

Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook 2022-2023

Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook

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Introduction

1.
Welcome

Welcome!

Welcome to Sterling Montessori. You are now an important member of a team of educators who have dedicated their professional lives to children.

Please carefully read this employee handbook. It is your guide to your time at Sterling Montessori. Then, please initial, date, sign and return the receipt for this handbook to the school office. This receipt will become a part of your employee record

1.2 About

About Sterling Montessori

1.2.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.

1.2.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 child-centered educational approach based on scientific observations of children. Children develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively in order to thrive in the real world.

1.2.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, 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

1.2.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.

1.2.e

A History of Sterling Montessori

In 1989, Andrea Faurot and Charles Uzzell founded the Cary Montessori School in their home, 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.

1.2.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.
- committed to offering parent education in Montessori methods and philosophies.

1.2.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.

1.3 Employment

Employment at Sterling Montessori

1.3.a Equal Opportunity Employment

It is the policy of Sterling Montessori to provide all applicants for employment with equal employment opportunities and to provide current employees with training, compensation, promotion, and other attributes of employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship status, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, except where sex, age, or physical requirements are essential occupational qualifications. All candidates will be evaluated on their merits and qualifications for positions.

1.3.b Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

In keeping with Sterling Montessori's commitment to equal opportunity employment, Sterling Montessori will ensure compliance with the ADA. All otherwise qualified employees and applicants with a "disability" (as defined by law), will be afforded "reasonable accommodation" in accordance with ADA, as long as accommodation can be provided without undue hardship at Sterling Montessori. Any individual who requests accommodation must contact the Human Resources (HR) Manager who will comply with the requirements of the ADA.

1.3.c Employee Relations Philosophy

We are committed to providing the best possible climate for maximum development and achievement of goals for employees. Our practice is to treat each employee as an individual. We seek to develop a spirit of teamwork; individuals working together to obtain a common goal. In order to maintain an atmosphere where these goals can be accomplished, we provide a workplace

which is comfortable and progressive. Most importantly, we have a workplace where communications are open, and problems can be discussed and resolved in a mutually respectful atmosphere, considering individual circumstances and the individual employee.

We firmly believe that by our communicating with each other directly, we can continue to resolve any difficulties that may arise, as well as develop a mutually beneficial relationship.

Employee Practices

2.1 Employee Practices

Employee Practices

School Structure

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

2.1.a Requirements for All Employees

All employees, immediately upon acceptance of employment but prior to starting work, shall undergo a criminal records check. Sterling reserves the right to withdraw its offer of employment to any new employee based on the results of the criminal records check. Note that all employees must truthfully and accurately complete all required employment application forms. Any untruthful statement and/or misrepresentation by an employee on their employment application shall be grounds for immediate termination.

As a condition of employment, several requirements must be met prior to beginning employment. These requirements include, but may not be limited to:

- Employment Application/References/Resume
- Criminal Background Check resulting in a Qualification Letter obtained from DHHS. This background check must be renewed as specified in Policy 41: Criminal History and Background Checks
- Tuberculosis (TB Skin Test)
- Medical Staff Report
- Emergency Information Sheet
- Confidentiality Statement

- Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9)
 - Documentation of Orientation
 - Employee Information / Health Questionnaire

2.1.b

Required Trainings for All Employees

The following trainings are required for initial hire and will be retaken as specified by the Executive Director or designee.

- CPR Training/Certification
- Wright Specialty Insurance Online Trainings:
 - Active Shooter Response for K-12 Employees
 - Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention for K-12 Employees (Yearly)
 - Sexual Harassment Prevention for K-12 Employees
 - Workplace Bullying and Violence Prevention

2.1.c

Lead Teacher Employment Requirements

- MACTE Montessori Certification for the level at which the teacher is employed
- A Bachelor's Degree
- State licensure (at least 50% of teachers must meet this requirement)
 - All teachers will be required to obtain their teaching license within 3 years of the date of employment.

2.1.d

Assistant Teacher Employment Requirements

- Be at least 18 years of age

- Embrace Montessori theory and practice, or be willing to attend Professional Development on how it relates to the Assistant Teacher's job responsibilities.

2.1.e

Additional Requirements for Employees Who Work with Academy Children

- Child Abuse and Neglect Statement
- Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma Staff Acknowledgement
- In-Service Training Requirements
- Health and Safety Pro Solutions Training:
 - Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases (Including Immunization)
 - Hand-washing: Clean Hands = Better Health
 - Blood-borne Pathogens
 - Infectious Disease Control: Kick Those Germs to the Curb!
 - Administration of Medication
 - Medication Administration in the Child Care Setting: Using Proper Practices and Procedures
 - Prevention of and Response to Emergencies Due to Food and Allergic Reactions
 - Food Allergies: Recognizing Allergic Reactions and Meal Planning in the Child Care Setting
 - Building and Physical Premises Safety
 - Ensuring Building and Physical Premises Safety
 - Essentials of Outdoor Safety
 - Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma
 - Brain Development: Amazing Brains, Amazing Babies-Physical Well-Being, Stress and Trauma

- Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Response Planning
- Emergency Preparedness: Better Safe Than Sorry!
- Responding to Medical Emergencies
- Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials and the Appropriate Disposal of Bio-Contaminants
- Essentials of Indoor Safety
- Recognizing and Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment

2.1.f

Professional Development

Continuing education funds can be made available to employees. Professional development should be geared towards educational opportunities that are relevant to your classroom's philosophy and curriculum.

Employees interested in pursuing such funds should submit a Professional Development Request Form to their Section Director for approval.

2.1.g

Licensure

Sterling Montessori Lead Teachers are required to obtain State Licensure within three years of being hired. Professional Educator's Initial Licenses are intended for teachers with 0-2 years of teaching experience, and are valid for three years. To be issued a Professional Educator's Initial License, an individual must have:

- Completed a state approved teacher education program from a regionally accredited college or university

or

- Completed another state's approved alternative route to licensure and earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college.

To be issued a Professional Educator's Initial License, teachers must also have:

- Praxis II Testing - for middle grades (6-9), secondary (9-12), and K-12 (including Exceptional Children: General Curriculum) license areas

and

- Pearson Testing for North Carolina: Foundations of Reading and General Curriculum - for Elementary Education and Exceptional Children: General Curriculum licenses only.

Professional Educator's Continuing Licenses are intended for teachers with 3 or more years of teaching experience, and are valid for five years. Teachers who are fully licensed in another state who have three or more years of teaching experience AND who meet NC State Board of Education approved licensure exam requirements, OR have National Board Certification, are issued the Professional Educator's Continuing License.

Teachers who hold a current license to teach in the state of North Carolina are required to complete continuing education credits (CEUs) in order to maintain and renew their professional teaching license. More information on state licensure can be obtained from DPI. Teachers are responsible for fulfilling their CEU requirements as well as payment.

2.1.h

Probationary Period

The probationary period for new employees lasts 90 days from the contracted date of hire. You are eligible for health benefits after 30 days if your average hours per week are at least 30 hours.

During the probationary period, you have your first opportunity to evaluate Sterling Montessori as a place to work and we have our first opportunity to evaluate you as an employee. A New Staff Orientation is required for all new employees. As part of this orientation the administrators will provide an on-the-job-review of Sterling Montessori's procedures and policies. When necessary, employees will be given a job performance review after the 6 weeks' employment anniversary, and again after 10 weeks. These reviews will be conducted by your Direct Supervisor. Upon successful completion of this probationary period, you will become a permanent employee.

2.1.h.1

Personnel File

Pursuant to North Carolina law, personnel files shall be available for the employee's inspection at all reasonable times. Any pre-employment information may be kept in a file separate from the personnel file and need not be made available to the employee for inspection.

2.1.i

Contract Renewal

All employees who receive written employment contracts will receive an offer of re-appointment, or notification of the status of their re-appointment in the spring before the next school year. When you receive an offer of re-appointment, you have 10 business days to sign and return your contract to the Executive Director or designee. If your contract is not returned within that time, the offer of re-appointment expires automatically, unless the Executive Director or designee elects to extend that time limit.

2.1.j

Outside Employment

Any outside employment must not conflict in any way with your responsibilities at Sterling Montessori.

Performance Expectations

3.1 Performance Expectations

Performance Expectations

3.1.a Teacher Hours and Breaks

The standard work day for full time employees is from 8:00 am -4:00 pm or as stated in the annual employment contract. Teachers and assistants are expected to work the same hours on professional development days, conference days, and teacher work days.

It is expected that staff attend meetings as stated in the annual employment contract. Lead Teachers shall attend any staff meetings, professional development, trainings, parent workshops, and annual open house outside of standard working hours as requested by the Section Director and as stated in the annual employment contract. Throughout the year, Sterling Montessori will conduct school functions, such as festivals and performances. Sterling Montessori encourages participation by all its employees during these functions as part of their employment with the school.

3.1.a.1 Black-Out-Periods and Capped Days

Due to the importance of full coverage there are certain “black-out” periods when leave is typically denied. These include conference and teacher work days, one week before the opening of school, the first and last week of school, during EOG testing and the day before or after a vacation period or holiday.

Leave may be denied if days are capped due to high number of leave requests or lack of substitutes on any particular day.

3.1.b

Attendance and Punctuality

All staff are required to work their specified contract hours. When late or absent for work, notify your Section Director, teaching partner and office administrator as soon as possible and prior to the start of your work day. Ten days advance notice and approval from your Section Director is required for personal leave. If the required advanced notice is not given, you may be denied your request for time off. This helps to ensure safe and adequate coverage for the children.

3.1.c

Parking

Employees are required to park within the designated areas. The school is not responsible for loss, damage, or theft to your vehicle.

3.1.d

Parent Communication

When school is in session, employees are required to respond to parent emails within 48 hours.

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/guardians 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.

3.2 Development & Evaluation

Faculty and Staff Development & Evaluation Process

Sterling Montessori is dedicated to supporting the professional growth and development of each faculty and staff member. In order to accomplish this support, Sterling follows an annual comprehensive professional growth and evaluation process for its faculty and staff.

3.2.a

Professional Growth for Individuals and the Reflective Practice

Sterling Montessori is a school that nurtures and develops its staff to be a reflective, child centered community. Each Director plays a vital role in creating a space where teachers feel safe to reflect upon their daily practice in the classroom with the children. The school and directors support the teachers in alignment with AMS standards in the following ways:

- Prepared Environment: Directors help remove obstacles for the adults to maximize their potential. Teachers will prepare their environments to be beautiful, organized and well maintained.
- Role of the Adult: Directors support teachers in ways that will cultivate each teacher to demonstrate Grace and Courtesy, the ability to listen, be honest, respectful, show patience and kindness to the children, parents/guardians, colleagues and administration.
- Professional Development: Directors will help identify professional development goals for teachers to help them meet their highest potential and meet the needs of the children they serve in their classrooms.
- Directors will support their team members in the work of the shared mission by observing on a regular basis and meeting 1:1 to discuss the observations and see what is working and what are areas of growth. This is an opportunity for teachers and directors to practice the reflective process:
 - Looking over the Observation (data collection) form

- Discussing what trends the teacher sees (children not working in Practical Life and only in Math and Language)
- Develop a plan on how to address any issues that they may see in their classroom
- Evaluate: How will you know if the plan is working? What will you see as a result?
- Continue the process and refine goals and action items when necessary

Code of Ethics and Standards of Behavior

4.1 Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics and Standards of Behavior

4.1.a

Code of Ethics and Standards of Behavior

Employees of Sterling Montessori hold positions of public trust and are responsible for the education of our children, which includes being a good role model. Each employee at Sterling Montessori is a professional who is dedicated to the education of our children according to the [AMS Code of Ethics](#) and [NC Educators Code of Ethics](#).

All staff are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for themselves and others at all times. All staff are responsible for both the integrity and the consequences of their own actions. Conduct that interferes with or adversely affects the operation of the school, brings discredit on the school, or is offensive to others will not be condoned or tolerated and is grounds for disciplinary action by your Section Director or Executive Director. This may include, but is not limited to, a verbal or written warning, a suspension without pay, immediate termination, or non-renewal of an employment contract. The infraction and what actions were taken to resolve the issue will be documented and filed in the employee's file.

Each employee has an obligation to observe and follow the School's mission, policies, the Guiding Principles and maintain proper standards of conduct at all times.

4.1.b

Guidelines and Strategies for a Montessori Approach to Education:

Sterling Montessori cultivates a rich diversity of backgrounds and opinions and shares a commitment to the values underlying the [AMS Code of Ethics](#) and [NC Educators Code of Ethics](#). In a climate of mutual respect and support, we

each play a significant part in developing and supporting these values in ourselves, our children and the community at large.

4.1.c

Perspectives Related to Attitude Toward Self and Others

Attitude: recognize oneself as being a unique individual.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to exhibit unconditional positive regard for each child as a person of worth and dignity, regardless of his or her behavior. Children in a classroom of mixed ages are encouraged to show mutual respect and empathy for others by working together toward common outcomes. These ongoing experiences develop social skills as a response to conditions, rather than through direct teaching intervention.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The strategy for the Sterling employee is to exhibit positive regard for each individual as a person of worth and dignity, is sensitive to cultural differences and is respectful in communications with families, staff, community members, and other stakeholders.

Attitude: to be self-evaluative, to have a realistic knowledge of one's own strengths and weaknesses.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to provide constant encouragement and support for each child by responding to their individual needs and interests. When discouraging situations arise, the teacher approaches all situations with a solution-oriented framework. The teacher is expected to be positive and respectful to the child.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The strategy for the Sterling employee is to display a realistic appreciation of his/her strengths and weaknesses, and delegate responsibilities based, in part, on that awareness. Employees manage their time effectively, remain calm in the face of stress and understand their emotional triggers and take steps to mitigate their impact on the organization.

Attitude: to work in alignment with Sterling's Code of Ethics and to remain true to those values under emotional or group pressures.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to develop a community consensus as well as specify guidelines for acceptable behavior, Grace and Courtesy, and restorative practices. The emphasis of these guidelines is mutual respect and acceptance of individual differences. They provide concrete and consistent rules for the class. The group enforces these standards of behavior.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The strategy of the Sterling employee is to put the needs of the organization as a whole above individual preference or self-preservation. They take a consistent stand for the integrity of the school's mission and sustainability. Sterling employees are meticulous about promoting open, honest and direct communication across the school community, taking care to avoid triangles, splitting or other dysfunctional patterns of conflict or avoidance.

Attitude: to be able to work with others to set and meet reasonable goals by learning how to contribute ideas, listen to others and to compromise.

Strategy with Students: The strategy of the teacher is to widen the learning process for the child by offering a variety of collaborative opportunities. The spirit of cooperation is encouraged through mixed-aged mentoring.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The strategy of the Sterling employee is to understand the feelings and perspectives of others and assumes the best intentions of all. The employee is an excellent listener, giving full attention to those who are speaking and makes working collaboratively a priority.

Attitude: to develop a sense of responsibility and be accountable for their choices.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to apply the principles and strategies of Positive Discipline.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The Sterling employee seeks feedback from all members of the community, asks questions, and listens authentically to multiple points-of-views. The employee finds value in and actively reflects on one's self and willingly takes responsibility for errors and will take risks in order to improve practice. They are resilient and able to recover from setbacks. When at school, employees direct their full attention to the growth and development of children. This is evident in behavioral norms such as: arriving on time to school and to meetings, refraining from checking email while in meetings, refraining from cell phone use, etc.

Attitude: to be well rounded in their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to apply the Montessori approach to education, which does not isolate subject matter, but rather incorporates and demonstrates the interrelationship of all knowledge.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The Sterling employee deliberately demonstrates curiosity about what goes on in the life of the student and seeks to build a deeper knowledge base of Montessori theory and practice. They embody the core values of the school with all community members-children, trained and untrained staff, families, and other stakeholders. They are intentional about caring for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

4.1.d

Perspectives Related to Attitudes Towards Society

Attitude: to understand the interdependence of humans, animals, plants and the natural resources of the Earth.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to provide knowledge, which demonstrates the interdependencies of man with nature, and shows the child his place in preserving and protecting the ecological balance.

Strategy with Stakeholders: Sterling Montessori is dedicated to incorporating our stakeholders in school-wide functions and educational opportunities.

Attitude: to have knowledge of and respect for the different ways humans have met their physical and spiritual needs over the ages.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to provide a wide scope of history that shows that humankind has been meeting the same basic needs throughout time. The child has a rightful place in this contribution to the greater good. Faculty will use the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; they teach to and through student's strengths.

Strategy with Stakeholders: Sterling Montessori's faculty and staff value diversity. Faculty and staff are accepting of all backgrounds and respect the different cultural backgrounds and customs, different ways of communicating and different traditions and values. We strive to be culturally self-aware. We have an understanding and an awareness that culture is the sum total of an individual's experiences, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and interests—it shapes a person's sense of who they are and where they fit in their family, school, community, and society.

Attitude: to recognize personal choices.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to respect and listen to each child's individual choices and guide them to build confidence and self-worth by providing a variety of choices throughout their day.

Strategy with Stakeholders: Sterling's staff provide parent education for the practice of independent choice and the student led work cycle.

Attitude: to be able to communicate clearly and comfortably with individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to model and interact respectfully with all community members in all situations.

Strategy with Stakeholders: Sterling staff are direct, specific, and consistent in communicating expectations about social interactions, care of the environment, and purposeful work. The tone of voice and body language are calm, soft and pleasant.

Attitude: to learn courteous, caring, and respectful behavior.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to set a positive tone: be confident, fair, consistent, and respectful. The classroom community will establish clear expectations and enforce reasonable and well-defined rules.

Strategy with Stakeholders: Sterling's faculty and staff intentionally practice Grace and Courtesy when interacting with all stakeholders.

Attitude: to be able to use a variety of effective positive techniques for resolving conflict.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to reinforce desirable behavior through the Positive Discipline principles and strategies and to apply Restorative Conflict practices.

