Parent Policies and Procedures Handbook
Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook Contents

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Welcome
Welcome to Sterling Montessori

1.1.a
Our Mission Statement

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

1.1.b
Philosophy

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

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

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

1.1.c Guiding Principles

- Sterling Montessori will nurture in its students a life-long love of learning, and respect for themselves and others, in a peaceful and safe environment.

- The philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori will be the cornerstone of the educational programs at Sterling Montessori, while complying with the requirements of the Office of Charter Schools.

- The Sterling Montessori campus will be aesthetically beautiful, and will be an interactive extension of the classroom by offering a prepared and sustainable environment for students.

- Sterling Montessori will be a community where the voices of the students, parents, and faculty are valued equally, and all members of the community are welcomed to actively participate.

- Sterling Montessori will have a strong management team, led by an Executive Director, which will create sound procedures guided by established policies that will ensure a safe environment for all.

- Sterling Montessori will be committed to responsible growth, driven by genuine Montessori practices, financial sustainability, and the collective needs of the community.

1.1.d History of Sterling Montessori

On June 20, 1989, special education teachers Andrea Faurot and Charles Uzzell opened Cary Montessori in their home with one preschool student and their daughter, Molly. From this humble beginning, Sterling Montessori was born. By December 1990, Cary Montessori had grown to 90 students and 14 teachers. This rapid growth necessitated a move to larger facilities – first moving into 201 High House Road, then in 1993 – 1994, moving into two additional spaces in Cary.

As demand for a quality Montessori education grew, Andrea and Charles were challenged to find land or facilities in Cary large enough for the growing school. The first six acres in Morrisville were purchased and construction

Sterling Montessori’s founders, Andrea Faurot and Charles Uzzell, were teachers and visionaries committed to the quality of the Montessori education the school provided. The non-profit Laura Holland Uzzell (LHU) Foundation was started in 1993 to raise money for teachers to acquire Montessori certification, and for students to have access to a Montessori education. Named after one of Sterling Montessori’s early supporters, the LHU Board operates, and is the governing body of, Sterling Montessori.

1.1.e
LHU Board

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

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

1.1.f
Parent and Faculty Association

The Parent Faculty Association (PFA) is a very important part of Sterling Montessori. The PFA strives to support the students, teachers and staff of the Sterling Montessori community, with the goal of enriching the children's Montessori education. Parents volunteer time and talents and raise funds to support various programs. Each year the PFA aims to increase parent involvement from the classroom to community-wide events. To stay informed and connected, visit our website, smpfa.org. Learn about our monthly meetings, get event reminders, and remain up-to-date on Sterling-related topics.
1.1.g
School Structure

The school is comprised of two separate educational entities. The Academy serves children ages 3-4 and is a tuition-based program. The Charter School serves children ages 5-14 (Kindergarten through 8th grade). Each program has separate admission procedures.
Curriculum and Evaluation

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

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

MTSS is a framework, or a mindset, through which we can highlight student needs, risks and opportunities and identify next steps to employ in service to the student.

MTSS is used to provide targeted support to struggling students. It focuses on the “whole child”. MTSS supports academic growth and achievement, behavioral growth and development, social and emotional needs and absenteeism. It is an integrated continuum that is varied, differentiated, organized and child centered. Students fluidly move between a seamless support system.

1.2.a.1
Who is in MTSS?

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

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

- Daily Observations - Formal and Informal
- Montessori Three-Period Lessons with Materials
- Easy CBM for Reading and Math
- Moby Max for Reading and Math
- BOG’s and EOG’s
**1.2.c**  
**Beginning of Grade Testing Policy**

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

**1.2.d**  
**Evaluation and Progress**

Individual progress is monitored by each teacher. This helps inform lesson planning based upon a student’s mastery of skills. Progress is reported to parents four times a year; two of these are shared during fall and spring conferences with parents, and two progress reports that are sent home.

**1.2.e**  
**End of Grade (EOG) Testing Policy**

All students in grades 3 through 8 must take state mandated EOG tests in math and reading each year. These tests are administered during the last 10 days of the school year. Students in grades 5 and 8 will also take a science EOG. Students who take NC Math I must take the Math I End of Course test. Sterling Montessori sends home a test calendar for the school year in August, so parents are aware of all the test dates for the school year and can plan accordingly. This test calendar is also posted on our school’s website.

**1.2.f**  
**Tutoring**

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

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

Exceptional Children Services

1.3.a Section 504

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

1.3.b Exceptional Children Services

Sterling Montessori provides special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9. The school provides a continuum of services to meet the individual needs of students. The Public Schools of North Carolina, Exceptional Children Division, provides local units with detailed procedures for the delivery of special education services. These rules and regulations are detailed in the 2007 Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities.

Children who meet all of the specified criteria outlined in the Policies may be entitled to special education services. If you are new to Sterling Montessori and have a child who has been receiving special education services at another school, contact the Exceptional Children’s Director with documentation of
your child’s special needs (i.e., a copy of the student's Individualized Education Plan).

1.3.c
Teacher Evaluation Forms for Outside Services

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

1. Parent must fill out the Exchange of Information Form.

2. Give prior notice to teachers and allow at least five days to complete.

3. All Teacher evaluation forms will be sent directly to the provider by Sterling Staff.
The Regular School Day
2.1 Attendance

Attendance

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

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

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

Tardiness

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

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

2.2.a Tardy Procedure

When a child is tardy, his or her parent must walk their child to the Main Office to be signed in. Tardies are excusable under the following circumstances:

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

**Early Dismissal**

Sterling Montessori is aware of the occasional need for students to be picked up early for various appointments (i.e. doctor, dentist, etc.). Please schedule these after school when possible. At the end of the school day, students are receiving last-minute instructions, packing up, collecting their belongings, and helping with the cleaning of the classroom. Dismissing students during this time causes a disturbance to teachers and other students. Please go to the Main Office to request early dismissal from class. Repeated early dismissals are not allowed.

**Parents arriving after 3:00 pm will not be granted this request.**
2.4 Dismissal

Dismissal

2.4.a A Building Dismissal

Dismissal of all A building students begins at 3:15 pm and ends at 3:30 pm. Parents are required to park their cars, collect their children from their classroom’s outer doors, and escort their children back to their cars.

2.4.b B, C & D Building Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:30 pm and ends at 3:45 pm.

Carpool

To ensure student safety, the school conducts the following procedure: an announcement is made calling the student to proceed to the pick-up area of the carpool line.

Every effort is made by staff to keep carpool lines flowing, crosswalks safe, and we appreciate cooperation from parents in carpool to facilitate picking up students in a timely manner.

Walkers

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

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

- Student must be in the 7th or 8th grade.
- Student must remain on the sidewalk and/or use the crossing guard at Cedar Fork Elementary on Town Hall Drive.
- Parents must provide a written note permitting their child to walk home.

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

**2.4.c**

**Unsupervised Children Before & After School Hours**

Sterling Montessori prohibits unsupervised children on campus at any time before or after school hours. Children who arrive earlier than their scheduled arrival time will be escorted to the Before Care Program.

Likewise, children who remain on campus after scheduled pickup time will be escorted to the Main Office to await their parents.

In either circumstance, parents will be subject to a charge of $5.00 per minute to a maximum of $50.00 per day. When a parent/guardian is running late, a courtesy call should be made to the Main Office and/or classroom.
Before & After Care Programs

Sterling Montessori provides quality Before Care and After Care programs for all enrolled students, enabling parents and family members to go to work knowing their children are in safe, caring environments.

Before Care hours are from 7:00 am to 8:30 am, and After Care begins at 3:30 pm and ends at 6:00 pm. The Before and After Care programs are offered 5 days a week. Sterling does not offer individual days or single hours for these programs. Parents who are interested should visit Sterling Montessori’s website and go to Programs > Before and After School Care to find more details and to access an application and contract.

