



Community Handbook 2024-2025

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Mission Statement

The mission of River Montessori Charter School (“RMCS”) is to provide students with a learning culture grounded in Montessori Philosophy. This historically proven educational model supports the whole child, creates lifelong learners, and educates for peace. The resulting academic excellence is supported by a prepared classroom environment that inspires self-paced, individualized discovery; a love of learning; and respect for self, others, and the environment.

Our **vision** at RMCS is to create a Montessori learning community where children are inspired to realize their academic, personal, and social potential to become global citizens.

Core Values

Collaboration: working together, respecting others, and maintaining a global perspective enlighten students, teachers, families, and the larger community.

Academic Excellence: A prepared and rigorous Montessori environment challenges children cognitively, physically, emotionally, and socially and provides each student with the freedom to progress at their own developmental level and pace.

Individuality: The limitless potential of every child contributes to the strength and diversity of our school community.

Community: Shared experiences foster lifelong commitment to social responsibility.

Respect: Uncompromising responsibility for self, others, and the environment is critical to overall success.

Educating for Peace: Inner contentment, self-actualization, and community harmony engender the all-encompassing goal of peace.

RMCS Non-discrimination Statement

River Montessori Charter School is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against any persons (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

The Montessori Philosophy

1. The Montessori Approach to Education

As the American Montessori Society summarizes:

“A Montessori program is based on non-competitive and cooperative activities that help a child develop a strong self-image, high levels of academic and social competence, and the confidence to face challenges.”

“Encouraged to make decisions at an early age, Montessori-educated children are problem-solvers who can make appropriate choices, manage their time, and work well with others. They exchange ideas and discuss work freely. These positive communication skills build the foundation for negotiating new settings.”

“Research has shown that the best predictor of future success is a positive sense of self-esteem. Montessori programs, based on self-directed, non-competitive activities, help children develop the confidence to face change with optimism.”

Dr. Maria Montessori was a physician, research scientist, and educator during the late 1800s-early 1900s who made observations about how children learn. The Montessori Philosophy of Education is based on Montessori’s observation that children have a natural desire to learn and that stages of development exist for which there should be corresponding educational environments and trained adults who prepare these environments. Children learn independently in a prepared environment with teachers who guide and serve as the links between the student and the educational environment of academic materials and lessons. By providing freedom of choice, this enriched learning environment cultivates individuals who learn to make independent decisions and to solve problems creatively. Students learn to develop healthy social relationships, to develop skills in concentration, and to master academic and life skills.

Over the years, the Montessori philosophy has evolved to challenge the whole child’s personality and intellect in a variety of multicultural and international settings. Dr. Montessori used her scientific observations of children to design functional learning environments created to support and enhance a child’s innate desire to learn about the world around him. Based on a strong integration of adult to child observation and practical hands-on activities, classroom materials offer learning experiences in a clear, concrete manner. Students use motor and intellectual discovery when working with these materials, with an emphasis on the sequential and orderly acquisition of both motor and cognitive skills. This ordered work method also allows for individualization and usually offers a three-year age span within the classroom, enabling students to work and learn at their own pace, as well as in group settings. Montessori education is based on a three-year developmental and academic learning cycle.

The integration of varied age spans allows older students to gain confidence by working and role-modeling materials with younger students as well as reinforcing their own understanding of academic subjects. Collaborative learning and projects completed in groups encourage students to teach and learn with each other.

A well-prepared Montessori learning environment is given careful attention, allowing and encouraging the child accessibility to all materials she/he needs in performing and experiencing the step-by-step process of individual work. The classroom is thus arranged in a series of easily accessible shelves designed to accommodate specific work areas. This framework of organization gives accessibility to the necessary learning materials and frees the student to concentrate on the work, allowing an increase in independence and responsibility. This, in turn, decreases the need of direction from the teacher. As a result, children develop internal, rather than external referencing. The teacher is also better able to observe the total classroom environment as well as the individual student. Each classroom at RMCS follows Montessori’s concepts and is carefully designed to provide for the developmental needs of its students.

The Montessori classroom contains materials to support learning in the core subjects of language arts (reading and writing), mathematics, and geometry, while also providing materials in the areas of history, geography, and natural sciences (e.g. biology, astronomy, and chemistry). Each classroom contains materials that teach specific concepts for the particular age range. The materials are designed in a logical sequence of skill acquisition and concept building while reinforcing the development of abstract thinking. The learning materials initially isolate knowledge to one concept at a time in a concrete manipulative style. The child progresses toward an abstract, more divergent, level of evaluation and analysis, while also moving toward self-set, teacher-supported goals.

Through observation and record keeping, the Montessori teacher assesses the needs and level of each student to guide the student towards a path to meet individual interests, maturity levels, capabilities, educational needs, and academic success. As a result of these observations, guides make adjustments in individual learning plans, both academically and behaviorally. Students work at their own speed and must demonstrate mastery of material before progressing.

2. The Prepared Environment

A Montessori classroom is strikingly different from a traditional classroom: there are no rows of desks. Colorful materials are neatly organized into clustered areas—like a science area with materials to conduct experiments, reference texts, binders labeled with student’s names charting their individual progress through the curriculum and housing their science reports, and a terrarium. Desks are interspersed with open space where children work together on rugs, or cluster around a teacher sitting on the floor answering questions. Students are typically so actively engaged in their work that visitors are undisturbed, and an atmosphere of quiet concentration prevails.

The Montessori classroom facilitates independent learning and exploration. The environment is designed to strike the imagination, to lead the student to abstraction, and to provide a system of information storage and retrieval. The Prepared Environment facilitates the child’s exploration of the essential principles of all disciplines through sequenced order and aesthetic appeal.

Technology elements are integrated into classroom life. Children learn to use calculators, computers, and multimedia devices as part of their everyday experience. Throughout the curriculum, as appropriate, internet resources supplement research collected first-hand from resources found in the classroom and the community. Montessori classrooms tend to fascinate both children and their families. Typically, they are warm, bright, inviting, and filled with plants, animals, art, music, and books. There are curriculum centers with intriguing learning materials, such as three-dimensional mathematical models, colorful maps, botany charts, and collections of natural specimens. Each material stimulates curiosity and the five senses.

3. Multi-age Learning Communities

Montessori education places children in multi-age groupings. Children aged six to nine and nine to twelve, and thirteen and fourteen are placed in lower and upper elementary and junior high classes respectively. This multi-age grouping gives many advantages to learning, including the following:

- Children can progress through the curriculum at their own pace, guided by an individualized learning plan.
- The classroom serves accelerated students as well as remedial or English Language Learner students well because it is enriched with materials for an age-range, up to the level of challenging the interests of the most advanced students. It is acceptable and expected that students will excel in one area but may struggle with basic concepts in another. The three-year curriculum gives each student space to grow at various levels while meeting end-criteria before moving forward.
- Younger students are constantly stimulated by the interesting work of older students.
- Older students serve as tutors and role models, providing leadership experiences. Older students grow from helping younger students and reinforce their own knowledge by teaching others. They also learn to empathize with the needs of children who are younger than themselves, building important social and character skills.
- In a mixed-age class, teachers work with the same students for three years, forming an integral and close mentoring relationship.
- The class retains a high degree of continuity since the majority of students in each class returns the following year. This makes it easier to orient new children and individualize the ongoing curriculum for each student.

The multi-age classroom is a groundbreaking concept for developing community and supporting students of varying levels of academic and social development. By creating a bond between families, teachers, and children, Dr. Montessori sought to create a closely-knit community where individuals could learn to be empowered; where children could learn to become contributing, sharing members of their school-family; where students could learn to care for younger children, learn from older people, and trust one another; and where children could find ways to be acceptably assertive rather than aggressive.

4. Individualized Learning

Montessori philosophy posits that for education to touch a child's heart and mind, the child must be learning because they are curious and interested. Montessori strives to make learning its own reward with each success fueling the desire to discover even more. To appeal to each child in this way, the curriculum is individualized according to the following principles:

- Individual learning styles, timetables, and capacities are respected. The child must develop herself, the adult acts as a resource and a catalyst for development.
- Students are given the opportunity to choose what to investigate and learn.
- The student is responsible for mastering basic skills and basic core knowledge. The student will follow a written study plan for each week, which is arrived at jointly by the teacher and the student.
- The student will be supported in planning an individual schedule for completing work.

Materials and activities are designed to support different learning styles and multiple intelligences, such as linguistic, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, and interpersonal. Some children – kinesthetic learners — learn best by using their hands, taking measure of materials physically and thereby mapping them mentally.

Others — linguistic learners — are especially attentive to verbal cues and have innate ability to verbalize knowledge and to learn by listening attentively. Other children may benefit greatly from interacting with others, sharing, teaching, and collaborating to master the material; these are children with strong interpersonal learning skills. Montessori philosophy supports these differences and recognizes that children may also transition from one learning skill set to another as they develop during these formative years. One-size-fits-all teaching can fall short for these children.

5. Active Learning

Montessori materials are designed to stimulate the senses and engage students in active learning. Students are encouraged to pursue areas of particular interest to them, becoming “experts” (meaning the student is able to integrate this learning into their daily work and practice) and using all available resources, including internet and community sources to engage their curiosity.

The classrooms are prepared with Montessori-sourced materials, which are hands-on and encourage “experiential” learning, as opposed to the more traditional model of lecture and drill exercises, which are comparably passive. Repetition is accomplished by having a variety of materials with which to practice the same concept. It is this repetition — through active and multiple modes of learning — which leads to mastery of the concept.

Students learn by trial and error and by discovery. They learn to ask the right question, spontaneously engage in their own research, analyze what they have found, and draw their own conclusions. The extended work period, typically three hours, offers both the time and resources for investigation and experimentation, using the internet, classroom library, and related indoor and outdoor materials, as well as opportunities to pursue research outside the classroom, in a community garden, the local library or museum, or by contacting outside experts. Throughout this process of discovery, students are not afraid to take risks and to learn constructively from their mistakes.

Students engage with the Montessori materials, which are designed to transition children from concrete understanding in early elementary to abstract thinking. This means that children arrive at abstraction through their own creative process and their desire to understand. This is a joyful process of intellectual development, inner awareness, and creative thinking. Again, the child's education is forged on the path to discovery.

Active learning is the heart of Montessori education. Rather than present children with the “right information” and supply the “right answers” up front in the form of lessons and lectures, Montessori educators guide students to ask the “right questions” and help them discover the answers for themselves. With this active approach, learning becomes its own reward and each success fuels the desire to discover more.

6. Montessori Curriculum Materials

Credentialed Montessori teachers present core subjects using Montessori materials. Montessori materials have been shown to be an effective way of meeting California state standards and Common Core. In addition, materials are supplemented with books, experiences, technology and other instructional materials to support the child's individual learning style. Supplemental materials to be added to the Montessori classroom are regularly reviewed staff. Dialogue continuously occurs between teachers and administration based on observation and assessment of individual student progress.

The integrated curriculum includes materials and activities for the development of understanding and skills in mathematics, geometry, natural sciences, physical sciences, technology, language arts (including phonics, spelling, grammar, sentence analysis, creative and expository writing), literature, geography, history, civics, economics, anthropology, sociology, practical life, movement, physical education, music, visual arts, and crafts.

Montessori materials are concrete representations of lessons, which guide the student to understanding a concept. Each Montessori material and lesson is specifically designed with a purpose, prerequisites, direct and indirect aims, typical age ranges, procedure, language, control of error, points of interest, variations and extensions, subsequent lessons, and its placement and importance in the entire curriculum. Teachers are trained in the selection, implementation, and outcomes of each material, thus solidly serving the student in his or her education. Materials are organized and presented sequentially, becoming more complex and abstract. Comprehension and mastery are required before student progresses to the next material. This allows the student to continue on a path of education that is uniquely individual, neither waiting for others to catch up, nor hindering others progress. It also provides constant placement of the student within the framework and assessment of individual student progress, as well as offers an immediate diagnostic capability should a student struggle with any material or concept.

Materials are presented in small and large group lessons designed to inspire the student and encourage the student's thoughtful application of mastered materials and concepts. Typically, students progress through most group lessons with their yearly cohort, which incorporates a general pacing and allows for individual rates and movement to another group as necessary, similar to traditional educational system whereby a student would be "pulled out" for specific assistance, although the Montessori student remains in the classroom. In the Montessori Model, students find the specific support they need in a variety of lesson groups in the classroom, combined with the individualized attention of the trained teacher.

Of paramount importance are the Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), created at the beginning of each school year by the student in collaboration with the family and teacher to determine a path of individual student success. The plans provide a process whereby strengths and areas of improvement are identified, goals are formulated, and specific learning objectives are agreed upon. In this way, the order and manner of learning new material is adjusted to the needs of each child as much as possible. The student's progress toward fulfilling his or her ILP is the primary focus of subsequent conferences, progress reports, and student self-evaluations.

Each student, in collaboration with the teacher, also develops a Weekly Work Plan (WWP), setting forth the goals, expectations, and assignments for the week ahead. Weekly Work Plans address core subjects of language, mathematics, and science as well as, other areas of personal development. Whenever possible or appropriate, WWPs offer students the opportunity to propose an alternative assignment that would lead to the fundamental objective, but which would be more interesting to the student. Teachers review the WWP of each student on a weekly basis throughout the school year.

Appropriate measures are taken to respect the confidentiality of any student records protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. All records and assessments are available to families and are sent to the student's new school in the case of the student transferring to another school.

7. Homework –The Montessori Way

The Montessori student often volunteers to continue research, do community service, and work on classroom related projects. Consequently, the Montessori student naturally develops good study skills, discipline, and responsibility. Continuing school-related projects at home also provides families the opportunity to be involved in and stay current with their children's education. Daily homework, however, is not a part of a Montessori program. Nonetheless, if the student chooses, the teacher provides guidance for outside projects and activities based on the student's individual interests and needs. RMCS encourages daily reading individually and together, math fact practice, and cultivating a love of learning at home.

A Montessori Day
(Bell Schedule)

Monday through Thursday

7:00am-8:00am	Before School Program (subject to demand)
8:00am-8:14am	Arrival
8:15am-11:45am	Montessori Work Period
11:45am-12:15pm	Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and Lower Elementary Lunch/ Upper Elementary Recess
12:15pm- 12:45pm	Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and Lower Elementary Recess/Upper Elementary Lunch
12:45pm-3:00pm	Montessori Work Period with group activities such as art, music, physical education, etc.
3:00pm-3:15pm	Dismissal
3:15pm-6:00pm	After School Program/Expanded Learning

Friday

7:00am-8:00am	Before School Program (subject to demand)
8:00am-8:14am	Arrival
8:15am-8:30am	Morning Gathering in the Multi-Purpose Room
8:30am-12:00pm	Montessori Work Period
12:00pm-12:15pm	Dismissal
12:15pm-6:00pm	After School Program/Expanded Learning

School Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

The Montessori classroom is a structured environment, and at the beginning of the morning work period, activities and work groups are organized each day. Late arrival interferes with the individual's entry and the community as a whole and prevents the child from participating in cooperative learning experiences.

Please allow sufficient time for your child to arrive at school and not feel rushed. The feelings of the child as the student enters class can set the tone for the day.

Between 8:00 a.m. and 8:14 a.m., RMCS staff and volunteers greet students as they are dropped off from their cars. Please refer to the RMCS parking and traffic flow map available on-line or in the office. Children arriving after 8:14 a.m. are late, and **must** be signed-in at the front office by a family or guardian immediately upon arrival. Please park in the designated area and walk your child in through the main entrance and sign-in at the front office.

Dismissal

Regular pick-up is between 3:00 and 3:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and from 12:00 to 12:15p.m. on Friday. Please refer to the parking and traffic flow map posted on the school website for information regarding carline/carpool pick-up. A staff member will assist children to their vehicles in the carpool traffic lane. Please have the back seat on the driver's side available for your child's use so that we are efficient in loading all the cars. Students with written family permission to sign themselves out from school will be released Monday through Thursday at 3:15 p.m. and Friday at 12:15 p.m. so they are not crossing the car-line in order to ensure their safety.

Attendance, Absences, & Truancy

Absences

Montessori philosophy requires that we respect the concentration and level of development of each child. The Guides spend time and energy preparing curriculum and lessons for each day so that each child may make continuous progress in their personal and academic development. Social work groups and roles in projects are established by the children at the beginning of the day. Please help ensure your child's social and academic progress by avoiding unnecessary absences and late arrivals. If your child is frequently tardy or absent, he or she may not make the progress you expect because we cannot provide a consistent flow of work for the student.

Attendance is mandatory at our public charter school. If your child is absent, you must email or call the office within 24 hours and (per law) state the reason.

Montessori education is a relationship-based pedagogy which requires presence in the classroom for experiencing the hands-on learning materials and social interactions so necessary for growth and learning. Regular attendance at school helps students succeed in all areas of development, academics, social-emotional confidence, independence, concentration, and leadership. Daily, on-time attendance is expected each and every school day except as provided within this Policy. With a year-round school-year and one early-release day per week, RMCS encourages families to schedule appointments and travel during non-school time, including the five breaks throughout the school year.

Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies, and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law or school policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health;

2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer;
3. Medical, dental, ophthalmologic, or chiropractic appointments;
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services or grieving the death of either a member of the pupil's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than five (5) days per incident. "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.
5. For any of the following reasons, if an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, has died:
 - a. To access services from a victim services organization or agency.
 - b. To access grief support services.
6. To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the pupil or an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation. Absences under this section shall not be excused for more than three (3) days per incident, unless extended on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the school administrator. "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil. Jury duty in the manner provided by law;
7. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial family, including absences to care for a sick child, for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor;
8. Justifiable personal reasons, when accompanied by a written request by the family or guardian and approved by the Executive Director or his/her designee, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Appearance in court
 - b. Attendance at a funeral service
 - c. Observance of a holiday or ceremony of their religion
 - d. Attendance at religious retreats (not to exceed four hours per semester)
 - e. Attendance at an employment conference
9. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization. Spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family, who is an active duty of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this section shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Executive Director or designee.
10. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
11. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator.

Method of Verification

Students who are absent must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. RMCS uses an electronic Absence Reporting tool which can be found on the website.

Physician's verification may be requested upon continued absences for illness. Insofar as class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, families/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

Students in grades K-6 should not be absent from school without their families/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency.

Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

The Director, or designee, shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy. When the student's attendance problems cannot be resolved or the student and family/guardian have failed to respond to directives to correct the problem, a student who has been classified as truant may be referred to the district attorney or probation officer for truancy mediation. Further, the School attendance review board or probation officer may request a juvenile court petition on behalf of the student.

Students shall be classified as truant if absent from school without a valid excuse three (3) full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any thirty (30) minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three (3) occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Such students shall be reported to the Executive Director or designee. A student's grades may be affected by excessive unexcused absences in accordance with Board policy.

Independent Study Contracts

Students who are absent for between one (1) and fifteen(15) days may be eligible to study/work at home under adult supervision. A short-term Independent Study Agreement can be designed to allow a student to continue schoolwork while injured or during a family emergency. Independent Studies cannot exceed fifteen(15) schooldays within one academic year.

