

## **River Montessori Charter School Public Relations, Media, and Website policies and procedures**

A charter school's primary link to the community, including constituents, the public, and the media, is the board. Clearly articulating the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public, as well as garnering support from important members of the community, are important elements of a comprehensive public relations strategy.

By establishing and maintaining a high standard of quality in every aspect, we enhance the identity of River Montessori Charter School (RMCS), its programs, and encourage support and advocacy from the entire community. The quality of information published by River Montessori Charter School plays an important role in maintaining a strong reputation and image.

As with all communications, RMCS communications should adhere to the highest standards of quality. Copy should be kept simple and direct. Artwork should be creative and should clearly communicate the message. Information should be disseminated in a timely manner to our community within the school and throughout the community.

### **RMCS logos**

RMCS logo is seen in attachment 1. No other logo is approved for use by RMCS employees and students without consent of the RMCS board. Any document using the school logo before being ordered e.g. letterhead and business cards should obtain prior approval a Board officer.

White is the preferred color for any preprinted stationery. Certain specifications exist for the RMCS logo used on stationery. The RMCS logo must also be printed in the designated colors.

Business cards and stationery are printed, by an approved vendor, and will be ordered in quantities by administration once a year. Employees should obtain prior approval from the Director. Employees should include the following with their request:

- Name
- Job Title
- Email Address
- Telephone Number
- Fax Number

Outside printing services are available only through preapproved printing companies. All printing must have prior approval by the Director. Many items may be printed in-house at a nominal cost for materials. Please contact the Director to discuss publishing projects, including format, print quantities, desired delivery date, and creative ideas to enhance the project.

In general, flyers and other signs should be typed and designed for easy reading. There should not be any handwritten posters posted, unless they are written by the children. Clear tape or poster putty should be used when posting. Marquee-signboards at the entrances are available on a limited basis to publicize an event. Contact the administration to have an event posted.

Promotional items may be purchased with public money for distribution as long as the items are used for public purposes, with prior approval from the Director. Examples of such items include, but are not limited to: clothing, pens, pencils, cups, mugs, refrigerator magnets, briefcases and notebooks. All items must have prior approval to ensure that logo specifications and color guidelines are met. Public purposes include, but are not limited to, recruitment or retention of students; promotion of the school image; promotion of a development campaign designed to fund RMCS activities.

RMCS may not spend public money on promotional items for private purposes, such as the personal benefit of employees. Specific questions on appropriate use of public money for promotional items may be directed to the RMCS board.

### **Non-Discrimination Statements**

Questions concerning compliance with regulations may be directed to the Director.

This short version of the non-discrimination statement should be used on stationery and one-sheet publications – e.g. fliers, brochures, leaflets. It also could be used in display advertising or in radio and television commercials.

- RMCS is an equal opportunity educational institution.

This version of the non-discrimination statement should be used in publications that are distributed externally and are larger than one page, including booklets and application forms.

- RMCS does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of actual or perceived disability, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

The Board of Education prohibits unlawful discrimination against job applicants on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, marital status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, veteran status, gender, sex or sexual orientation. This version of the non-discrimination statement is to be used in advertising job openings:

- RMCS is an equal access, equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and is committed to providing equal opportunity through employment practices. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

The fourth non-discrimination statement is the complete version that includes all areas of compliance – Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988; and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989, etc. It is always printed in the parent and staff handbooks and may be used whenever and wherever appropriate.

- RMCS is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education. RMCS programs and activities shall be free from discrimination based on gender, sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or the perception of one or more of such characteristics.

### **News release/media contacts**

News releases are designed to capture the attention of the media. Positive publicity is like free advertising. When issuing news releases, consider the scope and relevance to the towns/counties/region/state and utilize the following media: newspapers, television, radio, magazines, trade publications and newsletters.

Information for upcoming events should be submitted whenever possible at least two weeks prior to the date the event will be held. The Director submits information, which includes WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, HOW MANY, HOW MUCH, about upcoming or past events and special interest articles to area newspapers. If writing a news release about something that has already occurred, send the news release as soon as possible following the event; Old news rarely makes it into media outlets.

Media requests for information should be channeled through the Director. This procedure permits a consistency of presentation. If the media contacts an employee, the employee should notify and refer the media to the Director. If the Director considers an employee should be contacted directly, the Director will contact the employee. This allows the employee time to gather thoughts prior to speaking with the media.

## **Web Policy**

This policy sets minimum standards that are meant to ensure that information published electronically is visually appealing and well written and follows the same high standards as other forms of published information.

The River Montessori Charter School Web Policy and Guidelines defines the roles and obligations of the School and individuals in presenting material on the River Montessori Charter School Web Site.

The official entry point to the River Montessori Charter School Web Site is through the River Montessori Charter School home page <http://www.rivermontessori.org>.

The main RMCS web pages are designed by the RMCS Web Administrator, and the Web Committee. Please see web guidelines for additional expectations.

The purpose of the RMCS website is to introduce the School to prospective families, alumni, and others, while also providing useful and timely information to current students, parents, faculty and staff.

## **Web Administration**

The River Montessori Charter School Web Site is administered by the Web Administrator with the guidance of the Web Committee, of which the Web Administrator is a member. The Web Administrator and the Director will be the only two individuals with administrative rights to change the website's password.

The Web Administrator is designated by the School Board of Directors to maintain the Web site.