After 4 o’clock the Main Office is closed. In an emergency you can reach our after care staff by calling the following numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before and After Care Contact Information</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s House</td>
<td>(984) 220-1495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary and Middle School</td>
<td>(984)220-1499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6 Closings & Delays

Unexpected Closings, Delays and Early Dismissals

Inclement weather is a normal part of the school year. Sterling Montessori will follow the Wake County Public School System’s (WCPSS) weather-related closings, delays and early dismissals. A determination will be made on a case by case basis by the administration in the event of a non-weather-related 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, the school’s website and voicemail system. Sterling Montessori families will also receive alerts via text messaging, email and/or voicemail. Contact information is taken from the Student Information Sheets and is the responsibility of the family to keep this information updated. Families and staff are expected to make their own judgements and use their discretion about the safety of the roads during inclement weather. Families and staff should inform the school if they are not able to make it to school.
Student Health
3.1 Student Health

Student Health

3.1.a Sick Policy

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

- Temperature over 100°F axillary (underarm) or 101°F orally within the last 24 hrs.
- 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 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.

Children may not return to school for a period of 24 hours after being sent home due to fever, vomiting or diarrhea.
3.1.b  
**Accidents and Incidents**

All accidents and incidents requiring first aid are reported to parents/guardians in writing. If a child requires treatment beyond what the school is able to administer, the office will attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If they cannot be contacted, emergency contacts listed in the child’s Student Information Sheet will be called. In an extreme emergency, the school will arrange for ambulance transport to an appropriate treatment center. If parents/guardians elect to seek medical care for their student after an accident occurs at school, we require that they notify the Section Director immediately.

3.1.c  
**First Aid**

All members of our faculty are trained in CPR and first aid and have knowledge of blood-borne pathogens. The faculty is only permitted to perform the following procedures for first aid: wash or direct a child to wash an abrasion or cut with soap and water, apply a bandage, take an ancillary temperature, and offer ice for bumps and bruises.

Faculty members are not permitted to remove splinters or ticks, or administer non-prescription medication, including painkillers and cough drops, without the consent of a parent. Sunscreen and ointments will only be administered if written permission is given by the parent or guardian. Parents will be called if their child gets splinters or ticks or need other first aid for which the faculty is unable to offer.

3.1.d  
**Medicine**

All medicines are stored in and administered from the Main Office, with the exception of inhalers, diphenhydramine (Benadryl), and epinephrine injectors (EpiPen), which are kept in a secure area of the child’s classroom. **In order to be admitted into class on the first day of school, students requiring EpiPens or inhalers must have necessary paperwork and two current EpiPens/inhalers.**

The school endeavors to make sure children receive medicine when required and may only administer labeled prescription medicines or over-the-counter medication in its original/most recent container. All prescription medication
must be accompanied by a note from the physician. Prescription authorization must be renewed every year. The same forms must be filled out and turned in **at least 1 day prior to departure** for overnight field trip medications. A parent/guardian must pick up medication at the end of the school year or they will be properly disposed of within a week after the end of school.

### 3.1.e Chronic Health Issues

Please note on the Student Information Sheet, and notify the Main Office and all the child’s teachers, if your child has a chronic health condition. Chronic health conditions include asthma, allergies, or anything that requires continuous medication or special considerations. Sterling Montessori complies with FERPA regarding matters of confidentiality. Parents should report any new medications or health issues to their child’s teachers in a timely manner.

### 3.1.f Concussions

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

After a head injury, 911 will be immediately called for any incident resulting in loss of consciousness, significant neck pain, significant changes in mental state, severe headache, or uncontrolled bleeding or vomiting. Parents are always called when an incident involves the head.

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

### 3.1.g Suicide Intervention

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

*Our complete Suicide Intervention Policy (P.22) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*
Student Safety
4.1 Volunteers & Visitors

4.1.a Criminal History and Background Checks for Volunteers

Sterling Montessori strives to provide the safest possible learning environment for all students, teachers, staff, employees, and parents. Sterling Montessori requires all volunteers to secure a background check.

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

The complete Criminal History and Background Check Policy for Volunteers (P.35) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

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

4.1.b Visitor Sign-In

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

4.1.c Alumni Prearranged Visits

Sterling Montessori welcomes visits by our alumni. Prearranged visits may be made with classroom teachers. In addition, each year we have an alumni day set aside for returning students. Information will be posted on our website.
4.2 Student Safety

4.2.a Verification of Child Custody

Any person, other than an authorized parent, guardian, or legal custodian, will not be permitted to take a student from school unless the Administration is satisfied that such person has the approval of the authorized parent or guardian. In cases of custodial dispute or other extenuating circumstances, a Custodial Release form and necessary court documents are required to prohibit the release of a child to a parent/guardian. This form is available upon request at the Main Office.

4.2.b Locked Doors

Students arriving after 8:45 am for all buildings will need to check in at the Main Office and be escorted to the exterior doors of their respective classrooms. Elementary and Middle School students leaving early will be called to the Main Office by the Office Manager. Parents of A-Building students picking up early must get an early pick-up slip from the Main Office before picking up their child from the classroom patio door.

4.2.c Pets

For the safety of everyone, personal pets are not permitted on campus at any time. This policy does not apply to service animals.

The complete Service Animals Policy (P.26) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

4.2.d Child Abuse and Neglect

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

4.2.e
Asbestos Information

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

4.2.f
Emergency Procedures

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

5.1.a Peace Education and Social Interaction

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

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

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

- Be caring and courteous
- Cooperate with others
- Deal with angry feelings
- Self-Advocate in respectful ways
- Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person
- Make appropriate behavioral and academic choices

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

1. To learn to recognize oneself as being a unique individual. To learn to be self-evaluating, to have realistic knowledge of one’s own strengths and weaknesses, while not ignoring or dwelling on them.

2. To develop a personal code of ethics, to have a sense of right and wrong, and to remain true to these values under emotional or group pressures.

3. To be able to work with others to accomplish a goal, to learn to contribute ideas, to listen to others, and to compromise.

4. To learn to be responsible, not only in the sense of being reliable, but also being able to understand the effect of an action before performing it, and being answerable for it afterwards.

5. To experience balanced development across emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical areas, not neglecting any for the others.

6. To understand the interdependence of humans, animals, plants and the natural resources of the earth.

7. To have knowledge of and respect for the different ways humans have met their physical and spiritual needs over the ages.

8. To be able to communicate clearly and comfortably with individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

9. To be able to use a variety of effective nonviolent techniques for resolving conflict.

10. To accept the responsibility of making a contribution for the benefit of future generations.

11. To be self-directed, to be able to initiate activities, set goals, organize time, and complete projects.
12. To be determined to try, and to be capable of working to the limit of one's ability in everything one does.

13. To develop persistence, to be allowed to struggle with difficult work, and to learn to take disappointment in stride.

14. To think logically and rationally, and to evaluate information and seek out different opinions and facts before making a decision.

15. To be creative, using his or her imagination to generate fresh and new ideas in all areas.

16. To love learning, to find knowledge interesting in itself, to pursue interests with enthusiasm, and for fun.
6

Code of Conduct and Discipline
6.1 Intervention Pyramid

The Pyramid of Intervention

Administrative Level III - Final Intervention
- Chronic Issues from AL II, Assault, Weapon, Destructive Device, Bomb Threat, Act of Terror, Hate Crimes
- **Consequences**: Suspension, Exclusion, Involvement of Outside Resources, i.e. Counselor, Psychologist/Psychiatrist.

Administrative Level II
- Chronic Issues from AL I
- Bullying/Harassment
- Alcohol and Drugs, Fighting, Physical or Verbal Assault, Repeated Cheating Lying
- Leaving Campus, Racial or Demeaning Slurs
- **Consequences**: Discipline Referral, Conference with Family, Removal from the Environment, Suspension

Administrative Level I
- Chronic Issues from Classroom Management Level
- Escalated Harmful Behavior
- Destruction of Property
- Plagiarism or Stealing
- Profanity/Obscenity
- Misuse of Electronics (Personal or School Owned)
- **Consequences**: Discipline Referral, Conference / Parent Involvement, Possible Suspension, Interventions

Classroom Management Level
- Disruptive Behavior
- Harming Others
- Inappropriate Communication
- Disobedience
- Inappropriate Dress
- **Consequences**: Problem Solving, Natural and Logical Consequences, Classroom Interventions, Interventions Plus Parent Involvement

RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY - THE FOUNDATION
6.2
Discipline Policy

6.2.a
Philosophy of Discipline at Sterling Montessori

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

6.2.b
Discipline Model

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

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

6.2.b.1
Classroom Management Level (Tier I)

Includes: Lead Teacher, Parents, 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 (e.g. 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

### 6.2.b.2

**Administrative Level I (Tier II)**

**Includes:** Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parents, 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.