Families are encouraged to inform the teacher of anticipated absences at least one (1) week in advance (five (5) school days) so that an Independent Study agreement can be approved and academic lessons assigned. RMCS may only mark a student in attendance and receive funding for independent study if the agreement is satisfactorily completed by the due date and based upon the personal determination of a certificated employee assigned to supervise the independent study of the time value of the student work product.

Independent Study Timeline

At least one week prior to leaving:	Notify the Office & Guide of your desire for an Independent Study
3 days prior to leaving:	Confirm with your Guide
1 day prior to leaving:	Meet with your Guide and child to go over the contract and assigned work
While you are gone:	Assist your child with their assignments
No later than 5 days after your return:	Return completed assignments to your Guide

Incomplete Independent Study assignments and those assignments not returned will void the Independent Study Contract and your child's attendance will be noted as unexcused absences for the dates your child was out of school.

Students who have an Individualized Academic Program ("IEP") must have the IEP team's agreement that the student's disability will not preclude the student from making academic progress using independent study and document the agreement within the IEP.

Communication with RMCS

Effective communication supports the Montessori partnership of child, school, and family. RMCS communicates with families in a variety of ways to ensure a successful relationship.

Communication Between Home and School:

School Announcements and News: Timely announcements such as health alerts, calendar notices, and upcoming special events or deadlines are distributed electronically via Transfamily Classroom and email and are available in English,

Spanish, and other languages. Hard copies are provided upon request for families with limited access to the internet.

School Newsletter: *The River Current* is generally published electronically, and provides school information and family educational resources, including a director's letter, calendar of events, student articles, news and tidbits, book reviews, and familying articles. *The River Current* is available in English, Spanish, and other languages. Hard copies are posted in the office and provided to families upon request with limited access to the internet upon request.

School Website: The calendar on the school website is regularly updated. Essential documents pertaining to governance, registration and enrollment, school day information, etc. are all posted on the school website.

Public Notices: Public notices related to RMCS Board of Directors' meetings and changes to meeting dates are all posted in accordance with the Brown Act, in the office, and in administration windows for 24/7 public access.

Family Communication with Staff

In the spirit of our community, if a Guide has a particular concern about your child, the Guide will contact you directly to discuss it. Likewise, if a family has a particular concern about their child, it is expected that the family will contact the child's Guide directly to discuss it.

Please keep in mind that classroom Guides are preparing for the students daily from 7:30am –8:00am at which time they begin greeting the children and then is involved in classroom structure until the end of the school day. It is best to email your classroom Guide and coordinate information and/or a time to meet.

Partnership Meetings are regularly scheduled two (2) times per year; prior Fall and Spring breaks. Additional meetings can be scheduled with your child's Guide as necessary.

Observations

Montessori has a unique understanding of observation as a tool to discover what a child needs for continued development, whether academic, social, physical, or emotional in nature. Through this relationship, the Guide strives to help the child achieve independence and self-motivated learning. Discovery by the child of what they know unconsciously is the basis of the approach to learning at the elementary level. It can be a joyful experience for the child and the observer.

River Montessori opens its classrooms for observations approximately two (2) months after the start of the school year to allow for the children to normalize or adjust as individuals and allow the cohesion of individuals and the group. Anyone interested in observing a classroom must schedule an appointment with the main office and the Guide.

Family University: Curriculum Presentations and Family Education Forums

Throughout the year, families are encouraged to participate in the various curriculum activities and presentations offered by RMCS staff, classrooms, or the Board of Directors. These sessions include specific components of the curriculum, Montessori philosophy, or informational forums. The purpose of these events is to educate families about Montessori education, the design and mission of the school, and to further develop a successful collaboration between home and school. Participation in these events also counts toward a family's volunteer hours.

Family & Community Surveys

Throughout the year RMCS school administration publishes surveys to families and the community, requesting family response. These surveys are an important method of the RMCS administration's gaining insight and feedback from a busy community. Summary information from these surveys is not only used by the RMCS administration but is also shared with the RMCS Board of Directors, state review agencies, potential funding agencies, and families - all who share differing interests in the RMCS community. RMCS strives to have every voice heard, and urges each family to commit to completing surveys when requested throughout the year.

Family and Emergency Information/Change of Authorized Pick Up

Family and Emergency Information forms are completed at the beginning of the school year. This form allows families to identify carpool drivers, care program providers, or other adults such as families of your child's friends that may routinely pick up your child during the school year. Adults designated on this form are authorized to pick up your child at dismissal. Students may be released to individuals named on their *Family & Emergency Information Form* in the event of a school or family emergency. If you would like your child to be picked up by someone other than those designated on the form, you must notify the office in writing **before noon**. For your child's safety, your child will not be released to someone who you have not provided written authorization as designated pick-up adult. Notifications by phone and changes during carline will not be accepted. Please email your written request to the office: admin@rivermontessoricharter.org.

River Crew Child Care Program

Recognizing that families have needs for their children beyond the hours of the school day, RMCS provides a child care program called **River Crew**. River Crew operates with the same philosophical basis as our Montessori classes. Children will engage in arts and crafts projects, planned and unstructured indoor and outdoor activities, and enjoy social time with other children.

Information regarding hours and schedules during non-school sessions are available on-line, in the office, and through announcements. It is necessary to register for River Crew. Enrollment forms may be found on our website.

- The program is overseen by a California credentialed teacher who is an employee of the school.
- Childcare is prepaid by the first of the month. Drop-in rates are invoiced monthly and are due immediately upon receipt.
- During scheduled bi-annual Partnership Meetings, childcare is available to all families during their conference meeting time at no charge.
- Families whose volunteer activities are during River Crew hours are offered childcare at no charge.

Families or care givers are required to sign children in and out from River Crew through an on-line program. This helps to ensure your child's safety and is necessary for administration to maintain accurate records.

Student Health

Medical Health Forms

At the beginning of each school year, a Student Health History form is required as part of new and continuing student registration. This form is used to update and document health information for all students including allergies, medication taken prior to and during school, and recent illnesses or medical conditions.

Dispensing Medication

Forms are available should a student require medicine to be dispensed during the school day. Parent/Guardian and physician consent are required for any medication (prescription or over the counter) dispensed at school. Medication must be in the original pharmacy container, labeled with the student's name, name of the medication, proper dosage and instructions, expiration date, and name of the prescribing physician. Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining current prescriptions and current dosages. In addition, for those students with asthma or severe food allergies, a food allergy action plan and/or asthma action plan must be completed by the healthcare provider.



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Commitment to Community Wellness

Consistent Student Attendance

Health/Wellness Occurrence Students & Staff	School & Classroom Protocol
<p>Exhibiting Mild Symptoms</p> <p>Including but not limited to coughing, runny nose, congestion. Able to meaningfully participate in routine school activities without compromising the health and safety of others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff & Students Attend School ● Staff & Students with Respiratory Symptoms Mask Indoors ● Volunteers Do Not Attend School
<p>Exhibiting Extreme Symptoms</p> <p>Including but not limited to excessive coughing or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, 100 ° fever. Unable to participate meaningfully in school activities and compromise the health and safety of others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff & Students Do Not Attend School ● Return when extreme symptoms subside and without fever for 24 hours sans fever-reducing medication ● Independent Study, if feasible; i.e., waiting for fever period to end ● Note from Physician if over 3 absences or pattern persists
<p>Consistent Communicable Respiratory Illness Symptoms Among 10% of Classroom Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff & Students Attend School and Mask Indoors ● Classroom Community Masks until shared common symptoms abate
<p>Known Exposure to Positive COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff & Students Attend School and Mask Indoors for 3 days ● Covid test recommended, and again after 5 days or if symptoms develop
<p>Positive COVID-19 Test</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff & Students Attend School when symptoms subside and are fever-free for 24 hours sans fever-reducing medication ● Staff & Students Mask Indoors for 3 days ● Independent Study highly encouraged while student is symptom-free

Guidelines for Returning to School After Illnesses

When assessing your child's readiness to return to school after an illness, please consider the following factors: Student's ability to participate fully in their work and activities throughout the school day and the potential for infecting classmates, other students, faculty, and staff.

A physician's note is required to permit a child with a contagious infection or disease to return to school. Please consult the following additional standards in making your assessment:

Bronchitis: on antibiotics for 24 hours or more

Chicken Pox: when lesions are crusted over (approximately one week)

Colds: no presence of yellow or green mucus, which may be related to an infection (may return if there is no elevated temperature, sore throat, or severe cough)

Conjunctivitis: when discharge from eyes has stopped; for bacterial conjunctivitis, usually 24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops; see physician regarding viral infections

Diarrhea: free of diarrhea for 24 hours or more if caused by illness and not medication

Ear Infection: on antibiotics for 24 hours or more

Fever: Fever-free (under 100 °) without medicine, for at least 24 hours (readings generally lower in morning)

Rash: Please provide a physician's release for any atypical redness or rash

Strep Throat: after treatment with antibiotics for at least 24 hours

Vomiting: free from vomiting for 24 hours or more

Medical Emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, the most expedient procedure for the safety of the child will be followed, with immediate attempts to reach the family(s)/guardian. 911 will be called and direction from emergency personnel will be followed.

General Information

Accountability

State Reported Measurements

RMCS complies with all State of California published standards for charter schools in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, and Physical Education.

Our philosophy dictates that the accomplishment of performance outcomes is achieved by working to develop positive character traits in students while they learn. Montessori education integrates outcomes and the learning process. For example, independence is a behavior that is not separate from the process by which it is attained and practiced. Similarly, academic competence is the disposition to do things in certain ways, the ability to recall knowledge, and the skills to enact appropriate academic procedures. Consequently, in addition to State of California published standards RMCS will focus on developing several attributes of successful learners and positive character traits in our students.

ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS

Develop Attributes of Successful Learners River Montessori Charter School provides an environment in which students develop deeply held values of independence, responsibility, self-respect, respect for others, and compassion; this results in a strong sense of self-confidence. Character development is integrated throughout the curriculum. Children of different ages are brought together so the classroom becomes similar to an extended family in which children live and work cooperatively. In this “mini-society,” children help establish the ground rules for behavior, get practice in self-government and thus become responsible for their own behavior. The aim is for children to learn to respect the rights of others, feel responsibility toward others, and gain respect for their own individuality. To facilitate the development of independence and a sense of engagement with the community, RMCS strongly encourages participation in day-to-day classroom management, care of the environment, and decision making. We seek to help each student see the value of commitment both to our own community and to the community of humanity. Children contribute to the betterment of the world through various activities.

In addition to State Standards, RMCS focuses on developing several attributes (listed below) of successful learners and character traits in our students. Nancy Rambusch and John Stoops identify these traits for addressing the whole child as a learner in “The Authentic American Montessori School,” (American Montessori Society, 1992). All of the attributes listed below are monitored and conveyed through Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), progress and report cards, and biannual conferences.

1) Cognitive Understanding and Thinking Skills · Students demonstrate an awareness of order and sequence. · Students demonstrate the development of observation, questioning, and critical thinking skills. · Students evidence a variety of complex thinking processes to help resolve complex issues. · Students are able to access, evaluate, and integrate information from a variety of resources. · Students are able to reflect upon their learning and to transfer learning to new situations.

· In Montessori education, the students are to think for themselves, not merely learn what other people have thought. · Students demonstrate the ability to effectively use technology.

2) Confidence and Competence · Students are capable of correcting their own work upon observation, reflection, discussion, or completion of additional lessons. · Students manage the available array of information with a clear sense of purpose. · Students demonstrate the development of concentration, patience, and persistence.

3) Independence · Students are able to choose their own work, apply energy to that work, complete it to agreed-upon criterion, and return material used to the place it is customarily kept in such a way that another child will be able to find and use it. · Students participate in designing their own Individual Learning Plans. · Students are able to locate resources to continue the self-chosen task, or are able to solicit help if necessary.

4) Autonomy · Students are able to accept or reject inclusion in another child’s work or group with equanimity.

5) Intrinsic Motivation · Students are drawn to continue working for the apparent pleasure of so doing. · Students, once having achieved competence, are able to move on to revel in mastery by showing others.

6) Ability to Handle External Authority · Students are able to accept the “ground rules” of the group and abide by them. · Students, when distant from the teacher, are able to function as if the teacher were nearby.

7) Social Responsibility · Independent and autonomous persons are also always a part of a group and must realize independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. · Students are able to collaborate and work effectively with others in cooperative groups. · Students are respectful of others.

8) Stewardship, Good Citizenship · All children are part of both a world political reality and a world ecological system. Both systems have their constitutions and the citizen must learn to live within the spirit of the laws of man and nature. · Students demonstrate citizenship by planning and implementing a project in service to the school and/or the greater community. · Students demonstrate an understanding of the natural world, and their interconnectedness to it. River Montessori Charter School Page 40 of 122 Renewal Term 2019-24

9) Positive Self-Image · Students are able to express feelings in a healthy manner. · Students demonstrate the ability to solve conflicts effectively and fairly using skills of active listening and negotiation. · Students demonstrate knowledge of pertinent issues of personal health.

Student performance will be assessed through:

California Mandated Standardized Tests

- CAASPP – California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (Levels 3-6)
- CAST Science Assessment (Level 5)
- PFT (Level 5)

Local/Internal Assessments

A cornerstone of Montessori education is keen observation of each student as they pursue their work. RMCS teaching staff uses a series of internal assessments to monitor individual progress, including daily observation, record keeping, weekly individual learning contracts, work plans, and portfolios. These techniques are designed to provide a holistic assessment of the student’s learning.

Both students and families play central roles in assessment. As each student matures, they play an increasingly integral role in setting their own goals, assessing their own work, and tracking their own progress. Families participate formally at least two (2) times a year in conferences, with frequent teacher interaction encouraged.

Montessori Methods of Student Evaluation

Assessment in the Montessori classroom incorporates the hourly, daily, and weekly appraisal of student progress. Early in their educational career at RMCS, students learn self-assessment from the prepared environment of self-correcting materials and the examples/modeling provided by the adult teaching staff. Self-assessment, self-reflection, and self-correction are important lifelong skills that students acquire from the earliest years in a Montessori environment. Additionally, students have experience from their earliest years that their learning is a partnership with teachers and families.

Teachers and students establish and agree upon daily, weekly, and monthly goals. Teachers will maintain written records of the work presented and mastered, and each child has a “work plan” against which his/her progress is measured as the student moves through various time periods.

At any given time, a Montessori teacher knows precisely where a child is academically, developmentally, socially, and emotionally. With frequent one-on-one interaction and individual, personalized assessment of student work by the classroom teacher, issues and concerns emerge and are quickly addressed. Constant fine-tuning and periodic adjustments maximize student progress and assure intellectual engagement for each child.

In such a highly structured program, families are alerted quickly to any concerns throughout the year. Additionally, RMCS will provide formal documentation of the student’s progress quarterly. Progress reports will be sent home bi-annually (in the Fall and the Spring), and families/guardians receive end-of-term reports at the end of each school semester (January and June).

Portfolios

Twice each year, students and teachers go through the student's completed work and make selections for their portfolios. Students prepare a self-evaluation of the selected work; what he or she accomplished, what he or she enjoyed the most, what the student would like to learn next.

Written Evaluations

Teachers evaluate student's level of academic mastery and behavior (personal development) once each semester.

Self-Assessment

Students reflect on both long and short-term planning of organizational and study skills as well as behavior goals.

Informal Oral Exams

Students share current work with the teacher verbally. Teachers continuously solicit feedback and understanding from the children on every aspect of their work, progress, perspective, and analysis.

Demonstration of Mastery by Peer Teaching

By guiding and advising each other and sharing what they have learned. Students in a Montessori classroom reinforce their knowledge through teaching.

Formal Presentations of Projects and Reports

Teachers expect group and individual presentations of projects and reports in the Montessori classroom. Teachers evaluate the students' level of understanding of the topic through these formal presentations.

Ongoing Teacher Observation

A core tenet of the Montessori philosophy includes daily comprehensive observation. These observations go beyond work choices and performance. The teacher records notes on the student's level of independence, coordination, organization, and concentration, as well as all areas of development, understanding of work, and success in managing student and community responsibilities.

Rubrics

A rubric uses descriptors explaining what is and is not present in the work. With these descriptors, the learner knows exactly how to improve his/her score on an assignment or project.

School Culture

One of the keys to success for children at RMCS is their ability to balance freedom with responsibility. Students take a role in their own learning that is increasingly active, self-directed and independent as they get older. Children are supported to be responsible and respectful toward themselves, other people, and their environment, and to have a positive attitude toward their work.

RMCS is committed to teaching conflict resolution skills through modeling. Discipline is non-punitive, with an emphasis on protecting the civil rights of all students, and teaching positive communication skills and guiding students to work together to find peaceful resolution to conflicts. RMCS discipline practice is rooted in the belief that peace can be learned by example and modeled as an active, positive value.

Zones of Regulation

RMCS has been working at all levels with the "Zones" and students are responding with increased self-awareness and positive success. Please enjoy a brief description of the Zones of Regulation.

Self-regulation is something everyone continually works on, whether we are aware of it or not. We all encounter trying circumstances that test our limits from time to time. If we are able to recognize when we are becoming less regulated, we are able to do something about it to feel better and get ourselves to a better place. This comes naturally for some, but for others it is a skill that needs to be taught and practiced. This is the goal of The Zones of Regulation (or Zones for short).

The Four Zones: Our Feelings & States Determine Our Zone

The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, one has some control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.



The Zones can be compared to traffic signs. When given a green light or in the Green Zone, one is “good to go”. A yellow sign means be aware or take caution, which applies to the Yellow Zone. A red light or stop sign means stop, and when one is the Red Zone, this often is the case. The Blue Zone can be compared to the rest area signs where one goes to rest or re-energize. All of the zones are expected at one time or another, but the curriculum focuses on teaching students how to manage their Zone based on the environment and people around them. For example, when playing on the playground or in an active/competitive game, no one would think twice about one being in the Yellow Zone but that would not be same in the library.

Snacks and Lunch

RMCS is a nut-free and sesame-free school. There are children enrolled at RMCS with life-threatening allergies. Please support the school community in providing a safe and healthy environment for each and every child at RMCS and do not send snacks or lunch items to school containing nuts, sesame seeds, or sesame products.

If you send a snack from home, please eliminate sweets such as candy, cookies, and soda; instead, send healthy foods including high protein and fats to nourish the growing brain, such as yogurt, cheese, vegetables, fresh fruits, and water to drink. Each classroom has its own procedure and schedule for snacks.

As a pedagogy that prioritizes Care of the Environment, RMCS operates a no waste practice. Please use re-sealable containers for snack and lunches. Soft lunch boxes with cooling packs are recommended. Students do not have access to a microwave or refrigeration for their lunches.

In accordance with state requirements, **RMCS participates in the Universal Meals Program. Please see more information in Appendix A.** RMCS continues to pursue collaboration with our authorizing district, other partners and opportunities. As this may change at any time, families are encouraged to reach out with any questions.