Strategy with Stakeholders: Sterling employees resolve conflicts and questions through in-person conversations. They regard those with whom they have difficulty as their greatest teachers.

4.1.e

Perspectives Related to Attitudes Towards Work and Learning

Attitude: to be self-directed, to be able to initiate activities, organize time, and complete projects reflective of their potential.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to monitor and guide the child from one activity to another when necessary. The teacher will assist the child towards independent learning by setting positive expectations and reinforcing success. The teacher or child will keep records of their work and progress, and these will be reviewed on a regular basis. Expectations and strategies for growth will be shared with the child.

Strategy with Stakeholders: Sterling Montessori is dedicated to providing Professional Development opportunities for faculty and staff. The school provides ongoing opportunities for family education, including information sessions, discussion groups, observation of classrooms, and parent-teacher-student conferences

Attitude: to develop critical thinking skills.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to provide a wide scope of information and learning tools for the child to evaluate information and perspectives.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The Sterling employee develops strong partnerships between home and school which is evident in all formal and informal communications.

Attitude: to be creative, using imagination to generate fresh and new ideas in all areas.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to provide a climate of acceptance that sponsors creative thought and allows for freedom of imagination. The child is encouraged to do so in their own way, without predetermined standards.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The Sterling employee continually strives to realize their own human potential, and look toward the students and each other for inspiration.

Attitude: to develop and maintain a love of learning.

Strategy with Students: The strategy for the teacher is to embrace and model a love of learning and demonstrate a growth mindset.

Strategy with Stakeholders: The strategy for the Sterling employee is to stay up-to-date on the latest research on human development, and best practices, including new insights on neuroscience and cognition and their relationship to Montessori theory and practice.

4.2 Anti- Harassment

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying

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 the school administration shall promptly take appropriate action to address the violation.

Our complete Prohibition against [Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying \(P.3\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.2.a Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is conduct of a sexual nature that creates an unwelcome environment; it does not require physical contact. It is our policy to prohibit sexual harassment of any kind.

Our complete [Sexual Harassment Policy \(P.3.0\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.3 Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of Interest

An employee's primary duty is to represent the school at all times to the best of his or her ability. To this end, an employee should not become involved in any situation which may create a personal interest or place the employee under any obligation that may interfere with this primary duty.

Each employee has a duty to be free from any influence which might conflict or appear to conflict with the interest of Sterling Montessori or which might deprive the employee of his or her undivided loyalty and business.

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties. No employee should directly or indirectly engage in conduct which is disloyal, disruptive, competitive, or damaging to the school.

Our complete [Conflicts of Interest Policy \(P.4\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.4 Nepotism

Nepotism

Nepotism is favoritism based on kinship. The purpose of our nepotism policy is to protect the interests of Sterling Montessori when it is contemplating entering into an arrangement with an immediate family member or a member of the LHU Board of Directors or an employee of Sterling Montessori.

Our complete [Nepotism Policy \(P.5\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.5 Tobacco Use

Tobacco Use

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

4.6 Drug-Free Workplace

Drug-Free Workplace

Sterling Montessori complies with state and federal laws maintaining a drug-free workplace. This policy will govern each employee while on school property and at any time during which an individual employee is acting within the course and scope of his/her employment or at any other time that the employee's violation of this policy has a direct and adverse effect upon the performance of his/her job.

Our complete [Drug-Free Workplace Policy \(P.6\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.7 Weapons

Weapons

No weapons of any sort, whether or not concealed, are permitted on Sterling Montessori campus or school-sponsored events or activities.

4.8 Dress Code

Dress Code

All employees are expected to maintain the highest standard of professional cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times. As employees they are integrated parts of the classroom environment, serve as role models for the students with whom they work and as leaders in the community. Consistent with these roles, all faculty and employees shall dress in a manner and have an appearance that is appropriate and professional in light of the environment in which they work, the duties of their jobs and the impressionable students they serve. We understand that working with children can be messy work, so there is a balance to be struck.

Employees are to wear clothing that is neat and clean. Employees are **not** to wear clothing that is revealing, torn, tattered, dirty and excessively faded, or with visual, written, or implied messages that are likely to disrupt the school environment. Employees are not to wear attire prohibited in the student dress code. Sweatpants and ripped jeans are prohibited.

Our complete [Dress Code Policy \(Policy 38\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.9 Corporal Punishment

Corporal Punishment

Sterling Montessori prohibits the use of corporal punishment. No school employee or volunteer may use corporal punishment to discipline any child. Corporal punishment is defined as all forms of physical punishment including, but not limited to spanking, paddling or slapping.

Our complete [Discipline Policy \(P. 48\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.10
Care of
Environment

Care of Environment

All Sterling Montessori employees are expected to use proper care when using Sterling Montessori's property and equipment. No school property may be removed from the premises without proper authorization. If any school property is lost, broken or damaged for any reason whatsoever, it must be reported to a supervisor immediately. Sterling Montessori has the right to charge an employee for any damage they cause to property or equipment.

4.10.a
The Prepared Environment

Preparation of the "prepared environment" is an ongoing task in the Montessori class. It remains the responsibility of all those who use the class. Children are encouraged to return the materials in such a way that the materials will be ready for others to use.

At the end of the day, all chairs must be stacked or placed on the tabletops in order for floors to be cleaned. Students should also help to clean up the floor. Sink areas are to be kept clean and clear to give the custodians access to the surfaces for cleaning.

Policies and Procedures Relating to Employment

5.1 Policies & Procedures

Policies and Procedures

All Sterling Montessori employees are responsible for knowing and understanding the policies and procedures outlined in the Employee & Parent Handbook.

5.1.a

Protecting School and/or Child Information

It is the responsibility of every employee to protect the school's and child's confidential information and all employees share a common interest in making sure that such information is not improperly or accidentally disclosed. The business affairs of the school or child's confidential business should not be discussed outside the organization except when required in the normal course of business. Access to any sensitive school or child information and operating procedures will be limited to those employees on a "need to know" basis.

Any employee in the possession of confidential information is responsible for its security and extreme care must be taken to ensure that this information is safeguarded to protect the school, its children, and its employees. In the event that the media reaches out to any school employee, refer them to the Executive Director. Do not respond to any media inquiries.

Confidential child information is protected by state and federal law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

5.2 Grievance

Grievance

Sterling Montessori strives to encourage harmony among its employees, faculty, children, and parents/guardians. When disagreements arise, Sterling Montessori always tries to find equitable solutions through open and honest communication. All grievances should be resolved as close to their source as possible. Any grievance should only move to a higher level of authority after direct communication between those initially involved has failed to produce a resolution.

5.2.a Faculty Grievance

For those cases in which more informal attempts at a resolution of a problem have not been successful, Sterling Montessori is committed to providing employees a fair procedure for prompt consideration of the complaints.

Our complete [Grievance Policy \(P.7\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

5.3 Separation & Termination

Voluntary Separation / Involuntary Termination

In the event an employee's employment with Sterling Montessori is voluntarily or involuntarily terminated, the code of ethics and standards of behavior and all procedures are expected to be followed until the last day of employment at Sterling Montessori. Involuntarily or voluntarily terminating employment may forfeit any bonus or pay raise to that employee for that contracted year.

5.3.a Voluntary Separation

Individuals who leave employment with Sterling Montessori are expected to provide adequate notice, return school property, and satisfy outstanding financial or other obligations before their last work day. Until all financial matters or other obligations are settled the last paycheck will be held. Sterling Montessori may pay employees for unused accumulated paid leave per this policy.

5.3.b Involuntary Termination

Occasionally, it becomes necessary to terminate an employee involuntarily. The Involuntary Termination Procedures are to be employed to ensure due process for all employees and that all employees are treated in a just and equitable manner.

Our complete [Involuntary Termination Policy \(P.8\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

5.4

Telephone Use

Telephone Use

5.4.a

Classroom Telephone Use

Faculty and staff are expected to use the school's telephone system to conduct school business and to only make personal local calls when it is absolutely necessary.

5.4.b

Employee Use of Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

Employees are permitted to possess cell phones on campus. Cell phone use must take place outside of the presence of students. This includes checking emails from personal devices.

All parent communications shall be made through school phones and devices. Taking photos or videos of students using personal devices is prohibited.

Our complete [Employee Policy on Cell Phones \(P.9\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

5.5 Use of Technology

Use of Technology

5.5.a Responsible Use of Technology

Sterling Montessori 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 faculty and staff.

Sterling Montessori intends that children and employees will remain within the bounds of safe, legal and responsible use of technology.

Our complete [Use of Technology Policy \(P.10\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

5.5.b 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 child may independently access the Internet, the child's parent must be made aware of the possibility that the child could obtain access to inappropriate material while engaged in independent use of the Internet. The parent and child must consent to the child's independent access to the Internet and to 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.

5.6

Use of Personal Technology

Use of Personal Technology

5.6.a

Personal Websites and Social Media

The Executive Director or designee 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.

Children

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.

Employees

Pictures that show children should not be uploaded to an employee's social media account or personal website without the parent or guardian's consent. All parent communications shall be made through school phones and devices. Taking photos or videos of students using personal devices is prohibited.

5.6.b

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

Pay and Benefits

6.1 Payroll

Payroll

6.1.a Pay Period and Pay Date

Sterling Montessori has one (1) pay period per month: the pay period ends on the last day of the month and is payable on that day. Employees can view pay stubs on the Employee Linq Portal. If you have questions about the direct deposit program, please contact the HR Manager.

6.1.b Payroll Deductions

Two types of deductions are made from each employee's gross pay. Mandatory deductions required by federal or state agencies and voluntary deductions.

Mandatory deductions will be made automatically in accordance with legal requirements. Your records provide accurate information within legal limitations as a basis for these deductions. Attachment made to an employee's paychecks by legal authority of wage garnishment, regardless of cause, will be treated as a mandatory deduction in the amount and for the time specified by such authority.

Voluntary deductions will not be made without your written authorization.

6.1.c Salary Policy

It is the goal of Sterling Montessori to offer fair and competitive compensation for all employees.

Lead Teachers

All lead teachers will be compensated according to the salary scale for licensed and non-licensed teachers published by the State of North Carolina, with any additional salary supplements offered by Wake County. This salary scale includes

additional compensation for teachers with advanced degrees and National Board Certification.

It is the goal of Sterling Montessori that all lead teachers possess a valid North Carolina Professional Educator's License, appropriate for the grade level they are teaching. Lead teachers hired after January 2018 will be required to obtain their teaching license within 3 years of the date of employment. All teachers who are hired without a teaching license are to be initially paid on the NC Salary Scale. If and when they obtain their license, they will be moved to the Wake County Scale. If a teacher is unable to obtain a license during that time period, their salary scale will revert to the scale published by the State of North Carolina, without the additional salary supplement offered by Wake County.

Teaching Assistants

Sterling Montessori has developed its own, internal salary scale for Teaching Assistants. Most notably, for teaching assistants hired after January 2018, Sterling Montessori will not pay an additional bonus for teaching assistants with Master's degrees.

Administrative Personnel

Sterling Montessori has a set salary scale for administrative personnel based on the educational level and experience of each employee.

Our complete [Salary Policy \(P.46\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

6.2 Employee Benefits

Employee Benefits

Health benefits are available for all employees who work 30 or more hours per week. There is a 30-day waiting period for new employees.

6.2.a Health Insurance

Sterling Montessori pays 100% of the NC State Employee Coverage plus \$15 of the State subscribers co-pay.

6.2.b Dental Insurance

Sterling Montessori pays for the employee's coverage.

6.2.c Vision Insurance

Sterling Montessori pays for the employee's coverage.

6.2.d Flexible Spending Account

Sterling Montessori offers a Flexible Spending Account for employees to withhold amounts for medical and child care expenditures.

6.2.e
403b Retirement Plan

Employees who work 20 hours or more/week can have amounts withheld to invest in a 403b retirement plan. Sterling Montessori will contribute 50 cents on the dollar up to the first 6 % of the employee's contribution.

6.2.e.1
Vesting

A year of vesting service is earned when 1,000 hours have been worked in a contract year (July 1 - June 30). Generally, an Hour of Service is earned for each paid hour of work but there are exceptions that may apply.

Years of Service	% Vested in Non-Elective Contributions
Less than 1 Year	0%
1 Year	20%
2 Years	40%
3 Years	60%
4 Years	80%
5 Years	100%

6.2.f
Life Insurance

Employees are covered for life insurance in the amount of their annual salary. (Reduced benefits for advanced age of employee).

6.2.g
Supplemental Insurance

Supplemental Insurance is also available to Sterling Montessori employees.

6.2.h

School Related Employee Discounts

- Full time Employees receive 60% off Annual Children's House tuition for their children. Application fee and new student fees are waived.
- Employees receive free Before/After/Staff Care while the employee is working including on professional development days.
- If the employee is working at Sterling Montessori camps, their children will receive free tuition for camps. There is no discount for employees not working at Sterling Montessori camps.

For these discounts, "children" are defined as biological children, adopted children, foster children, step children, children for whom you stand in the place of a parent, or children for whom you are a legal guardian. Proof of guardianship by way of a Court Order is required.

6.2.h.1

Admissions for Children of Employees

Sterling Montessori will offer priority enrollment for children of full-time Sterling Montessori employees, not to exceed 15% of the school's total enrollment. The tuition for the Academy will be reduced by 60% and the New Student Fee is waived.

Before and After Care for children of employees is offered at no additional cost. Employees must fill out all required applications and child information sheets.

Our complete policy on [Charter Admissions \(P.11\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

6.2.i

Leave Policies for Ten (10) Month Employees

6.2.i.1 Calendar

Every Winter, upon approval of the LHU Board, the Executive Director or designee publishes a school calendar for the upcoming school year. This calendar is composed of 176 school days.

Our complete policy on [Holidays and Vacations for 10 \(P.12\) Month Employees](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

6.2.i.2 Personal Leave

Unless otherwise specified in the employment contract, Personal Leave may not be used during the first or last week of the school year and is subject to blackout periods as identified by the Executive Director or designee.

Requests for Personal Leave must be made at least 10 days in advance, and approvals are subject to the needs of the school and are in the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee. Personal Leave may be taken in increments as small as one half (1/2) day, and, unless due to illness or family emergency, must be approved by the Executive Director or designee.

Full-time employees shall accrue a maximum of twelve (12) days per year of Personal Leave.

Our complete [Leave for 10 Month Employees Policy \(P.13\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

6.2.j Additional Leave Policies for Twelve (12) Month Employees

Unless otherwise specified in the employment contract, Vacation and Personal Leave may not be used during the first or last week of the school year and is subject to blackout periods as identified by the Executive Director or designee. Requests for Vacation and Personal Leave must be made at least 10 days in advance, and approvals are subject to the needs of the school and are in the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee. Vacation and Personal Leave

may be taken in increments as small as one half (1/2) day, and, unless due to illness or family emergency, must be approved by the Executive Director or designee.

6.2.j.1

Vacation Leave

Full-time 12-month administrator employees may accrue Vacation Leave as specified in the employment contract. In no event shall any employee accrue more than fourteen (14) Vacation Leave days in a calendar year.

Our complete [Leave for 12 Month Employees Policy \(P.14\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

6.2.j.2

Personal Leave

Full-time employees shall accrue a maximum of twelve (12) days per year of Personal Leave. Personal Leave is accrued at the rate of one (1) day per month worked.

Our complete [Leave for 12 Month Employees Policy \(P.14\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

6.2.k

Voluntary Shared Leave Policy

The purpose of voluntary shared leave is to provide economic relief for Sterling Montessori employees who are likely to suffer financial hardship because of a prolonged absence or frequent short-term absences caused by a serious medical condition of the employee or of a member of the employee's immediate family.

Our complete [Voluntary Shared Leave Policy \(P.15\)](#), including eligibility requirements, can be found in the Policies section of this handbook

6.2.l

Unpaid Leave of Absence

Leaves of Absence without pay may be granted to employees for personal leave at the discretion of the Executive Director or designee. The maximum term is for a three-month period which may be renewed in some cases, if deemed warranted, at the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee for an additional period of up to three months. The request for such leave must be submitted to the Executive Director or designee, in writing, clearly stating the reasons for such a request. This leave is not to be used for an employee seeking alternative employment opportunities.

6.2.m

Family and Medical Leave

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. FMLA also includes certain military family leave provisions.

For more information on FMLA eligibility and to see our complete [Family and Medical Leave Policy \(P.16\)](#), please see the Policies section of this handbook.

6.2.n

Jury Duty

The school recognizes jury duty as a community obligation and the responsibility of a citizen. All employees who are summoned for jury duty will receive benefits/pay required by law. You should make appropriate arrangements for leave as soon as you have received your jury duty notice, of which a copy must be submitted to the school.

6.2.o

Military Leave

All employees who are required to serve in any branch of the armed forces of the United States will be given the necessary time off, without pay. This includes those employees serving in any of the reserves, National Guard or entering into active military service.

The employee must provide the school advance written notice of the date of his or her departure and expected return. Upon providing the school with notification of the satisfactory completion of his or her duties, employees still qualified to perform the duties of their position will be reinstated to their former position or to a comparable position with the same status, pay and seniority.

6.3 Substitute Teachers

Substitute Teachers

Sterling Montessori will employ substitute teachers as deemed appropriate by the administration. Human Resources will coordinate the recruitment and selection of substitute teachers, recommending qualified applicants to the Executive Director or designee.

Substitute teachers must complete all onboarding documentation in order to be placed on the substitute list.

6.3.a Breaks and Placement

Substitutes are notified either by phone or by text through the substitute phone system (984-220-1497). Substitute jobs may be for either full or half days. Sterling will provide substitute teachers working a full day, an unpaid 30-minute break.

Employees who need a substitute teacher when absent are required to follow the Leave Request procedures in place.

It is in the discretion of the school to place the substitute in a classroom or where there is a greater need within the school due to the lack of substitute teacher coverage.