6.2.b.3
Administrative Level II (Tier III)

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

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

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

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

6.2.b.4
Administrative Level III (Continuation of Tier III)

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

Behaviors addressed at the Administrative Level III, including hate crimes, are more severe in nature and typically result in a recommendation for Long-Term Suspension or Exclusion. Additionally, chronic behaviors in all previous levels not responsive to interventions may be elevated to this level. Referral to MTSS, alternative placement, or involvement of school counselor or other outside resources may be responses at this level.
After a student receives a suspension, both the parents and student, are asked to meet with the Assistant Executive Director prior to the student returning to the classroom.

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

### 6.2.c

**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.

#### 6.2.c.1

**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.

#### 6.2.c.2
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.
6.3 Bullying

Anti-Bullying

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

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

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

Our complete Anti-Bullying Policy (P.3) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.
6.4 Suspension

6.4.a Long Term Suspension and Exclusion from the Charter School

Sterling Montessori is a close-knit community, where student retention throughout the entire K-8 school pathway is valued. Therefore, long term suspensions and exclusions from the Charter School should be a very rare event. This action should be taken only when there is either a clear and present danger to the school community because of a student’s actions, or as a last resort after multiple, lower level disciplinary actions have been implemented.

Our complete Long Term Suspension and Exclusion from Charter School Policy (P.40) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.
General School Policies and Procedures
7.1 Arrival and Departure

7.1.a The Rules of Respect

The primary rules at Sterling Montessori are:

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

7.1.b Arrival and Departure Procedures

Children’s House Students Upon Arrival:

- No student may be on the playground before or after school hours unless they are enrolled in a Before or After Care Program.
- Upon arrival, the child must be accompanied by an adult, or minor 13 years and older, to their individual classroom.
- Staff must be notified of the child’s arrival.
- Make sure the teacher personally greets your child and has recorded their arrival.

Children’s House Students Upon Departure:

- Make sure the teacher has personally acknowledged your child’s departure. This also applies to the After Care program.
- Authorization is required in writing when anyone other than the designated adult arrives to pick up the child. Be prepared to present Photo ID.
- Minors 13 years and older are allowed to escort Academy students to and from the building if the students are on time. Otherwise, parents/guardians must park and escort student/s to the Main Office for a tardy
slip and escort their Academy child to their classroom. Academy students are not allowed to enter or leave the building without an escort.

**Elementary and Middle School Students Upon Arrival:**

- No student may be on the playground or field before or after school hours unless enrolled in the Before or After Care program.

**Elementary and Middle School Students Upon Departure:**

- Dismissal begins at 3:30 pm and ends at 3:45 pm. To ensure student safety, the school conducts the following procedure: an announcement is made calling the student to proceed to the pick-up area of the carpool line. Students attending the After Care program or engaged in other after school activities will be escorted to designated areas to wait for the start of the program or activity.

- Authorization is required in writing when anyone other than the parent or guardian is picking up a student. For non-routine departures, we ask that parents email both the teacher and the Main Office and be prepared to present photo ID. **Be sure that the person picking up your child is on the child’s approved driver list, otherwise, your child will not be released.**
7.2
Carpool Procedures

7.2.a
Carpool Procedures

Safety and security of your child is our first priority here at Sterling Montessori. We appreciate your support in following these guidelines. We will be glad to address any and all questions you may have about these guidelines.

• Follow all signs and arrows in the parking lot.
• The right lane is for carpool and the left lane is for parking.
• **Cell phone use is prohibited in the carpool line.**
  • Slow down in the parking lot.
  • Only allow children to enter or exit the side of the car facing the sidewalk.
  • Parents can only park in the main parking lot.
  • The back parking lot is staff parking only.

Parents of Preschoolers and Kindergartners:

For arrival and dismissal, parents **must** park and walk their child(ren) to the classroom patio doors where they will be greeted by classroom teachers.

Morning Drop-Off for 1st - 8th Grade:

Sterling Montessori prohibits unsupervised children on campus at any time before or after school hours. If you arrive before the scheduled start time, we ask that you and your child remain in your car until a Sterling Montessori staff member begins the arrival process. Children who arrive before 8:25 will be escorted to the Before Care Program at a charge as outlined in the parent handbook.

For B, C and D Building Students:

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

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

**Afternoon Pick-Up for 1st-8th Grade:**

- The “C” Building zone will be blocked off.

- All families will have a **CARPOOL TAG.**

- Students will wait in their classroom to be called before they make their way to the drop off zone.

- All B, C, & D building siblings of preschoolers and kindergartners who are not going to routinely go through the carpool process, will need to be picked up at the designated cone.
  
  - You must present your tag and verify that it matches the dismissal tag on your child’s backpack before your child will be released to you.

  - Please notify your child’s classroom teacher in advance if you choose to get back in the carpool line after picking up your preschooler or kindergartener.

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

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

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

**7.2.b Changes in Pick-Up Routines**

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

7.2.b.1
Situations which Require a Main Office Check-In During Dismissal

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

- Any last-minute changes to routine which have a non-authorized person picking-up your child. This will enable us to confirm and verify the information you provided in email.

- Any situation or change in pick-up routines that is not covered in this information and where you are unsure of the procedure.
7.3 Comm.

7.3.a Communication

Clear communication between parents and teachers is vital to student success. Parents requesting information about student progress and/or who have other concerns and issues should directly address the Lead Teacher. You can call your child’s teacher, email or make an appointment. Drop-Off and Pick-Up are not the appropriate times for conferences as this interferes with safety and smooth transition into and from the classroom. Teachers will make every effort to respond during non-instructional time.

7.3.b Friday Message, Texts and Updates

Sterling Montessori uses digital communication to send updates through our Friday Messages, text messaging, and emergency alerts. Email and phone information is obtained from the Student Information Sheets which are filled out electronically by parent/guardians. Although most communications are done electronically, we do mail some information home. Please make sure we have your most recent address on file. If your child is a member of a two-household family, please make sure both addresses are listed on their student information sheets.

If you need to update your information, please email office@sterlingmontessori.org.
7.4
Field Trips

7.4.a
Enrichment Opportunities for Pre-Schoolers

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

7.4.b
Off Campus Field Trips

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 Section Director. 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.

7.4.c
Going Out

A Going Out is a meaningful, productive component of ‘Cosmic Education’ as implemented in a Montessori Elementary classroom.

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

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

Chaperones of Going Out trips will receive guidelines of their responsibilities on the trip and are required to complete a background check and have all required documentation on file at the office prior to the trip, as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
7.5 Visiting Classrooms

7.5.a Volunteering

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

7.5.b Observing Classrooms

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

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

7.6.a Notification of Rights Under FERPA

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

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Executive Director a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Executive Director will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the Executive Director, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an
education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

| The office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office |
| U.S. Department of Education |
| 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington DC |
| 20202-5901 |

7.6.b
**Student Records**

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

*Our complete policy on Student Records (P.37) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*
7.7
Appropriate Attire

7.7.a
Appropriate Clothing

Make sure children are dressed appropriately in school clothes that allow for safe movement, independence and the possibility of getting dirty. We discourage distracting clothing such as those with lights, or which 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.

Sterling Montessori prohibits disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene or unsafe clothing or bodily appearances.

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

7.7.a.1
Appropriate Clothing for Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a part of our daily schedule. Sterling Montessori takes ALL children outdoors in most weather conditions. Increased caution is taken during days of extreme heat or cold. It is very important for students to come to school every day with the appropriate clothing for outside activities.

Children who cannot go outside should remain at home. If a child has an illness or injuries that prevent play (such as asthma), there are places outdoors for children to sit while being supervised. The school cannot make provisions for students to remain indoors unless stated in a 504 Plan due to medical conditions.

7.7.b
Appropriate Footwear

For safety reasons, Sterling Montessori requires that all students in the Children’s House through Upper Elementary wear closed toed, rubber-soled
shoes while playing on the playground. All students and adults must wear shoes at all times while on campus due to fire and health regulations. Charter School students must wear appropriate shoes in order to participate in physical education. Students may bring a pair of shoes for physical education to school and keep them in their cubby or locker. Those without proper shoes will not be able to actively participate in physical education.