Special Events

Throughout the year, members of our school community come together for educational meetings, student performances, open houses, and fundraisers. These community-building gatherings afford an opportunity for families, faculty, staff, and children to get to know each other better and learn more about Montessori and RMCS.

During events on school grounds, participants must respect the classroom learning environments by not going into classrooms unless it is a part of the planned activity. Our teaching staff devotes considerable time and effort in preparing classroom environments, and honoring the integrity of classroom materials and structure is essential.

Families are expected to provide firm and consistent supervision of their children during special events at the school. Children need family support during events outside of regular school hours in understanding that school rules are still in place before and after school and on evenings and weekends.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special occasions, and RMCS honors and celebrates these events with the Montessori Birthday Celebration and leaves party-style events for the family. Using photographs and personal stories from the child and family for each year of life noting milestones, accomplishments, and growth, RMCS supports an acknowledgment and appreciation for the child's aging and growth. Classes may have different expressions to celebrate the day. Because this Montessori ritual is so reverent of the child's growth, history, and mastery, we do not distract from it with food, goody bags, or treats. If a family is interested and would like to give something, please consider a well-loved book or item from the class wishlist for the classroom for everyone to enjoy. **Please contact your classroom teacher at least one week before your child's birthday to schedule a birthday celebration for your child.**

Birthday invitations are encouraged to be distributed in accordance with our green practices and through family communication portal. If necessary, invitations may be distributed if all students are invited so as to avoid disruption and hurt feelings about an outside event during the schoolday. Invitations may only be distributed via Friday folders if received by Wednesday so that there is enough time for the Guide to schedule the task.

Board of Directors

River Montessori Charter School is governed by a Board of Directors ("Board"), comprised of both community and family members. The Board has the ultimate responsibility for the success of the school. The Board sets policy for the school and hires a director, who in turn, hires and manages the staff of the school. Working through the RMCS Director, the RMCS Board ensures all laws and regulations are being followed, and that day-to-day operations are consistent with the mission of the school. In consultation with the Director and Business Manager, the Board develops and approves the budget for the school.

The Board performs most of its work through committees. These committees consist of directors, families, and members of the community. The Board meets regularly through Board or committee meetings, both of which are open to the public. The dates and times of all meetings are posted at the school and on the school website. The Board discusses issues, sets policy, and conducts their business for anyone to observe; public comment is invited at the beginning of each meeting.

Directory

Individual families opt in/permit family information to be shared in the family communication portal and may be included in an annual family directory published and distributed annually by the River Montessori Foundation.

Calendar

The RMCS academic school calendar is approved annually by the Board and is available on our webpage (www.rivermontessoricharter.org).

Cell Phones

Cell phones, wrist phones, and other such technology are disruptive to student focus, motivation, learning, and partnership. Students have no need for such technology academically or socially and may not use personal cell phones during school hours. If there is an individual unique need such as a student with an IEP or a Section 504 Plan, such technology must be approved by the IEP or Section 504 team and the Executive Director & Superintendent, must remain completely turned off (not in silent mode), and secured in their backpacks or bags, until dismissal. Cell phones may not be out during class time or on the playground. Cell phones may not be in student's pockets at any time during the school day.

Out of courtesy and respect to the workflow of RMCS students' and staff, RMCS asks that all staff, volunteers, and visitors, do not use cell phones during the school day. Faculty and/or approved staff may occasionally use a cell-phone to take a picture through the family communication portal/program to document student work/learning, activities, and events.

Classroom Volunteers

RMCS loves and wholeheartedly welcomes its dedicated volunteers! In order to volunteer for RMCS, volunteers must pass a criminal background check with the California Department of Justice using Live Scan fingerprinting. Please obtain a Live Scan form with our Charter School's codes from school administration. California Education Code requires that volunteers who are exposed to children on a frequent basis must also have tuberculosis (TB) clearance in order to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Volunteers assume all costs associated with the clearance. Please advise the office if this is a hardship. All classrooms must complete the normalization period before family volunteers are invited in to help. For additional information please refer to the Volunteer Guidelines located on our website.

If you will be driving students other than your own for school-related field trips or excursions, a driving clearance is required. A copy

Computer Use

River Montessori Charter School offers age/grade-level appropriate limited access to the Internet from computers in the classrooms. The Internet is compatible with Montessori philosophy as a teaching resource because it allows students to become familiar with the global nature of information and to form links with children around the world. Access to the Internet is a privilege. All students are supported to practice computer etiquette and safety. Please also reference computer use guidelines that families and students are required to sign as part of the enrollment process.

Students do not require social media in the Montessori pedagogy and receive “freedom within limits” for using all technology. Anything disruptive to learning will result in temporary loss of computer privileges. Partnership Meetings/Conferences

Student-led Partnership Meetings including guides and families are conducted twice a year before the Fall and Spring breaks. These conferences are very important to your child’s academic success and it is expected that families or guardians and your child attend both scheduled conferences.

Dress Code

Children’s clothing needs to be comfortable and appropriate (see list of non-allowed clothing below) in order to participate fully in all classroom and outdoor activities/play. Clothing labeled with the child’s name is helpful if articles are lost.

Students will discuss classroom community responsibilities and standards during initial community meetings for what is respectful and this includes appropriate clothing. Guides will let a member of the class know if they think a child’s clothing is inappropriate. Elementary students generally feel that extremes of clothing are out of place. Clothing with messages and icons of pop culture distract from the work and peaceful culture of the school and classroom. Personal appearance, dress, or grooming must not disrupt the educational process or threaten the health or safety of any individual.

The following articles of clothing are not permitted:

- Commercial images or icons (i.e. cartoon/ television characters, rock bands, etc.)
- See-through or revealing shirts
- Backless, strapless or tank tops
- Halter tops or dresses
- Low-cut tops or dresses
- Bare-midriff tops
- Clothing that fails to conceal undergarments
- Shorts or skirts shorter than the middle finger when arms are held down by their sides and also not more than five (5) inches above the kneecap when kneeling
- Pajamas or slippers (other than classroom slippers)
- Extremely tight or excessively oversized clothes

In addition:

- Pants or shorts must be worn above the hip bones
- Make-up is not permitted. Nail polish may be worn.
- Headwear may be worn outside only, unless it is for religious purposes and may be worn inside and outside the classroom.

- Shoes should be solidly on the student’s feet to help ensure safe participation in school activities. No flip flops, backless sandals, high heels, or shoes with wheels (hidden or exposed) or games are permitted. Tight open toed sandals are permitted.
- Any clothing, jewelry, or accessories that create safety or health concerns or cause or threaten to cause a disruption to the educational process are prohibited (long earrings, chain belts, etc.). Please discourage your child from wearing expensive jewelry items to school

Field Trips and Montessori *Going Out*

RMCS will periodically conduct field trips to provide cultural, scientific, social, or educational experiences for the children. Notices and permission slips will be sent home in advance describing the objectives of the field trip.

Walking field trips may encompass local businesses or outings to nearby Schollenberger and Ellis Creek. A permission slip for walking field trips throughout the year is included in registration documents. Field trips requiring vehicle transportation require a separate permission slip for each outing.

Families who volunteer to chaperone for field trips are expected to adhere to the Volunteering Guidelines.

“Going out” is a term unique to the Montessori approach to the elementary-aged child. It is a mini- field trip, usually four to six students who have a particular interest in a certain area. The children plan all the details and arrange the logistics of the trip. These excursions encourage individual interests and responsibility for learning. They provide research opportunities that are an integrated extension of the curriculum.

Garden

Children will be encouraged to work in classroom gardens, to plant, to water, and harvest their “crops”. From time to time, children may come home a little dirtier than usual—at RMCS gardening is considered hands-on science. Families are encouraged to assist in the garden on weekends or evenings. Please contact your child’s Guide or the office for volunteer opportunities.

Libraries in Montessori Education

Montessori classrooms maintain their own libraries and can consequently offer great overview materials while specializing in the children’s interests. Books serve as learning materials in the classroom and are used daily for research, language work, and enjoyment. We appreciate the many books that families share to maintain exposure and inspiration. Families are encouraged to use the Sonoma County Public Library.

Family Lending Library

RMCS maintains a small lending library; a collection of Montessori, familying, and other reference books/materials that have been favorites of Montessorians and community members over the years. This budding library is maintained in the school office. Families may sign out books and materials, and are welcome to bring reference materials to donate or share with others.

Lost and Found

Found items with no identification will be placed in the lost and found area. RMCS is not responsible for lost or damaged personal belongings. Items left in the lost and found will be removed quarterly. It is recommended that all items are labeled before being brought to school. Unclaimed lost articles will be kept until the end of each quarter in lost and found and then donated to a local charity.

Family Participation

Achieving high academic outcomes, teaching values, and developing character cannot be accomplished without the close partnership of families/guardians and families. For example, the role of family/guardian is a paramount in developing civic values and ethical behavior in their children.

Consequently, we believe that children learn more when their families and schools work closely together.

RMCS encourages families to be an integral part of their child’s education by learning about the Montessori philosophy, observing the classrooms, and volunteering in the school. Families are encouraged to make a commitment of time and energy

to support the school, thus utilizing their skills and talents. There are many different ways in which families and families can participate: helping in the classroom, organizing and chaperoning field trips, serving on the Governing Board or school committees, organizing and directing after-school enrichment activities, and providing clerical assistance to the teachers and staff of the school.

RMCS encourages families to fulfill a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service to the school each academic year. Families with more than one child attending the school are expected to contribute an additional 20 hours of volunteer time for each additional child in attendance. However, no student will be removed from the program if the family(s) fail to meet the target for volunteering. Family Involvement Pledges are included in registration and family materials that allow families to sign up for various volunteer options that align with their talents and interests. Hours donated are logged on a Volunteer log sheet, and are maintained in the school office. The following agreement is included on every log sheet, which is signed by each volunteer:

VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT:

With my signature above, I am in agreement that in my capacity as a family volunteer with River Montessori Charter School (RMCS), I understand that care and courtesy of one another and our environment is key to our environment and commitment. In the course of the school day, or any activity or event sponsored by the RMCS Foundation or school, I may be in a position to hear confidential student information relayed verbally between families, staff and faculty members.

I agree to respect the confidentiality of all students and families currently or previously enrolled at RMCS by not disclosing any information that I may be exposed to in my capacity as a volunteer.

In addition to the active participation of families in RMCS, a secondary emphasis of the program is to provide familying classes to help families recognize the uniqueness of their child(ren) and to enhance their ability to family and be their child's primary teacher. Family education opportunities also enable families to learn more about the Montessori philosophy and the classroom environments to serve their children in learning.

RMCS's Board and Director/Superintendent regularly consult with both families and teachers regarding the school's educational programs. Methods of communication include, but are not limited to family-teacher conferences, meetings and surveys.

Families and community members are continuously involved in RMCS through opportunities to serve on the Board and through the "Foundation," which coordinates volunteers and family led activities and facilitates communication between students, families, and school faculty/administration.

Personal Property

The Montessori classroom is an enriched "prepared environment" of didactic materials that lead children toward abstraction of the concepts being studied. Each beautiful apparatus engages the students to seek meaning in knowledge and provides learning at an individualized pace in a self-paced, supportive environment. Montessori does not use textbooks as its core curriculum and supplements the research and culturally based studies with appropriate resources.

Therefore, we do not encourage the child to bring articles to school that may distract from learning experiences. We welcome books or other objects that relate to the work of the classroom to continually maintain the inspiration and collaborative work of the group. Items related to culture, heritage, science, and history are appreciated. Toys, games and commercial products should not come to school.

All students need a variety of supplies at school. Many items, such as paper and writing implements, need to be replenished during the year. We appreciate the generous donations of our families to ensure that every classroom is well stocked for great learning and inspiration as it occurs.

River Montessori Foundation

The River Montessori Foundation is the primary fundraising organization for River Montessori Charter School and is led by families and larger community members. Aside from raising funds for RMCS, the Foundation also shares two additional goals: to increase awareness of the Montessori Philosophy and to support the Montessori community. All families are automatically a part of the Foundation, and are welcomed and encouraged to participate in meetings and activities to support the school.

There are many ways that the Foundation supports the school, often behind the scenes, working to provide support to families

and the school. In addition to publishing an annual family directory and hosting events and activities throughout the year, the Foundation also organizes a monthly coffee social prior to each monthly Foundation meeting. As a 501c3 non-profit organization, the Foundation has officers and committees that work tirelessly for the RMCS community. While the primary focus of the monies raised directly fund classroom assistants, music, physical education, other special areas of funding and activities are determined through Foundation members in meetings.

The Foundation also shares weekly messaging to the RMCS community included in the weekly school emails. These messages are always full of valuable and timely information to the community.

Following is a sampling of events and activities that the Foundation organizes and supports throughout the year:

- Social Events
- Monthly Coffee Socials/Foundation Meetings
- Dine-n-Donates
- Walk-a-Thon
- Creator Faire
- Book Faire
- Annual Fund

Emergency Preparedness

River will be conducting emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are prepared in the event of an emergency (see the section on Safety below). Another important component of emergency preparedness at school is ensuring that each child has a small emergency kit on site, and that each classroom has a store of basic first aid and emergency supplies. We ask that you support your child and the school in these efforts by sending the following items for your student. Most of these items can be purchased at the local drug store. These kits will be returned to you during the final week of the school year.

Write your child's name, date, and classroom CLEARLY on the outside of a one gallon zip-lock bag with a waterproof marker (one bag per child please). Then assemble the following items in the one gallon-sized zip-lock bag:

1. An emergency card that includes *all* of your contact information (including email) plus a friend or relative living more than 50 miles from Petaluma
2. A plastic garbage bag that can double as a rain poncho
3. Food such as jerky, energy bars, or granola bars (4) **(nut and sesame free)**
4. A dust mask
5. Water or juice boxes (2)
6. An emergency solar blanket
7. Band aids
8. A family photo, small card game, or a comfort item that will fit into the bag and have meaning for your child
9. Whistle on a lanyard
10. A small flashlight with batteries

Safety

Fire & Earthquake Drills: Regularly scheduled fire, earthquake, and emergency drills will be conducted in conjunction with

the local emergency departments. Guides and students periodically review the drill procedures, which are posted in a visible location in each classroom.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

The school has an Emergency Plan and coordinates its procedures with local emergency responders.

Fire, Weapons, Illegal Substances, and Tobacco

Possession or use of fire, weapons of any kind, illegal substances, or alcohol or tobacco products within the school building, on school grounds, or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel, students, and families, is prohibited at all times.

Transportation Safety

Your cooperation is essential if we are to keep children safe in the parking lot and traffic lanes at River Montessori. **The speed limit on school grounds is 5 mph at all times.** Please refer to the parking and traffic map posted on the school website for detailed information about parking and traffic flow patterns around the school.

Both gates on the school site will be closed during the school day. Full use of the playground and outdoor space around the school is essential to the health of our students! For this reason, the gates are opened during arrival and dismissal times only. If you need to enter the school building during the school day, please park in designated areas in front of the school and enter through the main office.

Parking on the East side of the building is reserved for Cypress School.

Please do not leave children unattended outside of the school building, in the parking lot, or at neighboring properties. Parking and traffic lanes are in close proximity to the school building, and children left unattended outside or in a parked car are not safe and require your supervision.

Visitors and Volunteers

Each time an adult visits the campus, they must check in at the office and get an identification badge. This is a mandatory requirement even for those families who frequently work in the classrooms. Not only does this protect the safety of our children but it also allows us to identify who is on campus in the event of an emergency. Classroom volunteers must submit to Live Scan screening and have verification of a negative TB reading on file in the office.

Appendices

Code of Conduct

RMCS is a place which promotes values that are in keeping with the School's Mission. All students, families, Guides, and staff have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that intimidate or put at risk the safety of others or oneself. This includes behavior that may be considered intentional anti-social. For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, "School Community" comprises the Director, Guides, staff, learning specialists, program directors, students, families, guardians, step-families, relatives, friends, supporters, caregivers, and invitees of the School who attend the School, or elsewhere, for the purpose of visiting, viewing, participating, supporting or being present for any official activity, whether learning or social, held by or for the benefit of the School and its students. The School Community Code of Conduct sets clear standards of behavior which are expected of members of the School Community. It specifies the consequences for any member of the School Community who does not comply with those standards of behavior, whether those persons are on the School's campus, in transit to or at another location for the purpose of any School-authorized events or activities.

Background

Dr. Maria Montessori integrated a code of conduct into her curriculum emphasizing grace and courtesy. Behavior in a Montessori classroom is no different in our homes or the social community; respect and care for each other, our environment and ourselves.

The following are the principles which provide the framework for the River Montessori Code of Conduct:

Honesty

Honesty in all matters is the basic expectation at River Montessori. Trust, an outgrowth of honesty, is essential to relationships that hold our community together. In the face of social pressures, truthfulness can sometimes be difficult to maintain; however, honesty is the quality that we value the most in our students.

Kindness

We expect that all River Montessori student will treat others with consideration both inside and outside of the classroom. Students' treatment of each other must be respectful at all times, whether or not an adult is present. River Montessori encourages students, faculty, and families to accept, tolerate, and welcome differences.

Discipline

The Montessori approach to conduct is based on self-discipline. We understand that students test limits as they grow and that they will have challenges. Our discipline system is based on the philosophy that if a child is supported in learning self-awareness and honesty, his or her straightforwardness and ability to communicate is the first step in accepting responsibility for inappropriate behavior or mistakes.

Every student at River Montessori has the right to learn and thrive in a school atmosphere that is conducive to academic achievement and social growth. Any behavior by a student that threatens to disrupt the learning process or pose a danger to others is unacceptable. In the event that a student is unable to comply with classroom rules and appropriate behavior, the student will be liable for Breach of Conduct and subject to the actions outlined in this document.

With this in mind:

- All members of the School Community are to be treated with respect and dignity
- Members of the School Community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve any conflict

- Insults, disrespect, and other hurtful acts disrupt learning and teaching in the School Community, and are a direct contradiction to the Schools Mission and Values. Members of the School Community have a responsibility to maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility to all others.
- Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the civic life of the School Community. Active and engaged members are aware of their rights but, more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.

Families play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of School staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Families fulfill this responsibility when they:

- Show and active interest in their child’s schoolwork and progress
- Communicate regularly with the School
- Help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for School
- Ensure that their child attends School regularly and on time
- Promptly report to the School any absence, late arrival or early departure
- Become familiar with the Family Handbook
- Encourage and assist their child to learn and practice healthy social skills
- Work with school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues

Standards of Behavior

- Respect all applicable Federal and State laws
- Respect differences in people, their ideas, and opinions
- Respect the legal and moral rights of others
- Take appropriate measures to help those in needs
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity
- Treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, especially when there is a disagreement
- Respect persons who are in positions of authority
- Show proper care and regard for School property and the property of others

- Respect the needs of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching
- Respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions of the State

As a minimum, all members of the School Community are expected to behave with respect, civility, and in the manner of a responsible citizen. This means, all School Community members must:

Scope

River Montessori’s School Community Code of Conduct is intended to provide members of the School Community with guidelines for effective development of positive relationships within the School Community and, as expressed in the introduction, to assist in promoting the values that are in keeping with the School’s Mission.