6.3.b Duties and Responsibilities

To enable substitute teachers to provide better services to students during planned and/or emergency absences, all lead teachers (including lead exceptional teachers) must prepare an emergency substitute teacher folder. This folder must be kept in the classroom at all times and updated periodically as necessary.

As applicable, the folder should include the following information for each class/group:

- Attendance procedures and an up-to-date class roster
- Lesson plans
- Instructions for using electronic equipment
- Daily schedule for students and teacher (pull-out programs, etc.)
- Classroom management procedures (group and/or individual plans)
- Medical plans and/or procedures for students
- Lunch procedures
- Accident procedures, reports
- Any extra duties that the absent teacher may have (carpool, lunch duty)

6.3.c

Long Term Substitutes Requirement and Expectations

A long-term substitute teacher is a qualified individual who steps into a classroom and takes over a position for a prolonged period of time. The long-term assignment must be for 4 weeks (20 days) or longer.

For long-term substitute teachers, if the teacher has not left adequate information for the substitute, the responsibility falls upon the individual teams, Section Directors and other staff members to provide the necessary lesson plans, interim reports, grades, IEP meetings, teacher/parent conferences, etc.

6.3.d

Compensation

Long Term Substitutes will be paid according to years of experience and qualifications. A long-term substitute is not eligible for benefits including sick leave, holiday pay, vacation pay, etc. Those days (sick, holiday, vacation) will be deducted from their pay on a monthly basis when incurred.

6.3.e

“Do Not Use” Requests

In the event that a substitute does not work out, the school administrator may notify Human Resources asking that the substitute’s name be removed from the list of available substitutes. The school administrator or designee must inform the substitute teacher of the reasons for their dismissal in person or by phone. If a substitute teacher is dismissed and is terminated from employment, s/he may submit a written appeal to the Executive Director or designee within 30 calendar days. A substitute teacher will not be able to work during the appeal process. Once the appeal process has been completed the substitute will be notified by phone of the decision.

6.4 Workers Compensation

Worker's Compensation

On the job injuries are covered by our worker's compensation insurance policy which is provided to you at no cost. **If you are injured on the job, no matter how slight the injury, you must report the incident immediately to the Human Resource Manager.** Failure to promptly report an injury may result in the loss of benefits.

Sterling Montessori feels that as a responsible employee you should notify administration of any unsafe conditions which you feel could lead to or contribute to an employee being harmed.

Information regarding the school's Worker's Compensation policy is posted in the Main Office. Please contact the Human Resource Manager if you would like further information regarding Worker's Compensation Insurance.

6.4.a Claim Reporting Procedures

1. Each employee injured on the job, no matter how minor, should report the incident to their immediate Supervisor and HR Manager.
2. If seeking medical assistance, the employee will go to a **local urgent care** on the day of the incident. A post-accident drug screen is required. Leave time will not be deducted when an employee leaves work on the day of an injury to seek medical assistance for an on the job injury; however, the employee must provide Sterling with a work note from their local urgent care provider.
 1. The employee will be provided with the "Initial Employee Form" to give to the medical provider's office.

2. The employee will be provided with the “First Fill Card,” a prescription card which is approved for a single RX-fill.
3. The Supervisor and/or HR Manager will complete a Supervisor’s Accident Investigation Report and determine from the employee, what happened, what body part was injured, and who witnessed the incident.
4. The employee will complete the Employee’s Report of Injury Form with the HR Manager. The employee should sign off on the form acknowledging the information is true and accurate.
5. If the employee identified a witness to the incident, the witness should complete the Witness Report of Injury Form by the end of the day and return to the HR Manager.
6. In cases of emergencies, the employee can see a health care provider at their local hospital emergency room. However, any follow-up treatment must be by a pre-approved health care provider.
7. If follow-up visits are needed the employee will contact the Supervisor and HR Manager after each visit to their health care provider. The employee will provide the following information:
 - A. The length of his/her disability period or related time off.
 1. Provide a medical leave of absence slip from the health care provider. If the employee is to remain out of work during any length of time. It is the employee’s responsibility to get the disability/medical leave slip to the HR Manager. A copy of the slip should be maintained in the employee’s Workers Compensation file.
 - B. The date and time of employee’s next health care provider’s visit (if applicable).

- C. A telephone number where the employee can be reached.
-
- 8. Once the claim has been submitted and entered, a Workers Comp Adjuster will be assigned to you. The assigned Adjuster will contact the employer, employee and medical provider to begin the claims process.

Health and Safety

7.1 General Safety

General Safety Precautions

7.1.a Required Safety Precautions

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork at the school. Each employee, supervisor, and administrator must practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations and reporting unsafe conditions immediately.

- Please observe the following precautions:
 - Understand your job duties fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safest procedure, don't guess, ask an administrator.
 - Know the locations, contents and use of all first aid and firefighting equipment.
 - Call Maintenance and Facilities Manager to repair machines and equipment.
 - Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
- The violation of any safety precaution is in itself an unsafe act.

7.1.b Emergency Procedures

Sterling Montessori must be prepared to respond to an emergency or traumatic event in an organized and timely manner. This section includes procedures that are designed to handle a number of emergencies and crises that could occur. These procedures do not cover every condition that might develop, and it may not always be possible to follow every procedure.

7.1.c

General Emergency Plan for Teachers

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, call (911) and immediately notify the main office. The Executive Director or designee will report to your room immediately. Teachers should remain calm and in control at all times, especially in front of children. Take appropriate actions to care for the children at the scene. Send child(ren) to get help if you are the only adult present. Verbal communications should not be overheard or misinterpreted by children or other non-responders. Always account for children that you are responsible for during that time.

7.1.d

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.

7.2 Weather, Closings & Delays

7.2.a Severe Weather

The Executive Director or designee will monitor weather reports to determine if action must be taken. If a warning is issued, an announcement will be made over the public address system (PA) with all relevant information.

Weather Watch

Weather conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop during the next 24-36 hours. No severe weather currently exists within the county; therefore, no action other than preparation is required at this time.

Weather Warning

Weather conditions have produced severe weather within Wake County. Actions should be taken to protect lives and property.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning

If outside, return to the building for protection and shelter. If inside, stay away from windows.

Tornado Warning

Follow the protocols as outlined in the Emergency Procedure Guidelines.

If outside, return to the building in predetermined safe areas of the building. Take shelter in predetermined safe areas of the building. Use "head tuck" position when appropriate to protect from flying objects.

Winter Storm Warning

Issuance of a Winter Storm Warning indicates some form of frozen precipitation (snow, sleet, freezing rain, etc.) is occurring within Wake County, which will provide significant accumulation of frozen precipitation on the ground. Remain indoors and calm children. The school administration will provide direction on the handling of children and/or transport of children to their homes.

7.2.b

Unscheduled School Closings/Delays/Early Dismissal

Sever weather, including hurricanes and winter storms, is a normal part of the school year. A determination will be made on a case by case basis by the Executive Director or designee in the event of an unscheduled closing, delay or early dismissal.

Sterling Montessori will not provide Before Care when operating on a delay and will not provide After Care when operating with an early dismissal. Staff may not use weather related closings as an optional teacher workday.

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 Child 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 [Severe Weather \(P. 50\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.3 Toxic Substances

Toxic Substances

The variety of potential accidents and hazardous materials makes it impossible to present a comprehensive list of procedures. Here are some general guidelines to follow when needing to take cover.

7.3.a Hazardous Material Spills

Spill(s) of hazardous materials can occur at any location and at any time.

If the spill is outside, the Executive Director or designee should contact off-site emergency services (911). Move upwind away from the spill area. If you are outside, return to the building. Close all exterior windows, doors and vents.

If the spill is inside, contact the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director or designee should contact off-site emergency services (911). Avoid direct or indirect contact with materials spill. Go to a safer location inside the building. Evacuate the building if the situation requires.

7.3.b Natural Gas Leaks

Gas leaks are identified by an odor similar to rotten eggs. If a gas leak is detected, the following steps should be taken:

If the gas leak is inside, open exterior windows to vent building. Contact the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director or designee should contact off-site emergency services (911). Utilize evacuation procedures to evacuate the area/building upon direction of the fire department.

Do not turn on or off any electric device including light switches.

If the gas leak is outside, move upwind of gas odor. Turn off ALL automobile engines in the area. If you are outside, return to the building. Notify the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director or designee should contact off-site emergency services (911). Keep exterior windows and doors closed.

7.4 Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation Procedures

7.4.a General Evacuation Procedures

For the protection of all occupants of the building, it is important that everyone is informed and understands what to do in the event of a fire, gas leak, or other type of emergency requiring the evacuation of the building.

The following evacuation procedures should be discussed with each class:

- Occupants should remain silent. Directions and important instructions cannot be heard if teachers and children are talking.
- Occupants should clear the building immediately through a predetermined exit and report to a predetermined area. Teachers should take the Red Emergency Bag with them. Ensure that all children are evacuated safely from the building. Relocate as far from the building and the emergency vehicle access areas as possible to the previously designated area.
- Attendance should be taken to account for all children.
- The Executive Director or designee will give a verbal or manual “all clear” to return to the building after all areas have been determined safe.
- If an evacuation exit route is blocked, the next nearest exit should be used. If relocation to another site is necessary, the relocation will be facilitated by the Executive Director or designee.

7.4.b
Fire

Follow the protocols as outlined in the Emergency Procedure Guidelines. These will be followed for handling actual fire or smoke situations, automatic system activations, or a false alarm.

Our complete [Fire Policy \(P. 17\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.4.c
Bomb Threat

In the event a bomb threat is received by telephone, the individual receiving the telephone call should attempt to obtain and record as much information as possible. Immediately record the call ID number located on the caller identification screen (if applicable). Record all information on the Bomb Threat Information Sheet.

The person receiving the call should immediately notify the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director or designee should immediately call law enforcement officials (911).

Our complete [Bomb Threat Policy \(P.18\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.5 Lockdown Procedures

Lockdown Procedures

7.5.a Lockdown / Lockdown Codes

A Lockdown is a protective action employed to safeguard children, faculty, and staff when there is an imminent threat (i.e. armed perpetrator) approaching the school, on school grounds, or in the school. Lockdown is employed to keep people away from a violent perpetrator while law enforcement engages the suspect.

The procedures will minimize the risk of harm by limiting the opportunity for any perpetrator to gain access to children, faculty or staff. They are also designed to reduce the anxiety levels. Familiarize yourself with the system that will be used to warn you to lockdown.

Follow the protocols as outlined in the Emergency Procedure Guidelines.

7.5.b Hostage Situation

Remain calm. Notify the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director or designee should immediately contact law enforcement (911). The Executive Director or designee should designate a location for a command center. Document all decisions made and all actions taken, noting time of action or decision. Avoid confrontation with the perpetrator.

Our complete [Hostage Situation Policy \(P.19\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.6 First Aid & Sickness

First Aid and Sick Procedures

7.6.a CPR & First Aid

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

Faculty Members are NOT permitted to remove splinters or ticks. They can only administer non-prescription medication, ointments and sunscreen with a signed Medication Administration Permission Form signed by parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians will be called if their children get splinters or ticks or need other first aid which the faculty is unable to offer.

Our complete [Student Medical Support Policy \(P. 51\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.6.b Accidents and Incidents

All accidents and incidents requiring first aid require an Incident Report to be filled out and given to parent(s) or guardian(s) the day they occur. Serious injury policies are regulated by the state. If a child requires treatment beyond what Sterling Montessori can administer, the office will attempt to contact the parents/guardians.

If parents/guardians cannot be contacted, emergency contacts listed in the child's child records will be called. In an extreme emergency, the school will call 911.

7.6.c

Sick 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.
- Pink 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.
- Tuberculosis or Impetigo, until 24 hours 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 that cannot be covered, until a health professional states that the child is not infectious.
- Any 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 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, fatigue, and incessant coughing.

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

7.7
Child
Health

Child Health

7.7.a

Children with Chronic Health Issues

Parents/guardians are to notify faculty/staff directly if children have a chronic health condition. Chronic health conditions include asthma, allergies or anything that requires continuous medication or special considerations. Sterling Montessori complies with FERPA regarding matters of confidentiality.

7.7.b

Medication

All medicines are stored in and administered from the Main office, with the exception of inhalers and EpiPens and antihistamine which are kept in a secure area of the child's classroom.

Our complete [Student Medical Support Policy \(P. 51\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.7.c

Concussions

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

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

After a head injury, 911 should immediately be called for any incident 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.

All parents/guardians must inform their child's teacher and Section Director when their child has/had a concussion.

The complete mandated [Concussion Policy \(P.21\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.8 Threats of Violence

Threats of Violence

Take ALL threats seriously. Notify the Executive Director or designee of any threat. Protect children at the scene. School administration and/or personnel conduct a preliminary interview with the children. If an imminent danger is perceived, contact law enforcement (911). Notify the parent(s) and have them report to the school. Document all actions taken, noting the names of those involved and the date actions were taken.

7.8.a Report of Suicide Threat

Take ALL threats seriously. Notify the Executive Director, Section Director or school counselor. Take necessary steps to keep the child safe in school. Confiscate pills/weapons. Search locker. Do not leave child alone at any time. Do not permit child to leave campus without adult supervision.

The complete [Suicide Intervention Policy \(P.22\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.8.b Threat of Runaway or Confirmed Runaway

Take ALL threats seriously. Notify Administration immediately. Interview the child/witnesses. Take appropriate action based on the results of the interview. Notify the parent(s). If a runaway occurs, notify law enforcement and the Administrative Team. Do not allow the child to leave campus unsupervised. Have appropriate school personnel monitor the child after the incident. Document all actions taken, noting time and names of those involved in actions taken. When necessary, use your walkie talkie to ask for assistance.

7.9 Missing Children

Missing Children

7.9.a Missing Child Protocol

If a child is missing from campus remain calm. Notify the Administration Team or designee immediately of the situation. Provide as many details as possible, including: name, nickname, aliases; race, gender, and nationality; identity of missing child's friends; detailed description of clothing; time when the child was last seen; location where the child was last seen and who they were last seen by. Advise Executive Director or designee of any problems that are known to you regarding the child.

If a thorough search of the school and its perimeter fails to locate the child, the Administration Team or designee should contact the parent/guardian of the missing child. A determination will be made whether it is necessary to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.

If media contacts Sterling Montessori for a statement, all media inquiries will be referred to an administrator or designee.

7.9.b Media Procedures

The Executive Director or designee shall be the only spokespersons to respond to the media.

Television, radio, and newspapers provide an excellent conduit for getting information to large numbers of people. As a result, information shared with the news media should be both timely and accurate. Employees and children should avoid speaking with the press. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

(FERPA) precludes school staff from disclosing a child's name, grade or other personal identifying information.

Reporters and photographers should be kept off campus until specific photo and briefing opportunities have been scheduled.

7.10 Attendance & Release

7.10.a Student Attendance

Children may begin entering classrooms at their designated arrival time. Attendance will be taken no later than 10:00 am. Those children who arrive after the arrival window are considered tardy and must be signed in at the Main Office before going to their classroom.

Early Dismissal

Parents/guardians must sign out their child at the Main Office in order to pick up their children early but no later than 3:00 pm. Parents/guardians of A building must then walk over to their child's classroom to pick up their child from the classroom. Parents/guardians of Elementary and Middle School must wait in the office for their child to come to them.

Late Dismissal

Charter School children who are still on campus at the end of dismissal must go to the Main Office or their designated after school activity. Late charges may apply. All children must be supervised at all times by an adult.

7.10.b Student Release

Parents or guardians must provide the school with a list of people authorized to pick up the child on the Student Information Sheets. No child will be dismissed to any unauthorized person at any time.

7.10.b.1
Carpool Supervision

During dismissal, children will wait in their respective classrooms. Each arriving family will have a carpool tag on their dashboard with a unique number. Using an iPad, staff at curbside will select the arriving families' numbers in a shared google spreadsheet. The classroom teachers will have a view of their own class' roster in the same google spreadsheet. When a child's family is selected, the teacher will see the child's name indicated in the roster and will send them out. For this carpool process to work efficiently, it is essential that classroom teachers respond immediately to prepare their children to leave when the Main Office makes the announcement to prepare for carpool over the PA system. Please see the most updated carpool document for more information.

7.11
Custody &
Child Welfare

Custody and Child Welfare

7.11.a
Verification of Child Custody

It is the responsibility of Sterling Montessori to determine that any person appearing at the school requesting permission to take a child from the school be properly identified and approved before allowing that person to do so.

7.11.b
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. Best practice of mandatory reporting is to also notify the Executive Director or designee.

7.12
Child or
Staff Death

Child or Staff Death

7.12.a
Death in Child's Immediate Family

When a death occurs in a child's immediate family, inform the school counselor, administration and all of the child's teachers. Develop a plan on how to inform the child's peers and to talk to them regarding the death; including how to welcome the child back to school. Appropriate school personnel should contact the family. Prepare to have support for the child when they return to school (outside specialist) and monitor the child as needed.

7.12.b
Child/Staff Death

Notify the Executive Director or designee and the School Crisis Intervention Team. Verify the child's/staff member's death. A school counselor should be brought in to assist children and staff. Communicate known facts to school Crisis Intervention Team members according to the school's crisis plans. Notify staff and families as soon as possible. Schedule a staff meeting and develop a crisis plan for the day (Refer to Crisis Intervention Team Manual).

The administration and the Crisis Intervention Team will update information concerning death(s). They will follow a crisis plan by making announcements and counseling children. Additionally, they will make arrangements for appropriate staff to attend funeral, identify and monitor children/staff most affected by the tragedy and plan for an appropriate memorial.

7.13
Child
Supervision

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, they 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.

7.13.a

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.

7.13.b

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.

7.13.b.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 the gate has been 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.

7.13.b.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
- Gaga courts must follow the same set of rules.
- 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.