7.7.c
Toys, Jewelry, Watches, Money, and Electronics

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

7.8.a Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is regulated while students are on campus. This ensures that lessons and student work will not be interrupted, safeguards students against cyber bullying, and prevents theft of such devices.

*Our complete policy on Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices (P.36) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

7.8.b 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 and future faculty and staff.

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

*Our complete Use of Technology Policy (P.10) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*
7.9 Grievance

7.9.a Lost and Found

Items that remain unclaimed in the Main Office will be washed and donated on a monthly basis. Please make sure you label all items brought to school by your child.

7.9.b Returned Check Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with processing and accounting for returned checks. A $25 fee for each check returned by the bank for any reason shall be remitted by the check issuer to Sterling Montessori. The check issuer shall be notified and informed that they have 10 days to make payment to Sterling Montessori in the amount of the returned check along with the $25 fee and any applicable late fees via certified funds or money order.

7.9.c Parent/Guardian Grievance

Sterling Montessori encourages resolutions of any grievance through informal means, however it recognizes that, at times, a formal process may be necessary for certain types of grievances or if the informal process did not produce satisfactory results. Grievances will be dealt with in accordance with all applicable laws, policies, and regulations. Grievance proceedings and all information pertaining to them shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent feasible and permitted by law.

Our complete Policy on Parent/Guardian Grievances (P.39) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.
Nutrition
8.1 Nutrition

8.1.a Snack

A balanced morning snack is provided for Academy and Kindergarten students, and an afternoon snack is provided to the students enrolled in our After Care program. Parents are asked to look at the posted snack menu to determine whether or not the food being served is appropriate for their child. The school does not offer substitutes to foods on the menu and is not a peanut-free environment. If your child has a food allergy or dietary restriction, it is the family’s responsibility to provide substitutes that are nutritionally balanced. Charter students in 1st - 8th grades may bring a snack if desired.

8.1.b School Lunch Option

Sterling Montessori has partnered with a lunch provider to offer your child a hot lunch option. You can place orders monthly. Sterling Montessori follows the USDA Food Guidelines.

Visit [www.sterlingmontessori.org](http://www.sterlingmontessori.org), click on the “Order Lunch” option and you will be directed to our lunch provider’s ordering website where you can enter information for your child/children and order lunch on a monthly basis. Parents interested in the hot lunch option are required to enter information for each of their children that attend Sterling Montessori, whether new or returning.

8.1.c Home Lunch Option

Parents may choose to send lunch from home. Please visit [http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/pyramid.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/pyramid.html) for nutritional guidelines. Academy/Kindergarten students are required to store their lunches in the classroom refrigerator. Due to sanitation regulations, any food students do not consume during the lunch period must be discarded.

8.1.d Birthday Celebrations
Birthday celebrations are very special. Please coordinate any celebration plans with your child’s teacher. Parent-provided snacks in the Children’s House must come from a state approved source such as a bakery, grocery store or be prepackaged for retail sale [Child Care Rule .0901]. Teachers have the final approval of snacks served in their classrooms. Contact your child’s teacher regarding classroom-specific guidelines and any possible food allergies.
Enrollment
9.1 Enrollment

9.1.a Sterling Montessori Charter Admissions and Enrollment

Sterling Montessori is a tuition free public school. Any student who is qualified under North Carolina law for admission to a public school is qualified for admission at Sterling Montessori. All students are required by NC Charter School law to complete an application for admission. All applicants to the lottery must be North Carolina residents at the time of the application process with a physical North Carolina address. However, North Carolina county boundaries or school attendance areas do not affect charter school enrollment.

In addition, Sterling does not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

*Our complete Charter Admissions and Enrollment Policy (P.11) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.*

9.1.b Expectations for Incoming Academy Students

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

9.1.c Class Placement

Class Placement is a collaborative, involved process aimed at maintaining well-balanced, successful classrooms. The needs of each child over a three-year cycle are considered and weighed in an effort to meet individual and group needs. Reassignment during the three-year cycle is a rare occurrence, happening only when it is deemed to be in the child’s best interest, after sustained collaboration and problem-solving among parents, teachers and
administration. Specific classroom requests are not permitted. Multiple-birth siblings are not recommended, but may be considered for placement together, and upon request, a team approach will be used to determine placement.

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

9.1.d
Student Retention and Acceleration

The question of retention or acceleration will also be a collaborative effort. The ultimate decision for both of these special cases will rest with the Assistant Executive Director of the school. The aforementioned team will be comprised of parents, faculty, administration, and any other involved EC/MTSS professionals.

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

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

9.1.e
Student Information Sheets

Each school year we require each family complete a Student Information Sheet. The information can be found on the school's website, https://studentform.sterlingmontessori.org/.

Every child enrolled in the Academy and Charter program must have a Student Information Sheet on file by the first day of school. Having current and accurate information by the first day of school allows the school to send important communication via text and email to parents. For families having more than one child at Sterling, you will have to complete a form for each child. Once you submit the information for the first child and submit it, auto-fill will allow you to fill out the same information more quickly for additional siblings.

9.1.f
Health/Medical Records and Immunizations

By law, the school must maintain current health and immunization records on all students. Health forms are provided by the school, if needed. Medical forms require a signature and date of examination from a health provider.
Physical exams must be dated no more than six months prior to enrollment, and must be in your child's file no more than 30 days from their start date, or they will be sent home until required forms are received.

Sterling Montessori complies with FERPA regarding matters of confidentiality.

9.1.g
Required Documents: Preschoolers through Eighth Grade

Preschoolers -8th grade students are required to have the following documents in their student file. NOTE: Because it can sometimes be difficult to schedule a school physical with the children’s regular pediatrician prior to the start of school, the Medical Form (for preschoolers) and the Health Assessment Form (for K-8) can be submitted up to 30 days following the start of school. Unfortunately, we still cannot admit children without a completed exam record and immunization record.

- Academy Application for Enrollment (preschoolers)
- Lottery Application for Enrollment (must be signed and dated by parent or guardian)
- Copy of Original Birth Certificate
- Proof of Residence (one of the following: NC Driver’s License, Deed of Trust, Rental Lease Agreement or Utility Bill no more than 30 days old)
- Student Information Sheet
- Current Immunization Record
- 7th grade students must have TDAP booster (if entering 7th grade after 7/1/15)
- Medical Form (preschoolers only)
- Health Assessment Form (K-8th grade)
- Parent Permission Form
- Primary Language Survey
- Student Records Request Form (K-8th Grade if applicable)
• Medical Action Plan (if applicable)
• Custodial Form (if applicable)
• Shaken Baby Head Trauma Policy Form (preschoolers)
Withdrawal and Graduation
10.1 Withdrawal

10.1.a Withdrawing or Exiting from Sterling Montessori

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

1. Contact Data Manager to inform of the withdrawal from program, complete Withdrawal Form, and notify of new address.

2. Notify Classroom Teacher and EC or 504 Coordinator if applicable.

3. Notify Before and After Care staff if applicable.

4. Return all Carpool tags to Main Office.

5. Reconcile all fees and outstanding balances.
Policies
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Rev. 6/2019
Accelerated Math Placement Policy

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

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

If the class is currently being taught at Sterling Montessori, preference is that qualified students will take an in-person class. Students who otherwise qualify may be offered classes through NCVPS (North Carolina Virtual Public School) if placement in a middle school classroom is not appropriate. If a math class is not offered at Sterling Montessori (Common Core Math II, Common Core Math III) and a student has met all requirements to enroll in these courses, staff will make arrangements through an accredited provider and will be responsible for enrolling the student in the North Carolina Final Exams, which will be administered by a Sterling Montessori staff member.
To Qualify for Placement in the 7+ course taught in the Sterling Middle School (UE students & Rising 7th):

- The student must have completed the state standards for the 6th grade math curriculum and half of the 7th grade math curriculum.

- The student must receive at least a 70% on the 7+ placement test given at the end of the school year.

- The student must be recommended by the placement team.

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

- The student has completed the second half of 7th grade and all of 8th grade math curriculum.

- Student must receive at least 70% on the Math 1 placement test given at the end of the school year.