This document is then essentially a guide for all members of the School Community about the standards of behavior which are acceptable in the School environment or when attending any official, learning or social function or activity of or relating to the School or in any location at which the School is represented. The School Community Code of Conduct is a guide for acceptable standards of behavior that extend beyond the immediate family to include guardians, step-families, relatives, friends, supporters, and caregivers of students of the School.

General Conduct

School Community members are expected to:

- Support the Director, Guides, and schools staff in the development of a learning community based upon the Montessori Pedagogy
- Acknowledge that the Director has the ultimate responsibility to implement these policies
- Work with School teaching staff to deal promptly with areas of concern
- Treat all members of School Community with respect and courtesy
- Acknowledge and affirm success in individual and School achievement
- Abide by the School’s policy

Physical Safety

In particular, all School Community members must not:

- Use any objects (whether as a weapon or otherwise) to threaten or intimidate any other person; or cause injury to any person by the use of any object
- Be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol or illegal drugs. The exception(s) is when, in the normal course of festivities, alcohol is made available to members or guests of the School community

All School Community members must:

- Not cause, inflict or encourage other to verbally abuse, threaten or inflict bodily harm on any other person by any physical aggression
- Seek staff assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully

Responsibility for Other Community Members

Any family or School Community member who invites a relative, friend, support, caregiver, or other person to be present at any official learning or social activity held by or for the benefit of the School and its students must at all times be responsible for that person and ensure that they act at all times in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct.

Breach of the Code of Conduct

The consequences to a member of the School Community for breaching this Code of Conduct will be as determined at the Director's discretion. The consequences include any one or more of the following:

- The School may ban any member of the School Community from attending any school sponsored extra- curricular activity or social/fundraising event
- The School may ban any member of the School Community from within on the School ground in general
- The School may direct that any family may only communicate with members of the teaching staff through a nominated School representative
- The School may take such other steps as it may in its reasonable discretion determine appropriate according to the nature of the breach

Appendices

Appendix A Annual Notices

Appendix B School Directory/River Flow

APPENDIX A

2024-2025 Annual Notice Guide to Families

A. ANNUAL NOTICES

Availability of Prospectus

Upon request, River Montessori Charter School (“RMCS” or “Charter School”) will make available to any parent or legal guardian, a school prospectus, which shall include the curriculum, including titles, descriptions, and instructional aims of every course offered. Please note that, pursuant to law, RMCS may charge for the prospectus in an amount not to exceed the cost of duplication.

Campus Search and Seizure

RMCS recognizes and has determined that the occurrence of incidents which may include the possession of firearms, weapons, alcohol, controlled substances, or other items of contraband prohibited by law or RMCS rules and regulations, jeopardizes the health, safety and welfare of students and RMCS employees.

The California Constitution requires that all students and staff of public schools have the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure, and peaceful. As such, RMCS has adopted a Policy outlining the reasonable search of students and their property, student use areas, and/or student lockers and the seizure of illegal, unsafe, unauthorized or contraband items and materials through a search based upon reasonable suspicion.

Student lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of RMCS. Students shall assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers. Student lockers may not be used to store illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials. The acceptance and use of locker facilities on school campus by any student shall constitute consent by the student to the search of such locker facilities by authorized school personnel and/or law enforcement. Inspections of lockers may be conducted by school personnel and/or law enforcement through the use of trained dogs.

A student’s personal cell phone, smartphone, or other personal electronic device shall not be searched by school officials without a warrant, the student’s consent, or a legitimate emergency, unless the device is lost or abandoned. An emergency is any *situation involving danger of death or serious physical injury to any person, that requires access to the information located or reasonably believed to be located on the electronic device*. If RMCS has a good faith belief that the device is lost, stolen, or abandoned, RMCS may only access electronic device information in order to attempt to identify, verify, or contact the owner of the device.

RMCS is not prohibited from seizing/confiscating a student’s personal electronic device, without searching its contents, if the student’s use or possession of the private electronic device is in violation of RMCS rules or regulations.

Cancer Prevention Act

Students in the state are advised to adhere to current immunization guidelines, as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, regarding full human papillomavirus (HPV) immunization before admission or advancement to the eighth grade level of any private or public elementary or secondary school.

Because the vaccine is more effective when given at younger ages, two doses of HPV vaccine are recommended for all kids between the ages of 9 to 12 years, and the second dose should be given before the start of 8th grade. Kids who wait until later to get their first dose of HPV vaccine may need three doses.

HPV vaccination can prevent over 90 percent of cancers caused by HPV. HPV vaccines are very safe, and scientific research shows that the benefits of HPV vaccination far outweigh the potential risks.

Dangers of Synthetic Drugs

The illicit use and abuse of synthetic drugs represents an emerging and ongoing public health threat in California. The fentanyl crisis specifically, has impacted communities across the state, leading to a sharp increase in fentanyl poisonings and deaths in recent years.

This notice aims to address the crisis with a preventative approach ensuring students and families are educated on the deadly consequences of recreational drug use.

A synthetic drug is a drug with properties and effects similar to a known hallucinogen or narcotic but having a slightly altered chemical structure, especially such a drug created in order to evade existing restrictions against illegal substances.

Synthetic drugs include but are not limited to synthetic cannabinoids (“synthetic marijuana,” “Spice,” “K2”), methamphetamines, bath salts, and fentanyl.

The California Department of Public Health (“CDPH”) has expounded on the extreme danger of drugs laced with fentanyl. Illicit fentanyl can be added to other drugs to make them cheaper, more powerful, and more addictive. Illicit fentanyl has been found in many drugs, including heroin, methamphetamine, counterfeit pills, and cocaine. Fentanyl mixed with any drug increases the likelihood of a fatal overdose. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to tell if drugs have been laced with fentanyl without additional testing, because fentanyl cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted when used as a lacing agent.

Additional information regarding fentanyl from the CDPH’s Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch [can be found here](#).

Diabetes

RMCS will provide an information sheet regarding type 1 diabetes to the parent or guardian of a student when the student is first enrolled in elementary school, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.6. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

1. A description of type 1 diabetes.
2. A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes.
3. A recommendation that parents or guardians of students displaying warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes should immediately consult with the student’s primary care provider to determine if immediate screening for type 1 diabetes is appropriate.
4. A description of the screening process for type 1 diabetes and the implications of test results.
5. A recommendation that, following a type 1 diagnosis, parents or guardians should consult with the pupil’s primary care provider to develop an appropriate treatment plan, which may include consultation with and examination by a specialty care provider, including, but not limited to, a properly qualified endocrinologist.

A copy of the information sheet regarding type 1 diabetes is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/type1diabetes.asp>. Please contact the office if you need a copy of this information sheet or if you have any questions about this information sheet.

Education of Foster and Mobile Youth

Definitions: For the purposes of this annual notice the terms are defined as follows:

- “Foster youth” means any of the following:
 1. A child who has been removed from their home pursuant to Section 309 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code (“WIC”).
 2. A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to WIC section 300 and 602(whether or not the child has been removed from the child’s home by juvenile court).
 3. A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant WIC section 602, has been removed from the child’s home by the juvenile court, and is in foster care.
 4. A nonminor under the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court, as described in WIC section 450, who satisfies all of the following criteria:
 - a. The nonminor has attained 18 years of age while under an order of foster care placement by the juvenile court.
 - b. The nonminor is in foster care under the placement and care responsibility of the county welfare department, county probation department, Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization.
 - c. The nonminor is participating in a transitional independent living case plan.

5. A dependent child of the court of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization who is the subject of a petition filed in the tribal court.¹
 6. A child who is the subject of a voluntary placement agreement, as defined in WIC section 11400.
- *“Former juvenile court school student”* means a student who, upon completion of the student’s second year of high school, transfers from a juvenile court school to RMCS.
 - *“Child of a military family”* refers to a student who resides in the household of an active duty military member.
 - *“Currently Migratory Child”* refers to a child who, within the last 12-months, has moved with a parent, guardian, or other person having custody to RMCS from another Local Educational Agency (“LEA”), either within California or from another state, so that the child or a member of the child’s immediate family might secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity, and whose parents or guardians have been informed of the child’s eligibility for migrant education services. This includes a child who, without the parent/guardian, has continued to migrate annually to secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity.
 - *“Newcomer pupil”* is a person aged 3 to 21 years, who was not born in any of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and has not been attending one or more schools in any one or more of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, for more than three (3) full academic years.
 - *“Educational Rights Holder” (“ERH”)* means a parent, guardian, or responsible adult appointed by a court to make educational decisions for a minor pursuant to WIC sections 319, 361 or 726, or a person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student pursuant to Education Code section 56055.
 - *“School of origin”* means the school that the foster youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the foster youth was last enrolled. If the school the foster youth attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which the student was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the foster youth attended within the immediately preceding 15 months, the Charter School liaison for foster youth, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the ERH for the youth, shall determine, in the best interests of the foster youth, the school that shall be deemed the school of origin. For a foster youth who is an individual with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code section 56026, “school” as used in the definition of “school of origin” includes a placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school as defined in Education Code section 56034, subject to the requirements of Education Code section 56325.
 - *“Best interests”* means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for a foster youth, consideration is given to, among other factors, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational program and the foster youth’s access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all Charter School students.
 - *“Partial coursework satisfactorily completed”* includes any portion of an individual course, even if the student did not complete the entire course.

Within this notice, foster youth, former juvenile court school students, a child of a military family, a currently migratory child, and newcomer pupil will be collectively referred to as “Foster and Mobile Youth.” Within this notice, a parent, guardian, or other person holding the educational rights for a Foster and Mobile Youth will be referred to as a “parent/guardian” or “ERH.”

Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison: The Executive Director & Superintendent or designee designates the following staff person as the Liaison for Foster and Mobile Youth:

Kelly Griffith Mannion, M.Ed.
 Executive Director & Superintendent
 3880 Cypress Drive, Ste B
 Petaluma, CA 94954

¹ RMCS shall not require an Indian tribe or tribal court representative to certify that any student is a dependent of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization.

The Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison's responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Ensuring and facilitating the proper educational placement, enrollment in school, and checkout from school of foster children.
2. Assisting foster children when transferring from one school to another school in ensuring proper transfer of credits, records and grades.

School Stability: RMCS will work with foster youth and their parent/guardian to ensure that each pupil is placed in the least restrictive educational programs, and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all pupils, including, but not necessarily limited to, interscholastic sports. All decisions regarding a foster youth's education and placement will be based on the best interest of the child and shall consider, among other factors, educational stability and the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress.

Foster youth, currently migratory children and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest. RMCS will immediately enroll a foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family seeking reenrollment in RMCS as the student's school of origin (subject to RMCS's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in RMCS's charter and Board policy). If a dispute arises regarding a foster youth's request to remain in RMCS as the school of origin, the foster youth has the right to remain in RMCS pending the resolution of the dispute. RMCS will also immediately enroll any foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family seeking to transfer to RMCS (subject to RMCS's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in RMCS's charter and Board policy) regardless of the student's ability to meet normal enrollment documentation or uniform requirements (e.g., producing medical records or academic records from a previous school).

Foster youth, currently migratory children, and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin following the termination of the child's status as a foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family, as follows:

1. For students in Kindergarten through eighth grade, inclusive, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through the duration of the academic year in which the student's status changed.

If the Charter School operates an intersession program, Charter School shall grant priority access to foster youths. Notwithstanding any other law, if the foster youth will be moving during an intersession period, the pupil's educational rights holder, or Indian custodian in the case of an Indian child, shall determine which school the pupil attends for the intersession period, if applicable. "Intersession program" means an expanded learning program offered by the Charter School on nonschooldays, including, but not limited to, summer school. "Indian custodian" is as the term is defined in Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code.

Acceptance of Course Work: The Charter School will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a Foster and Mobile Youth.

The Charter School will provide Foster and Mobile Youth credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, the Charter School shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless the Charter School, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the Foster and Mobile Youth shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. These students shall not be prevented from taking or retaking a course to meet California State University or the University of California admission eligibility requirements.

Student Records: When RMCS receives a transfer request and/or student records request for the educational information and records of a foster youth from a new local educational agency ("LEA"), RMCS shall provide these student records within two (2) business days. RMCS shall compile the complete educational record of the student, including but not limited to a determination of seat time, full or partial credits earned, current classes and grades, immunization and other records, and, if applicable, a copy of the student's special education records including assessments, IEPs, and/or 504 plans. All requests for student records will be shared with the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison, who shall be aware of the specific educational recordkeeping needs of Foster and Mobile

Youth.

RMCS shall not lower a foster youth's grades as a result of the student's absence due to a verified court appearance, related court ordered activity, or a change the placement of the student made by a county or placing agency. If a foster youth is absent from school due to a decision to change the placement of the student made by a county or placing agency, the grades and credits of the pupil will be calculated as of the date the student left RMCS.

In accordance with RMCS's Educational Records and Student Information Policy, under limited circumstances, RMCS may disclose student records or personally identifiable information contained in those records to certain requesting parties including but not limited to a foster family agency and state and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, without parent/guardian consent.

Discipline Determinations: If RMCS intends to extend the suspension of any foster youth pending a recommendation for expulsion, RMCS will invite the student's attorney and an appropriate representative from the relevant county agency to participate in the meeting at which the extension of the suspension will be discussed.

If RMCS intends to suspend for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expel a student with a disability who is also a foster youth due to an act for which the recommendation for expulsion is discretionary, RMCS will invite the student's attorney and an appropriate representative from the relevant county agency to participate in the Manifestation Determination Review meeting.

Complaints of Noncompliance: A complaint of noncompliance with any of the requirements outlined above may be filed through RMCS's Uniform Complaint Procedures. A copy of the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures is available on the RMCS website.

Availability of Complete Policy: For any Foster and Mobile Youth who enrolls at RMCS, a copy of RMCS's complete foster youth policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. A copy of the complete Policy is available on the RMCS website.

Education of Homeless Children and Youth

The term "homeless children and youth" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. It includes children and youths who (42 U.S.C. § 11434a):

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
3. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and/or
4. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of "homeless."

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by RMCS Liaison.

School Liaison: The Executive Director & Superintendent or designee designates the following staff person as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)):

Kelly Griffith Mannion, M.Ed.
Executive Director & Superintendent
3880 Cypress Drive, Ste B
Petaluma, CA 94954
707.778.6414 x 101

RMCS Liaison shall ensure that (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies, and through the annual housing questionnaire administered by RMCS
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at RMCS.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, any other preschool programs administered by RMCS, if any, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
4. Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of such youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, RMCS's charter, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
8. Charter School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
9. RMCS Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.
10. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that the youths may obtain assistance from RMCS Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Act.

The California Department of Education publishes a list of the contact information for the Homeless Education Liaisons in the state, which is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>

Housing Questionnaire: Charter School shall administer a housing questionnaire for purposes of identifying homeless children and youth. Charter School shall ensure that the housing questionnaire is based on the best practices developed by the CDE. Charter School shall annually provide the housing questionnaire to all parents/guardians of students and to all unaccompanied youths at Charter School. The housing questionnaire shall include an explanation of the rights and protections a student has as a homeless child or youth or as an unaccompanied youth. The housing questionnaire shall be available in paper form. The housing questionnaire shall be available in English, and if fifteen (15) percent or more of the students enrolled at Charter School speak a single primary language other than English, it shall also be written in the primary language. The questionnaire shall be translated into other languages upon request of a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth. Charter School shall collect the completed housing questionnaires and annually report to the CDE the number of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled. (Education Code Section 48851.)

School Stability: The Charter School will work with homeless students and their parent/guardian to ensure that each student is placed in the least restrictive educational programs, and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all students, including, but not necessarily limited to, interscholastic sports. All decisions regarding a homeless student's education and placement will be based on the best interest of the child and shall consider, among other factors, educational stability and the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress.

Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest. The Charter School will immediately enroll a homeless student seeking reenrollment in the Charter School as the student's school of origin (subject to the Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy). The Charter School will also immediately enroll any homeless student seeking to transfer to the Charter School (subject to the Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy) regardless of the student's ability to meet normal enrollment documentation or uniform requirements (e.g., producing medical records or academic records from a previous school).

Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin following the termination of the child's status as a homeless student as follows:

1. For students in Kindergarten through eighth grade, inclusive, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through the duration of the academic year in which the student's status changed.
2. For students enrolled in high school, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through graduation.

If the Charter School operates an intersession program, Charter School shall grant priority access to homeless students. Notwithstanding any other law, if the homeless student will be moving during an intersession period, the pupil's parent, guardian, educational rights holder, Indian custodian² in the case of an Indian child, or, if none of the preceding are applicable, an accompanied homeless student themselves shall determine which school the pupil attends for the intersession period, if applicable. "Intersession program" means an expanded learning program offered by the Charter School on nonschooldays, including, but not limited to, summer school. "Indian custodian" is as the term is defined in Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code.

Acceptance of Course Work: The Charter School will accept any coursework satisfactorily completed at any public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency by a homeless student.

The Charter School will provide homeless students credit for the partial completion of courses taken while attending a public school, a juvenile court school, a school in a country other than the United States, and/or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. If the student did not complete the entire course, the Charter School shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless the Charter School, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the homeless student shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. These students shall not be prevented from taking or retaking a course to meet California State University or the University of California admission eligibility requirements.

Complaints of Noncompliance: A complaint of noncompliance with any of the requirements outlined above may be filed through the Charter School's Uniform Complaint Procedures. A copy of the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures is available upon request at the main office.

Availability of Complete Policy: For any homeless student who enrolls at the Charter School, a copy of the Charter School's complete policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. A copy of the complete Policy is available on the website. **English Learners**
RMCS is committed to the success of its English Learners and support will be offered both within academic classes and in supplemental settings for students who need additional support for English language learning. RMCS will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, English Learners and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. RMCS will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding English Learners and the rights of students and parents.

Human Trafficking Prevention

California has the highest number of incidents of human trafficking in the U.S., and all students may be vulnerable. Information and materials for parents/guardians about the prevention of human trafficking are available at the following links:

² "Indian custodian" means any Indian person who has legal custody of an Indian child under tribal law or custom or under State law or to whom temporary physical care, custody, and control has been transferred by the parent of such child. *Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code*

Immunizations

Pursuant to the California Health and Safety Code and the California Code of Regulations, children must provide proof of having received required immunizations (shots) before they can attend school unless they meet the requirements for an exemption. Immunization records are required for all incoming students. Verification of immunizations will be completed with written medical records from the child’s doctor or immunization clinic. To ensure a safe learning environment for all students, RMCS follows and abides by the health standards set forth by the state of California. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Those students who are not in compliance with the State requirements must be excluded from attendance until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of RMCS.