7.13.c

Procedures for After Care Program

Safety is one of the highest priorities at Sterling Montessori. In order to ensure that all children are making their way to the designated aftercare classroom in a timely efficient manner, please abide by the following procedures:

- At 3:30 PM (Academy/K) or 3:45 (Grades 1-8) all children that are enrolled in the After Care Program are taken to their designated aftercare classroom.
- At 3:30 PM (Academy/K) or 3:45 (Grades 1-8), any child NOT enrolled in the After Care Program but whose parents/guardians have NOT picked them up are brought to the aftercare classroom (Academy/K) or to the office (Grades 1-8). The teacher is to sign the child into the aftercare classroom and bring the completed Late Child Form with them.
- Children who are picked up after 3:30 PM (Academy/K) or 3:45 (Grades 1-8) will be charged applicable late fees. (Note, teachers who offer tutoring or any other services after school to a child must stay with the child until the parent picks them up to avoid late fees).

When someone other than the parent is picking up a child, please alert the aftercare staff. Remember to make sure all persons picking up children are on the authorized pick up list on their emergency cards and Child Information Forms.

7.13.d

Off-Campus Field Trips

Off-campus field trips apply to kindergarten through middle school-aged children.

The purpose of this policy is not only to ensure the safety of all children, staff, and volunteers, but also to enhance the classroom educational experience. All off-campus field trips require pre-approval from the Executive Director or designee.
Only

curriculum-related study and trips in adherence to the safety precautions outlined in the policy will be approved.

Our full policy on [Off-Campus Field Trips \(P.28\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.14 Animals

Animals

7.14.a Pets

For the safety of everyone, personal pets are not permitted on campus at any time. Class pets with the exception of approved reptiles and amphibians are not allowed. Teachers are responsible for the care of the class pets over weekends, and when school is not in session.

Our complete Policy on [Classroom Pets \(P.47\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

7.14.b 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.

Our complete [Service Animals Policy \(P.26\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

8

Facilities

8.1 Facilities

Facilities

8.1.a Good Housekeeping

Good housekeeping, good work habits, and a neat place to work are essential for job safety and efficiency. All employees are expected to keep their place of work organized and in good order at all times. All employees are expected to report anything that needs repair or replacement to Maintenance.

8.1.b Pests

Email the Maintenance and Facilities Manager with any pest-related requests. Red ants require an immediate request. Please keep children clear of the nest. Mouse droppings are to be reported ASAP as well. Please do not clean up their droppings or have the children clean them up.

8.1.c Food Waste

Please instruct the child to put all food waste in the lidded trash unit assigned to the classroom. Using the trash can instead of an open one helps with pest reduction. Please do not leave food out overnight or for any extended period of time. All food kept in the classrooms must be in air-tight storage containers.

8.1.d Dumpster Use

The Maintenance and Facilities Manager and the Custodian are the only people who may enter the dumpster areas. All cardboard must be broken down before the cleaning crew will remove it. Place it alongside the trash can. At no time should children be taking trash to the dumpster without supervision.

8.1.e
Maintenance Requests

For non-emergency facility needs, email the Maintenance and Facilities Manager.

8.1.f
After Hours Use

In an effort to increase community involvement, Sterling will allow the use of its property after school hours when certain criteria are met.

Our complete [Policy on After Hours Use \(P.31\)](#) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

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P.1 Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory Reporting

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A **child** means any individual under 18 years of age.
- A **staff member** is any individual working at Sterling.
- A **mandatory reporter** is any adult 18 years of age or older who must report when they know or suspect that child abuse is going on.
- **Child abuse or neglect** is any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation"; or "An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.
- **Child neglect** is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, which include adequate food, clothing, hygiene, or supervision.

Staff members are mandatory reporters, required by law to report any cases of suspected child abuse or neglect immediately, or as soon as practically possible. Mandatory reporters must report any suspected case when there is knowledge of, or observance of a child being subjected to, conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child.

If a student states they are uncomfortable with any adult, you do not stop there. Always ask, "tell me more," document any red-flag conversations and report to your Direct Supervisor or administrator. **Sharing suspected abuse or neglect with your Direct Supervisor is not a substitute for reporting the case to the Wake County CPS Report Line.** Mandatory reporters are required to provide their name when making reports. Reporters are required to report the facts and circumstances that led them to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. They do not have the burden of proof that abuse or neglect has occurred. Mandatory reports cannot and will not be subject to any disciplinary actions for making a report. *When in doubt, report.*

If one or more staff members have joint knowledge or suspicion of abuse, one staff member may be designated to report the suspected abuse. Any staff member who has knowledge that the designated staff member has failed to report the suspected abuse is legally obligated to report it themselves. If the mandatory reporter is uncomfortable

making the report to the Wake County Report Line themselves, they may ask their Direct Supervisor or administrator to assist them in making the call.

How to Report a Suspected Case of Child Abuse or Neglect:

3. Report all documentation and the need to call CPS and Law Enforcement to your Direct Supervisor or appropriate administrator.
4. Report the suspected abuse or neglect to the Wake County CPS Report Line and to Law Enforcement.

All reports of child abuse or neglect should be made to the Wake County Child Protective Services (CPS) Report Line: (919) 212 - 7990.

**P.3
Discrimination
Harassment &
Bullying**

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 reasonable 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 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 violation 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 or designee 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 or designee 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 or designee 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.4
Conflicts of
Interest

Conflicts of Interest Policy

An employee's primary duty is to represent the School at all times to the best of his or her ability. To this end, an employee should not become involved in any situation which may create a personal interest or place the employee under an obligation that may interfere with this primary duty. Each employee has the duty to be free at all times from any influence which might conflict or appear to conflict with the interest of the school or which might deprive the employee of his or her undivided loyalty and business dealings.

- If an employee or member of his or her immediate family has a financial interest in a firm which does business with the School and the interest is sufficient to affect the employee's decisions or actions, the employee must report the interest to the School and must not represent the School in any such transaction.
- No employee should directly or indirectly engage in conduct which is disloyal, disruptive, competitive, or damaging to the School.

The following acts are deemed by state law and/or the NC Board of Education to conflict with the interests of the Sterling Montessori.

- An employee or voting member of the governing board shall not, for personal financial gain, solicit or sell or have any pecuniary (financial) interest in the supplying of any goods, wares, merchandise materials, supplies, services, or equipment to Sterling Montessori. Approved extended employment shall not be a violation of this.
- An employee shall not, for personal financial gain, solicit or sell or have any pecuniary (financial) interest in the sale of any goods, wares, merchandise, materials, supplies, equipment, or services to students or employees of this school at school, on school premises, or any Sterling Montessori facility or activity.
- An employee shall not act as an agent for any manufacturer, merchant, dealer, publisher, or author seeking to sell any goods, wares, merchandise, materials, supplies, services, or equipment to the Sterling Montessori.

- An employee shall not receive or accept any gift, reward, gratuity, or other compensation from any manufacturer, merchant, dealer, publisher, or author for influencing or recommending to the school system or any school that it use a seller's goods, wares, merchandise, materials, supplies, services, or equipment.
- An employee shall not use for personal financial gain, any school facilities, supplies, equipment, or student labor (student labor during regular school hours), in the manufacture, creation, or repair of any goods, wares, or merchandise for sale, or for the providing of services to the general public.
- Except as allowed by state law (N.C.G.S. §§14-234, 143-58.1), no employee shall use the powers, policies, and procedures of the State's Division of Purchase and Contract or the school system's Purchasing Division to purchase or procure any property or service for private use or benefit.
- No employee of the charter school shall be immediate family (as defined in G.S. 115C-12.2) to any member of the Nonprofit LHU Board.
- No employee of the charter school, whether hired by the LHU Board or a management company, shall be a voting member of the Nonprofit LHU Board.
- No teacher or staff member that is immediate family of the chief administrator shall be hired without the LHU Board evaluating their credentials, establishing a structure to prevent conflicts of interest, and notifying the Department, with evidence, that this process has occurred.

P.5
Nepotism

Nepotism Policy

The purpose of this nepotism policy is to protect the interests of Sterling Montessori when it is contemplating entering into an arrangement with an immediate family member of a member of the LHU Board of Directors of the Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation or an employee of Sterling Montessori. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state laws governing nepotism applicable to nonprofit and charitable corporations.

The Policy shall be as follows:

Before any immediate family, as defined in G.S. §115C-12.2, of any member of the LHU Board or a charter school employee with supervisory authority shall be employed or engaged as an employee, independent contractor, or otherwise by the LHU Board in any capacity, such proposed employment or engagement shall be:

- disclosed to the LHU Board

and

- approved by the LHU Board in a duly called open-session meeting.

The burden of disclosure of such a conflict of interest shall be on the applicable Board member or employee with supervisory authority. If the requirements of this subsection are complied with, Sterling Montessori may employ the immediate family of any member of the LHU Board or a Sterling Montessori employee with supervisory authority.

No teacher or staff member that is immediate family of the chief administrator shall be hired without the LHU Board evaluating their credentials, establishing a structure to prevent conflicts of interest, and notifying the Department, with evidence, that this process has occurred.

The term “immediate family member” means a spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term includes the step, half, and in-law relationships.

P.6
Drug Free
Workplace

Drug Free Workplace Policy

This drug-free policy applies to all employees, contractors, and substitutes. Sterling Montessori complies with state and federal laws maintaining a drug-free workplace. This policy will govern each employee while on school property at any time during which an individual employee is acting within the course and scope of his/her employment or at any other time that the employee's violation of this Policy has a direct and adverse effect upon the performance of his/her job.

Sterling Montessori prohibits any unlawful manufacture, transmission, conspiring to transmit, possession, use, or being under the influence of any alcoholic or other intoxicating beverage, narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, anabolic steroids, counterfeit drugs, other intoxicants of any kind, or other controlled substance as defined in schedules I through V of Section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act.

Employee shall not display the odor of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance while acting within the course and scope of his/her employment. The school prohibits the possession, use, transmission, or conspiring to transmit drug paraphernalia.

Employees shall not be impaired by the excessive use of prescription or nonprescription drugs in the workplace. The proper use of a drug authorized by valid medical prescription from a legally authorized health care provider shall not be considered a violation of this Policy when the drug is taken by the person for whom the drug was prescribed. Any employee with prior knowledge that the use of a prescribed medication under a doctor's direction or an over-the-counter medication could alter the employees' ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of his/her position must notify the appropriate supervisory person. An employee is responsible for finding out from a health care professional the effects of any prescribed drug being taken.

If, in the opinion of the employee's supervisor, an employee's action and/or behavior are considered unsafe as a result of the proper use of medication, the employee may be sent home. A conference shall be conducted with the employee prior to the employee's resuming his/her duties. Prior to the employee's returning to work, the employee must provide written assurance that the medication's use has been terminated or the medication has been adjusted/modified to avoid impairment.

Any employee having reasonable grounds to believe that another employee is using or in possession of any illegal drug, or is under the influence of or in possession of alcohol while in the workplace shall immediately report the facts and circumstances to a Director.

An employee who is convicted of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace shall notify his/her Director and Human Resource no later than five days of such conviction. Violation of this policy shall subject an individual to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment.

The school has a strong commitment to assist any employee who voluntarily asks for help. Employees shall be provided information concerning available counseling, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs. It is the employee's responsibility to seek help for drug and alcohol problems before they must be addressed at the workplace or otherwise become apparent as unsatisfactory job performance and/or work habits.

When there are reasonable grounds to believe that an employee is in violation of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy, the Executive Director or designee may require that the employee submit to a medical examination, including a drug or alcohol assessment. All information, reports, interview, statements, memoranda are confidential. If the drug or alcohol assessment is positive and there is no legitimate medical explanation for the results, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Any employee who refuses a drug or alcohol-screening test may be terminated.

Sterling Montessori has the right to determine whether, when or under what conditions an employee may be suspended, terminated or returned to employment after an instance of alcohol abuse or improper drug use.

Compliance with the Policy is mandatory, but compliance does not alter the “at will” status of the employer and, therefore, is not a guarantee of continued employment with the Sterling Montessori.

P.7
Grievances

Grievance Policy

Sterling Montessori Charter School strives to encourage harmony among its employees, faculty, students, and parents/guardians. When disagreements arise, Sterling Montessori always tries to find equitable solutions through open and honest communication. All grievances should be resolved as close to their source as possible. Any grievance should only move to a higher level of authority after direct communication between those initially involved has failed to produce a resolution. The following procedures have been adopted to meet these goals.

Availability of Grievance Policy

For those cases in which more informal attempts at a resolution of a problem have not been successful, Sterling Montessori is committed to providing employees a fair procedure for prompt consideration of the complaints.

The grievance procedure may be used by an eligible employee whenever he or she believes that he or she has been treated in a manner inconsistent with Sterling Montessori policies, or believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of any protected classification under North Carolina or Federal Law.

Professional assessments and judgments of supervisors concerning such issues as performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, salary scale determinations, staffing, or organization of a department or allocation of its resources, are not subject to review under this procedure, unless it is alleged that the professional assessment or judgment was conducted in a manner inconsistent with Sterling Montessori policies or resulted from unlawful discrimination.

An employee who has any employment-related problem has the right and is responsible for discussing that problem with his or her immediate supervisor in an effort to seek a resolution. If the problem cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the employee, the employee is entitled to seek further assistance from the Executive Director.

Retaliation

Employees are encouraged to use this grievance procedure and may do so without fear of reprisal or prejudice. Any individual found to have retaliated against an employee for initiating a grievance may be subject to disciplinary action. If any employee believes that he or she has been retaliated against as a result of pursuing a grievance, the employee should file a written petition with the LHU Board.

Grievance Procedure

Only after the grievance has failed to resolve in an informal manner, should an employee initiate this formal grievance procedure. Grievance proceedings and information shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent feasible and permitted by law.

Level One: Direct Supervisor

- An employee may, by written request, seek a conference with an immediate supervisor to address an unresolved grievance.
- How the matter is handled by the administration will depend on the nature and severity of the issue being discussed. In all cases, if the grievance is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee has the right to seek assistance from the Executive Director.
- The supervisor will document the content and outcome of the conference and provide a copy of this documentation to the employee.
- If the supervisor is the subject of the grievance, the employee may take the grievance directly to the Executive Director for consideration.

Level Two: Executive Director

- The Executive Director will review the grievance and determine whether or not the employee's grievance falls within the scope of the Grievance Policy.
- If it is determined that the grievance does not fall under the Grievance Policy, a consultation with the employee will consist of helping the employee identify the source of concern, providing the employee with information about school policies affecting their employment, providing feedback about

their particular situation, and suggesting possible solutions.

- If it is determined that the grievance does fall under the Grievance Policy, the Executive Director will review the grievance, help clarify issues, and offer advice and consultation. This may involve discussion(s) with the individuals involved, and communication to the department involved, including appropriate administration officials when necessary. The Executive Director may seek the advice and counsel of the LHU Board.
- In all grievances in which discrimination is alleged, the Executive Director will notify the LHU Board of the nature of the allegation, the proposed resolution and the disposition of the case.
- The Executive Director will retain written documentation of the employee's grievance including: the content and dates of any relevant meetings, the names of the parties involved, the subject of the employee's grievance, and the resolutions initiated.
- The employee has the right to know within (5) five business days of the Executive Director's review of the grievance, the manner in which the grievance is being handled except where there are issues of school or personnel confidentiality. The Executive Director will provide the employee with written notice of the final disposition of the issue.
- If the Executive Director is the subject of the grievance, the employee may skip Level Two and take the grievance directly to the LHU Grievance Committee for consideration.

Level Three: LHU Grievance Committee

- If a grievance cannot be resolved through the administrative level, the employee may submit a formal grievance to the president of the LHU Board for review by the LHU Grievance Committee.
- A formal grievance statement shall be made in writing and shall include:
- A description of the specific grievance(s) including but not limited to: date(s), event(s), name(s) and title of person(s) involved, and information about the impact the issue has had or is having on the employee.
- A description of the alleged misapplication of a stated Sterling Montessori policy or procedure, or alleged act(s) of discrimination and whether this discrimination is based on any protected classification under North Carolina or Federal Law.
- A statement of the remedy sought by the employee. The formal grievance statement must be submitted within twenty (20) days of the final disposition

issued by the Executive Director.

- Upon receipt of a formal written grievance, the Grievance Committee will determine if the complaint falls under the Grievance Policy. If it does, the LHU Board Grievance Committee will convene for a formal hearing to consider the grievance within ten (10) academic days after receiving the formal written grievance; if more time is needed, the hearing may be delayed for up to twenty (20) days (or as agreed upon in writing with the grievant).
 - At the hearing the LHU Board Grievance Committee will:
 - Receive and review the written record and documents relevant to the grievance;
 - Determine whether any additional evidence should be allowed;
 - Allow each party to make a brief oral presentation regarding their position on the grievance; and,
 - Make a record of the proceedings at the hearing.
 - At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee will make one of the following determinations:
 - School policy or discrimination provision has not been violated. In such a case, the LHU Board Grievance Committee may direct the employee as to other steps required to address the issue(s) or may refer the matter to other appropriate offices.
 - School policy or discrimination provision has been violated. In such a case, the LHU Board Grievance Committee will make a recommendation for appropriate corrective action. To
- issue this determination, the LHU Board Grievance Committee must be convinced in light of all the information presented, that it is more likely than not that school policy was violated.
- The LHU Board Grievance Committee will provide the employee and the Executive Director a written statement of its decision within five (5) academic days of the hearing. A copy of the written decision will also be sent to the LHU Board.

Level Four: LHU Board

- The employee may make a final written appeal to the LHU Board within five (5) academic days after being notified of the determination by the LHU Board Grievance Committee.

- The appeal must be submitted to either the LHU Board President or the Vice President. At its next monthly meeting the LHU Board will consider the written record and documents which it deems to be relevant to the allegations raised in the appeal.
- The LHU Board will ordinarily conduct its review based on the written record, but may allow a brief presentation by the employee and the Executive Director, if necessary in a particular case. Upon review, the LHU Board may elect to accept, reject or modify in any way, the previous determinations.
- The LHU Board will provide the employee and Executive Director a written statement of its decision within five (5) academic days of the board meeting. The resulting decision of the LHU Board is final.