- The student must be recommended by the placement team.

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

- The student must obtain at least a B (80% average) in 7th grade math.

- The student has completed all of the 8th grade math curriculum.

- The student must receive at least a 70% on the Math 1 placement test given at the end of the student’s 7th grade year.

- The student must be recommended by the placement team.

To Qualify for Placement in Math I (7+ Students):
• The student who obtained at least a B (80%) in 7+ automatically qualifies for Math 1

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

• If the student received less than a C (70%) average in 7+, the student will take 8th grade math in 8th grade.
P.3 Anti-Bullying

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying includes any of the following:

• Any repetitive or continued act after being asked to stop.

• An imbalance of “power” or strength or being outnumbered.

• Intentional and deliberate meanness or cruelty.

• Motivated by race, sexual orientation, religion or disability.

Bullying can take many forms, and may include, but is not limited to any of the following:

• Physical bullying: hitting, kicking, pushing, pulling hair, scratching and tripping.

• Verbal or written bullying (including electronic media): teasing, name calling, starting rumors, taunting, humiliating, and threatening.

• Emotional bullying: rejecting, excluding, defaming, continual discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, humiliation, isolating, and ostracizing.

• Sexual bullying: exhibitionism, propositioning, and sexual touching.

• Cyber bullying: sending hurtful texts or messages, posting embarrassing photos or videos or spreading rumors online.

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

• All administrators and teachers who have any incident of bullying reported to them should promptly forward the reports to the Assistant
Executive Director, or to an appropriate Section Director and follow the Code of Conduct as outlined in the Parent Handbook.

**P.10 Use of Technology**

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**Use of Technology Policy**

Sterling attempts to provide an extensive technology infrastructure toward the purpose of improving the School’s educational, administrative, and clerical functions. The significant ongoing investment in technology prepares students for life and work and increases the productivity of current and future faculty and staff. Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School (Sterling) will maintain a Responsible Use of Technology Policy that is similar to Wake County Public School System (https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=wake_new).

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 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 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 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.
Charter Admissions and Enrollment Policy

Sterling Montessori Charter School is a tuition free public school. Any student who is qualified under North Carolina law for admission to a public school is qualified for admission at Sterling Montessori. All students are required by NC Charter School law to complete an application for admission. All applicants to the lottery must be North Carolina residents at the time of the application process with a physical North Carolina address. However, North Carolina county boundaries or school attendance areas do not affect charter school enrollment.

In addition, Sterling does not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

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 Sterling Montessori, siblings of enrolled students receive priority enrollment status the following year. Note: The term “siblings” applies to any of the
following students who reside in the same household: half-siblings, step-siblings, and children residing together in the same family foster home.

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

### Special Circumstances

Multiple birth siblings (twins, triplets, etc.) 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 waiting list, the parents must determine which student is placed first on the waiting list.

If the multiple birth siblings are in different grades, the parents will need to decide at the time that applications are submitted which grade level they would like for their surname to be entered.

### 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(s) or legal guardian.

For those without digital access, a computer will be available located in the Sterling Montessori Main Office from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on school days during the time of the application period. For Kindergarten admissions, the applicant must be 5 years old on or before August 31 of the enrollment year (NC G.S. 115C-364).

Parents who accept enrollment for their child/children to attend Sterling Montessori, 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 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. Lottery details can be found on the Sterling Montessori website. The enrollment process is activated by Sterling Montessori Admissions who will then generate and record the lottery results.

3. The process is instantaneous and the results will be shared with families within the hour via the email addresses that were supplied on the application.

4. 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. 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.

5. The school’s waiting list will be updated regularly.

**Late Submissions**

Applications submitted after the lottery application deadline will be placed at the bottom of the waiting list according to the student’s applicable grade level.

Applications that are eligible for priority enrollment will be placed at the bottom of the appropriate priority wait list.

All wait list placements are dependent on seat availability.

**Acceptance of Enrollment**

The lottery results and waiting lists are posted on [https://www.sterlingmontessori.org](https://www.sterlingmontessori.org), and updates will be 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 of prospective students will have seven (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 waiting list for their grade level, and the offer will be presented to the next prospective student on that specific grade’s waiting list.

- Thirty (30) days prior to the first day of school, parents or court appointed legal guardians of prospective students will have 3 business days to reply to an offer.

- Beginning one week prior to the first day of school and through the thirty fifth (35th) academic day, parents or court appointed legal guardians of prospective parents 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 child’s birth certificate, proof of residency and immunization records within seven (7) days after receiving the aforementioned documents. If Sterling Montessori does 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 waiting list will only be applicable to the academic year that the lottery was conducted. Sterling Montessori will continue to fill open Charter seats from the waiting list 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.

**First 20 Days of School**

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

**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 the 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.
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.
Suicide Intervention Policy

We take ALL threats seriously. Notify the Administration or designee. Take necessary steps to keep the student safe in school. Confiscate pills/ weapons. Search locker.

Do not leave the student alone at any time.

Do not permit the student to leave campus without adult supervision.

Conference with parent at school. Link parent with appropriate community resources i.e. mental health, medical. etc. Sign release of information to talk with child's therapist. Accompany student and parent to or communicate with appropriate community services for suicide assessment for hospitalization or other needed services.

After student is cleared by qualified medical personnel, parents meet with school counselor, Assistant Executive Director and Section Director before student returns to school.

If safety issues are involved, notify law enforcement (911). Appropriate school personnel should monitor the student after his/her return to school. Document all actions taken, noting time and names of those involved in actions taken.

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 Executive 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.
Service Animals Policy

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

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

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

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

1. Service animals must be housebroken; must have received all vaccinations as required by state law; must wear a rabies tag; must be free of parasites, must be kept clean and groomed, and otherwise in good health; must be under the control of its handler; and must be on a harness, leash or other tether, unless the service animal is required to perform a task that it could not accomplish while on a leash/lead or the handler is otherwise unable to maintain the service animal on a leash/lead due to a disability. In such a case, the handler still must be able to maintain control over the service animal through other means.

2. All costs related to the handling and care of the service animal are the responsibility of the staff member or the parent/guardian of the student for whom the service animal provides service.

3. Sterling Montessori is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal, including walking the service animal or responding to the service animal’s need to relieve itself. A student or employee with a service animal is expected to care for and supervise the service animal. In the case of a young child, or a student with disabilities who is unable to care for or properly supervise a service animal, the parent/guardian is responsible for providing a handler to care for and supervise the service animal. Any handler provided for a service animal must be able to meet all statutory and day care licensing regulations (background check, fingerprinting, etc.) in order to be in the presence of students, including the requirements set forth in other Sterling Montessori policies. The handler for the service animal is not allowed to interact with the students, other than to inform them of the needs of the service animal, and the handler shall not interfere in any way with the functioning of the classroom. If the handler is unable to meet the applicable statutory, day care licensing regulations, and/or other Sterling Montessori policies related thereto, or if the handler’s behavior interferes with the proper functioning of the classroom environment, then Sterling Montessori has the right to exclude that particular handler.

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

5. The use of a service animal on Sterling Montessori property by a student or employee will be subject to a Service Animal Plan, which covers the introduction of the service animal to the school environment, and any appropriate training for staff and students regarding interaction with the service animal.

6. For students, the need for a service animal may require a specific classroom placement, in order to accommodate the allergies/fears of the existing students or faculty. Final decisions on classroom placement are within the sole discretion of the Executive Director, and those decisions are not eligible for appeal to the LHU Board. If there are staff or students at the school with severe allergies to, or severe phobias of, the service animal, the service animal may be restricted from that particular classroom, but service animals will not be excluded from the common areas of the school.

7. The owner or handler of a service animal shall be solely and exclusively liable for any damage to Sterling Montessori or personal property to the same extent required by other regulations that impose liability for property damage. The owner or handler of a service animal shall also be solely and exclusively liable for any physical damage or injuries caused by the service animal. The student and parent/guardian of a student or the staff member (when the service animal is required by a staff member) who uses a service animal on Sterling Montessori property shall hold Sterling Montessori harmless from any and all liability and indemnify the school from any such damages and liability.