These required immunizations include:

Child’s Grade	List of shots required to attend school
TK/K-12 Admission	<p>Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTaP) - Five (5) doses Polio - Four (4) doses Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) - Two (2) doses Hepatitis B (Hep B) - Three (3) doses Varicella (chickenpox) – Two (2) doses</p> <p>NOTE: Four doses of DTaP are allowed if one was given on or after the fourth birthday. Three doses of DTaP meet the requirement if at least one dose of Tdap, DTaP, or DTP vaccine was given on or after the seventh birthday (also meets the 7th-12th grade Tdap requirement.) One or two doses of Td vaccine given on or after the seventh birthday count towards the requirement for DTaP. Three doses of Polio are allowed if one was given on or after fourth birthday. MMR doses must be given on or after first birthday. Two doses of measles, two doses of mumps, and one dose of rubella vaccine meet the requirement, separately or combined. Combination vaccines (e.g., MMRV) meet the requirements for individual component vaccines.</p>

Involuntary Removal Process

No student shall be involuntarily removed by RMCS for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the action (“Involuntary Removal Notice”). The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student’s parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student’s educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include the charges against the student and an explanation of the student’s basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. The hearing shall be consistent with RMCS’s expulsion procedures. If the student’s parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until RMCS issues a final decision. As used herein, “involuntarily removed” includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to RMCS’s suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon parent/guardian request for a hearing, RMCS will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student’s parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student’s educational rights holder, and shall include a copy of RMCS’s expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If the parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing the student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent RMCS from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

Lost or Damaged School Property

If a student willfully damages RMCS's property or the personal property of a Charter School employee, or fails to return a textbook, library book, computer/tablet or other Charter School property that has been loaned to the student, the student's parents/guardians are liable for all damages caused by the student's misconduct not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), adjusted annually for inflation. After notifying the student's parent or guardian in writing of the student's alleged misconduct and affording the student due process, RMCS may withhold the student's grades and transcripts until the damages have been paid. If the student and the student's parent/guardian are unable to pay for the damages or to return the property, RMCS will provide a program of voluntary work for the minor in lieu of the payment of monetary damages. Upon completion of the voluntary work, the student's grades will be released.

Mental Health Services

RMCS recognizes that when unidentified and unaddressed, mental health challenges can lead to poor academic performance, increased likelihood of suspension and expulsion, chronic absenteeism, student attrition, homelessness, incarceration, and/or violence. Access to mental health services at RMCS and in our community is not only critical to improving the physical and emotional safety of students, but it also helps address barriers to learning and provides support so that all students can learn problem-solving skills and achieve in school and, ultimately, in life. The following resources are available to your child:

Available on Campus:

- **School-based counseling services** – your child is encouraged to directly contact a Charter School counselor by coming into the counseling office during school hours and making an appointment to speak with a counselor. The counseling office can also be reached at 707.778.6414 x 114. **The RMCS Student Services Coordinator & Education Specialist coordinates** supports students by providing individual sessions, group or parent consultations whenever a student is having a difficult time due to academic stress, transition to changes in their environment, or social concerns, including isolation. Counseling services, whether provided by our Charter School or by an outside provider listed herein, are voluntary.
- **Special education services** – if you believe your child may have a disability, you are encouraged to directly contact Education Specialist and Student Services Coordinator, Lorna Rochman-McEntire at 707.778.6414 x to request an evaluation.
- **Prescription medication while on campus** – if your child requires prescription medication during school hours and you would like assistance from School staff in providing this medication to your child, please contact our Office Coordinator Alex Van Houten at 707.778.6414 x 103.

Available in the Community:

- County of Sonoma Department of Health Services provides health coverage, food assistance, housing assistance, foster care, and a broad range of programs and services designed to promote, develop and sustain the health of individuals, families, and communities. [\(707\) 565-4700](tel:7075654700) or CA Relay: [711](tel:711) or visit: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services>
 - County of Sonoma Mental Health Hotlines-
 - 24 Hour Hotline [\(707\) 565-6900](tel:7075656900) or [\(800\) 870-8786](tel:8008708786)
 - 24-hour Suicide Prevention [\(855\) 587-6373](tel:8555876373)
 - 24-Hour Crisis Services -[\(707\) 576-8181](tel:7075768181)
- Child Parent Institute provides child therapy, family resource assistance, parent education, facilitated supervised visitation, therapeutic and recreational creative arts programming. (707) 585-6108 or visit: <https://calparents.org/>

- Petaluma Health Center- This organization ensures access to high-quality health care and health equity for the community. 707.559.7500 or visit: <https://phealthcenter.org/>
- Mentor Me at Cavanaugh Recreation Center- This organization services youths ages 5-17 with trained adult mentors. 707.765.8488 or visit: www.wearementorme.org.

Available Nationally:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline - This organization provides confidential support for adults and youth in distress, including prevention and crisis resources. Available 24 hours at 1-800-273-8255.
- The Trevor Project - This organization provides suicide prevention and crisis intervention for LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13 and 24. **Available at 1-866-488-7386 or visit <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.**
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America – This organization is a community- based mentorship program. Community-specific program information can be found online at <https://www.bbbs.org> or by calling (813) 720-8778.

Nondiscrimination Statement

RMCS does not discriminate against any person on the basis of actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, immigration status, religion, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes in the California Penal Code.

RMCS Board of Directors shall not refuse to approve the use or prohibit the use of any textbook, instructional material, supplemental instructional material, or other curriculum for classroom instruction or any book or other resource in a school library on the basis that it includes a study of the role and contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, persons with disabilities, or members of other ethnic, cultural, religious, or socioeconomic status groups.

RMCS adheres to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEIA”).

RMCS does not discourage students from enrolling or seeking to enroll in RMCS for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance, disability, neglect or delinquency, English proficiency, for being homeless or a foster/mobile youth, economic disadvantage, nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. RMCS shall not encourage a student currently attending Charter School to disenroll or transfer to another school based on any of the aforementioned reasons except in cases of expulsion and suspension or involuntary removal in accordance with RMCS’s charter and relevant policies.

RMCS does not request nor require student records prior to a student’s enrollment.

RMCS shall provide a copy of the California Department of Education Complaint Notice and Form to any parent, guardian, or student over the age of 18 at the following times: (1) when a parent, guardian, or student over of the age of 18 inquires about enrollment; (2) before conducting an enrollment lottery; and (3) before disenrollment of a student.

RMCS is committed to providing an educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex); Titles IV, VI, and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, or national origin); The Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the IDEIA; and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA (mental or physical disability).

RMCS also prohibits sexual harassment, including cyber sexual bullying, and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, religious affiliation, creed, color, immigration status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation.

RMCS does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including discrimination, intimidation, or bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which RMCS does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of position or gender.

Pursuant to California law and the California Attorney General's guidance to K-12 schools in responding to immigration issues ("Guidance"), Charter School provides equal access to free public education, regardless of a student's or their parent's or guardian's immigration status or religious beliefs. The complete Guidance, including *Appendix G – Know Your Rights* can be reviewed via the following link: <https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/bcj/school-guidance-model-k12.pdf>

RMCS will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted. Inquiries, complaints, or grievances regarding harassment as described in this section, above, should be directed to RMCS Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") Compliance Officer.

Kelly Mannion,
Executive Director/Principal
River Montessori Charter School
3880 Cypress Drive Petaluma, CA 94954
(707) 778-6414 EXT. 101

The lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in RMCS's programs or activities. RMCS prohibits retaliation against anyone who files a complaint or who participates or refuses to participate in a complaint investigation.

Oral Health Assessment

Students enrolled in kindergarten in a public school or while enrolled in first grade if the student was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school are required to have an oral health assessment completed by a dental professional. Please contact the main office if you have questions about this requirement.

Physical Examinations and Right to Refuse

All students must complete a health screening examination on or before the 90th day after the student's entrance into first grade or such students must have obtained a waiver pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 124040 and 124085. This examination can be obtained from your family physician or possibly through the services provided by your County Health Department. Information and forms are distributed to students enrolled in kindergarten. If your child's medical status changes, please provide the teacher with a physician's written verification of the medical issue, especially if it impacts in any way your child's ability to perform schoolwork.

A parent/guardian having control or charge of any child enrolled in RMCS may file annually with the Executive Director & Superintendent a written and signed statement stating that the parent/guardian will not consent to a physical examination of the child. Thereupon the child shall be exempt from any physical examination, but whenever there is a good reason to believe that the child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, the child shall be sent home and shall not be permitted to return until the school authorities are satisfied that any contagious or infectious disease does not exist.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

RMCS recognizes that pregnant and parenting students are entitled to accommodations that provide them with the opportunity to succeed academically while protecting their health and the health of their children. A pregnant or parenting student is entitled to eight (8) weeks of parental leave, or more if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician, which the student may take before the birth of the student's infant if there is a medical necessity and after childbirth during the school year in which the birth takes place, inclusive of any mandatory summer instruction, in order to protect the health of the student who gives or expects to give birth and the infant, and to allow the pregnant or parenting student to care for and bond with the infant. RMCS will ensure that absences from the student's regular school program are excused until the student is able to return to the regular school program.

Upon return to school after taking parental leave, a pregnant or parenting student will be able to make up work missed during the pregnant or parenting student's leave, including, but not limited to, makeup work plans and reenrollment in courses.

Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pregnant or parenting students may be filed under the RMCS Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") with the RMCS UCP Compliance Officer.

Kelly Mannion,

Executive Director/Principal
River Montessori Charter School
3880 Cypress Drive Petaluma, CA 94954
(707) 778-6414 EXT. 101

A copy of the UCP is available on the RMCS website. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the complaint procedures, please contact the Executive Director & Superintendent.

Safe Storage of Firearms

The purpose of this notice is to inform and to remind parents and legal guardians of all students at the Charter School of their responsibilities for keeping firearms out of the hands of children as required by California law. There have been many news reports of children bringing firearms to school. In many instances, the child obtained the firearm(s) from his or her home. **These incidents can be easily prevented by storing firearms in a safe and secure manner, including keeping them locked up when not in use and storing them separately from ammunition.**

To help everyone understand their legal responsibilities, this notice spells out California law regarding the storage of firearms. Please take some time to review this notice and evaluate your own personal practices to assure that you and your family are in compliance with California law:

- With very limited exceptions, California makes a person criminally liable for keeping any firearm, loaded or unloaded, within any premises that are under their custody and control where that person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, and the child obtains access to the firearm and thereby (1) causes death or injury to the child or any other person; (2) carries the firearm off the premises or to a public place, including to any preschool or school grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, or to any school-sponsored event, activity, or performance; or (3) unlawfully brandishes the firearm to others.
 - The criminal penalty may be significantly greater if someone dies or suffers great bodily injury as a result of the child gaining access to the firearm.
- With very limited exceptions, California also makes it a crime for a person to negligently store or leave any firearm, loaded or unloaded, on their premises in a location where the person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to it without the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian, unless reasonable action is taken to secure the firearm against access by the child, even where a minor **never** actually accesses the firearm.
- In addition to potential fines and terms of imprisonment, as of January 1, 2020, a gun owner found criminally liable under these California laws faces prohibitions from possessing, controlling, owning, receiving, or purchasing a firearm for 10 years.
- Finally, a parent or guardian may also be civilly liable for damages resulting from the discharge of a firearm by that person's child or ward.

The county or city may have additional restrictions regarding the safe storage of firearms. Thank you for helping to keep our children and schools safe. Remember that the easiest and safest way to comply with the law is to keep firearms in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders the firearm inoperable.

School Bus and Passenger Safety

All students who are transported in a school bus or school student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety. A copy of the Transportation Safety Plan is available upon request at the main office.

School Safety Plan and Asbestos Management Plan

RMCS has established a Comprehensive School Safety Plan. The Plan is available on the RMCS website.

The Charter School has also established an Asbestos Management Plan. The Plan is available upon request at the main office. The following asbestos-related activities are planned or in progress at the Charter School: Building owner coordinates such efforts.

Section 504

RMCS recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program of RMCS. Any

student who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity, including, but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodations by RMCS. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for accommodations under Section 504 may make a referral for an evaluation to the Executive Director & Superintendent. A copy of RMCS's Section 504 policies and procedures is available on the RMCS website.

Special Education /Students with Disabilities

We are dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of the academic environment and society. RMCS provides special education instruction and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEA"), Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and procedures of the El Dorado County SELPA. These services are available for special education students enrolled at RMCS. We offer high quality educational programs and services for all our students in accordance with the assessed needs of each student. RMCS collaborates with parents, the student, teachers, and other agencies, as may be indicated, in order to appropriately serve the educational needs of each student.

Pursuant to the IDEA and relevant state law, RMCS is responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating children enrolled at RMCS with known or suspected disabilities to determine whether a need for special education and related services exists. This includes children with disabilities who are homeless or foster youth. RMCS shall not deny nor discourage any student from enrollment solely due to a disability. If you believe your child may be eligible for special education services, please contact Lorna Rochman-McEntire, Education Specialist & Student Services Coordinator, 707.778.6414 x 114.

State Testing

RMCS shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades (e.g., the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress ["CAASPP"].) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent's or guardian's written request to Charter School officials to excuse their child from any or all parts of the CAASPP shall be granted. Upon request, parents have a right to information on the level of achievement of their student on every State academic assessment administered to the student.

Student Records, including Records Challenges and Directory Information

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within five (5) business days after the day RMCS receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to RMCS Executive Director & Superintendent or designee a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. RMCS official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask RMCS to amend a record should write RMCS's Executive Director & Superintendent or designee, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If RMCS decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, RMCS will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and 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. If RMCS decides to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Executive Director & Superintendent must order the correction or the removal and destruction of the information and inform the parent or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

3. The right to provide written consent before RMCS discloses personally identifiable information ("PII") from 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 Charter School officials with legitimate educational interests. A Charter School official is a person employed by RMCS as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on RMCS's Board of Directors. A Charter School official also may include a volunteer, consultant, vendor, or contractor outside of RMCS who performs an institutional service or function for which RMCS would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to

the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or contracted provider of digital educational platforms and/or services; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another Charter School official in performing their tasks. A Charter School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.

Upon request, RMCS discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled, if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

Note that Charter School will not release information to third parties for immigration-enforcement purposes, except as required by law or court order.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by RMCS to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

5. The right to request that RMCS not release student names, addresses and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from a student's education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to Charter School officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires RMCS to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A Charter School may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student to the following parties:

1. Charter School officials who have a legitimate educational interest as defined by 34 C.F.R. Part 99;
2. Other schools to which a student seeks or intends to enroll so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. When a student transfers schools, RMCS will mail the original or a copy of a student's cumulative file to the receiving district or private school within ten (10) school days following the date the request is received from the public school or private school where the student intends to enroll. RMCS will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the request for records at the parent's or eligible student's last known address, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student. Additionally, RMCS will give the parent or eligible student, upon request, a copy of the record that was disclosed and give the parent or eligible student, upon request, an opportunity for a hearing;
3. Certain government officials listed in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1) in order to carry out lawful functions;
4. Appropriate parties in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid if it is necessary to determine eligibility, amount of aid, conditions for aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of the aid;
5. Organizations conducting certain studies for RMCS in accordance with 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(F);
6. Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
7. Parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
8. Individuals or entities, in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. Subject to the exceptions found in 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(9)(i), reasonable effort must be made to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance, so that the parent or eligible student may seek a protective order;
9. Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies;
10. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law;
11. A foster family agency with jurisdiction over a currently enrolled or former student, a short-term residential treatment program staff responsible for the education or case management of a student, and a caregiver (regardless of whether the caregiver has been appointed as the student's educational rights holder) who has direct responsibility for the care of the student, including a certified or licensed foster parent, an approved relative or nonrelated extended family member, or a

resource family, may access the current or most recent records of grades, transcripts, attendance, discipline, and online communication on platforms established by RMCS for students and parents, and any individualized education program (“IEP”) or Section 504 plan that may have been developed or maintained by RMCS; and/or

12. A victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense. The disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceedings conducted by RMCS with respect to that alleged crime or offense. RMCS discloses the final results of the disciplinary proceeding regardless of whether RMCS concluded a violation was committed.

“Directory Information” is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. RMCS may disclose the personally identifiable information that it has designated as directory information without a parent’s or eligible student’s prior written consent. RMCS has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Student’s name
2. Student’s address
3. Parent’s/guardian’s address
4. Telephone listing
5. Student’s electronic mail address
6. Parent’s/guardian’s electronic mail address
7. Photograph/video
8. Date and place of birth
9. Dates of attendance
10. Grade level
11. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
12. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
13. Degrees, honors, and awards received
14. The most recent educational agency or institution attended
15. Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student’s social security number, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

If you do not want RMCS to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify RMCS in writing at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment. Please notify the Executive Director & Superintendent at: admin@rivermontessoricharter.org. A copy of the complete Policy is available on the RMCS website.

Please note that data collected and reported by Charter School to the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (“CALPADS”³) pursuant to state law, will be shared with the California College Guidance Initiative (“CCGI”⁴) and will:

- 1) Be used to provide pupils and families with direct access to online tools and resources.
- 2) Enable a pupil to transmit information shared with the CCGI to both of the following:
 - a. Postsecondary educational institutions for purposes of admissions and academic placement.
 - b. The Student Aid Commission for purposes of determining eligibility for, and increasing uptake of, student financial aid.

Surveys About Personal Beliefs

Unless the student’s parent/guardian gives written permission, a student will not be given any test, questionnaire, survey, or examination containing any questions about the student’s, or the student’s parents’ or guardians’ personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality, or religion.

Tobacco-Free Schools

³ CALPADS is a database maintained by the CDE which consists of pupil data from elementary and secondary schools relating to, among other things, demographic, program participation, enrollment, and statewide assessments data.

⁴ CCGI is an authorized provider of an institutional service to all California local educational agencies and part of the state’s efforts to make college-going a more streamlined experience for students. The CCGI currently receives enrollment data for all public-school students enrolled in grades six through twelve from the California Department of Education (“CDE”).

Ample research has demonstrated the health hazards associated with the use of tobacco products, including smoking and the breathing of secondhand smoke. RMCS provides instructional programs designed to discourage students from using tobacco products. RMCS's Governing Board recognizes that smoking and other uses of tobacco and nicotine products constitute a serious public health hazard and are inconsistent with the goals of RMCS to provide a healthy environment for students and staff.

In the best interest of students, employees, and the general public, the Board therefore prohibits the use of tobacco products at all times on Charter School property and in Charter School vehicles. This prohibition applies to all employees, students, visitors, and other persons at school or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event. It applies to any meeting on any property owned, leased, or rented by or from RMCS.

Smoking or use of any tobacco-related product or disposal of any tobacco-related waste is prohibited within 25 feet of any playground, except on a public sidewalk located within 25 feet of the playground. Smoking or use of any tobacco-related product is also prohibited within 250 feet of the youth sports event in the same park or facility where a youth sports event is taking place. In addition, any form of intimidation, threat, or retaliation against a person for attempting to enforce this policy is prohibited.