The Web Administrator will:

- bring any complaints of policy violation to the attention of the Web Committee for review;
- monitor the River Montessori Charter School Web Site for organization and conformity to set guidelines;
- monitor the River Montessori Charter School Web Site for technical problems including correcting unreliable (faulty) links and references;
- conduct maintenance, updates and general upkeep of the site;
- ensure the school logo resides on the web server's root directory;
- monitor large graphics, backgrounds, image maps, and other features that degrade speed without adding content;
- monitor large files, or files with unusual formats should be accessed through links that specify their size and format;

- clearly distinguish between links to related resources from links to RMCS pages.
- back up all website files and submit to archive files quarterly.

## **Web Committee**

The School will create a web committee to encourage, facilitate, and coordinate the development of web pages to achieve consistency across the web pages for RMCS. The Web Committee is responsible for:

- ensuring the reliability and general organization of the River Montessori Charter School Web Site's overall structure;
- development and oversight of the River Montessori Charter School Web Policy & Guidelines;
- long-range planning for the River Montessori Charter School Web Site;
- content and design of the Web Site-- All information on the River Montessori Charter School Web Site should be accurate, timely, and of high quality;
- All web pages will be reviewed by web committee for accuracy and timeliness.
- the security of all sensitive data such as passwords;
- offering support to all Contributors-- Difficult questions may be referred to the Web Site Administrator.
- The web committee has responsibility for the classroom web pages and has the authority to refuse authorization of a web page link. When changes are made to the web pages, the web committee must be notified.
- When the web committee concludes that the content of a web page is objectionable, the material will be removed from the web site or the external link for the site will be removed from the school's web page.

## **Web Guidelines**

RMCS recognizes that electronic publication technology is evolving rapidly and these guidelines are expected to evolve along with it they will be reviewed as needed by the web committee as technology and the school change. These guidelines set minimum standards for the official RMCS web pages, including the classroom web pages, and all other related web pages. All web pages on the RMCS site are obliged to abide by the basic guidelines set forth in this document. These guidelines are established to provide guidance for web pages that are linked to the school's main web page but also to encourage individual creativity.

RMCS documents on the World Wide Web are official communication and are electronic publications. Information published electronically must follow the same high standards regarding content and presentation as other forms of

RMCS published information and are subject to the same policies and standards as print publications.

Content of the RMCS site is maintained by many users e.g. the Web administrator, technical support, and faculty and strives to provide current and accurate information to site visitors. It is the responsibility of all RMCS employees to ensure that the site promotes a quality image of RMCS and that all Web guidelines are followed. Personal email addresses are not to be used on the RMCS web site so that official communications are processed properly and appropriately.

If misleading, inappropriate or incorrect information is found on the RMCS site, the originating party or the Web administrator should be contacted. Every effort will be made to correct or delete the information as quickly as possible.

The quality of all information published by RMCS plays an important role in maintaining the strong reputation and image of the school; All pages, including classroom home pages, are official publications of the school. Therefore, these pages should promote and represent the school, its programs and its employees in a professional, informative and positive light. They are also required to carry out official school business in support of the school mission.

All web pages must be active. No "under construction" information, links or icons will be allowed.

Faculty that create their own pages are responsible for creating and maintaining their respective pages. Page creators will keep all information current, and pages must be updated on at least a monthly basis.

- A web page creator may request appeal of an undesired decision by the web administrator. Appeals must be in writing and sent to the web committee.
- Web pages may be reviewed and changes requested by the school's web committee.
- Web pages are considered official school publications.
- Classroom home pages should include links to other pages providing information about the Faculty member and the Montessori methodology.

### ***Legal Requirements***

All on-line material must conform to applicable local, state, and federal laws including copyright and other intellectual property laws, license agreements, and contracts. Where appropriate, material must be protected from inappropriate access. All on-line material and conduct must be consistent with School policies and regulations.

Use of River Montessori Charter School's Web resources to promote a commercial venture is specifically prohibited. Use of the RMCS web pages for personal profit or personal business is prohibited. Links to such sites as personal businesses and other sites not related to the school's mission and vision is prohibited.

Copyright laws apply to all electronic publishing, as well as, print publishing. RMCS web page creators must have permission to publish text, photographs or graphics if they are not the creator or author. All information on the RMCS website must conform to applicable federal and state laws and River Montessori Charter School policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. The use of the RMCS Website for personal profit or personal business is prohibited.

In designing forms to collect "audience" data, the Privacy Act and other federal/state rules will be followed, which may prohibit the asking of certain personal information. The posting of images or audio of individuals without consent is prohibited as is the use of information about individuals who do not want the information posted. The last names of children will not be included on the website.

Faculty, all other staff, the foundation, and parent volunteers with web pages are solely responsible for their sites' content, links, and adherence to all policies and guidelines stated in this document and all other School policies.

### ***Appearance***

Graphics will not be used in place of text when possible (especially content headers). Screen readers, Braille devices and other assistive technologies cannot "read" what a graphic says. Using text makes the page content flow better when read by such software or hardware. Also, search engines rely upon the text in cataloging a web page.

Limit use of multimedia and graphics on a web page so that download time is less than 10 seconds, or warn the user that the next page may download slowly.

The Style Guide for using RMCS images in printed documents applies to web pages. All font choices are stipulated in style sheets.

### ***Maintenance***

The Web Site Administer reserves the right to remove links to out-of-date web pages and to delete web pages.

All persons creating classroom pages must acknowledge the school's PR/Media and Web Policy. Classroom pages should be relatively small and easily accessible; three or four pages are an acceptable standard. Minor

changes in standing content may be made by the Website Committee without prior approval for the purposes of 1) enhancing site visibility and ease of use 2) maintaining accurate information 3) assuring compliance with these Guidelines and Web standards. If changes are made to a page that is maintained by someone other than the web administrator, the web administrator will notify said individual of any changes.