**Grounds for Removal of Service Animal**

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

1. If the service animal is out of control and/or the service animal’s handler does not effectively control the service animal’s behavior, the service animal may be removed from the premises, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the severity of the behaviors. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

2. All service animals must be properly housebroken. Any service animal that eliminates inside the building more than once in a school year will be considered not properly housebroken and may be removed from Sterling Montessori premises. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

3. If the service animal poses a direct threat (perceived or real) to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications, the service animal may be removed from Sterling Montessori premises. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director. The presence of students or staff members with allergies or fears of animals is not sufficient grounds for the exclusion of a service animal.

4. If the service animal’s presence or behavior fundamentally interferes in the functions of Sterling Montessori, the service animal may be removed from Sterling Montessori premises. The decision on whether to temporarily or permanently remove the service animal from Sterling Montessori premises is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

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

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 students, staff, and volunteers, but also to enhance the classroom educational experience. All off-campus field trips require pre-approval from the Section Director. Only curriculum-related study and trips in adherence to the safety precautions outlined below will be approved.

Definitions

Off-Campus Field Trip

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

Types of field trips include:

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

Approval Process

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

Parental Information and Consent
Information about the trip should be completed by the teacher on the parent field trip permission form (available in the Appendix of the Employee handbook). A signed parent permission form from the student’s parent/guardian is required before the student can participate. Verbal consent from the parent/guardian is not acceptable.

**Pre-Trip Preparation of the Student**

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

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.
- Be sure students with epipens are assigned to chaperones who are trained in the use of epipens.
• 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 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. Because of this, all chaperones must be approved by the teacher ahead of time. All unexpected chaperones at the location will not be included as a part of the class activities. 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: meeting the group at the location, bringing siblings on the trip, 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 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 will be notified.
- The teacher will notify Sterling Montessori’s front office, who will then call parents 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.
Attendance Policy

The following policy applies only to Charter students:

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

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

The NC Department of Public Instruction defines excused absences as:

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

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

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

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

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

Approved 7/2019
Student Policy for Retention

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, 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.

Criteria to Consider

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

Social

- Who is the child’s peer group/who do they relate to?
- What is their ability to express their needs?
- Are they able to work well with adults?
- How do they work in a group? Are they willing to participate in small group/large group?
- Does the child have behavior problems? (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.)
• 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

• Read to Achieve Law (3rd Grade Only)

**Birthdate**

• What is the child’s birthdate?

**Attendance**

• Attendance will be included as a part of the criteria in considering retention

*(See Attendance Policy in the policies section of this handbook)*

**Timeline**

Discussions for retention will take place all throughout the student’s school year. Retention decisions will be made by the end of the child’s school year.

**Appeals Process**

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

Approved 4/24/2019
Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Disciplinary Measures**

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

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

**Responsibility**

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

All student records shall be up-to-date and shall be maintained with appropriate measures of security and confidentiality. Sterling Montessori abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) with regard to the procedures for inspection, review and disclosure of student records as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 C.F.R. Part 99. Records protected by this policy include any recorded information directly related to a student and maintained by Sterling Montessori. Student records do not include the records of school personnel that are in the sole possession of the maker and which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the person who made the record. Each student’s official record must be maintained permanently and must include: the student’s date of birth, attendance data, grading and promotion data. Student official record will also contain any notice and notice of any suspension of more than 10 days (long-term suspension) or exclusion and the conduct for which the student was suspended or excluded.

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

- The student graduates from high school or is not suspended or excluded during a two-year period following the student’s return to school after the suspension or exclusion.

- The Executive Director determines that maintenance of the record is no longer required to maintain safe and orderly schools.

- The Executive Director determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the student.

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

Additional rights of parents and eligible students concerning a student’s special education records are explained in the Handbook on Parents’ Rights and the North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities.
Student Records Request Policy

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

Expungement of Disciplinary Information From Student Records

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

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

- One of the following persons makes a request for expungement:
  - The student's parent, legal guardian, or custodian.
  - The student, if the student is at least 16 years old or is emancipated.

- The student either graduates from high school or is not excluded or suspended again during the two-year period commencing on the date of the student's return to school after the exclusion or suspension.

- The President of the LHU Board determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to maintain a safe and orderly school.

- The President of the LHU Board determines that the maintenance of the record is no longer needed to adequately serve the child.

The President of the LHU Board may opt to expunge the disciplinary record even if not requested by the parent, legal guardian, custodian, or student, if all the other provisions have been met. The official record of each student is not a public record as the term "public record" is defined by G.S. 132-1. The official record shall not be subject to inspection and examination as authorized by G.S. 132-6.
The actual address and telephone number of a student who is a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the General Statutes or a student with a parent who is a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program established pursuant to Chapter 15C of the General Statutes shall be kept confidential from the public and shall not be disclosed except as provided in Chapter 15C of the General Statutes.
Sterling Montessori Dress Code

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 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.
Parent/Guardian Grievance Policy

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School (“Sterling Montessori”) encourages resolutions of any grievance through informal means, however it recognizes that, at times, a formal process may be necessary for certain types of grievances or if the informal process did not produce satisfactory results. Grievances will be dealt with in accordance with all applicable laws, policies, and regulations. Grievance proceedings and all information pertaining to them shall be kept confidential at all levels to the extent feasible and permitted by law.

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

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

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

Informal Grievance

**Step One:**

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

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

If the grievance is against the Executive Director, bring the grievance directly to the attention of the LHU Board pursuant to the procedure set forth in Step Four below.

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

**Formal Grievance**

**Step Two:**

If Step One does not result in a satisfactory resolution of the grievance(s), an aggrieved person shall bring the grievance directly to the attention of the Section Director through a formal written notice and may request a conference with the Section Director to address the grievance(s). If the aggrieved person is a student, then the student’s parent or guardian shall submit the written notice.

The notice shall succinctly describe the specific grievance(s) and related details, and shall identify any specific policy, rule, regulation or law believed to have been violated.

Following receipt of the written notice, the Section Director, if requested by the parent or guardian, will conduct a conference with the aggrieved student and his or her parent or guardian within five working days of the written notice (or with just the parent or guardian if the aggrieved person is the parent or guardian). Within five working days following the conference, or, if no conference is requested within five working days of receipt of the written notice, the Section Director shall issue a written decision on the grievance and provide a copy of the written decision to the parent or guardian.

**Step Three:**

The parent or guardian may appeal the Section Director’s decision directly to the Executive Director through a formal written appeal.

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

The Executive Director shall issue a written decision within five working days following the hearing, create a written record of the evidence received, and provide a copy of the written decision to the parent or guardian.

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

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

Step Four:

If the Executive Director’s written decision involves one of the three exceptions noted above, then the parent or guardian may appeal the Executive Director's written decision to the President of the LHU Board through a formal written appeal.

The appeal shall include a description of the specific grievance(s) and related details, all rationales for concern, a description of the steps taken to resolve the grievance(s), a description and/or argument why the parent or guardian believes the Executive Director’s written decision should be reviewed, changed, modified, vacated, or overturned, any and all other evidence that the parent or guardian wishes for the Board to consider on appeal (in addition to the evidence presented throughout the foregoing process), and the remedy sought.

Upon the receipt of a written appeal, the President shall take the matter under advisement and, at his or her discretion, bring the appeal to the Executive Committee of the LHU Board for final adjudication and provide notice to the parent or guardian of the LHU Board for final adjudication and provide notice to the parent or guardian of the Executive Committee meeting, add the appeal to the agenda of the next Board meeting and provide the parent or guardian with notice of the addition of the appeal to the agenda, and/or convene a committee of the Board to review the appeal and issue a recommended final adjudication for the Board’s review and consideration and provide notice to
the parent or guardian of the committee meeting. Decisions by the LHU Board shall be the final step in the grievance process. The decision shall be made in writing, and it shall be issued by the Board and provided to the parent or guardian within sixty days of the President’s receipt of the written appeal.