The Executive Director & Superintendent or designee shall inform students, parents/guardians, employees, and the public about this policy. All individuals on Charter School premises share in the responsibility of adhering to this policy. Additionally, RMCS will post signs stating "Tobacco use is prohibited" prominently at all entrances to school property.

Uniform Complaint Procedure ("UCP")

RMCS is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. RMCS shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints using policies and procedures known as the Uniform Complaint Procedure ("UCP") adopted by our Governing Board for the following types of complaints:

1. Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any protected group on the basis of the actual or perceived characteristics of age, ancestry, color, mental disability, physical disability, ethnic group identification, immigration status, citizenship, gender expression, gender identity, gender, genetic information, nationality, national origin, race or ethnicity, religion, medical condition, marital status, sex, or sexual orientation, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any Charter School program or activity. Unlawful discrimination includes, but is not limited to, noncompliance with Education Code section 243(a).
2. Complaints alleging a violation of state or federal law or regulation governing the following programs:
 - Accommodations for Pregnant, Parenting or Lactating Students;
 - Adult Education;
 - Career Technical and Technical Education;
 - Career Technical and Technical Training;
 - Child Care and Development Programs;
 - Consolidated Categorical Aid;
 - Education of Students in Foster Care, Students who are Homeless, former Juvenile Court Students now enrolled in a public school, Migratory Children and Children of Military Families;
 - Every Student Succeeds Act;
 - Migrant Education Programs;
 - Regional Occupational Centers and Programs;
 - School Safety Plans; and/or
 - State Preschool Programs.
3. Complaints alleging noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees. A student enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory or is for credit.

- A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, clothes, or other materials or equipment.
- A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment, or clothes associated with an educational activity.

Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees may be filed with the Executive Director & Superintendent or the Compliance Officer identified below.

4. Complaints alleging noncompliance with the requirements governing the Local Control Funding Formula (“LCFF”) or Local Control and Accountability Plans (“LCAP”) under Education Code sections 47606.5 and 47607.3, as applicable. If RMCS adopts a School Plan for Student Achievement (“SPSA”) in addition to its LCAP, complaints of noncompliance with the requirements of the SPSA under Education Code sections 64000, 64001, 65000, and 65001 shall also fall under the UCP.

Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding child nutrition programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 49490-49590 are governed by Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (“C.F.R.”) sections 210.19(a)(4), 215.1(a), 220.13(c), 225.11(b), 226.6(n), and 250.15(d) and Title 5, California Code of Regulations (“C.C.R.”) sections 15580 - 15584.

Complaints alleging noncompliance regarding special education programs established pursuant to Education Code sections 56000-56865 and 59000-59300 are governed by the procedures set forth in 5 C.C.R. sections 3200-3205 and 34 C.F.R. sections 300.151-300.153.

Complaints regarding state preschool health and safety issues in local educational agencies exempt from licensing are governed by 5 C.C.R. sections 4690-4694, except as otherwise indicated.

Complaints other than complaints relating to pupil fees must be filed in writing with the following Compliance Officer:

Kelly Mannion, Executive Director & Superintendent
 River Montessori Charter School
 3880 Cypress Drive, Ste B
 Petaluma, CA 94954
 (707) 778-6414 EXT. 101

Only complaints regarding pupil fees or LCAP compliance may be filed anonymously and only if the anonymous complainant provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees or LCAP.

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, must be filed within six (6) months from the date the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, occurred or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying. All other complaints under the UCP shall be filed not later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred. For complaints relating to the LCAP, the date of the alleged violation is the date on which RMCS’s Board of Directors approved the LCAP or the annual update was adopted by RMCS.

The Compliance Officer responsible for investigating the complaint shall conduct and complete the investigation in accordance with California regulations and RMCS’s UCP Policy. The Compliance Officer shall provide the complainant with a final written investigation report (“Decision”) within sixty (60) calendar days from RMCS’s receipt of the complaint. This sixty (60) calendar day time period may be extended by written agreement of the complainant.

The complainant has a right to appeal RMCS’s Decision to the California Department of Education (“CDE”) by filing a written appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of RMCS’s written Decision, except if RMCS has used its UCP to address a complaint that is not subject to the UCP requirements. The appeal must include a copy of the complaint filed with RMCS, a copy of RMCS’s Decision, and the complainant must specify and explain the basis for the appeal of the Decision, including at least one of the following:

1. RMCS failed to follow its complaint procedures.

2. Relative to the allegations of the complaint, RMCS's Decision lacks material findings of fact necessary to reach a conclusion of law.
3. The material findings of fact in RMCS's Decision are not supported by substantial evidence.
4. The legal conclusion in RMCS's Decision is inconsistent with the law.
5. In a case in which RMCS's Decision found noncompliance, the corrective actions fail to provide a proper remedy.

A complainant who appeals RMCS's Decision on a UCP complaint to the CDE shall receive a written appeal decision within sixty (60) calendar days of the CDE's receipt of the appeal, unless extended by written agreement with the complainant or the CDE documents exceptional circumstances and informs the complainant.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the CDE's appeal Decision pursuant to 5 C.C.R. section 4633(f)(2) or (3), either party may request reconsideration by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction ("SSPI") or the SSPI's designee. The request for reconsideration shall specify and explain the reason(s) for contesting the findings of fact, conclusions of law, or corrective actions in the CDE's appeal Decision.

If a UCP complaint is filed directly with the CDE and the CDE determines that it merits direct intervention, the CDE shall complete an investigation and provide a written decision to the complainant within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the complaint, unless the parties have agreed to extend the timeline or the CDE documents exceptional circumstances and informs the complainant.

If RMCS finds merit in a UCP complaint, or the CDE finds merit in an appeal, RMCS shall take corrective actions consistent with the requirements of existing law that will provide a remedy to the affected student and/or parent/guardian as applicable.

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of RMCS's complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaints arising under state law, however, a complainant must wait until sixty (60) calendar days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if RMCS has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of the complainant's right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 C.C.R. § 4622.

A copy of the UCP shall be available upon request free of charge on the RMCS website. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the UCP, please contact the Executive Director & Superintendent.

Universal School Meals

1. School Meals and Student Wellness (classroom based)

Pursuant to California law, the Charter School shall make available a nutritionally adequate breakfast and a nutritionally adequate lunch free of charge and with adequate time to eat, during each schoolday to any student who requests a meal without consideration of the student's eligibility for a federally funded free or reduced-price meal, with a maximum of one (1) free breakfast meal and one (1) free lunch meal during each schoolday. This shall apply to all pupils in kindergarten through grade twelve (12).

The School Meals Program and applications for school meals are managed by Old Adobe Unions School District. At this time, OAUSD requires all families to complete the application form. Completed application forms can be returned to the RMCS office. Income eligibility guidelines for federally funded free and reduced-price meals are available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/rs/>

Based on a parent/guardian's annual earnings, a parent/guardian may be eligible to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit from the Federal Government (Federal EITC). The Federal EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. The Federal EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits. In most cases, Federal EITC

payments will not be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, low-income housing, or most Temporary Assistance For Needy Families payments. Even if you a parent/guardian does not owe federal taxes, they must file a federal tax return to receive the Federal EITC. Be sure to fill out the Federal EITC form in the Federal Income Tax Return Booklet. For information regarding your eligibility to receive the Federal EITC, including information on how to obtain the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Notice 797 or any other necessary forms and instructions, contact the IRS by calling 1-800-829-3676 or through its website at www.irs.gov.

A parent/guardian may also be eligible to receive the California Earned Income Tax Credit (California EITC) starting with the calendar year 2015 tax year. The California EITC is a refundable state income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. The California EITC is treated in the same manner as the Federal EITC and generally will not be used to determine eligibility for welfare benefits under California law. To claim the California EITC, even if you do not owe California taxes, you must file a California income tax return and complete and attach the California EITC Form (FTB 3514). For information on the availability of the credit eligibility requirements and how to obtain the necessary California forms and get help filing, contact the Franchise Tax Board at 1-800-852-5711 or through its website at www.ftb.ca.gov.

Charter School shall allow students, teachers, and staff to bring and carry water bottles. Water bottles may be excluded from libraries, computer labs, science labs, and other places where it is deemed dangerous to have drinking water. Charter School may develop additional policies regarding the types of water bottles that may be carried.

Charter School adheres to all applicable requirements regarding placement and maintenance of water bottle refilling stations on campus.

Charter School shall encourage water consumption through promotional and educational activities and signage that focus on the benefits of drinking water and highlight any water bottle filling stations that are located on campus.

A copy of the complete Policy, which includes the Charter School's meal charge policy, is available upon request at the main office. The Charter School also maintains a School Wellness Policy pursuant to state and federal requirements.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, Charter School is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
email:
Program.Intake@usda.gov

Charter School is an equal opportunity provider.

Use of Student Information Learned from Social Media

RMCS complies with all federal, state, and local guidelines regarding the gathering and/or maintenance of information about any enrolled student obtained from social media in the student's educational record. RMCS gathers student information from social media. Such information shall be maintained in RMCS's records with regard to the student and shall be destroyed within one (1) year after a student turns 18 years of age or within one (1) year after the student is no longer enrolled in RMCS, whichever occurs first. A non-minor student or a student's parent or guardian may access the student's records for examination of the information, request the removal of information or corrections made to information gathered or maintained by RMCS by contacting the Executive Director & Superintendent.

B. COMPLETE POLICIES

Professional Boundaries: Staff/Student Interaction Policy

RMCS recognizes its responsibility to make and enforce all rules and regulations governing student and employee behavior to bring about the safest and most learning-conducive environment possible.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student.

For purposes of this policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to property.

For clarification purposes, the following examples are offered for direction and guidance of School personnel:

Examples of PERMITTED actions (NOT corporal punishment)

1. Stopping a student from fighting with another student;
2. Preventing a pupil from committing an act of vandalism;
3. Defending yourself from physical injury or assault by a student;
4. Forcing a pupil to give up a weapon or dangerous object;
5. Requiring an athletic team to participate in strenuous physical training activities designed to strengthen or condition team members or improve their coordination, agility, or physical skills;
6. Engaging in group calisthenics, team drills, or other physical education or voluntary recreational activities.

Examples of PROHIBITED actions (corporal punishment)

1. Hitting, shoving, pushing, or physically restraining a student as a means of control;
2. Making unruly students do push-ups, run laps, or perform other physical acts that cause pain or discomfort as a form of punishment;
3. Paddling, swatting, slapping, grabbing, pinching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical pain.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Staff/Student Behavior

This policy is intended to guide all School faculty and staff in conducting themselves in a way that reflects the high standards of behavior and professionalism required of school employees and to specify the boundaries between students and staff.

Although this policy gives specific, clear direction, it is each staff member's obligation to avoid situations that could prompt suspicion by parents, students, colleagues, or school leaders. One viable standard that can be quickly applied, when you are unsure if certain conduct is acceptable, is to ask yourself, "Would I be engaged in this conduct if my family or colleagues were standing next to me?"

For the purposes of this policy, the term “boundaries” is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing the boundaries of a student/teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member’s perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from a student or parent point of view. The objective of the following lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct.

Staff must understand their own responsibility for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of the established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is crucial that all employees learn this policy thoroughly and apply the lists of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors to their daily activities. Although sincere, competent interaction with students certainly fosters learning, student/staff interactions must have boundaries surrounding potential activities, locations and intentions.

Duty to Report Suspected Misconduct

When any employee reasonably suspects or believes that another staff member may have crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, he or she must immediately report the matter to a school administrator. All reports shall be as confidential as possible under the circumstances. It is the duty of the administrator to investigate and thoroughly report the situation. Employees must also report to the administration any awareness or concern of student behavior that crosses boundaries or where a student appears to be at risk for sexual abuse.

Examples of Specific Behaviors

The following examples are not an exhaustive list: Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors (Violations of this Policy)

- (a) Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal and intimate nature.
- (b) Kissing of any kind.
- (c) Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation.
- (d) Intentionally being alone with a student away from the school.
- (e) Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments.
- (f) Sexual jokes.
- (g) Seeking emotional involvement with a student for your benefit.
- (h) Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented.
- (i) Discussing inappropriate personal troubles or intimate issues with a student in an attempt to gain their support and understanding.
- (j) Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior.

Unacceptable Staff/Student Behaviors

- (a) Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities.
- (b) Being alone in a room with a student at school with the door closed.
- (c) Allowing students in your home.

Cautionary Staff/Student Behaviors

(These behaviors should only be exercised when a reasonable and prudent person, acting as an educator, is prevented from using a better practice or behavior. Staff members should inform their supervisor of the circumstance and occurrence prior to or immediately after the occurrence)

- (a) Remarks about the physical attributes or development of anyone.
- (b) Excessive attention toward a particular student.
- (c) Sending emails, text messages or letters to students if the content is not about school activities.

Acceptable and Recommended Staff/Student Behaviors

- (a) Getting parents' written consent for any after-school activity.
- (b) Obtaining formal approval to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions.
- (c) E-mails, text, phone and instant messages to students must be very professional and pertaining to school activities or classes (Communication should be limited to school technology).
- (d) Keeping the door open when alone with a student.
- (e) Keeping reasonable space between you and your students.
- (f) Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries.
- (g) Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
- (h) Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief.
- (i) Asking for advice from fellow staff or administrators if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries.
- (j) Involving your supervisor if conflict arises with the student.
- (k) Informing the Executive Director about situations that have the potential to become more severe.
- (l) Making detailed notes about an incident that could evolve into a more serious situation later.
- (m) Recognizing the responsibility to stop unacceptable behavior of students or coworkers.
- (n) Asking another staff member to be present if you will be alone with any type of special needs student.
- (o) Asking another staff member to be present when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours.
- (p) Giving students praise and recognition without touching them.
- (q) Pats on the back, high fives and handshakes are acceptable.
- (r) Keeping your professional conduct a high priority.
- (s) Asking yourself if your actions are worth your job and career.

Discipline Philosophy and Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

Montessori philosophy recognizes the importance of an orderly and safe environment as a cornerstone to the learning experience for children. Personal community values such as sharing, kindness, cleanliness, and personal responsibility as well as respect for self, others, and the environment are an integral part of the Montessori experience. As these values are continually modeled and reinforced, children need less and less correction over time.

However, if a student persistently has difficulty accepting the school's code of conduct or engages in dangerous behavior, parents, the student, and the Executive Director & Superintendent work together find appropriate solutions.

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy and Procedures have been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and wellbeing of all students at RMCS. In creating this policy, RMCS has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* which describe the offenses for which students at noncharter schools may be suspended or expelled and the procedures governing those suspensions and expulsions in order to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspensions, expulsions and involuntary removal. The language that follows is largely consistent with the language of Education Code Section 48900 *et seq.* RMCS is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions, expulsions, and involuntary removals, and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension, expulsion or involuntary removal.

Consistent with this Policy, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This shall serve as RMCS's policy and procedures for student suspension, expulsion, and involuntary removal, and it may be amended from time to time without the need to seek a material revision of the charter so long as the amendments comport with legal requirements. Charter School staff shall enforce disciplinary policies and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This policy and its procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook which will clearly describe discipline expectations.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

RMCS administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians⁵ are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline and involuntary removal policies and procedures. The notice shall state that this policy and its procedures are available upon request at the Executive Director & Superintendent's office.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom RMCS has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to general education students except when federal and state law requires additional or different procedures. RMCS will follow all applicable federal and state laws including but not limited to the applicable provisions of the California Education Code, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom RMCS has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students.

No student shall be involuntarily removed by RMCS for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) school days before the effective date of the action. The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian, and shall inform the student, and the student's parent/guardian of the basis for which the is being involuntarily removed and the student's parent/guardian's right to request a hearing to challenge the involuntary removal. If a student's parent/guardian/ requests a hearing, RMCS shall utilize the same hearing procedures specified below for expulsions, before the effective date of the action to involuntarily remove the student. If the student's parent, guardian requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until RMCS issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include removals for misconduct which may be grounds for suspension or expulsion as enumerated below. Students may be involuntarily removed for reasons including, but not limited to, failure to comply with the terms of the student's independent study Master Agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(c)(4).

Procedures

A. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at any time including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; or d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

B. Enumerated Offenses

1. Discretionary Suspension Offenses. Students may be suspended when it is determined the pupil:
 - a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
 - b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.

⁵ The Charter School shall ensure that a homeless child or youth's educational rights holder; a foster child or youth's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker; and an Indian child's tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker have the same rights as a parent or guardian to receive a suspension notice, expulsion notice, manifestation determination notice, involuntary transfer notice, involuntary removal notice, and other documents and related information. For purposes of this Policy and its Procedures, the term "parent/guardian" shall include these parties.

- c) Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053- 11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of a pupil's own prescription products by a pupil.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this policy, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this policy, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- p) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this policy, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for their own safety or for their immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or their immediate family.

- q) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this policy, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This provision shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 6, inclusive.
- r) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 6 inclusive.
- s) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 6, inclusive.
- t) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
 - 1) "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of their age, or for a person of their age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
 - ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health.
 - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance.
 - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by RMCS.
 - 2) "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - i. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
 - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (b)(1) above.
 - (1) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
 - (b) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
 - iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
 - (a) For purposes of this policy, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be

reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

(b) For purposes of this policy, “cyber sexual bullying” does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.

3) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

u) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (3)(a)-(b).

v) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee’s concurrence.

2. Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses: Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion when it is determined the pupil:

a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other destructive device unless, in the case of possession of any device of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee’s concurrence.

b) Brandished a knife at another person.

c) Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed Health and Safety Code Section 11053, et seq.

d) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289 or former Section 288a of the Penal Code, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.

3. Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students may be recommended for expulsion when it is determined the pupil:

a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.

b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.

c) Unlawfully possessed, used, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053- 11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.

d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.

e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.

f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.

- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of a student's own prescription products by a pupil.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases.
- l) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- m) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- n) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- o) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this policy, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this policy, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- p) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases. For purposes of this policy, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for their own safety or for their immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, which includes but is not limited to, electronic files and databases, or the personal property of the person threatened or their immediate family.
- q) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this policy, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This provision shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 6, inclusive.
- r) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 6, inclusive.
- s) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated school personnel or volunteers and/or a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading the rights of either school personnel or volunteers and/or student(s) by

creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This provision shall apply to students in any of grades 4 to 6, inclusive.

- t) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
- 1) "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of their age, or for a person of their age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
 - ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on their physical or mental health.
 - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their academic performance.
 - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with their ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by RMCS.
 - 2) "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - i. A message, text, sound, video, or image.
 - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
 - (1) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (b) (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
 - (b) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
 - iii. An act of cyber sexual bullying.
 - (a) For purposes of this policy, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), inclusive, of paragraph (1). A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.
 - (b) For purposes of this policy, "cyber sexual bullying" does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political, or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
 - 3) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.
- u) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in

which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (3)(a)-(b).

- v) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee's concurrence.