P.8
Involuntary
Termination

Involuntary Termination Policy

Occasionally, it becomes necessary to terminate an employee involuntarily. The following procedures are to be employed to ensure due process for all employees and that all employees are treated in a just and equitable manner.

- The immediate supervisor must contact the Executive Director before any involuntary termination is carried out; and the Executive Director must obtain LHU Board approval before any involuntary termination is carried out.
- Generally, prior to an involuntary termination, performance or behavior issues have been addressed in detail between the supervisor and the employee. In such cases, the causes of the termination are clear and well-documented and the termination is a logical conclusion to the unsuccessful outcome of performance remediation efforts, or behavioral disciplinary actions. In these cases, the supervisor and/or the Executive Director will have already met with the employee and documented expectations in relation to the performance or behavior concerns. When it becomes clear to the supervisor and/or the Executive Director that it is no longer in the best interests of the school to retain the employee, the following procedure will be followed:
 1. The Section and/or Executive Director may choose to suspend the employee with or without pay prior to notice of termination.
 2. Whether the employee is on active suspension or currently working, the Executive Director will obtain LHU Board approval to terminate the employee.
 3. Upon Board approval, the Executive Director and the Section Director will conduct a formal meeting with the employee. The purpose of the meeting is:
 - to clarify the reasons for the termination;

- to give the employee the opportunity to make representations with regard to the termination of their employment, ask questions, or raise relevant issues.
 - The Leve and/or Executive Director will provide the employee with a notice in writing of the decision to terminate employment.
4. The Section and/or Executive Director will ensure that a final payroll payment is made to the employee no later than two business days following the termination.

In rare circumstances, an employee will face immediate termination for egregious behavior that the school cannot tolerate. Although it is not possible to identify every possible violation of standards, the following is a partial list of infractions which will result in immediate suspension without pay followed by immediate dismissal upon LHU Board approval:

- misuse or misappropriation of school property, school funds, or funds held by an employee as part of his/her official duties;
- falsifying records of any kind – including application for employment, expense reports, time cards or student records;
- engaging in any behavior deemed “gross neglect” by the administration;
- being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on school premises or business;
- possessing unauthorized drugs or alcohol while on school premises or business;

- endangering the physical safety of a community member;
- damaging the psychological wellbeing of a community member;
- moral turpitude. Conduct generally accepted as immoral or indecent that would cause general condemnation of the person involved. Examples include, but are not limited to: dishonesty, carrying weapons while on Sterling Montessori premises, conviction of a felony or other serious criminal act, and sexual misconduct. Employees dismissed for such egregious violations of school policy are not eligible under state law nor under this policy for unemployment compensation or for COBRA benefits continuation coverage. In addition, employees dismissed under such circumstances will not receive bonus pay for any unused personal leave days.

Obligation of Employee

Individuals who terminate employment must return all school property to the appropriate supervisor before the last work day. Examples include but are not limited to:

- keys to buildings or offices; equipment; cellular phones and other communications equipment; policy manuals and other confidential material; books and other materials owned by the school; computers, software, documentation, supplies and other computer-related materials; and credit/other, cards.

Employees must also satisfy all financial obligations prior to the last work day. Examples include but are not limited to educational loans and payroll advances.

Obligation of Sterling Montessori

- Maintain a current written policy on Employee Terminations.
- Ensure all employees are aware of the existence of the Policy on Employee Terminations and have access to a written copy of the policy.
- Invite all terminating employees to participate in an Exit Interview with a member of the LHU Board.

- Treat all terminating employees with respect and humanity.
- In the case of an involuntary termination, conduct a formal face-to-face meeting with the employee Section and/or Executive Director and Human Resource Manager to clarify the reasons for the termination.
- Provide each involuntarily terminated employee with a notice of same in writing.
- Ensure all employees involuntarily terminated are able to obtain their own personal property from the school. The employee's supervisor and/or designee will work with the employee to obtain all personal property in a manner that best suits the situation.
- Provide that all school property has been returned, all employees being involuntarily terminated will receive a final compensation check within two business days following the last date of service.
- Upon termination, supervisors must make appropriate arrangements to discontinue an employee's password and/or access to all school information systems. This may include, but is not limited to, financial, employee, and student information systems.
- Advise all employees being involuntarily terminated of the right to appeal the termination in accordance with the school's Policy on Faculty Grievances.
- Exiting employees must submit an updated address if applicable, in order to receive a W-2.

P.9
Cell Phone
Policy

Employee Policy on Cell Phone Use

Approved 4/2019

Purpose

To regulate the misuse of cell phones and Other Electronic Devices by employees. This shall ensure uninterrupted instruction during the school day. Employees are permitted to possess cell phones on campus but are asked to limit cell phone use to emergencies only.

Definition

The term “Other Electronic Devices” refers to all 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 this policy 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 other violation of this policy.

Employee Guidelines

Cell Phone / Electronic Device Use:

- Employees, as well as service personnel, may bring personal cell phones and/or other electronic devices to school. When cell phones and/or Other Electronic Devices are not in use, employees shall use their best efforts to ensure they are stowed away and placed in silent mode. Cell phones and/or Other Electronic Devices may be used on campus during break times (if they are not supervising students) or for emergency purposes.

- This policy does not prohibit the use of cell phones and/or Other Electronic Devices when communication between colleagues is urgent.
- Employees shall not read or send personal text messages while in the presence of students except in the event of an emergency.
- From time to time it may be necessary for employees to make and receive personal calls or texts of an urgent matter on their cell phones during the school day or while on trips. Whenever possible, these communications should take place during scheduled breaks. If this is not possible, employees should notify another adult who can assume responsibility for their students, and step away to use their cell phone.
- Other Electronic Devices can be used during the school day for parent communication, record-keeping, planning and/or for instructional purposes related to students.

Field Trip Use:

- Employees are permitted to use cell phones and/or Other Electronic Devices for photography while on field trips to the extent permitted by parents/guardians, guardians, and/or other applicable policy, and for instructional and/or medical purposes. Employees are encouraged to carry a cell phone with them while on field trips and share that cell phone number with office administration as an added security measure.

Social Media Use:

- Employees shall not “friend” and/or “follow” any current student on any social networking site or platform. Pictures and/or videos of Sterling Montessori students shall not be shared on any website or social media without the expressed, written consent of the parent or guardian.

Misuse of cell phone or Other Electronic Devices

If a pattern of misuse is observed, employees will be asked to meet and review policy expectations with their supervisor. If misuse continues, it will be documented and brought to the attention of the Section Director.

P.10
Use of
Technology

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).

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(s), 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 Section Director, 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 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 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.

Personal Websites and Social Media

The Executive Director or designee 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.

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- 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 guardians express consent.

P.11
Charter
Admissions

Charter Admission and Enrollment Policy

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, 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 parents/guardians.

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 or designee via email by close of business (4PM) the next day after receiving the withdrawal notification. The Executive Director or designee 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 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. 12
**Holiday &
Vacations**

Holidays & Vacations for 10 Month Employees

Every spring, upon approval of the LHU Board, the Executive and Section Directors publish a school calendar for the upcoming school year. The school calendar is composed of minimum of 191 days. The days are distributed as follows:

- A minimum of 176 instructional days for students and a minimum of 1,025 hours of instruction covering at least nine (9) calendar months. Instructional days for students may vary in length as long as the minimum hours of instruction are scheduled. Make-up instructional days may be scheduled on any day except Sunday.
- Fifteen (15) non-instructional workdays for teachers. The number of non-instructional workdays will be reduced if the LHU board increases the number of instructional days for students. When instructional days for students are increased, non-instructional teacher workdays will be converted to student days. The total of instructional and non-instructional workdays will be 191.
- The annual vacation leave days will be scheduled in the school calendar by the Executive and Section Directors upon approval by the LHU Board. These days must be taken by 10 month employees as vacation days and as scheduled in the school calendar.
- All holidays are scheduled in the school calendar as follows: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and Winter Break.
- Upon the approval of the LHU Board, all holidays are scheduled in the school calendar as follows: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Holidays & Vacations for 12 Month Employees

- Permanent 12 Month Employees work year-round and follow the holiday leave schedule based on the school calendar set forth by the Executive and Section Directors. The holidays scheduled off during the academic calendar year are days that Sterling Montessori will be closed.
 - All holidays are scheduled in the school calendar as follows: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving (3 days), (Winter Break according to the school calendar), and 1 floating holiday.
 - Permanent 12 Month Employees will have the option to work or take additional Vacation Leave during the following school breaks. A leave request form must be submitted to the Section Director at least 10 days in advance of requested time off. If the breaks fall during the above mentioned holidays, the employee will exclude those days from the leave request.
 - Thanksgiving Break (2 days in November)
 - Spring Break (April)
- *Vacation Leave days are subject to blackout periods as identified by the Executive and Section Directors. The first week after school is let out in June and the week prior to work week in August are subject to blackout periods.

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**Leave Policy:
10 Month**

Leave Policy for 10 Month Employees

Personal Leave Policy

Full-time employees shall accrue a maximum of twelve (12) days per year Personal Leave. Personal Leave is accrued at the rate of one (1) day per month worked. Personal Leave days are subject to blackout periods as identified by the Executive and Section Directors.

Use of Personal Leave

Personal Leave may not be used during the first or last week of the school year, teacher work days, protected work days, or during Beginning of Grade (BOG) or End of Grade (EOG) testing. When possible, Leave Request Forms (refer to Appendix) must be made at least two weeks in advance and turned into a designated administrator. Personal Leave is subject to the scheduling requirements and discretion of the School. Personnel are expected to work on all regular student days, teacher work days, professional days, any make-up days, and the Annual Open House. These days are reflected in the annual school calendar. Unexcused absences on such days will be without pay. The Section Director has the discretion to grant personal leave to a full-time employee on these days, but prior approval MUST be obtained. No more than three (3) personal leave days may be taken consecutively unless due to illness or family emergency.

The employee may choose to rollover Personal Leave days from one school year to another. The maximum number of these rollover Personal Leave days may not exceed ten (10) accumulated. Annually for each unused Personal Leave day not rolled over, the employee will be paid a Wellness Bonus of \$50 per day at the end of the school year. The Wellness Bonus will be paid upon resignation but not termination.

Leave Deficit

An employee that has not earned sufficient annual Personal Leave to cover any annual Personal Leave day scheduled will be placed on leave without pay. If an employee at the

termination of employment is overdrawn with respect to annual Personal Leave, a deduction in the appropriate amount will be made from the employee's final paycheck.

Unpaid Leave of Absence

Leaves of Absence without pay may be granted to employees for personal leave at the discretion of the Section Director. The maximum term is for a three-month period which may be renewed in some cases, if deemed warranted, at the sole discretion of the Section Director for an additional period of up to three months. The request for such leave must be submitted to the Section Director, in writing, clearly stating the reasons for such a request. This leave is not to be used for an employee seeking alternative employment opportunities.

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**Leave Policy:
12 Month**

Leave Policy for 12 Month Employees

Vacation Leave

Full-time 12-month administrator employees may accrue Vacation Leave as specified in the employment contract. Vacation Leave days shall be used in order from the oldest accrued day to the newest accrued day. In no event shall any employee accrue more than fourteen (14) Vacation Leave days in a calendar year.

For Vacation Leave days accrued on or after November 1, 2015

The employee may choose to convert any remaining Vacation Leave days to Personal Leave days at the end of the school year or upon resignation but not upon termination. This conversion shall be completed prior to the application of the Employee Personal Leave Policy and any rollover or Wellness Bonus calculations thereunder. Vacation Leave days shall not be carried over into a subsequent school year and shall be lost without compensation of any kind due to the employee if not converted to Personal Leave days.

Use of Vacation Leave

Unless otherwise specified in the employment contract, Vacation Leave may not be used during the first or last week of the school year and are subject to blackout periods as identified by the Executive and Section Directors. Requests for Vacation Leave must be made at least two (2) weeks in advance, and approvals are subjects to the needs of the school and are in the sole discretion of the Section Director. Vacation Leave may be taken in increments as small as one (1) day and shall not exceed three (3) consecutive school days unless due to illness or family emergency and must be approved by the Section Director.

Leave Deficit

An employee that has not earned sufficient annual Personal Leave to cover any annual Personal Leave day scheduled will be placed on leave

without pay. If an employee at the termination of employment is overdrawn with respect to annual Personal Leave days, a deduction in the appropriate amount must be made from the employee's final paycheck.

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**P.15
Shared
Leave**

Voluntary Shared Leave Policy

Approved 11/2019

Purpose

The purpose of voluntary shared leave is to provide economic relief to Sterling Montessori employees who may suffer financial hardship due to workday absences caused by a serious health condition suffered by the employee and/or a member of the employee's immediate family.

Definitions

For purposes of this Voluntary Shared Leave Policy, the following definitions apply:

Immediate Family:

The term "immediate family" means the employee's spouse or domesticated partner and child (biological, adopted, foster, and/or step).

Needed to care for:

The term "needed to care for" encompasses both physical and psychological care, including:

- Providing care for an immediate family member who, because of a serious health condition, is unable to care for his or her basic medical, hygienic, nutritional, or safety needs, or is unable to transport himself or herself to the doctor, etc.
- Providing psychological comfort and reassurance that would be beneficial to an immediate family member with a serious health condition who is receiving inpatient or home care; or

- Filling in for others who normally care for the immediate family member or to make arrangements for changes in care (such as transferring to a nursing home).

The employee need not be the only individual or immediate family member available to care for the immediate family member with a serious health condition.

Serious Health Condition:

The term serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider, not including pregnancy except as otherwise set forth herein, and not including routine medical, physical, dental, and/or eye examinations.

Voluntary Shared Leave:

The term “voluntary shared leave” means personal or vacation leave voluntarily donated by a Sterling Montessori employee to the Sterling Montessori voluntary shared leave bank.

Eligibility

Only full-time and part-time employees who have exhausted all available earned personal and vacation leave (said amount includes the total amount of personal and vacation leave said employee can earn in an academic year plus his or her available earned personal or vacation leave as of the date of the request for donation or date of approval of the request for receipt of donated leave) are eligible to receive donated leave. Temporary employees are not eligible for leave. Voluntary shared leave may be used only during the required requested period.

The Executive Director or his or her designee shall approve or deny all requests for receipt of donated leave.

In order to qualify for and receive voluntary shared leave, an employee must have a serious health condition, and/or a member of the employee's immediate family must have a serious health condition, that will require the employee to miss ten (10) or more workdays during an academic calendar year (July 1 - June 30) or when the employee is needed to care for the member of the employee's immediate family who has a serious health condition that will require the employee to miss ten (10) or more work days .

An employee on maternity leave may be eligible to receive voluntary shared leave to cover her absence from work due to a serious health condition suffered by the employee related to the pregnancy and/or birth of her child. Evidence of the serious health condition related to the pregnancy and/or birth of her child must be provided by the employee's treating physician. A request for voluntary shared leave shall not be approved for maternity leave and/or parental care of a child absent the tendering of the required documentation from the employee's treating physician set forth herein.

An employee on workers compensation leave who is drawing and/or receiving total disability compensation may be eligible for voluntary shared leave to the extent that the required requested leave period is not compensated and/or covered by the insurance company.

An employee requesting voluntary shared leave must complete, sign, and deliver to the Executive Director or designee the Voluntary Shared Leave Application; said form shall be delivered to the Executive Director or designee as soon as medical evidence is available (or within a reasonable time thereafter) to support the need for leave beyond the employee's available earned personal and vacation leave. This provision shall be liberally construed by the Executive Director or designee. Documentation from the treating physician which evidences the serious health condition must be tendered by the employee at the time of Voluntary Shared Leave Application submission. Documents required by this paragraph may be completed and tendered by a member of the requesting employee's immediate family (or third party if no such person is available) if the requesting employee is unable to complete and tender the documents required by this paragraph.

An employee who is receiving benefits from a disability, other than workers compensation as noted above, is not eligible to receive voluntary shared leave.

Amount of Leave to Donee

An employee may receive no more than a total of sixty (60) workdays of voluntary shared leave, either continuously or for the same serious health condition on a recurring basis, during an academic year. After sixty (60) workdays of voluntary shared leave have been used by the employee, the Executive Director or designee may extend this limit on a month-to-month for up to a total of twelve (12) months, calculated from the first day of use of voluntary shared leave, if the administration would have otherwise granted leave without pay to the employee.

All approved voluntary shared leave shall be credited to the personal and vacation leave account of the employee requesting voluntary shared leave.

Qualifying to Donate Leave

Any employee wishing to donate voluntary shared leave must:

- Have sufficient available earned personal or vacation leave (said amount includes the total amount of personal and vacation leave said employee can earn in an academic year plus his or her available earned personal or vacation leave as of the date of the donation) in order to donate his or her designated amount of voluntary shared leave;
- Donate a minimum of four (4) hours of his or her available earned personal or vacation leave;
- Donate no more than fifty percent (50%) of the total amount of personal and vacation leave said employee can earn in an academic year AND no more than fifty percent (50%) of his or her available earned personal or vacation leave as of the date of the donation; and
- Complete, sign, and deliver to the Executive Director or designee the Donor Voluntary Shared Leave Form.

Donations made pursuant to this policy are voluntary. No employee should feel pressured or coerced to participate. The donating employee may not receive compensation in any form for the donation of leave; violation of this provision

may subject the employee to discipline.

Leave Records and Accounting

Sterling Montessori shall establish a voluntary shared leave account, which shall provide accurate record keeping for financial and management purposes. Sterling Montessori shall keep voluntary shared leave donations confidential; however, an employee may reveal his or her donation of voluntary shared leave in his or her discretion. All voluntary shared leave donations made by an employee shall be debited from the employee's available earned personal and vacation leave.