The LHU Board believes that effective school governance requires that the primary responsibility for grievances involving the day-to-day management and decisions regarding school management remains with the Administrative team. Examples of day-to-day management and decisions include, but are not limited to, student discipline, curriculum, assessment and promotion. Day-to-day management and decisions should be made by the staff and the Executive Director, as these individuals are best equipped to resolve grievances that arise with respect to these issues.1

**LHU Directors Grievance**

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

If the grievance or grievances is/are against the President of the LHU Board (or the President and any one or more Directors other than the Vice President), then the foregoing procedure shall apply, except that the Vice President of the LHU Board shall issue a written decision within fifteen days after the Board meeting where the Board reviewed the notice and provide a copy of the decision to the parent or guardian. The Vice President’s decision shall be final and not subject to further appeal to the LHU Board.

1 The timeframe of sixty days was selected to allow sufficient time for the Board to schedule meetings and otherwise comply with the notice requirements of Open Meetings Laws and/or Board Bylaws.
If the grievance or grievances is/are against the President of the LHU Board and the Vice President, then the foregoing procedure in the first paragraph of this section shall apply, except that a written decision, signed by all Directors of the LHU Board, shall be issued within fifteen days after the Board meeting where the Board reviewed the notice and a copy of the decision provided to the parent or guardian. The decision shall be final and not subject to further appeal to the LHU Board.
Sterling Montessori is a close-knit community, where student retention throughout the entire K-8 school pathway is valued. Therefore, long term suspensions and exclusions from the Charter School should be a very rare event. This action should be taken only when there is either a clear and present danger to the school community because of a student’s actions, or as a last resort after multiple, lower level disciplinary actions have been implemented. The procedure leading up to a decision for a long-term suspension (defined as a suspension lasting more than 10 instructional days), or exclusion from Sterling Montessori is outlined as follows:

1. The Assistant Executive Director will collaborate with the MTSS Committee, consisting of, at a minimum, the student’s Lead Teacher and the Section Director, to discuss the proposed long-term suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori. This committee will make a recommendation regarding whether a long-term suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori is appropriate.

2. If the committee recommends a long-term suspension or exclusion from the charter school, the Assistant Executive Director shall give written notice to the student’s parent. The notice shall be provided to the student’s parent by the end of the workday during which the suspension was recommended when reasonably possible or as soon thereafter as practical. The written notice shall provide at least the following information:

   • A description of the incident and the student's conduct that led to the long-term suspension recommendation.

   • A reference to the offense that the student is alleged to have committed.

   • The specific process by which the parent may request a hearing to contest the decision, including the number of days within which the hearing must be requested.

   • The process by which a hearing will be held.
• Notice that the parent is permitted to retain an attorney to represent the student in the hearing process.

• Notice that Sterling Montessori permits the parent to have an advocate, instead of an attorney, accompany the student to assist in the presentation of his or her appeal.

• Notice that the parent has the right to review and obtain copies of the student's educational records before the hearing.

• A reference to the G.S. 115C-402, which covers the process for the expungement of discipline records.

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

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

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

1. The basis for the decision, including a reference to any policy or rule that the student is determined to have violated.

2. Notice of what information will be included in the student's official record pursuant to G.S. 115C-402.

3. The student's right to appeal the decision and notice of the procedures for such appeal.

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

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

- The right to be represented at the hearing by counsel, or a non-attorney advocate.
- The right to be present at the hearing, accompanied by his or her parents.
- The right of the student, parent, and the student's representative to review before the hearing any audio or video recordings of the incident and, consistent with federal and state student records laws and regulations, the information supporting the suspension that may be presented as evidence at the hearing, including statements made by witnesses related to the charges.
- The right of the student, parent, or the student's representative to question witnesses appearing at the hearing.
- The right to present evidence on his or her own behalf, which may include written statements or oral testimony, relating to the incident leading to the suspension, as well as any other factors to be considered, including the student's intent, disciplinary and academic history, the potential benefits to the student of alternatives to suspension, and other mitigating or aggravating factors.
- The right to have a record made of the hearing.
- The right to make his or her own audio recording of the hearing.
- The right to a written decision, based on substantial evidence presented at the hearing, either upholding, modifying, or rejecting the Assistant Executive Director's recommendation of suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori, and containing at least the following information:
  - The basis for the decision, including a reference to any policy or rule that the student is determined to have violated.
• Notice of what information will be included in the student's official record pursuant to G.S. 115C-402.

• The student's right to appeal the decision and notice of the procedures for such appeal.

Following the issuance of the decision, the Assistant Executive Director shall implement the decision of the LHU Board by authorizing the student’s return to school or by imposing the suspension or exclusion from Sterling Montessori that is reflected in the decision.
Criminal History and Background Check Policy

Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School strives to provide the safest possible learning environment for all students, teachers, staff, employees, and parents. 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 individuals 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**

- a. Except as otherwise provided below, Sterling Montessori shall reimburse Academy Personnel one hundred percent (100%) of the cost charged by DHHS for the process and background check associated with obtaining a Qualification Letter and all renewals thereof, including fingerprinting fees.

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

- Volunteers and club vendors shall be responsible for the cost charged by DHHS for the process and background check associated with obtaining a Qualification Letter and all renewals thereof, including fingerprinting fees.

**CHARTER SCHOOL**

**Definitions:**

“**Academy Personnel**” means:

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

“**Charter Personnel**” means:

- Any employee of Sterling Montessori not classified as Academy Personnel.
• Any independent contractor or employee of independent contractor of Sterling Montessori not classified as Academy Personnel, and who carries out duties customarily performed by school personnel, whether paid with federal, State, local, or other funds, who has significant access to students. School personnel includes teachers, assistants, substitute teachers, driver training teachers, bus drivers, clerical staff, and custodians.

• Any volunteer or club vendor of Sterling Montessori not classified as Academy Personnel who has or will have significant access to Sterling Montessori students in conjunction with roles, duties, or any other matter relating to volunteering.

“Criminal History” means:

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

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

- Article 5A, Endangering Executive and Legislative Officers
- Article 6, Homicide
- Article 7B, Rape and Kindred Offenses
- Article 8, Assaults
- Article 10, Kidnapping and Abduction
- Article 13, Malicious Injury or Damage by Use of Explosive or Incendiary Device or Material
- Article 14, Burglary and Other Housebreakings
- Article 15, Arson and Other Burnings
- Article 16, Larceny
- Article 17, Robbery
- Article 18, Embezzlement
- Article 19, False Pretense and Cheats
- Article 19A, Obtaining Property or Services by False or Fraudulent Use of Credit Device or Other Means
- Article 20, Frauds
- Article 21, Forgery
- Article 26, Offenses Against Public Morality and Decency
- Article 26A, Adult Establishments
- Article 27, Prostitution
- Article 28, Perjury
- Article 29, Bribery
• Article 31, Misconduct in Public Office
• Article 35, Offenses Against the Public Peace
• Article 36A, Riots, Civil Disorders, and Emergencies
• Article 39, Protection of Minors
• Article 60, Computer-Related Crime.

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

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

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

• Prior to commencing employment, all Charter employees, independent contractors, or employees of independent contractors (or applicants to be employed) (hereinafter referred to collectively as “Charter Employees”) classified as Charter Personnel shall conduct a statewide criminal records checks by NCDHHS for employees who have lived and worked within the state of NC for the five years before the date of application; and record checks in all states identified for individuals who have lived or worked outside of North Carolina during the five years before the date of application.

• A Charter Employee checked by the Department of Public Safety shall be fingerprinted and provide any additional information required by the Department of Public Safety to the local sheriff or the municipal police, whichever is more convenient for the employee, and sign a form consenting to the check of the criminal record and to the use of fingerprints and other identifying information required by the State and National Repositories of Criminal Histories. The Executive Director shall consider refusal to consent when making employment decisions. All Charter Employees shall provide the results of his or her criminal history check to the Executive Director.

• A check of sex offender registries shall be conducted on all Charter Employees.

• The Executive Director shall review the criminal history it receives on Charter Employees and determine whether the results of the review indicate that the person (i) poses a threat to the physical safety of students or personnel, or (ii) has demonstrated that he or she does not have the
integrity or honesty to fulfill his or her duties as public school personnel and shall use the information when making employment decisions for Charter Employees. The Executive Director shall make written findings with regard to how it used the information when making employment decisions and decisions with regard to independent contractors.

