

Families that have accepted an offer of enrollment must then submit required enrollment documents to include a copy of their student's birth certificate, proof of residency and immunization records within 7 days after receiving the aforementioned documents. If we do not receive the enrollment documents within 7 days, the student's offer/seat is forfeited and the seat will be offered to the next student on the waiting list.

The wait list will only be applicable to the academic year that the lottery was conducted. Sterling will continue to fill open Charter seats from the waitlist as they become available for the first 35 academic days of the school year. After 35 days, no additional Charter students will be admitted to avoid disruptions to the classroom.

### **Attendance: First 20 Days of School**

Newly enrolled and returning students 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.

Parents/guardian may appeal our decision to withdraw a student due to failure to adhere to the Admission Attendance Policy. A written appeal must be sent to the Executive Director via email by close of business (4PM) the next day after receiving the withdrawal notification. The Executive Director reserves the right to grant or deny re-enrollment based on the information provided in the appeal process.

### **Sterling's Right to Refuse Enrollment**

Sterling Montessori reserves the right to refuse to enroll any student currently under a term of exclusion or suspension by his or her school until that term is over.

If we become aware of misrepresentations on the application and it is discovered prior to the public lottery drawing, we will address them prior to the lottery. Post lottery, any misrepresentation may result in this application being discarded and/or applicant's dismissal from the school. Sterling Montessori reserves the right to refuse to enroll a student if a parent/guardian willingly and knowingly provided incorrect information on either the student's application for admission, or on the documents submitted at the time of enrollment.

## ***Addendum 3: Guidance for Homebound and Modified Day Placement***

*This policy was adopted after the release of the 2021-2022 Parent Handbook and so appear as an addendum.*

*Approved 10/2021*

### **P.20 Homebound & Modified Day**

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#### **Guidance for Homebound and Modified Day Placement**

*Approved 10/2021*

#### **Purpose**

In the fall of 2016, Disability Rights NC approached the NCDPI Exceptional Children Division with concerns about homebound placements of students with disabilities in NC. Concerns about the placements included lack of legal justification, length, frequency, lack of appropriate academic instruction, effects on educational outcomes, hardship on working parents, and use with other forms of exclusion, including suspension and modified day schedules. In response, DPI reviewed internal data about homebound placements and proposed that Disability Rights and DPI partner to facilitate a stakeholder group to attempt to address these concerns.

Professionals from schools, advocacy organizations, community disability and mental health providers, and others met to establish the stakeholder group. The focus was to create an open, thoughtful dialogue about the challenges of serving students with significant behavior support and/or intensive education needs, and offer guidance for improved solutions for addressing those needs.

This guidance document is the product of this stakeholder collaboration. It is designed to guide (Individualized Education Plan) IEP teams that are considering a homebound or modified day placement for a child and represents the collective thoughts of the stakeholder group on best practices to be followed by IEP teams. This document should be used in conjunction with the North Carolina Policies Governing Children with Disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and

the federal regulations. It reinforces the basic legal requirement that every child is entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment; and it supports teams in their efforts to implement that requirement.

## **Introduction**

Homebound instruction is instruction provided in a setting outside of school for students with disabilities who are unable to attend school. Instruction is provided by certified staff from the local education agency (LEA).

A homebound setting may be used in several distinct situations for students with or without disabilities. This guidance document focuses on students with disabilities served with an IEP.

## **Child with a Disability:**

As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a child with a disability means a child who has autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, developmental delay (applicable to children ages 3 – 7), hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, serious emotional disability, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, and who by reason of the disability, needs special education and related services.

Eligibility for services pursuant to the IDEA must be supported by an evaluation. Evidence must show that the child has at least one of the disabilities identified above, that the disability has an adverse effect on educational performance, and that the child requires specially designed instruction.

## **Homebound or Modified Day Placements – Students with IEPs Overview**

A homebound or modified day placement may be appropriate for a student served under the IDEA who is unable to attend school due to a medical or mental health condition. Additionally, in some situations, suspended students served under the IDEA may be placed in a homebound setting, as may students whose behaviors jeopardize the safety of themselves or others in the school building.

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, decisions regarding homebound or modified day placement are made by the student's IEP team. The IEP team must consider what will be the appropriate least restrictive environment for the student. Homebound isolates students from their peers - both those with and without disabilities - as well as from the variety of educators in the school building and the general learning environment. A "modified day" for a special education student is a partial homebound placement and is highly restrictive because it similarly segregates students with disabilities.

When in a homebound or modified day placement, students with disabilities are entitled to receive a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE). As it is modifying the IEP for implementation in a setting outside of school, the team must determine how the student will continue to access the general curriculum as well as the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP.