All voluntary shared leave donations shall be pooled together in one voluntary shared leave bank; said bank shall be accurately maintained and accounted for by Sterling Montessori. Approved voluntary shared leave requests shall be awarded voluntary shared leave from the voluntary shared leave bank and accounted for accordingly. Voluntary shared leave donations shall not be returned to the donor.

Earning Personal and Vacation Leave while Receiving Voluntary Shared Leave

Holidays occurring while an employee is receiving voluntary shared leave will be paid by Sterling Montessori. Personal and vacation leave will continue to be earned by said employee while he or she is receiving voluntary shared leave; however, all available earned personal and vacation leave must be used by the employee prior to the continued receipt of voluntary shared leave.

P.16
FMLA

Family Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. FMLA also includes certain military family leave provisions.

Eligibility

To qualify for FMLA, you must meet all of the following conditions:

- You must have worked for Sterling Montessori for a minimum of 52 weeks (12 months). The 12 months need not be consecutive. For eligibility purposes, you will be considered to have been employed for an entire week, even if vacation hours were used.
- You must have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12-month period immediately before the date when FMLA leave begins. Hours granted as paid or unpaid leave do not count as hours worked.
- You can take up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave under this policy during any 12-month period measured forward from the date the first FMLA leave begins.
- If both spouses work for Sterling Montessori, the amount of leave is limited to an aggregate of 12 weeks for “bonding” (the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child) and to care for the employee’s parent with a Serious Health Condition. However, if the leave is for the care of a sick child, for the other spouse, or for the employee’s own Serious Health Condition, each spouse is allowed 12 weeks’ leave, less any bonding leave taken by that spouse.

What is Covered

FMLA covers the following events:

- The birth and care of a newborn child or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for the newly placed child.
 - Leave to care for a newborn child or for a newly placed child must conclude within 12 months after the birth or placement.

- To care for a spouse, child, or parent with a Serious Health Condition;
 - The term “Spouse” is defined as a partner joined in a marriage recognized by the State of North Carolina.
 - The terms “Child” includes biological children, adopted children, foster children, step children, children for whom you stand in place of a parent, or children for whom you are the legal guardian. Leave under this policy is available to care for a son or daughter under 18 years of age or a son or daughter 18 years of age or older who is dependent because of his or her mental or physical disabilities.
 - The term “Parent” includes your biological parents or any individual who stands in the legal position of parent.
- A personal Serious Health Condition
 - A “Serious Health Condition” is defined as any illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves either (a) inpatient care at a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care, or (b) continuing treatment by a healthcare provider related to a condition which incapacitates the affected person for more than 3 days (or which would incapacitate the affected person for more than 3 days if the continuing treatment is not received).
 - Sterling Montessori may request you to provide a doctor’s certification of a serious health condition. You must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request, or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. Medical certification may be provided using the Medical Certification Form, refer to Appendix . Request for a medical certificate will be made in writing as part of Sterling Montessori’s response to your request for leave. Certification of the Serious Health Condition shall include: the date when the condition began, its expected duration, and a brief statement of the treatment. For medical leave for your own medical condition, the certification must also include a statement that you are unable to perform work of any kind or a statement that you are unable to perform the essential functions of your position.
 - For a family member who is seriously ill, the certification must include a statement that the patient, the family member, requires assistance and that your presence would be beneficial or desirable. Sterling Montessori reserves the right to contact the doctor, with the employee’s and patient’s permission, to clarify or authenticate the medical certification, but not to request additional information. If Sterling Montessori deems a

medical certification to be incomplete or insufficient, Sterling Montessori will specify in writing what information is lacking, and will provide you with 7 calendar days to resolve the issue.

If Sterling Montessori has reason to doubt the validity of a medical certification they may require you to obtain a second opinion with the following conditions:

- Sterling Montessori is permitted to designate the health care provider to for a second opinion, but the selected health care provider may not be employed on a regular basis by Sterling Montessori
- Sterling Montessori bears the expenses, including reasonable “out of pocket” travel expenses.
- Sterling Montessori may not require the employee or family member to travel outside normal commuting distance except in very unusual circumstance.
- Pending receipt of the second (or third) opinion, the employee is provisionally entitled to FMLA leave.
- If the certifications do not ultimately establish the employee’s entitlement to FMLA leave, the leave shall not be designated as FMLA leave.
- Third Opinion - If the opinion of the employee’s and the Sterling Montessori designated health care providers differ, Sterling Montessori may require the employee to obtain certification from a third health care provider, again at the expense of Sterling Montessori. This third opinion shall be final and binding. The third health care provider must be designated or approved jointly by Sterling Montessori and the employee. Sterling Montessori is required to provide the employee, within 2 business days, a copy of the second and third medical opinions, where applicable and upon request by the employee.

Recertification

Sterling Montessori may request recertification no more often than every 30 days unless: an extension is requested, circumstances described by the previous certification have changed significantly, or Sterling Montessori receives information that casts doubt upon the employee’s stated reason for the absence. If the minimum duration specified on a certification is more than 30 days, Sterling Montessori may not request recertification until that minimum duration has passed unless one of the conditions above is met.

When the duration of a condition is described as “lifetime” or “unknown,” Sterling Montessori may request recertification of an ongoing condition every six months in conjunction with an absence. The employee must provide the requested recertification to Sterling Montessori within the time frame requested by the Local Education Agencies (LEA) (which must allow at least 15 calendar days after Sterling Montessori request), unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances. No second or third opinion on recertification may be required.

- Any qualifying necessity because your spouse, child, or parent is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to duty) in the US Armed Forces.
- Under Military Caregiver Leave (Covered Service Member Leave) Eligible employees are also entitled to 26 work weeks of unpaid leave to care for a spouse, child, parent, or next of kin who is a member of the US Armed Forces and who is undergoing medical treatment or recuperating from a serious injury or illness incurred while on active duty.
 - “Next of Kin” is defined as the nearest blood relative of the service member, other than spouse, parent, son, or daughter, in the following order of priority: blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the service member by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered service member has specifically designated in writing another blood relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave, in which case the designated individual shall be deemed to be the next of kin.
 - To confirm that the employee and service member share one of the familial relationships or to confirm that the employee has been specifically designated as the service member’s next of kin, Sterling Montessori may request a statement from the service member outlining the familial relationship or indicating that the employee has been designated as the “next of kin.”
 - If an eligible employee does not take all of their 26 work weeks of leave entitlement to care for a covered service member during this “single 12-month period,” the remaining part of their 26 work weeks of leave entitlement to care the covered service member is forfeited. The 26-workweek entitlement is to be applied as a per-covered service member, per-injury basis. An eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered service members, or to care for the same service member with a

subsequent serious injury or illness.

Employee Status and Benefits During Leave

While you are on leave, Sterling Montessori will continue your health benefits at the same level and under the same conditions as if you had continued to work.

If you choose not to return to work for reasons other than your own continued Serious Health Condition, or the Serious Health Condition of a family member, or a circumstance beyond your control, Sterling Montessori will require you to reimburse the school for the amount it paid for your health insurance premium during the leave period. Your notification of intent not to return will be the COBRA qualifying event.

While you are on FMLA leave, Sterling Montessori will maintain your disability and life insurance benefits. While you are on FMLA leave, either paid or unpaid, you will continue to accrue sick leave and vacation leave under the school's policies for such leave. You will not be eligible to use any leave accrued during FMLA leave until you return to work. If you do not return to work, you will not be paid for any unused leave accrued while on FMLA leave. You will not be eligible for holiday leave, military leave, jury duty leave or bereavement leave while on FMLA leave. You will also not be eligible to be paid for any other school closings that occur while you are on FMLA leave.

Employee Status After Leave

If you take leave under this policy, you will be able to return to the same position, or a position with equivalent status, pay, benefits and other employment terms.

Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave

If you have earned paid leave, you may use such leave during FMLA leave. Paid leave may be substituted for unpaid FMLA leave if the reason for the FMLA leave is covered by the Sterling Montessori Leave Policies. Paid leave used will run concurrently with FMLA leave. If an employee is out on Workers' Compensation Leave drawing temporary total disability, the time away from work is considered as a part of the FMLA entitlement.

Intermittent Leave or Reduced Work Schedule

You may take FMLA leave in 12 consecutive weeks, may use the leave intermittently (take a day periodically when needed over the 12-month period), or under certain circumstances, may use the leave to reduce the workweek or workday, resulting in a reduced hour schedule. In all cases, the leave may not exceed a total of 12 work weeks over a 12-month period.

For the birth, adoption or foster care of a child, the Executive Director or designee and the employee must mutually agree to the schedule before the employee may take the leave intermittently or work a reduced hour schedule. If the employee is taking leave for a Serious Health Condition or because of the Serious Health Condition of a family member, the employee should try to reach agreement with the Executive Director or designee before taking intermittent leave or working a reduced hour schedule. If this is not possible, then the use of the leave must be medically necessary. Sterling Montessori may require certification of the medical necessity as discussed in the next section.

If you plan to take intermittent leave or work a reduced schedule, the medical certification must also include dates and the duration of treatment as well as a statement of medical necessity for taking intermittent leave or working a reduced schedule.

Procedure for Requesting Leave

All employees requesting leave under this policy should provide notice with an explanation of the reason(s) for the needed leave to their immediate supervisor, Section Director and the Executive Director. You are required to provide a written request for leave and reason(s) to the Section and/or Executive Director, failure of the employee to provide a written request for leave cannot be grounds to deny or delay the taking of FMLA leave.

If the leave is foreseeable, you are required to give at least 30 calendar days' advance notice of leave. If you fail to provide 30 days' notice for foreseeable leave with no reasonable excuse for the delay, the leave request may be denied until at

least 30 days from the date Sterling Montessori receives notice. Your failure to provide a written request for leave cannot be grounds to deny or delay the taking of FMLA leave.

If the leave is not foreseeable, you are required to give notice as soon as is practicable, generally defined as verbal notice to your Section Director and/or the Executive Director within one or two business days of learning the need to take FMLA leave. If you need to undergo planned medical treatment, you are required to make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment to minimize disruptions to the school's operations. While on leave, you are requested to report periodically to Sterling Montessori regarding the status of the medical condition, and your intent to return to work.

P. 17
Fire Policy

Fire Policy

Follow the protocols as outlined in the Emergency Prepared and Readiness Manual. These will be followed for handling actual fire or smoke situation, automatic system activation, or a false alarm.

Evacuate the building All employees should close windows, turn out lights and close doors behind them as they exit. Lead all students to the designated evacuation point. Call for emergency assistance (911). If safe, send responsible staff member to investigate the situation.

After locating fire or source of smoke, determine if fire is small enough to handle properly with a fire extinguisher. Only attempt to extinguish the fire if it is safe to do so, and if you have been trained to use a fire extinguisher. Never let the fire get between you and your exit. If fire is too large or out-of-control, evacuate the area immediately and ensure that all occupants have left the building. Remain outside to provide information to fire department personnel. All teachers and assistants should check attendance to account for all students. All office staff will begin to account for all teachers and assistants. Executive Director and staff will begin to account for office and custodial staff.

Wait for the fire chief or incident commander to give permission to re-enter.

P.18
Bomb Threat

Bomb Threat Policy

In the event a bomb threat is received by telephone, the individual receiving the telephone call should attempt to obtain and record as much information as possible. Immediately record the call ID number located on the caller identification screen (if applicable). Record all information on the Bomb Threat Information Sheet. The following information regarding the call and the caller should be obtained if possible:

The Call	The Caller
Check Caller ID	Gender of caller
Time Call Received	Approximate age of the caller
Specific location of device	Any accent detected
Time of detonation of device	Emotional state of the caller
What is the nature of the device?	Intelligence/educational level of caller
Can the device be moved?	Was caller convincing/credible
Motive of threat	Who does the caller represent?
Background noises detected	What is the caller? (name)
Other information	Was the voice familiar?

The person receiving the call should immediately notify the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director or designee should immediately call law enforcement officials (911).

DO NOT USE ANY TWO-WAY RADIOS OR CELL PHONES UNTIL CLEARED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT.

If there is any indication of imminent danger, evacuate immediately. If a decision is made to evacuate, standard fire drill procedures will be followed. If time allows, staff should be notified to utilize the red and green cards for bomb threat. Be sure

occupants are evacuated to a safe distance away from the building. Notification to staff will need to be by an administrator, NOT by an announcement.

If a suspicious parcel is observed, **DO NOT TOUCH**, evacuate immediately, and notify appropriate law enforcement personnel. If the building is evacuated, school personnel, school administrators, and law enforcement officials will then conduct a search. Occupants should return to the building only when directed by the Executive Director or designee.

P, 19
Hostage

Hostage Situation Policy

Remain calm. Notify the Executive Director or designee. The Executive Director or designee should immediately contact law enforcement (911). The Executive Director or designee should designate a location for a command center.

Document all decisions made and all actions taken, noting time of action or decision. Avoid confrontation with the intruder.

The Executive Director or designee should make the announcement over the Public Address System for a Code Red Lockdown (see section on Lockdown Codes). Upon hearing this announcement, teachers should not allow students to leave the classroom and should direct them to be seated on the floor next to an interior wall away from windows and doors. Students should only be allowed to leave the classroom when the all clear is given or when directed to move to another location by law enforcement personnel.

Teachers must take an accurate count of their students. A list should be made of those being held hostage, if possible. The Executive Director or designee should designate school personnel to monitor hallways and other areas of the building and to direct students to a safe area. Command of the incident will be transferred to law enforcement officials upon their arrival.

The Executive Director or designee should assign a staff member to give appropriate information to callers. If not given instructions, the response should be "No comment." All media contacts should be referred to the Executive Director or designee.

The Executive Director or designee should plan how to inform the families of students and school personnel that are directly affected. The Executive Director or designee should notify the school Crisis Intervention Team leader to activate an intervention plan for other students and school personnel, if needed.

P.21
Concussion

Concussion Policy

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

Suicide Intervention Policy

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.**

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 suppose.

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.

6. .

P.26
Service
Animals

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 or designee, 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 or designee.
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 or designee.
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 or designee. 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 or designee.

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

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
- Tuberculosis or Impetigo, until 24 hours 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

- Any 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

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, 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.30
LHU
Stipends

Policy on LHU Stipends for Extracurricular Activities

Rationale

As part of implementing Sterling Montessori's Strategic Plan, the LHU Board is interested in promoting community by encouraging faculty and students to engage in extracurricular activities, such as clubs, teams, arts and crafts, drama productions, etc. To encourage and support the faculty and staff in their desire to offer these activities, the LHU Board has approved the payment of a stipend to those employees who agree to offer these activities to our community.

Details

In order for faculty and staff to be eligible for a stipend, the following conditions must be met:

1. The proposed activity, and any proposed fees, must be approved in advance by the Executive Director or designee, and must be cleared with our liability insurance company as appropriate.
2. The faculty or staff member must be the primary supervisor of the activity, and must carefully supervise any additional volunteers (such as parents/guardians) who assist them. All volunteers must have a current background check on file.
3. The activity must meet at least once weekly, for at least 1 hour per week, for 15 weeks in order to qualify. Alternative meeting patterns, such as twice weekly for 8 weeks, may also be eligible, subject to approval by the Executive Director or designee, as long as they still meet at least 15 separate times.
4. The current stipend is \$500 per semester (December & June). There is a maximum of 2 semester stipends per year, per faculty member, per activity, except when two teachers work together to lead an activity.
5. The minimum number of students enrolled in order to qualify is 5.

6. The activity must be open to at least one whole section of the school – children’s house, lower elementary, upper elementary or middle school. It is acceptable to limit enrollment by number, as long as the method used to determine enrollment is clearly communicated (i.e. first come-first serve, audition, or pre-test for academic competitions).
7. Currently, the maximum number of available stipends is 15. If there are more requests than there is available funding, the Executive Director or designee will determine which activities will be funded.
8. If two teachers wish to work together to lead an activity, they can share the stipend between them. If there is a documented need for two faculty members, either due to a large enrollment, or due to the nature of the activity requiring more faculty involvement, the Executive Director or designee has the discretion to fund a full stipend for each faculty or staff member.
9. The participants may be charged a small fee to cover materials and supplies. All of the money must be spent by the end of the activity, with no funds being carried over, and no fees being used for faculty/staff compensation.
10. After registration for the activity closes, the faculty or staff member must provide the Executive Director or designee with a list of any adult volunteers, and a roster containing each student’s name, and their verified emergency contact information.

Procedure

The faculty or staff member will fill out the “Request for Extracurricular Stipend” form, and submit it to the Executive Director or designee for pre-approval. After the activity is completed, the form will be submitted to the Executive Director or designee for final approval for payment, and the Executive Director or designee will submit the form to the Administration Accountant to authorize payment.

P.31
After Hours
Use

Policy on After-Hours Use of Facilities for Employees

Approved 10/2019

Sterling Montessori's Insurance carrier requires documents and approval for those employees using the facilities during after school hours. Also, our liability insurance carrier has notified us that faculty and staff members, who are paid privately for tutoring or lessons, directly from community members, are not considered to be acting as our employees during those sessions, and therefore those activities are not covered under our liability insurance. Therefore, all privately-paid tutoring sessions or lessons taught on Sterling Montessori grounds must be billed through the school, so that the school is protected against potential liability.

Before using Sterling Montessori facilities outside of instructional hours, the faculty and staff must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Clubs, programs and activities are permitted during after school hours only (not during before school hours).
- Any private or group use of the building and grounds to teach, coach, or offer enrichment activities to students outside of regular instructional time, regardless of whether fees are collected, requires signed permission of the Executive Director or designee and must be cleared with our liability insurance company as appropriate.
- The facility must be returned to its original condition after use.
- Only currently enrolled Sterling Montessori students may be served.
- Any additional volunteers require a current background check to be on file with the school.
- In the case of conflicts over the use of the facilities, priority will be given to programs provided by Sterling Montessori (after school care, band, chorus, etc.)