4. Non-Discretionary Expellable Offenses: Students must be recommended for expulsion when it is determined pursuant to the procedures below that the pupil:

- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other destructive device unless, in the case of possession of any device of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee's concurrence.
- b) Brandished a knife at another person.
- c) Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed Health and Safety Code Section 11052, et seq.
Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 287, 288, or 289, or former Section 288a of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.

If it is determined by the Administrative Panel and/or Board of Directors that a student has brought a firearm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or destructive device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. In such instances, the pupil shall be provided due process rights of notice and a hearing as required in this policy.

The Charter School will use the following definitions:

- The term "knife" means (A) any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed, sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (B) a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing; (C) a weapon with a blade longer than 3½ inches; (D) a folding knife with a blade that locks into place; or (E) a razor with an unguarded blade.
- The term "firearm" means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such term does not include an antique firearm.
- The term "destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (A) bomb, (B) grenade, (C) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (D) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (E) mine, or (F) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses.

C. Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

1. Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Executive Director & Superintendent or the Executive Director & Superintendent's designee with the student and the student's parent/guardian and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or Charter School employee who referred the student to the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee.

The conference may be omitted if the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or Charter School personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against the pupil and shall be given the opportunity to present their version and evidence in their defense, in accordance with Education Code Section 47605(c)(5)(J)(i). This conference shall be held within two (2) school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. The conference shall be held as soon as the student is physically able to return to school for the conference. Penalties shall not be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil's parent or guardian to attend a conference with Charter School officials. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil's parent or guardian at the conference.

2. Notice to Parents/Guardians

At the time of the suspension, an administrator or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian in person, by email, or by telephone. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension and the date of return following suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense(s) committed by the student as well as the date the student may return to school following the suspension. If Charter School officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Expulsion

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension. Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the Executive Director & Superintendent or Executive Director & Superintendent's designee, the pupil and the pupil's parent/guardian will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. In such instances when RMCS has determined a suspension period shall be extended, such extension shall be made only after a conference is held with the pupil and the pupil's parent/guardian, unless the pupil and the pupil's parent/guardian fail to attend the conference.

This determination will be made by the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee upon either of the following: 1) the pupil's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the pupil poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the pupil's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

4. Homework Assignments During Suspension

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(a), upon the request of a parent, a legal guardian or other person holding the right to make education decisions for the student, or the affected student, a teacher shall provide to a student in any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, who has been suspended from school for two (2) or more school days, the homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47606.2(b), if a homework assignment that is requested pursuant to Section 47606.2(a) and turned into the teacher by the student either upon the student's return to school from suspension or within the timeframe originally prescribed by the teacher, whichever is later, is not graded before the end of the academic term, that assignment shall not be included in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class.

D. Authority to Expel

As required by Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(J)(ii), students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer to determine whether the student should be expelled. The procedures herein provide for such a hearing and the notice of said hearing, as required by law.

A student may be expelled either by the neutral and impartial Charter School Board of Directors following a hearing before it or by RMCS Board of Directors upon the recommendation of a neutral and impartial Administrative Panel, to be assigned by the Board of Directors as needed. The Administrative Panel shall consist of at least three members who are certificated and neither a teacher of the pupil nor a member of RMCS Board of Directors. Each entity shall be presided over by a designated neutral hearing chairperson.

The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense, and the Board of Directors shall make the final determination.

E. Expulsion Procedures

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee determines that the pupil has committed an expellable offense and recommends the student for expulsion.

In the event an Administrative Panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session (complying with all pupil confidentiality rules under Family Educational Rights Privacy Act "FERPA") unless the pupil makes a written request for a public hearing in open session three (3) days prior to the date of the scheduled hearing.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the pupil. The notice shall include:

1. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of RMCS's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
4. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at RMCS to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student and/or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

F. Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

RMCS may, upon a finding of good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations that shall be examined only by RMCS or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the pupil.

1. The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of their right to (a) receive five (5) days' notice of their scheduled testimony, (b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of their choosing present in the hearing at the time the complaining witness testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel, and (c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.
2. RMCS must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
3. At the discretion of the entity conducting the expulsion hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which the complaining witness may leave the hearing room.
4. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
5. The entity conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours the complaining witness is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.

6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the entity presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The entity conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany the complaining witness to the witness stand.
7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, RMCS must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to RMCS. The entity presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising their discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom they believe is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.
8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
9. Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have their testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed-circuit television.
10. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the entity conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

G. Record of Hearing

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

H. Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense. Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay. Sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Board or Administrative Panel determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code Section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have their testimony heard in a session closed to the public.

I. Expulsion Decision

The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of written findings of fact and a written recommendation to the Board of Directors, which will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The Board of Directors shall make the final determination regarding the expulsion within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

If the Administrative Panel decides not to recommend expulsion, or the Board of Directors ultimately decides not to expel, the student shall immediately be returned to their previous educational program.

The Board of Directors may also determine to suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order for a period of not more than one (1) calendar year from the date of the expulsion hearing and return the student to the student's previous educational program under a probationary status and rehabilitation plan to be determined by the Board. During the period of the suspension of the expulsion order, the student is deemed to be on probationary status. The Board of Directors may revoke the suspension of an expulsion order under this section if the student commits any of the enumerated offenses listed above or violates any of the Charter School's rules and regulations governing student conduct. If the Board revokes the suspension of an expulsion order, the student may be expelled under the terms of the original expulsion order. The Board of Directors shall apply the criteria for suspending the enforcement of the expulsion order equally to all students, including individuals with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code Section 56026. The Board of Directors shall further comply with the provisions set forth under Education Code Section 48917, except as otherwise expressly set forth herein.

J. Written Notice to Expel

The Executive Director & Superintendent or designee, following a decision of the Board of Directors to expel, shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Board of Directors' adopted findings of fact, to the student and the student's parent/guardian. This notice shall also include the following: (a) notice of the specific offense committed by the student; and (b) notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with RMCS.

The Executive Director & Superintendent or designee shall send a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the chartering authority. This notice shall include the following: (a) the student's name; and (b) the specific expellable offense committed by the student.

K. Disciplinary Records

RMCS shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at RMCS. Such records shall be made available to the chartering authority upon request.

L. No Right to Appeal

The pupil shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from RMCS as RMCS Board of Directors' decision to expel shall be final.

M. Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

Students who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including, but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence. RMCS shall work cooperatively with parents/guardians as requested by parents/guardians or by the school district of residence to assist with locating alternative placements during expulsion.

N. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from RMCS shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board of Directors at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to RMCS for readmission.

O. Readmission or Admission of Previously Expelled Student

The decision to readmit a student after the end of the student's expulsion term or to admit a previously expelled student from another school district or charter school who has not been readmitted/admitted to another school or school district after the end of

the student's expulsion term, shall be in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors following a meeting with the Executive Director & Superintendent or designee and the student and the student's parent/guardian to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Executive Director & Superintendent or designee shall make a recommendation to the Board of Directors following the meeting regarding the Executive Director & Superintendent's or designee's determination. The Board shall then make a final decision regarding readmission or admission of the student during the closed session of a public meeting, reporting out any action taken during closed session consistent with the requirements of the Brown Act. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon RMCS's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission or admission to RMCS.

P. Notice to Teachers

RMCS shall notify teachers of each pupil who has engaged in or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in any of the acts listed in Education Code Section 49079 and the corresponding enumerated offenses set forth above.

Q. Involuntary Removal for Truancy

As charter schools are schools of choice and as a charter school student who fails to attend school is potentially depriving another student of their opportunity to enroll, a student may be involuntarily removed as described within the Charter School's Board adopted Attendance Policy for truancy and only after the Charter School follows the requirements of the Attendance Policy and only in accordance with the policy described above which requires notice and an opportunity for a parent, guardian, educational rights holder to request a hearing prior to any involuntary removal. Students who are involuntarily removed for truancy will be given a rehabilitation plan and will be subject to the readmission procedures set forth herein.

R. Involuntary Removal for Truancy

As charter schools are schools of choice and as a charter school student who fails to attend school is potentially depriving another student of their opportunity to enroll, a student may be involuntarily removed as described within the Charter School's Board adopted Attendance Policy for truancy and only after the Charter School follows the requirements of the Attendance Policy and only in accordance with the policy described above which requires notice and an opportunity for a parent, guardian, educational rights holder to request a hearing prior to any involuntary removal. Students who are involuntarily removed for truancy will be given a rehabilitation plan and will be subject to the readmission procedures set forth herein.

S.

1. Notification of SELPA

RMCS shall immediately notify the SELPA and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the SELPA of the discipline of any student with a disability or student that RMCS or the SELPA would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability.

2. Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (which could constitute a change of placement and the student's IEP would reflect this change), and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP/504 Plan; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

3. Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, RMCS, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP/504 Plan, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent/guardian to determine:

- a. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or

- b. If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan.

If RMCS, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If RMCS, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP/504 Team shall:

- a. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that RMCS had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;
- b. If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- c. Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent/guardian and RMCS agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If RMCS, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP/504 Team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a direct result of the failure to implement the IEP/504 Plan, then RMCS may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

4. Due Process Appeals

The parent/guardian of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or RMCS believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings or by utilizing the dispute provisions of the 504 Policy and Procedures.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent/guardian or RMCS, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer in accordance with state and federal law, including 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k), until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, unless the parent/guardian and RMCS agree otherwise.

In accordance with 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(3), if a parent/guardian disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or if RMCS believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, the parent/guardian or Charter School may request a hearing.

In such an appeal, a hearing officer may: (1) return a child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed; or (2) order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

5. Special Circumstances

Charter School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

The Executive Director & Superintendent or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- a. Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 U.S.C. Section 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- b. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- c. Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

6. Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP/504 Team.

7. Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEA and who has violated RMCS's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if RMCS had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

RMCS shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- a. The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to Charter School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
- b. The parent/guardian has requested an evaluation of the child.
- c. The child's teacher, or other Charter School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other Charter School supervisory personnel.

If RMCS knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If RMCS had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. RMCS shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however the student shall remain in the education placement determined by RMCS pending the results of the evaluation.

RMCS shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy & Grievance Procedures

It is the policy of River Montessori Charter School ("Charter School") to create and maintain an educational environment where employees and students are treated with dignity, decency and respect. Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 ("Title IX") prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sex-based harassment, in the Charter School's education programs and activities. The Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including in admission and employment.

Sex discrimination can be discrimination on the basis of sex, including on the bases of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Any such behavior is a violation of the Charter School's policies, and state and federal law. Any employee or student found to have engaged in sex discrimination may be disciplined including, but not limited to, suspension and expulsion for students and discipline up to termination for employees.

Definition of Sex-Based Harassment Under Title IX

Sex-based harassment is a form of sex-discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex, including sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity that its either quid pro quo harassment or hostile environment harassment. Specific offenses of sex-based harassment include:

- Sexual assault
- Dating violence
- Domestic violence
- Stalking

Title IX Personnel/Parties

The Charter School's Title IX Coordinator is Kelly Griffith Mannion, M.Ed., Executive Director & Superintendent.

Contact Info: 707.778.6414. kmannion@rivermontessoricharterschool.org.

Investigator: The Title IX Coordinator may act as investigator of complaints of sex discrimination under Title IX. Alternatively, in the Title IX Coordinator's discretion, the Title IX Coordinator may designate that role to another individual. In any event, the investigator shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. The role of the investigator is that of fact finder.

Decisionmaker: The Title IX Coordinator may also act as the decisionmaker of complaints of sex discrimination under Title IX. Alternatively, in the Title IX Coordinator's discretion, the Title IX Coordinator may designate that role to another individual. In any event, the decisionmaker shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. The role of the decisionmaker is to evaluate evidence and make a determination regarding the formal complaint, including submitting a written determination of findings.

Complainants: The following person(s) have a right to make a complaint of sex discrimination, including complaints of sex-based harassment, requesting that the Charter School investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination under Title IX: 1) A complainant; 2) A parent, guardian, or other authorized legal representative with the legal right to act on behalf of the complainant; and 3) The Title IX coordinator.

If the complaint involves sex discrimination other than sex based harassment, a complaint may be made by any student or employee or any person other than a student/employee who was participating or attempting to participate in the Charter School's education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination.

Sex Discrimination Under Title IX

Sex discrimination under Title IX means conduct on the basis of sex, including sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity that falls within one or more of the following categories:

- A Charter School employee, agent or other person authorized by the Charter School to provide an aid, benefit or service under the Charter School's education program or activity explicitly or impliedly conditioning the provision of a school aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- Unwelcomed sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the Charter School's education program or activity;
- Whether a hostile environment has been created is a fact specific inquiry that includes consideration of many factors identified in 34 C.F.R. § 106.2.

Reporting Allegations of Sex Discrimination

All employees who are not confidential employees are required to notify the Title IX Coordinator when the employee has information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its implementing regulations.

Employees, students and/or their parent/guardian/caregiver, may report sex discrimination to the Charter School's Title IX Coordinator, or to any other Charter School employee, who shall inform the Title IX Coordinator of that complaint.

Complaints may be made in writing, orally, via email, telephone or by any other means reasonably contemplated to result in the complaint reaching the Charter School's Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator Responsibilities

The Title IX Coordinator will take the following actions when notified of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its implementing regulations:

- Treat the complainant and respondent equitably;
- Offer and coordinate supportive measures, as appropriate, for the complainant. If the grievance procedures identified herein are initiated or if an informal resolution process has been offered to the respondent, offer and coordinate supportive measures, as appropriate, for the respondent;
- Notify the complainant, or if the complainant is unknown, the individual who reported the conduct, of the grievance procedures and the informal resolution process, if available and appropriate;
- Monitor the School's education program or activity for barriers to reporting information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its implementing regulations, and take steps reasonably calculated to address such barriers
- If a complaint is made, notify the respondent of the grievance procedures and informal resolution process, if available and appropriate.

Procedures

The Charter School's Title IX grievance or complaint procedures apply only to conduct that falls within the definition of sex discrimination under Title IX. Other allegedly offensive conduct may not fall within this process, but may be investigated and handled through other complaint procedures. In order to evaluate which complaint procedures apply, the Title IX Coordinator shall review the complaint to determine if the conduct falls within the definition of sex discrimination under Title IX and its implementing regulations. If a complaint falls within both the Title IX definition and within the definition of complaint subject to the Uniform Complaint Procedure, both processes may be followed. Please contact Kelly Griffith Mannion, M.Ed., 707.778.6414 or kmannion@rivermontessoricharter.org to understand all of the School's complaint process options.

Response to an Informal Complaint

Upon receipt of a report of sex discrimination without a formal written complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will offer and coordinate supportive measures for the complainant and explain to the complainant (or other person reporting the behavior) the right and process to file a formal complaint.

In the event there is no formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall determine whether to initiate a complaint of sex discrimination that complies with the complaint procedures identified herein. This determination need not be made if the Title IX Coordinator reasonably determines that the conduct as alleged could not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its implementing regulations.

In making this determination, the Title IX Coordinator shall consider the following, within 20 school days of receiving an informal complaint:

- 1) The complainant's request not to proceed with initiation of a complaint;
- 2) The complainant's reasonable safety concerns regarding initiation of a complaint;
- 3) The risk that additional acts of sex discrimination would occur if a complaint is not initiated;
- 4) The severity of the alleged sex discrimination, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the removal of a respondent from campus or imposition of another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence;
- 5) The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is an employee of the Charter School;
- 6) The scope of the alleged sex discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern, ongoing sex discrimination, or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals;
- 7) The availability of evidence to assist a decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
- 8) Whether the Charter School could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating its complaint procedures.

After consideration, if the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct as alleged presents an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of the complainant or other person, or that the conduct as alleged prevents the Charter School from ensuring equal access on the basis of sex in its education program or activity, the Title IX Coordinator may initiate a complaint.

Regardless of whether a complaint is initiated, the Charter School shall take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue to continue or recur within the Charter School's education program or activity.

A formal complaint means an oral or written request to the Charter School that objectively can be understood as a request for the Charter School to investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination under Title IX or its implementing regulations. The Title IX Coordinator may request the complainant to fill out a formal complaint form in order to initiate a formal complaint, although that formality is not required.

Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary and nonpunitive and shall be available at any time during a Title IX investigation. These may include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines and other course-related adjustments, campus escort services, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, restrictions on contact applied to one or more parties, leaves of absence, changes in class, work, or extracurricular or any other activity regardless of whether there is or is not a comparable alternative, training and education programs related to sex-based harassment.

The complainant or respondent shall have a timely opportunity to seek, from an appropriate and impartial employee, modification or reversal of the Charter School's decision to provide, deny, modify, or terminate supportive measures applicable to them. A party will also be provided the opportunity to seek additional modifications or termination of a supportive measure if circumstances change materially.

The Charter School will not disclose information about any supportive measures to persons other than the person to whom they apply, unless necessary to provide the supportive measure or restore or preserve a party's access to the education program or

activity, or when a legal exception applies.

If a complainant or respondent is a student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator will consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, if any, or one or more members, as appropriate, of the group of persons responsible for the student's placement decision to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, throughout the School's implementation of supportive measures.

Response to a Formal Complaint

In response to a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator confirm, in writing as described below, the receipt of the complaint and will determine whether the allegations fall within the definition of sex discrimination under Title IX. If so, the Title IX Coordinator will follow this policy to resolve the complaint. If it does not, the Title IX Coordinator will either dismiss the complaint, or refer the complaint to a different division with the Charter School to handle the complaint, such as through the school's Uniform Complaint Procedures.

The Title IX Coordinator will initiate an investigation, by identifying an investigator and/or decisionmaker. A written decision shall be issued within sixty (60) calendar days receipt of the formal complaint.

If a complainant or respondent is a student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator will consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, if any, or one or more members, as appropriate, of the group of persons responsible for the student's placement decision to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, throughout the School's implementation of grievance procedures.

Emergency Removal: The School may remove an accused from the School's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the School first undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sex discrimination justifies removal, and provides the accused with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

If the respondent is an employee, the employee may be placed on administrative leave during the formal investigative process. If the respondent is a student, state and federal laws may impose additional procedural requirements for removal.

Written Notice of the Formal Complaint

Within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall provide the parties with a notice of the formal complaint. The notice shall include: (1) a copy of this Policy; (2) the identities of the parties involved in the incident; (3) the conduct alleged to constitute sex discrimination under Title IX and its implementing regulations; and (4) the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s), (5) a statement that the parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence or an accurate description of this evidence, and if the Charter School provides a description of the evidence, the parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access to the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence upon the request of any party; and (6) a statement that retaliation is prohibited.

During the Grievance Process:

Investigation

The investigator will review the complaint and other submitted evidence, gather additional evidence, and interview witnesses or parties. The investigator may also offer, modify or terminate supportive measures.

The investigation shall be adequate, reliable, and impartial. To do so, the Charter School shall: 1) ensure that the burden is on the Charter School to conduct the investigation that gathers sufficient evidence to determine whether sex discrimination occurred; 2) provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present fact witnesses and other inculpatory or exculpatory evidence that are relevant or not otherwise impermissible; and 3) review all evidence gathered through the investigation and determine what evidence is relevant and what evidence is impermissible regardless of relevance, and consistency with implementing regulations.