## **Student with IEPs and Medical Conditions**

Students with disabilities under the IDEA, like other students, may, at times, be unable to attend school due to either temporary or long-term medical or mental health conditions. The student's IEP team must obtain written documentation from the student's medical and/or mental health providers when considering a homebound or modified day placement for medical or mental health reasons. Documentation from the medical providers must support the conclusion that the student's condition prevents the student from attending school. At the time a homebound placement is determined, the team should set a reasonable time for review of the placement.

## **Students with IEPs Serving Long-Term Suspensions**

A student who has been long-term suspended (i.e., suspended for more than ten school days) could be placed in a homebound setting in some circumstances. Under the IDEA, this type of removal from school is called a "disciplinary change of placement." If the IEP team, which includes the parents, finds that the student's conduct is a manifestation of his/her disability, then the suspension may not occur, and the student must return to school. If, however, the IEP team finds that the conduct leading to the suspension was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the long-term suspension may be implemented, and the student can be subjected to a disciplinary change in placement.

If a student with a disability is suspended for more than ten days, the student is entitled to a continuation of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) during the

period of suspension. The IEP team must determine the alternative educational setting for the student. This could be in an alternative school in the district or in another setting. The student may not be placed in a homebound setting during the period of suspension unless the student's IEP team, which includes the parents, determines that such a placement is the least restrictive alternative environment for that student. If it is determined that the homebound placement is the least restrictive environment, the continued appropriateness of the setting must be reviewed at least monthly by a designee of the IEP team.

## **Students with IEPs Exhibiting Dangerous or Other Highly Disruptive Behaviors**

A student who displays repeated dangerous or other highly disruptive behaviors, despite various staff interventions, may need to be removed from his or her current placement. A homebound placement may be necessary for a temporary period when the student's behaviors put the safety of the student, staff and other students in jeopardy and all less restrictive options on the continuum of placements have been considered to the extent appropriate.

Prior to the implementation of a homebound/modified day placement for a student exhibiting dangerous or other highly disruptive behaviors, the IEP team should consider the following actions unless, for some reason, they are inappropriate or inapplicable for the situation:

- Initiate a reevaluation for the purposes of obtaining consent to conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) for the purposes of programming (reviewing/revising the student's IEP).
- Develop a strong, appropriate Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) based on the results of the FBA using evidenced-based practices.
- Implement the BIP with fidelity; evaluate and revise the BIP as needed.
- Review and revise the current IEP to determine if additional supplemental aids and supports in the current school setting are needed.
- Consult with school-based staff (counselors, school psychologists, etc.) who are familiar with the student to obtain information about the student's behaviors.
- Consult with district-level exceptional children administrators, behavior specialists, and/or disability-specific specialists about alternative strategies, supplemental aids, and supports.

- Consult with private behavior specialists and/or disability-specific program specialists from DPI about alternative strategies, supplemental aids, and supports.
- Request a release of confidential information to seek the recommendations of
  - the treating physicians or other mental health providers regarding supports that would allow the student to remain in a school setting, and/or
  - community agencies.
- Consider all alternative placements along the full continuum.
- Provide placement in a school setting that will offer the student a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
- Thoroughly and accurately document consideration of additional supplemental aids and supports in the school, as well as consideration of all options along the continuum.

## **Evaluating the Appropriateness of a Homebound/Modified Day Placement**

When evaluating the appropriateness of a homebound/modified day placement, the IEP team should consider:

1. Factors regarding the nature and type of the services to be provided.
  - a. Current classes, schedule, course of study, and method of instruction/delivery (with consideration of both general curriculum and special education curriculum)
  - b. Need for related services
  - c. Need for revisions to BIP for implementation in the home setting
  - d. Requirements for standardized testing
  - e. Impact of any ongoing medical conditions or treatment
  - f. Need for social or emotional instruction to address behavior that triggered the homebound/modified day placement
  - g. Coordination with community resources and supports
2. Factors affecting the amount of services provided.

- a. Current classes, schedule, course of study, and method of instruction/delivery (with consideration of both general curriculum and special education curriculum)
  - b. Credit needed to progress to the next grade
  - c. Impact of any ongoing medical conditions or treatment
3. Factors affecting the scheduling of services
  - a. The need to schedule instructional time around medical or mental health services or appointments
  - b. Coordination of multiple service providers (with consideration of both general and special education)
  - c. Coordination with family (supervision, work schedules, etc.)

## **Guidelines for Homebound/Modified Day Placement Reviews**

After a student has been placed in a homebound or modified day setting, the IEP team must immediately begin the planning process for reviewing/revising/determining the least restrictive environment for the student in order to have options available for the IEP Team to discuss once it reconvenes.