- The faculty or staff member must be the primary supervisor of the activity, and must carefully supervise any additional volunteers who assist them.
- Faculty and staff are required to work their contracted hours each day. If an after school activity runs during the employees contracted hours, the time must be made up on that day in the morning or after the conclusion of the activity in the afternoon.
- The activity must meet one hour per week for a minimum of six weeks in order to qualify.
- The teacher/child ratio cannot exceed 1:12 for Children's House and 1:25 for Elementary and Middle School unless specified otherwise by the Executive Director or designee.
- The activity must be open to at least one whole section of the school – Children's House, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary or Middle School. It is acceptable to limit enrollment by number, as long as the method used to determine enrollment is clearly communicated (i.e. first come-first serve, audition, or pre-test for academic competitions).
- The club or activity may charge a reasonable fee for materials or equipment (such as t-shirts, water bottles, jerseys, etc.). The teacher/instructors are responsible for determining these fees. The material fee must be approved by the After School Activities Team. All materials or equipment fees will be added to the participation fee. All collected materials and equipment fees will be deposited into a club account. All of the money must be spent by the end of the activity, with no funds being carried over, and no fees being used for faculty/staff compensation. Material orders should be placed through a purchase order approved by the After School Activities Team. No reimbursements. Equipment purchased, other than items specifically for students to take home, will become the property of Sterling Montessori (balls, cones, nets, paints, etc.).
- After registration for the activity closes, the faculty or staff member must provide the After School Activities Team with a list of staff members, and a roster containing each student's name, and their verified emergency contact information.
- Sterling Montessori will retain 25% of the proceeds, not including materials fees, to cover the cost of liability insurance, taxes, clerical and maintenance fees.
- The 75% remaining fees will be paid at the end of the semester or at the completion of the club, whichever comes first.

Clubs and Sports

- Student participation fees will be \$10 per day per child, staff paid 75%/25%.

Private Lessons (For example, violin, keyboarding, etc.)

- It is the responsibility of the staff member leading the lessons to set the fees per student. The fees will be approved by the After School Activities Team.

Sterling Programs

The After School Activities Team will decide the programs Sterling will offer after school. The After School Activities Team will determine student fees as well as payment for staff.

- Band- free to students, staff are paid a stipend.
- Chorus- free to students, staff are paid a stipend.
- Model UN- fee for students per semester, staff paid 75%/25%.
- STEM- fee for students per semester, staff paid 75%/25%.
- Academic Tutoring- \$40 per student per hour, staff paid 75%/25%.

Sterling will offer after school tutors to students who need additional academic support beyond that which is provided during the school day. Parents/guardians will fill out a request form to be turned in and the After School Activities Team will pair the student with a tutor.

Procedure for Staff

The faculty or staff member will fill out the “Request Form” and submit it to After School Activities Team for pre-approval. The form will be submitted to the Executive Director or designee for final approval. All forms should be turned in three weeks prior to advertising the anticipated activity.

P. 33
Behavior &
Boundaries

Inappropriate Behavior and Professional Boundaries

All staff members are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest standards of behavior. Staff members are required to maintain appropriate and professional staff member-student relationships at all times. The availability of social networking sites, text messaging, e-mails, and other media has increased engagement in grooming behavior. Such behavior, even in the early stages, can constitute sexual harassment. Staff members are to refrain from inappropriate communication with students, including but not limited to, verbal, written or electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication.

When considering the appropriateness of a communication, the following factors may be considered:

- The nature, purpose, timing and amount of the communication
- The subject matter of the communication
- Whether the communication was made openly, or the educator attempted to conceal the communication
- Whether the communication could be interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship
- Whether the communication was sexually explicit
- Whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the staff member or the student.

When any allegation of inappropriate communications or relations between a staff member and a student has occurred, it should be taken seriously, reported to the Section Director and Executive Director and investigated. Once an investigation is underway, the staff member will be placed on administrative leave during the pendency of the investigation. If it is determined that a staff member's communications with a student violated policy or law, Sterling will take appropriate corrective action in proportion to the offense. Corrective action may include, reprimanding the staff member and directing the staff member not to make inappropriate comments to students; suspending the staff member pending

investigation; or terminating employment.

P.34
Retention

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.35
Bereavement
Leave

Bereavement Leave Policy

Approved 11/18/2020

Purpose

The Bereavement Leave Policy for Sterling Montessori establishes uniform guidelines for providing paid time off to employees for absences related to the death of immediate family members. Sterling recognizes the importance of supporting employees as they grieve the loss of a loved one. Full-time employees will receive bereavement leave each year, and may use this leave throughout the year for the loss of an immediate family member.

Eligibility

All full-time active employees are eligible for benefits under this policy.

Procedures

An employee who wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify his or her supervisor as soon as possible. If an employee leaves work early on the day he or she is notified of the death, that day will not count as bereavement leave.

In addition to bereavement leave, an employee may, with his or her supervisor's approval, use any available vacation for additional approved time off as necessary.

The employee will need to complete a leave request form prior to leave or upon return from bereavement leave.

Paid bereavement leave will be granted according to the following schedule:

- Employees are allowed up to **three consecutive days** off from regularly scheduled duty with regular pay in the event of the death of the employee's spouse, domestic partner, child, stepchild, parent, stepparent, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister.
- Employees are allowed **one day** off from regular scheduled duty

with regular pay in the event of death of the employee's brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, grandparent, grandchild or spouse's grandparent.

As used in these North Carolina LEA benefit policies “immediate family” means the employee’s: (a) Spouse, (b) Children, (c) Parents, (d) Brothers, (e) Sisters, (f) Grandparents, (g) Grandchildren, and (h) Dependents living in the employee’s household. Also included are the step, half, and in-law relationship.

P.38
Dress Code

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.41
Background
Checks

Criminal History and Background Check Policy

Approved 11/2019

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://ncchildcarecbc.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

- 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 or designee 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 or designee.

- A check of sex offender registries shall be conducted on all Charter Employees.
- The Executive Director or designee 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 or designee 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 or designee. The background check shall be conducted by Castle Branch. The link to Castle Branch is 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 or designee, 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 or designee. The Executive Director or designee may require that the Charter Employee not return to work at Sterling Montessori until the Executive Director or designee 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 or designee 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 or designee 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 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:

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School
Employee Handbook

All Charter Personnel who are volunteers shall secure a background check and provide the results to the Executive Director or designee. The background check shall be conducted by Castle Branch. The link to Castle Branch is 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 or designee, then the Executive Director or designee 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 or designee'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 or designee) must notify the Executive Director or designee 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 or designee 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 or designee 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.43
Tutoring

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 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.45

Enrichment

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 or designee.

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.46
Salary

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School Salary Policy

It is the goal of Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School to offer fair and competitive compensation for all employees.

Lead Teachers:

All lead teachers at Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School must have earned a Bachelor's degree. In addition, all lead teachers hired after January 2018 must have Montessori training appropriate for their level, or be willing to obtain that training within the first 2 years of employment.

All lead teachers will be compensated according to the salary scale published by the State of North Carolina, with any additional salary supplements offered by Wake County. This salary scale includes additional compensation for teachers with advanced degrees and National Board Certification.

It is the goal of Sterling Montessori that all lead teachers possess a valid North Carolina Professional Educator's License, appropriate for the grade level they are teaching. Lead teachers hired after January 2018 will be required to obtain their teaching license within 3 years of the date of employment. If a teacher is unable to obtain a license during that time period, their salary scale will revert to the scale published by the State of North Carolina, without the additional salary supplement offered by Wake County.

Teaching Assistants:

Sterling Montessori has developed its own, internal salary scale for Teaching Assistants. This scale will be published annually, along with any adjustments that the school chooses to offer. For teaching assistants hired after January 2018, Sterling Montessori will not pay an additional bonus for teaching assistants with Master's degrees.

Administrative Personnel:

Sterling Montessori has a set salary scale for administrative personnel based on the educational level and experience of each employee.

P.47
Pets

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 or designee 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

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.

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 or designee 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(s), 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: Section Director(s), 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 Section 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 Section 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: Section Director(s), 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 Section 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
Severe
Weather

Severe Weather 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

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 prescribed by a health care practitioner upon the written request of a student's parent. A student

may be authorized to self-administer medications as provided for in this policy. To minimize disruptions to the school day, students should take medications at home rather than at school whenever feasible. The Executive Director or designee may deny a request to administer any medication to a student that could be taken at home or when, in the opinion of the Executive Director or his or her designee, in consultation with medical personnel, the administration of the medication by school personnel would pose a substantial risk of harm to the student or others. For purposes of this policy, all references to “parent” include parents, legal guardians and legal custodians. In addition, for purposes of this policy, the term “health care practitioner” is limited to licensed medical professionals who are legally authorized to prescribe medications under North Carolina law, such as doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathic medicine, physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Medication Administration by School Personnel

1. Conditions for Administering Medication

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.

2. Procedures for Administering Medications

- A. Except for specific cases in which the Executive Director or designee 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 or designee 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 or designee) 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 or designee, 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 or designee 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 or designee 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.

Appendix

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Appendix A

Employee Insurance Reference Guide			
Provider	Products	Customer Service	Website
NC State Health Plan	Health Insurance	888-234-2416	www.shpnc.org
Humana	Dental	1-877-282-5654	www.humana.com
Humana	Life Insurance	1-877-672-4946	www.humana.com
United Healthcare	Vision	1-800-638-3120 (call to get your member ID)	www.myuhcvision.com
Savers Admin	Flex Spending	336-759-3888	www.saversadmin.com Click Forms and Logins, FSA/HRA/HSA, Employee Portal Login.
Aspire	Retirement Plan	Christopher Nordlund, CPFA christopher.nordlund@nfp.com Kadedra Warren-Jones Plan Administrator (800) 826 - 7859, ext. 20013 kadedra.warren-jones@nfp.com	www.aspireonline.com

- United Healthcare does not provide employees with dental cards. Employees will need to contact United for their ID number and log in to the account and print off the card or use the reference card that can be retrieved from HR.

Appendix B

Guide to Commonly Used Initialisms and Acronyms	
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AMS	American Montessori Society
CEU	Continuing Education Credit
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FMLA	Family Medical Leave Act
HR	Human Resources
LHUF	Laura Holland Uzzell Foundation
NCDPI	North Carolina Department of Public Schools Instruction
WCPSS	Wake County Public School System

Appendix C

Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) Plan

Overview

Sterling Montessori has established a Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) in accordance with the State Board of Education Policy TCED-016 (formerly TCP-A-004/LICN-004). The BTSP at Sterling Montessori was designed to support the professional learning and development of beginning teachers as well as their mentors. Sterling Montessori is committed to helping both Mentors and Beginning Teachers (BTs) succeed through a shared vision, integral BTSP plan, and consistent, constructive feedback from a supportive network of colleagues and administrators. The BTSP plan was developed to align to the Beginning Teacher Support Program Standards.

- **Standard 1:** Systematic Support for High Quality Induction Programs- This standard is designed to promote the commitment of all stakeholders in seeing mentoring and induction programs succeed. Key program elements include the creation of an institutional plan, demonstrating institutional commitment, and support and principal engagement.
- **Standard 2:** Mentor Selection, Development and Support- This standard articulated the process and criteria for mentor selection, discusses mentor roles and responsibilities, and delineates foundational mentor training. Key program elements include mentor selection, defining the role of mentors, and mentor professional development.
- **Standard 3:** Mentoring for Instructional Excellence- Mentors are given protected time to provide beginning teachers with support to achieve success in the areas set forth by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. Key program elements include providing time for mentors and beginning teachers, ensuring mentoring is focused on instruction, and addressing issues of diversity.
- **Standard 4:** Beginning Teacher Professional Development: Professional development is provided to beginning teachers that orients them to their new career and supports their efforts to meet the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. Key program elements include structured orientation to the school site, as well as professional development designed to meet the unique needs of beginning teachers that is aligned with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, and the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation System.
- **Standard 5:** Formative Assessment of Candidates and Programs- New teachers and mentoring programs are monitored and supported using a formative assessment system to guide their work. Key program elements include formative assessment systems and program evaluation.

Identification of Beginning Teachers

The state of North Carolina defines “beginning teacher” as a teacher with fewer than three years of professional experience. Beginning teachers hold initial or lateral entry/residency licenses. All teachers who hold initial licenses are required to participate in a three-year beginning teacher induction period that includes a formal orientation, support from a trained mentor, and classroom observations, prior to the recommendation for the continuing licensure. Lateral Entry/Residency teachers are required to participate in the BTSP program for three years and have three years to complete licensure requirements to obtain the continuing license.

Teachers with three or more years of appropriate professional experience are not required to participate in the BTSP, nor are student service personnel (e.g., counselors, psychologist, and speech language pathologist), administrators, or curriculum instructional specialists.

Completion of the BTSP requirements in one teaching area satisfies the BTSP requirements for all other teaching areas. Once a continuing license has been earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require participation in BTSP.

The BTSP Coordinators work collaboratively with the Director of Licensure Renewal, the Executive Director, and Section Director to verify beginning teachers’ eligibility for continuing licenses, in accordance with state-mandated requirements and will follow NCSBE requirements for all required licensure tests.

After successful completion of the three-year BTSP, beginning teachers with three years of successful experience (who meet all licensure criteria, including “proficient” or higher ratings on all standards on the most recent Teacher Summary Form), notification will be sent to the Licensure Division of the NC Department of Public Instruction by the Director of Licensure Renewal.

New Staff Orientation

New Staff Orientation is the responsibility of the Executive Director and the Section Director(s). Orientation will be provided, attended, and documented prior to the first day of the teacher work days in August. Topics will include, but are not restricted to:

- Sterling Montessori’s mission, policies, procedures (including those directly affecting students)
- Meet members of the Administrative Team
- Review of the Employee and Parent Handbook
- Campus tour
- How to ask for technical assistance or resources.

Orientation of Beginning Teacher Within Two Weeks of the BT’s First Day of Work

Orientation of Beginning Teachers in the Beginning Teacher Support Program will be the responsibility of the BTSP Coordinators. Orientation will happen within two weeks of the BT's first day of work, preferably during the teacher work week in August. The Beginning Teacher Orientation topics include, but are not restricted to:

- The teacher will receive a rubric for evaluating NC teachers, the evaluation policy, and the schedule for completing all components of the evaluation process
- Review of Sterling Montessori's mission, policies, procedures (including those directly affecting students)
- Include an overview of the BTSP plan, process and BTSP calendar/schedule for the year
- Review and update all BTSP binders
- Reiterate that meetings and observations will be spaced out throughout the year
- Answer questions Beginning Teachers may have about the workplace, duties, school programs, etc., and address any concerns
- Provide assurance that Beginning Teachers are paired with Mentors who are trained, knowledgeable, trustworthy, and eager to help them succeed
- Provide assurance that the BTSP Coordinator will help maintain optimum work conditions, and make Beginning Teachers aware of NCDPI policies that support them
- Explain ways in which the BTSP Coordinator supports both Beginning Teachers and Mentors
- Review teaching criteria/policies of the State of North Carolina
- Review NC curriculum standards
- Discuss mission and goals for the State Board of Education
- Discuss the process for achieving a continuing license
- Overview of the resources and supports available to assist beginning teachers in acclimating to the classroom setting (including the role of a mentor)
- Documentation that each beginning teacher attended orientation

Required Working Conditions for Beginning Teachers:

The Executive Director, BTSP Coordinators, Section Directors, Mentors and peers are instrumental in supporting beginning teachers. It is the expectation of Sterling Montessori that administrators be intentionally involved in the professional development

and growth of beginning teachers by adhering to optimal working conditions for beginning teachers:

- **Assignment of area of licensure:** A critical factor in determining an applicant's eligibility for hire is the determination that he/she holds (or is eligible to hold), a North Carolina teaching license in the content area for which he/she has been recommended. The Executive Director or designee, in close collaboration with the Director of Licensure Renewal, reviews all certified hiring recommendations and application materials to ensure that the applicant's teaching license accurately corresponds to the teaching position for which he/she is being considered.
- **Mentor assigned early, in the licensure area, and in close proximity:** The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator works with the Executive Director and Section Directors to match beginning teachers with effective, nurturing, and committed teachers who have been trained as mentors. While every effort is made to ensure that mentor teaches in the same licensure area and is in close proximity to the beginning teacher's assigned location, in some instances, when a trained mentor does not exist in the same licensure area, or the teacher is a specialist in the school, a mentor will be assigned from a different location.
- **Limited preparations:** Section Directors will work to create the best possible schedules for the new teachers in their buildings. Specialists who serve all students in a school should have ample planning time each day to prepare lessons for the various grade levels that they teach.
- **Limited non-instructional duties:** Section Directors will monitor the number and type of duties and committees assigned to beginning teachers. These assignments are restricted by State Board policy QP-A-004 to those that all teachers on the staff are required to complete and to committees on which all staff members are assigned.
- **Limited number of exceptional or difficult students:** Decisions related to class assignments and teacher schedules are to be made with an intentional focus on setting beginning teachers up for success. To that end, the Executive Director, Section Directors, EC Coordinator, and EL Coordinator will work together to balance the number of EC, EL, and/or difficult students assigned to beginning teachers.
- **No extracurricular assignments unless requested in writing by the beginning teacher:**

In accordance with North Carolina GS 115C-47, which calls for local boards of education to adopt policies to eliminate extracurricular duties for teachers in their first three years of teaching, beginning teachers who elect to serve in extracurricular roles are required to sign Time to Teach Waivers. This waiver documents the beginning teacher's voluntary assumption of the extracurricular assignment. Possible examples of extracurricular duties include: club sponsor, sports coach, academic team coach, class sponsor, and assistance at sporting/cultural events.