The investigator shall provide the parties with the opportunity to review the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence (or an accurate description of the evidence) that is directly related to the allegations raised in the formal complaint. If provided with an

accurate description of the evidence, the School will further provide the parties with an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence upon the request of any party.

Thereafter, the parties will have a period of seven school days to review the evidence (or description thereof), respond, ask the investigator additional questions, and provide or suggest additional evidence to be considered by the investigator. The School will also take steps to prevent and address the parties' unauthorized disclosure of information and evidence obtained solely through the grievance procedures

The investigator/decisionmaker will question the parties and witnesses initially, and may reach out to the parties and witnesses again after its first initial round of questions. The investigator/decisionmaker may determine whether to question the parties and/or witnesses in person or remotely with the goal that the questioning must provide the opportunity to adequately assess a party's or witness's credibility to the extent that it is both in dispute and relevant to evaluating one or more allegations of sex discrimination.

If, in the course of the investigation, the School decides to investigate additional allegations of sex discrimination by the accused toward the complainant that are not included in the initial notice identified above or that are included in a complaint, the School will provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Presumption: There is a presumption that the accused is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

Extension of Time Frames: While the School endeavors to complete the grievance procedure within the timelines included in this policy, the Charter School may notify the parties of the need for a reasonable extension of time on a case-by-case basis for good cause during any of the major stages of the process, including during evaluation, investigation, determination, and appeal. Additionally, if one of the parties involved requests a reasonable extension of time for cause, the Charter School shall, on a case-by-case basis, reasonably consider such request.

Privacy: The Charter School shall take steps to protect the privacy of the parties and witnesses during the pendency of the grievance procedures, provided that the parties must be able to obtain and present evidence, including speaking to witnesses, consulting with their family members, confidential resources or advisors, or otherwise preparing for and participating in the grievance procedures.

Evaluation: The Charter School's investigator or decisionmaker shall evaluate all evidence that is relevant and not otherwise impermissible, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, and provide that credibility determinations are not based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness. The following evidence, and questions seeking that evidence, are impermissible:

- Evidence protected under a privilege as recognized by Federal or State law or evidence provided to a confidential employee, unless the privilege or confidentiality has been voluntarily waived;
- A party's or witness's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychologist or other recognized professional or paraprofessional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party or witness, unless the Charter School obtains that party's or witness's voluntary, written consent for use in the grievance procedures;
- Evidence that relates to the complainant's sexual interests or prior sexual conduct, unless evidence about the complainant's prior sexual conduct is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct or is evidence about specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual conduct with the respondent that is offered to prove consent to the alleged sex-based harassment. The fact of prior consensual sexual conduct between the complainant and respondent does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant's consent to the alleged sex-based harassment or preclude determination that sex-based harassment occurred.

Sex Based Harassment Only: For complaints alleging sex-based Harassment only, the following supportive measures are available to complainants and respondents: counseling, contact restrictions between the parties, change in work schedule and/or campus area, leave of absence. In addition, the following reflect the range of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies the School may implement if sex-based harassment has occurred: A verbal or written warning, disciplinary action.

Standard of Evidence: For all formal complaints of sex discrimination, the School shall use the preponderance of the evidence standard of proof. The decisionmaker shall evaluate relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence for its persuasiveness. If the decisionmaker is not persuaded under the standard of proof, the decisionmaker must not determine that sex discrimination

occurred.

Dismissal of a Formal Complaint:

The School shall investigate the allegations in a formal complaint and may dismiss a complaint of sex discrimination for any of the following reasons:

- The School is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so;
- The respondent is not participating in the School's education program or activity and is not employed by the School;
- The complainant voluntarily withdraws any or all of the allegations in the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator declines to initiate a complaint, and the School determines that, without the complainant's withdrawn allegations, the conduct that remains alleged in the complaint, if any, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its regulations even if proven; or
- The School determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its regulations.

Prior to dismissing the complaint, the School must make reasonable efforts to clarify the allegations with the complainant. Upon dismissal, the School will promptly notify the complainant of the basis for the dismissal. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then the School will also notify the respondent of the dismissal and the basis for the dismissal promptly following notification to the complainant or simultaneously if the notification is in writing.

Consolidation of Formal Complaints. A School may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sex discrimination against more than one respondents, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against another party, when the allegations of sex discrimination arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Where a grievance process involves more than one complainant or more than one accused, references in this policy to the singular "party," "complainant," or "respondent" include the plural, as applicable.

Determination Whether Sex Discrimination Occurred.

Following the investigation and evaluation of all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, the School will notify the parties in writing of the determination whether sex discrimination occurred under Title IX or its implementing regulations, including the rationale for such determination, and the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal, if applicable.

The School shall provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the School provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

If there is a determination that sex discrimination occurred, the Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the provision and implementation of remedies to a complainant and other persons the School identifies as having had equal access to the School's education program or activity limited or denied by sex discrimination, coordinate the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions on a respondent, including notification to the complainant of any such disciplinary sanctions, and other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the School's education program or activity.

The School will not discipline a party, witness, or others participating in the School's grievance procedures for making a false statement or for engaging in consensual sexual conduct based solely on the School's determination whether sex discrimination occurred.

If the School dismisses the complaint, it will offer supportive measures to the complainant as appropriate and, if the respondent has been notified of the allegations, offer supportive measures to the respondent as appropriate.

Appeals

Upon dismissal of a complaint, the School will notify the complainant that a dismissal may be appealed and provide the complainant with an opportunity to appeal the dismissal on the bases set out below. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then the School will notify the respondent that the dismissal may be appealed.

If the dismissal is appealed, the School will:

- Notify the parties of any appeal, including notice of the allegations as required above if notice was not previously provided to the respondent
- Implement appeal procedures equally for the parties
- Ensure that the decisionmaker for the appeal did not take part in an investigation of the allegations or dismissal of the complaint
- Ensure that the decisionmaker has been trained
- Provide the parties a reasonable and equal opportunity to make a statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome
- Notify the parties of the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result

The School shall offer both parties an appeal from a determination whether sex discrimination occurred, and from the School's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

- 1) Procedural irregularity that would change the outcome of the matter;
- 2) New evidence that would change the outcome and that was not reasonably available at the time when the determination whether sex discrimination occurred or dismissal was made; and
- 3) The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against a complainant or an accused generally or the individual complainant or accused that would change the outcome of the matter.

The School may offer an appeal equally to both parties on additional bases.

As to all appeals, the School shall:

- 1) Notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties;
- 2) Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator;
- 3) Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal complies with the conflict of interest and bias standards set forth above;
- 4) Give both parties a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome;
- 5) Issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result; and
- 6) Provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

Informal Resolution

At any time prior to determining whether sex discrimination occurred, the Charter School may offer to a complainant and respondent a voluntary informal resolution process, unless the complaint includes allegations that an employee engaged in sex based harassment of a student or if such process would conflict with Federal, State or local law. If the Charter School determines the alleged conduct would present a future risk of harm to others, it may decline to allow informal resolution. If an information resolution is followed, the Title IX Coordinator must, to the extent necessary, take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue to recur within the Charter School's education program or activity. Such specific steps will be taken depending upon the facts of each case.

The School has discretion to determine whether it is appropriate to offer an informal resolution process when it receives information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its implementing regulations or when a complaint of sex discrimination is made and may decline to offer information resolution despite one or more of the parties' witnesses. This decision may be made if the School determines that the alleged conduct would present a future risk of harm to others.

The School shall not require or pressure the parties to participate in an informal resolution process.

Before initiation of an informal resolution process, the Charter School shall provide notice to the parties that explains: 1) the allegations; 2) the requirements of the informal resolution process; 3) that, prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right

to withdraw from the informal resolution process and to initiate or resume the complaint procedures; 4) that the parties' agreement to a resolution at the conclusion of the informal resolution process would preclude the parties from initiating or resuming complaint procedures arising from the same allegations; 5) the potential terms that may be requested or offered in an informal resolution agreement, including notice that an informal resolution agreement is binding only on the parties; and 6) what information the Charter School will maintain and whether and how the Charter School could disclose the information for use in a complaint procedure if complaint procedures are initiated or resumed.

The facilitator of the information resolution process will not be the same person as the investigator and/or decisionmaker for the School's grievance process. The facilitator will not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

Recordkeeping

1) A School must maintain for a period of seven years records of—

(A) For each sex discrimination complaint, records documenting the informal resolution process or the grievance procedures, and if applicable, the resulting outcome.

(B) For each notification the Title IX Coordinator receives of information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or its implementing regulations, including notifications, records documenting the actions the School took to meet its legal obligations.

(D) All materials used to provide required training. The School must make these training materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

APPENDIX ?

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, DISCRIMINATION, AND BULLYING POLICY

Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are all disruptive behaviors, which interfere with students' ability to learn, negatively affect student engagement, diminish school safety, and contribute to a hostile school environment. As such, River Montessori Charter School ("RMCS") prohibits any acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying altogether.

As used in this policy, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are described as the intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, written communication or cyber-bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, based on the actual or perceived characteristics of mental or physical disability, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions, and parental status), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, nationality (including national origin, country of origin, and citizenship), race or ethnicity (including ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, ethnic background, and traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, and twists), religion (including agnosticism and atheism), religious affiliation, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, age or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or based on any other characteristic protected under applicable state or federal law or local ordinance. Hereafter, such actions are referred to as "misconduct prohibited by this Policy."

To the extent possible, RMCS will make reasonable efforts to prevent students from being discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, and/or bullied, and will take action to investigate, respond, address and report on such behaviors in a timely manner. RMCS school staff who witness acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so.

This policy applies to incidents occurring on the school campus, at school-sponsored events and activities regardless of the location, through school-owned technology, and through other electronic means, whether perpetrated by a student, employee, parent/guardian, volunteer, independent contractor or other person with whom RMCS does business, and all acts of RMCS's Board of Directors ("Board") in enacting policies and procedures that govern RMCS.

RMCS complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and local ordinances in its investigation of and response to reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

Definitions

Harassment means conduct based upon one or more of the protected characteristics listed above that is severe or pervasive, which unreasonably disrupts an individual's educational or work environment or that creates a hostile educational or work environment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes, comments or slurs.

Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work or school based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.

Deferential or preferential treatment based on any of the protected characteristics listed above.

Bullying is defined as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act. Bullying includes one or more acts committed by a student or group of students that may constitute hate violence, or creates an intimidating and/or hostile educational environment, directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

Placing a reasonable student or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.

Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.

Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's academic performance.

Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantial interference with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by RMCS.

Cyberbullying is an electronic act that includes the transmission of harassing communication, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, video or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation.

Electronic act means the creation or transmission originated on or off the schoolsite, by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

A message, text, sound, video, or image.

A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:

Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in the definition of "bullying," above.

Creating a credible impersonation of another actual student for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a student for the purpose of bullying the student and such that another student would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the student was or is the student who was impersonated.

Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in the definition of "bullying," above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious student or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual student other than the student who created the false profile.

An act of "Cyber sexual bullying" including, but not limited to:

The dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a student to another student or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described in definition of "bullying," above. A photograph or other visual recording, as described above, shall include the

depiction of a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording, or other electronic act.

Notwithstanding the definitions of “bullying” and “electronic act” above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

RMCS has adopted the following procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying Prevention Procedures

RMCS advises students:

To never share passwords, personal data, or private photos online.

To think about what they are doing carefully before posting and by emphasizing that comments cannot be retracted once they are posted.

That personal information revealed on social media can be shared with anyone including parents, teachers, administrators, and potential employers. Students should never reveal information that would make them uncomfortable if the world had access to it.

To consider how it would feel receiving such comments before making comments about others online.

RMCS informs its employees, students, and parents/guardians of RMCS’ policies regarding the use of technology in and out of the classroom. RMCS encourages parents/guardians to discuss these policies with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with such policies.

Education

RMCS employees cannot always be present when bullying incidents occur, so educating students about bullying is a key prevention technique to limit bullying from happening. RMCS advises students that hateful and/or demeaning behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in our society and at RMCS and encourages students to practice compassion and respect each other.

RMCS educates students to accept all student peers regardless of protected characteristics (including but not limited to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identification, physical or cognitive disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, and immigration status) and about the negative impact of bullying other students based on protected characteristics.

RMCS’s bullying prevention education also discusses the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and includes sample situations to help students learn and practice appropriate behavior and to develop techniques and strategies to respond in a non-aggressive way to bullying-type behaviors. Students will also develop confidence and learn how to advocate for themselves and others, and when to go to an adult for help.

RMCS informs RMCS employees, students, and parents/guardians of this Policy and encourages parents/guardians to discuss this Policy with their children to ensure their children understand and comply with this Policy.

Professional Development

RMCS annually makes available the online training module developed by the California Department of Education pursuant Education Code section 32283.5(a) to its certificated employees and all other RMCS employees who have regular interaction with students.

RMCS informs certificated employees about the common signs that a student is a target of bullying including:

Physical cuts or injuries

Lost or broken personal items

Fear of going to school/practice/games

Loss of interest in school, activities, or friends

Trouble sleeping or eating

Anxious/sick/nervous behavior or distracted appearance

Self-destructiveness or displays of odd behavior

Decreased self-esteem

RMCS also informs certificated employees about the groups of students determined by RMCS and available research to be at elevated risk for bullying and provides its certificated employees with information on existing school and community resources related to the support of these groups. These groups include but are not limited to:

Students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth (“LGBTQ”) and those youth perceived as LGBTQ; and

Students with physical or learning disabilities.

RMCS encourages its employees to demonstrate effective problem-solving, anger management, and self-confidence skills for RMCS’s students.

Complaint Procedures

Scope of the Complaint Procedures

RMCS will comply with its Uniform Complaint Procedures (“UCP”) policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging unlawful harassment, discrimination, intimidation or bullying against a protected group or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of the protected characteristics set forth in the UCP that:

Are written and signed;

Filed by an individual who alleges that they have personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, or by one who believes any specific class of individuals has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based

on a protected characteristic, or by a duly authorized representative who alleges that an individual student has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and

Submitted to the RMCS UCP Compliance Officer not later than six (6) months from the date the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

RMCS will comply with its Title IX Policy when investigating and responding to complaints alleging sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in its education program or activity, as applicable.

The following procedures shall be utilized for complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy that do not fall within the scope of RMCS's Title IX Policy or comply with the writing, timeline, or other formal filing requirements of the UCP. A copy of RMCS's Title IX Policy and UCP is available in the main office.

Submitting a Report or Complaint

All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, to intervene when safe to do so, call for assistance, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in this Policy for reporting alleged acts of misconduct prohibited by this Policy.

Reports and complaints of misconduct prohibited by this Policy shall be submitted to the Executive Director and Superintendent (or the Secretary of the Board if the complaint is against the Executive Director and Superintendent) as soon as possible after the incidents giving rise to the report or complaint.

Complaints regarding such misconduct may also be made to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders may also be available to complainants.

While submission of a written report is not required, and RMCS will investigate and respond to all oral and written reports of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, the reporting party is encouraged to submit a written report. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

Students are expected to report all incidents of misconduct prohibited by this Policy and other verbal or physical abuses. Any student who feels they are a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, the Executive Director and Superintendent, a staff person or a family member so that the student can get assistance in resolving the issue in a manner that is consistent with this Policy.

RMCS acknowledges and respects every individual's right to privacy. All reports and complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process to the greatest extent possible. This includes keeping the identity of the reporter and/or complainant confidential, as appropriate, except to the extent necessary to comply with applicable law, carry out the investigation and/or to resolve the issue, as determined by RMCS on a case-by-case basis.

RMCS prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual who files a report or complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any investigation or proceeding related to misconduct prohibited by this Policy. Such participation or lack of participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades, or work assignments of the individual. Individuals alleging retaliation in violation of this Policy may file a grievance using the procedures set forth in this Policy.

Investigation and Response

Upon receipt of a report or complaint of misconduct prohibited by this Policy, the Executive Director and Superintendent or designee will promptly initiate an investigation. In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than twenty-five (25) school days.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Executive Director and Superintendent or designee will, to the extent possible with respect to confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation. However, the Executive Director and Superintendent or designee will not reveal confidential information related to other students or employees.

If the complaint is against the Executive Director and Superintendent, a non-employee Board member who is not the Board Chair or a parent/guardian of a student at RMCS will conduct a fact-finding investigation and provide the complainant with information about the investigation and resolution of the incident/situation.

Consequences

Students or employees who engage in misconduct prohibited by this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from RMCS or termination of employment.

Right of Appeal

Should a complainant find RMCS's resolution unsatisfactory, for complaints within the scope of this Policy, the complainant may, within five (5) business days of notice of RMCS's decision or resolution, submit a written appeal to the Chair of the RMCS Board, who will serve as the decisionmaker for the appeal or designate a decisionmaker for the appeal. The decisionmaker for the appeal will notify the complainant of the final decision.

[INSERT CHARTER SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, DISCRIMINATION & BULLYING COMPLAINT FORM

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Email Address: _____

Date of Alleged Incident(s): _____

Name of Person(s) you have a complaint against: _____

List any witnesses that were present: _____
Where did the incident(s) occur? _____

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e., specific statements and conduct; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

I hereby authorize RMCS to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation. I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Complainant

Date: _____

Print Name

To be completed by RMCS:

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Follow up Meeting with Complainant held on: _____

APPENDIX B

River Montessori Charter School Directory Information

Main Line: (707) 778-6414

Attendance: Extension 10

Name	Position	Ext.	Email
Kelly Griffith Mannion	Executive Director & Superintendent	101	kmannion@rivermontessoricharter.org
Lorna Rochman-McEntire	Student Services Coordinator & Education Specialist	114	edspecialist@rivermontessoricharter.org
Courtney Spears	Business Coordinator	102	cspears@rivermontessoricharter.org
Katie Riley	Records & Communication Coordinator	103	kriley@rivermontessoricharter.org
Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten			
Yoli Sheridan	Copper Creek Guide	105	coppercreek@rivermontessoricharter.org
Emma Thompson	Ellis Creek Guide	106	ellisecreek@rivermontessoricharter.org
Lower Elementary			
Lisa Hartman	Kaweah Guide	107	kaweah@rivermontessoricharter.org
Emily Miyano	Tuolumne Guide	109	tuolumne@rivermontessoricharter.org
Deanna Peake	San Lorenzo Guide	108	sanlorenzo@rivermontessoricharter.org
Upper Elementary			
Luke Snyder	Yuba Guide	111	yuba@rivermonessoricharter.org
Carolyn Duffy	Guadalupe Guide	110	guadalupe@rivermontessoricharter.org
Club Montessori			
Kelly Fromm	Aftercare/Expanded Learning Program Supervisor	115	clubmontessori@rivermontessoricharter.org

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