When the IEP Team reconvenes to discuss the homebound/modified day placement, The following essential questions should be considered: How appropriate is it to continue the current placement?

- Is a transition plan needed for placement in a less restrictive setting?
- Is progress being made toward meeting IEP goals?
- How appropriate is it to continue current services?
- Is progress being made toward meeting behavior goals?
- What external factors (family situation, location of services, etc.) are impacting placement?
- Is there a need for a different educational setting (public or private), additional staffing, or other necessary services and supports?
- Do opportunities exist for gradual re-entry into the school setting?

## **Guidelines for Functional Behavioral Assessments**

Evidence-based strategies include the use of a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP). When conducting an FBA, the IEP team should:

1. Assume the student wants to behave appropriately but lacks essential skills to respond to demands at school in an adaptive way.
2. Consider the scope of the assessment activities
  - A. Impartial observations conducted by professionals with particular expertise,
  - B. Multiple documented data-based observations across settings (For example, collect ABC data. ABC data consists of detailed data collection about the antecedents, behavior, and consequences. ABC data is not complete if it does not include antecedents. ABC data must be systematically documented, taken in real time, and taken over time. ABC data is not a description of an incident relayed verbally by a staff person at an IEP meeting.),
  - C. Parent/student/teacher interviews (Include meaningful input from the student, parents, teachers, and other relevant school personnel, including behavior specialists, to help identify the underlying causes of the behaviors. For example, does a student who is seeking adult attention in an inappropriate manner lack effective skills to appropriately communicate his wants and needs?), and
  - D. Analysis of behavior that prompted suspensions or lead to a change of placement.

## **Guidelines for Behavior Intervention Plans**

1. Include meaningful input from the student, parents, teachers, and other relevant school personnel, behavior specialists, disability-specific specialists (such as autism specialists), and outside experts with knowledge and expertise.
2. Begin by identifying one or two target behaviors that a student can change, based on the result of the FBA.
3. Identify the replacement behaviors that will fulfill the same function as the undesired behaviors.

4. Provide the student repeated and consistent instruction in replacement behaviors. Identify the methods for this instruction in the BIP.
5. Include explicit and proactive strategies that staff will use to make the student's target behaviors unnecessary for the student.
6. Identify changes that can be made to the environment, if necessary, to minimize triggers to dangerous behaviors, and identify the personnel responsible for ensuring the changes occur.
7. Provide positive reinforcements for positive behavior that are selected specifically with and for the student. The IEP team could ask, "What will motivate this particular student to change his behavior?"
8. Identify the specific staff members who will implement the plan.
9. Include a plan for collecting and analyzing behavioral data and measurable criteria for success.
10. Allow time for the BIP to be implemented with fidelity while recording data to track progress. Then, meet with the team again to review progress and make any necessary changes. Regular reviews of the student's progress and adjustments to the plan should occur monthly.
11. If the dangerous behaviors have not responded to the intervention plan, the team needs to meet to review and revise the BIP. The team should also consider whether the hypothesis made regarding the function of the undesired behavior was correct. If the team concludes the hypothesis was in error, it should revisit that aspect of the FBA or complete a new FBA.

## ***Addendum 4: Updates to Suicide Intervention Policy***

*The updates made to this policy were adopted after the release of the 2021-2022 Employee Handbook and so appear as an addendum.*

*Approved 10/2021*

### **P.22 Suicide**

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## **Suicide Intervention Policy**

*Approved 10/2021*

We take ALL threats seriously. In the case of a suicide threat, the school's counselor and appropriate administrator should be notified. They will assess all cases and take all necessary steps to keep the student safe. **Do not leave the student alone at any time or permit them to leave campus without an adult present.**

The school's counselor or administrator will contact the student's parents/ guardians and will link the student's parents/guardians with the appropriate resources and recommendations, i.e. mental health professionals.

Parents/guardians may also need to sign a release of information to allow teachers and staff members to speak with the student's therapist. Staff members may need to communicate with health professionals for suicide assessment or other needed services. If necessary, the school may require an evaluation by a qualified health professional before they return to school.

A conference may need to be held with the appropriate staff to determine appropriate steps for support.

### **Suicide Attempt at School**

The following notifications should be made immediately:

1. Call (911). Do not communicate the incident as a suicide attempt, but as a

serious injury.

2. Notify the Director or designee.
3. Contact the parent(s)/guardian(s).
4. Keep all students and uninvolved school staff away from the scene.
5. Notify the school counselor in order to activate the intervention plan.