- **Developing building-level consistency and continuity:** To allow beginning teachers the chance to grow and develop, mentors must have worked with Sterling Montessori for a minimum of three years. This practice seeks to encourage continuity for the beginning teacher and to facilitate the development of strong professional relationships between beginning teachers, their mentors, colleagues, and administrative support teams.
- **Completion of surveys:** In accordance with Policy TCED-016, completion of the recent graduate survey by the Beginning Teacher (BT) and the employer survey by the principal of the school during the BT's first year of teaching as part of the requirements to measure the performance of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) stated in GS 115C-269.35 . The surveys must be completed at the end of the first year of teaching.

Mentor Assignment

In collaboration with the Executive Director, and BTSP Coordinators, Section Directors recommend mentors for their schools' beginning teachers. The Executive Director or designee will sign off on the mentor recommendation and the BTSP Coordinator will assign the mentor to the beginning teacher.

Eligibility will be based on SBE policy and GS 115C-296 requirements concerning Mentor's NCEES evaluation.

The selection of mentors is a critical component in developing beginning teachers, growing teacher leaders, and increasing student achievement. Mentor Assignment Guidelines shall follow Beginning Teacher Support Program Standard 2:

- Selection criteria, including mentors' range of roles and responsibilities, include input from a variety of stakeholder groups, are well-defined and clearly communicated to all stakeholders by program leadership.
- The selection process is transparent and uniformly implemented.

Mentors support Beginning Teacher orientation and provide logistical and emotional support. They focus their primary support on improving instruction and learning. Mentors provide ongoing support and encouragement for the Beginning Teacher. They must want to help others by sharing ideas, materials, knowledge, and experience. Being a Mentor is an opportunity to continue the cycle of learning, and to give back to the teaching profession by working collaboratively with Beginning Teachers. Mentors will be volunteers who are intelligent, prepared, creative, and determined to help the Beginning Teachers who depend on them for support. Mentors will have the experience to know how demanding teaching is; e.g. establishing positive connections between home and school, balancing responsibilities, keeping up with paperwork, communicating with faculty and teachers, managing stress, making time to take care of themselves, and always "following the child" in accordance with the needs of each individual student. They should be lifelong learners who love children and the work they do within the teaching profession and Sterling Montessori.

Mentor selection criteria include:

- Rated at least “proficient” level on NCEES (Ratings of proficient or higher on all five standards on the most recent summative evaluation, or on Standards 1 and 4 on an abbreviated evaluation) refer to Sterling’s Evaluation form
- Submission of the mentor application, including Executive Director’s and Section Director’s endorsement
- Teaching in the same or similar teaching area or performing similar duties;
- Mentors need to be in relatively close proximity to their Beginning Teachers so they are accessible for observations, check-ins, and routine support;
- Completion of a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience;
- Successful completion of the required mentor training;
- Committed to working with beginning teachers as needed to promote professional growth based on identifiers defined in the NC Teacher Evaluation System;
- Demonstrated ability and willingness to observe the beginning teacher and offer objective, constructive feedback;
- Skilled at modeling effective teaching, professional, and administrative behaviors;
- Participation in ongoing training and professional learning related to mentoring.
- Retired teachers are eligible to serve as mentors

The BTSP Coordinators with the Executive Director or designee’s approval shall determine which mentor teacher best meets the needs of each new teacher and shall assign the most appropriate mentorteacher to the new teacher, with priority consideration for mentors rated as “distinguished” or “accomplished”. If the BTSP Coordinators and/or the Executive Director or designee determines that a teacher rated “proficient” or a retired teacher is the most appropriate mentor for a new teacher, the Executive Director or designee shall maintain records of the reasons for that determination.

LEAs may use the most recently available evaluation for teachers who lack an evaluation from the prior year. Teachers without evaluation data for two or more consecutive years shall not be eligible to serve as mentor teachers, unless the mentor is a retired teacher. Any teacher who is assigned to be a mentor to a Beginning Teacher must meet eligibility requirements in the year of assignment. No mentor whose evaluation falls below the “proficient” level may continue to serve as a mentor to a Beginning Teacher, regardless of existing mentor-mentee relationships. A teacher may be a mentor at a different school building from which the mentor is assigned if the Executive Director (Principals) of each school and the mentor teacher approve the assignment, the mentor is rated at least “accomplished” (received ratings of accomplished or higher on three of five standards including Standard 4 on the most recent summative, or on Standard 4 on an abbreviated evaluation), and the Beginning Teacher’s Executive Director or designee maintains a record of the reasons for selecting the mentor from a different school building.

When mentor selection necessitates deviation from the criteria above, the BTSP Coordinator can advise and approve alternative solutions that best meet the mentoring needs of the beginning teacher. Occasionally, when a mentor must be relieved of his or her mentor responsibilities based on feedback from the mentee and/or Section Director, the BTSP Coordinators will work collaboratively with the Executive Director or designee to identify and assign a new mentor.

The BTSP Coordinators will assign Mentors to Beginning Teachers as early as possible during the first three weeks of school (including the teacher work week prior to students returning to school), and take an active role in the development of their successful relationship within the program.

Mentor Assignments will be made based on the needs of the Beginning Teachers, the area of expertise of the Mentors, and the compatibility of the Beginning Teachers and Mentors.

Training Based on NC Mentor Standards and Support is Provided for Mentors:

Teachers who meet the previously detailed criteria and who are endorsed by their Section Director and Executive Director are eligible to complete mentor training. Selected mentors have the option to complete mentor training through an annual face-to-face training, or via online modules that are aligned with the state's mentor standards and the corresponding NC Teacher Evaluation Standards. Offering multiple training opportunities provides options for teachers and enables Sterling Montessori to select and train new mentors throughout the school year.

Training will include the following:

- Knowledge of how to satisfy the mandated requirements for Beginning Teachers.
- Examples on how to serve as role models, coaches/helpers, and collaborators.
- Use of reflective processes (e.g. journaling and self-evaluation). Mentors will need to examine and reexamine their beliefs about the teaching profession and mentoring, including Montessori philosophy and methodology, and any problems that may arise in the course of mentoring. They need to devote time to developing their mentorship skills, which requires the support of the BTSP Coordinator and Sterling Montessori.
- Opportunities for professional development as they become available. Through online resources, Sterling Montessori will inform Mentors about instructional tools and ongoing professional development regarding mentor training, current issues affecting Beginning Teachers in the workplace, webinars about how the BTSP program can make a critical difference in how successful a Beginning Teacher is or perceives himself/herself to be.
- Information about regional meetings for Mentors, as it becomes available.
- Opportunities to participate in annual peer reviews.

- Links to information and support resources that Mentors can share with their Beginning Teachers.
- Monthly meetings with the BTSP Coordinator where Mentors feel nurtured, supported, encouraged, and appreciated.

Annual Development of a Professional Development Plan (PDP) in Collaboration with the Section Director, and the Assigned Mentor:

There are two aspects to consider when developing a Professional Development Plan with a beginning teacher at Sterling Montessori i.e. goal setting with Section Directors and Licensure Renewal with Director of Licensure Renewal. During the BTSP process, a Beginning Teacher's Professional Development Plan will be created and take these two things into account.

An annual PDP must be developed collaboratively between the Beginning Teacher, the assigned Mentor, and the Section Director by the end of October each year. The PDP is based on the NCPTS and must include goals, strategies, and assessments of the PT's progress in improving professional skills. They could include standards adopted by the NC Board of Education, as well as Montessori pedagogical principles. The creation of the PDP will be documented, placed in the binder and will be signed by the beginning teacher, the mentor, and the Section Director. The teacher's progress (formative assessment conferences) on his/her PDP goals will be reviewed a minimum of two times during the school year (mid-year and at the end of the year) by the assigned mentor and the Section Director. Signatures of Beginning Teacher, Mentor and Section Director are required for each formative assessment conference. The Beginning Teacher will provide tangible evidence of growth during both the mid-year and final review. It is the responsibility of the BTSP Mentors to help/support Beginning Teachers to meet these goals. Section Directors/Executive Director will conclude PDP discussions during the Beginning Teacher's summative evaluation conference.

The Director of Licensure Renewal will provide Licensure Renewal support by tracking licenses, linking faculty to professional development opportunities, securing Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Licensure Renewal Credits, and informing faculty members about state requirements regarding Professional Licenses. Ways to meet the requirements for Licensure Renewal will be part of the Professional Development Plan of Beginning Teachers in the BTSP process. The BTSP Mentor is responsible for helping Beginning Teachers plan and follow through with their Licensure requirements.

CEUs are granted for study that matches Sterling Montessori's priorities and/or each teacher's Professional Development Plan. Approval should be sought and granted prior to enrollment in Professional Development opportunities. Licensure Renewal Credits for Licensed Teachers may be granted for:

- Professional Development provided by Sterling Montessori
- Professional Development offered by NCDPI
- Relevant workshops and conferences offered by national, state, or local professional organizations including (but not limited to) the teacher's area of licensure, instruction methods, Montessori pedagogy, cultural diversity, global education, use of technology in the

classroom, effective communication (with colleagues, parents, students), learning disabilities, classroom management, and behavior management.

- University or college courses in an accredited program. The teacher must present the course description to their Section Director or Director of Licensure Renewal for approval prior to enrolling in the course; and upon completion of the course, the teacher must present to Director of Licensure an original transcript with the course listed and grade received.
- Teaching experience, with one unit granted for each year of full-time teaching. Teachers who teach less than full-time will receive prorated credit.
- Participation as a mentor for beginning teachers, mentor training, and monthly mentor support meetings. Mentors will receive .5 CEU for every year of mentoring.

Formal Process for Conducting Observations and a Summative Evaluation on all Beginning Teachers:

Sterling Montessori follows the comprehensive evaluation schedule to complete the four beginning teacher observations and summative evaluation required by the state each school year. All teachers, principals, and peer evaluators must complete training on the process. A Beginning Teacher will be informally observed at least five times throughout the year (for BT1s and BT2s at least 2 observations must be conducted within the first semester, and if practicable, at least one of those observations will be within the first grading period), with scheduling based on the specific needs of him/her:

- Two formal observations by Section Director:
 - The first observation to be conducted in October
 - The second observation to be conducted in March that evaluates the Beginning Teacher's cumulative performance of the school year
- The observations must last 45 minutes or entire class period, the first observation must have a pre-conference and all must have a post-conference within 10 days
- Two formal observations by the assigned Mentor (to be scheduled by BTSP Coordinator):
 - The first observation to be conducted by mid-October
 - The second observation to be conducted in April that evaluates the Beginning Teacher's cumulative performance of the school year
 - The observations must last 45 minutes or entire class period, the first observation must have a pre-conference and all must have a post-conference within 10 days

- One formal observation by Section Director completed at the beginning of May that evaluates the Beginning Teacher's cumulative performance of the school year
 - The observation must last 45 minutes or entire class period, and must have a post-conference within 10 days
 - For BT1s and BT2s, at least one of the three annual administrative observations must be conducted by the Section Director.
- One peer observation
- One summative evaluation annually
- Monitored Growth Plans and Directed Growth Plans must be implemented when necessitated by ratings.

PDP's, observations, and evaluations will be completed and documented in the binder provided during the BTSP orientation meeting.

In an effort to help support Beginning Teachers acclimate to their classrooms and to the community, BTSP Coordinators will schedule informal observations for each Beginning Teacher. There will be two observations per year either at Sterling Montessori or at a location approved by the BTSP Coordinator, scheduled in November and February.

Any teacher who teaches 120 or more days in a school year and who will get a full year experience credit should have six completed observations. Section Director's will aim to schedule six observations when possible for late hires that works less than 120 days, depending on when they were hired, and in accordance with the observation schedule. At a minimum, the peer observation and the observations required from the date hired will be completed. The Section Director, not his/ her designee, will complete the initial observation on all first year beginning teachers and any Beginning Teachers with performance concerns.

In accordance with State Board Policy, Beginning Teachers in the third year of employment must be rated as "proficient" or higher on all evaluation standards on the Summary Evaluation to be recommended for a continuing license.

In addition to the scheduled Observation Mentors will meet with their Beginning Teacher bi-weekly or weekly (monthly for BT-3 teachers), and will document the meeting using the meeting log.

Participation in BTSP Monitoring for Compliance with State Board Policy

As mandated by SBE policy TCED-016, the Sterling Montessori Beginning Teacher Support Program is monitored every fifth year for compliance. This monitoring process seeks to document evidence of Beginning Teachers' participation in a three-year induction period. In an effort to

meet or exceed the “proficient” rating on each element and standard of the compliance review, Sterling Montessori has established a system of ongoing BTSP support and documentation.

The BTSP Coordinators will hold the following meetings in an effort to be supportive of the Beginning Teachers and Mentors:

- **Beginning Teacher Group** (if there is more than one Beginning Teacher on staff): Informal 45-minute support meetings will be held once a month with just Beginning Teachers during a professional lunch time on campus (in Office A7 or Teacher Lounge). This will be a “support group” of enthusiasm, encouragement, collaborative problem-solving, and constructive feedback for Beginning Teachers. BTSP Coordinators will attend and lead this meeting.
- **Mentor Group** (if there is more than one Mentor on staff): Informal 45-minute support meetings will be held once a month with Mentors and lead by BTSP Coordinators during a professional lunch time on campus (in Office A7 or Teacher Lounge). This will be a “support group” of enthusiasm, encouragement, collaborative problem-solving, and constructive feedback for Mentors as role models, advocates for their Beginning Teachers, and teachers in their own right who require ongoing professional development and support.
- **BTSP Coordinators/Mentor/Beginning Teacher**: Informal 45-minute support meeting held twice a year (Beginning and end of year) with the Mentors and Beginning teachers lead by the BTSP Coordinators. The purpose of these meetings is to work through the BTSP process with sharing. Promote a collaborative environment between all participants.

At the start of each school year, Beginning Teachers and Mentors receive a binder. These binders are accessible by the mentor, the beginning teacher, and the BTSP Coordinators. They are used to organize and maintain all required Beginning Teacher documentation including but not restricted to:

- Calendar/Schedule for the year
- Check sheets for documentation to be added to the binder throughout the year
- Contact Log sheets
- Meeting log documentation forms
- Reflection/Assessment sheets for sessions/meetings
- Mentor observation forms
- Rubrics for observations
- Guide sheet for informal observations

- Teacher responses to observation forms
- Post-Visit Reflection Questions sheet for Mentors
- Self-Assessment surveys
- Teacher Summary Rating forms
- Beginning Teacher Individualized Growth Plan forms
- Professional Development Plan forms
- List of MTSB links
- List of additional resources
- “Motivational” writings about mentorship, and qualities of a great teacher
- “Anticipation Guides” for training and discussion
- Definitions of “administrator,” “colleague,” “helper,” “model,” “mentor,” “mentee”
- Active Listening helps

It is the responsibility of the Mentors and Beginning Teachers to keep their binders up-to-date and organized with monitoring by BTSP Coordinators, and assistance given as needed. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Beginning Teacher to ensure that his/her documents are completed and presented to the coordinators in full, and on time.

The BTSP Coordinators maintain the following BTSP documentation, either electronically or in a hard copy:

- Mentor contracts
- Mentor Training documentation
- Beginning Teacher induction and orientation sign-in sheets
- Monthly agendas from Novice Teacher Support Group Meetings
- Master list of beginning teachers and mentors
- Comprehensive list of trained mentors
- Monthly Mentor Meeting agendas

Additionally, the BTSP Coordinators and the BTSP Team works to continually improve efficacy of the BTSP by obtaining objective stakeholder feedback. This information is solicited in the form of:

- Annual Peer Review of a paired school (Casa Esperanza, for example)
- Self-Assessment of Sterling Montessori's BTSP Plan
- Timely transfer (within two weeks of transfer request) of all Beginning Teacher files to subsequent employing LEAs, Charter Schools, or non-public institutions within North Carolina.

Beginning Teacher Personnel Files are Filed and Kept Secure

All employee files, including beginning teacher personnel files are securely maintained and housed with the Human Resource Manager's office and the confidentiality of these files is strictly maintained.

Timely Transfer of Beginning Teacher Files to Subsequent Employing LEAs, Charter Schools, or Non-Public Institutions Within the State:

When an employee's cumulative file is requested by another LEA, documentation of participation in the Beginning Teacher Support Program will be provided to the Beginning Teacher Coordinator contact within that LEA. The BTSP Coordinator and the Director of Licensure Renewal will work together to provide the requested information within two weeks.

Conclusion

Sterling Montessori recognizes that one of the most critical factors in predicting a student's academic achievement is the effectiveness of the classroom teacher. To that end, Sterling Montessori is committed to providing the resources, logistical structures, and human capital required to nurture, develop, and retain beginning teachers. The BTSP Plan provides the foundation upon which the comprehensive continuum of beginning teacher services and supports is constructed.

Receipt of the 2021-2022 School Policies and Procedures Employee Handbook

I, the undersigned, have this day received a copy of Sterling Montessori School's Handbook. I understand that this Handbook has been provided to me for guidance purposes only, and that this Handbook is not a contract of employment, nor does it provide me with any contractual rights. I understand that I should consult with my Section Director regarding any questions not answered in the Handbook.

I understand that this Handbook replaces any and all prior handbooks, policies and practices of the School, and I also understand that the policies and benefits contained herein may be added to, deleted or changed by the School at any time at its discretion, and that the School will provide me with notice of such changes.

Name (please print): _____ **Date:** _____

Employee's Signature: _____

A WORD ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

In an effort to be responsive to the needs of a growing organization, changes or additions to this Handbook will be made when necessary, and SMACS reserves the right to change, add to, or delete any of the provisions of this Handbook at any time in its sole discretion. Should SMACS make a change to this Handbook, you will be given notice of such change.

This Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior such handbooks, policies, and procedures of SMACS.

Employees are subject to all policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook, unless otherwise stated in the employment contract. This Handbook does not create a contract, expressed or implied, guaranteeing a term or condition of employment (including employment for a specific duration). This Handbook does not modify or supersede any term of employment. Each employee must follow the terms and conditions of this Handbook and violation of any provision may be grounds for discipline or termination.

This 2020-2021 Employee Handbook was approved by the LHU Board.

Addenda