- After the expiration of two (2) years from the date of his or her last criminal history check, and every two (2) years thereafter, each Charter Employee shall secure a background check and provide the results to the Executive Director. The background check shall be conducted by Castle Branch. The link to Castle Branch is https://mycb.castlebranch.com/online_submission/package_code.php. Sterling Montessori’s package code is ST74. If the background check through Castle Branch causes any concern of the Executive Director, then the Charter Employee shall secure a new criminal history check through the North Carolina Department of Public Safety as soon as reasonably practicable and provide the results to the Executive Director. The Executive Director may require that the Charter Employee not return to work at Sterling Montessori until the Executive Director has reviewed the new criminal history check and made written findings with regard to how he or she used the criminal history check to determine whether employment at Sterling Montessori should be continued or terminated.

- The Executive Director may provide to the State Board of Education the criminal history it receives on a person who is certificated, certified, or licensed by the State Board of Education if required by law.

- The Executive Director may require a Charter Employee to provide a current background check through Castle Branch within a reasonable time period if the Charter Employee has not completed one within the past two years prior to the date this of this Policy’s adoption by the LHU Board.

- It is recommended that, prior to the expiration of the two-year period since a Charter Employee’s last background check, the Charter Employee obtain a new background check through Castle Branch.

Requirements for Volunteers of Sterling Montessori Academy and Charter School:

- All Charter Personnel who are volunteers shall secure a background check and provide the results to the Executive Director. The background check shall be conducted by Castle Branch. The link to Castle Branch is https://mycb.castlebranch.com/online_submission/package_code.php. Sterling Montessori’s package code is ST74.
• If the background check through Castle Branch causes any concern of the Executive Director, then the Executive Director shall, in his or her discretion, is authorized to refuse to allow the person seeking to volunteer at Sterling Montessori to be permitted to volunteer. No written findings are required, and the Executive Director’s decision is final and non-appealable.

• A check of sex offender registries shall be conducted on all Charter Personnel who are volunteers.

• Each contract executed by the Board with an independent contractor or for services of independent contractors must require the contractor to conduct a sex offender registry check.

**Costs:**

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

• Volunteers and club vendors shall be responsible for the cost charged by Castle Branch for obtaining a background check and all renewals thereof.

**Other:**

• All Charter Personnel who have been arrested and/or incurred pending charges, indictments, or convictions (other than minor traffic offenses i.e. speeding, parking, or a lesser violation), including entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, since the date of his or her most recent criminal history check or background check (whichever check was most recently submitted to the Executive Director) must notify the Executive Director of the arrest and/or pending charges, indictments, and/or convictions. Notice must be in writing, must include all pertinent facts, and must be delivered to the Executive Director no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge, indictment, or conviction (unless said person is hospitalized or incarcerated, in which case said person must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his or her release). Upon judicial action in the matter, said person must report the disposition and pertinent facts, in writing, to the Executive Director no later than the next business day following adjudication.

• Sterling Montessori shall not require Charter Personnel or Charter Personnel applicants to disclose any expunged criminal records.
Any information obtained by Sterling Montessori through the implementation of this Policy shall be kept confidential as provided by North Carolina law.
Returned Check Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with processing and accounting for returned checks. A $25 fee for each check returned by the bank for any reason shall be remitted by the check issuer to Sterling Montessori. The check issuer shall be notified and informed that they have 10 days to make payment to Sterling Montessori in the amount of the returned check along with the $25 fee and any applicable late fees via certified funds or money order.
Tutoring Policy

On-Campus Tutoring

Sterling Montessori provides academic and positive behavior support to all students during the regular school day. Each teacher provides direct instruction using the Montessori materials to meet and/or exceed State Standards. Accommodations, interventions and modifications are incorporated into 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 and/or any other areas that will help them achieve success. In order to meet these needs, Sterling Montessori offers before and after hours tutoring support provided by our qualified staff from 7:30 am to 8:00 am OR from 3:45 pm to 4:45 pm. All tutoring sessions are $40/hour. Any request to make adjustments to tutoring times other than what is already stated will be denied.

If parents are requesting that their child 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 the 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. It is the responsibility of the parents to communicate with the classroom teacher regarding the days and times that a student will be participating in 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 regarding off-campus tutoring and/or part day school options needs to be approved by the administration. Parents must contact the Section
Director with the request outlining why their child requires outside services during school hours. The Section Director, Assistant Executive Director and classroom teacher will review the request and make a decision. Many factors are considered when making the decision including but not limited to, required dismissal time, how the tutoring will affect classroom instruction, how the tutoring aligns with state standards and evaluating the student’s needs. We take each request on a case by case basis.

**All students must meet the state mandated minimum of instructional hours.**
Student Policy for Acceleration

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

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

Criteria to Consider

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

Social

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

Emotional

- Do they have the stamina to work for longer periods of time?
• Do they meet the expectations for emotional maturity that is needed for the next level?

• Are they able to handle transitions with little to no adult redirection or support?

**Academic/Work Habits**

• Are they able to work in a group and to sustain attention?

• Are they able to choose work independently and sustain attention for a developmentally appropriate amount of time?

• Are they able to start and finish tasks?

• Do they show appropriate application and interest in doing the academic works?

• Are they demonstrating accelerated progress in curricular areas?

• Are they able to follow multi-step directions?

• Is the child getting additional support or services? If so, in what areas?

• Does the child have average to above average ability?

• Student progress in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level ahead)

• Assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level ahead)

• State testing scores in Language Arts and Math (assessing above in all subject levels)

• Conclusion of goals determined by the MTSS team

**Birthdate**

• What is the child’s birthdate?

**Attendance**

Attendance will be included as a part of the criteria in considering acceleration.
Our complete Attendance Policy (P.32) can be found in the Policies section of this handbook.

**Timeline**

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

**Appeals Process**

When the recommendation for acceleration is not agreed upon by the parents/guardians, they have the right to appeal to the Executive Director.
After School Activities/Clubs Enrichment Policy for Outside Vendors

Procedure:

Anyone interested in providing an after school or enrichment program at Sterling Montessori must submit an application for consideration. The Supervisor of After School Activities/Clubs will review all applications and choose programs based on what is deemed the best use of space and resources that will most benefit students. After school programs are only permitted on campus with the approval of the Executive Director. The daily usage fees for outside vendors is set at $15 per classroom rented, per day for 10 or fewer students in the class. The charge will be $20 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 students must be collected from their classrooms at 3:45pm and taken to their enrichment classrooms. Lower Elementary, 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 $10,000 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:
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 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 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 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.
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 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, and Student.

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

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

- **Inappropriate Dress:** poor choices of clothing (decency)

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

- **Disruptive Behaviors:** arriving late to class, interrupting teachers, being a distraction during work time, being unprepared for class, misusing materials, rough play, leaving the classroom for an excessive amount of time, vandalizing, or hurting others

- **Inappropriate Communication:** passing notes, starting rumors, calling names, threatening others, being disrespectful, lying, using rude language and mimicking

- **Disobedience:** failure to comply with a reasonable request from the teacher or administrative staff

**Administrative Level I (Tier II)**

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

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

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

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

**Administrative Level II (Tier III)**
**Includes:** Assistant Executive Director, Section Director, Classroom Teacher, Parent and Student.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Incident Reports**

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

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

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

**Children’s House Level**

1. First Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent at dismissal.

2. Second Incident: An Incident Report is written, a phone call is made to the parent/guardian and the report is shared with the parent/guardian at dismissal.

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

**Elementary and Middle School Levels**

1. First Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent.

2. Second Incident: An Incident Report is written and shared with the parent.

3. Third Incident: An Incident Report is written and the parent/guardian is called immediately. A parent–teacher conference may be scheduled to make sure that the family is involved in the problem-solving process.
Appendices
Appendices Contents

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# Appendix A

## Guide to Commonly Used Initialisms and Acronyms

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

### Montessori Information and Resources

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<td><strong>Montessori Today</strong> by Paula Polk Lillard</td>
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<td><strong>A Parent’s Guide to the Montessori Classroom</strong> by Aline D. Wolf</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Secret of Childhood</strong> by Maria Montessori</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work</strong> by E.M. Standing</td>
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<td><strong>The Montessori Way: An Education for Life</strong> by Tim Seldin and Paul</td>
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<td>North American Montessori Teachers' Association</td>
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<td>Montessori Connections</td>
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<td>Association Montessori Internationale</td>
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Appendix C

Related Documents and Forms

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