



# **Creekside Montessori School**

## Parent Handbook

### 2023-24

MAIN SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER: 612-825-5914

**Creekside Montessori School · 106 E Diamond Lake Rd · Minneapolis, MN · 55419**  
**<http://www.creeksidemontessorimpls.org>**

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## Introduction

Welcome to Creekside Montessori School's Parent Handbook. For 12 years we referred to ourselves as *Mayflower Montessori/Mayflower Early Childhood Center/MECC* but spent the last two years officially changing our name to **Creekside Montessori School**. Please read this handbook in its entirety at the beginning of the school year and refer to it throughout the year for guidance. We thank you for being a part of the *Creekside Montessori School community!*

*Creekside Montessori Administration:*

Anne Estes, Head of School  
Kimberly Sims, Family Outreach Coordinator  
Stephanie Melander, Business Manager  
Arulai Mathis, Administrative Coordinator  
Saleha Asim, Administrative Support

Creekside Montessori School, admin@csmpls.org, 612-825-5914

## Mission and Purpose

The mission of Creekside Montessori School is to serve an economically and culturally diverse community, providing high quality Montessori learning environments that meet the developmental needs of the whole child. Our vision is to prepare all children of all backgrounds to attain a healthy and productive life. We seek to instill in children the values of respect, responsibility, grace and courtesy, self-motivation, self-discipline, and inclusivity.

In today's world, where all cultures are fast becoming accessible to each other and where a peaceful future depends on mutual understanding and tolerance, we take pride in fostering familiarity with and respect for many different races, nationalities, gender identities, and religions. We are a non-sectarian community. Creekside is a tenant of Mayflower Church. No religious training is incorporated into our curriculum. Our school does not discriminate in admissions or employment of staff on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, color, or national origin.

## Creekside Montessori Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Statement

Creekside Montessori School's mission is to serve economically and culturally diverse families, providing high quality learning environments that meet the needs of the whole child. As a Montessori school focusing on early childhood development, we are uniquely poised to help children develop healthy, complex identities as well as anti-bias thoughts and behaviors.

We want children of every race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, immigration status, ability, gender and orientation to reach their full potential and to feel they and their families belong at our school. Yet we know that bias, prejudice, stereotypes and racism exist within ourselves, our school, our community, and our world.

We value the Montessori approach to celebrating cultural diversity and helping children develop in their own unique ways, but we know that's not enough. We need to intentionally and actively teach children to recognize identity-based bias and mistreatment and speak out when they see it happening.

As a school, we commit to:

- Engaging in on-going Anti-Bias Education conversations, reflections, and training with our staff, parent and caregiver community, and CMS board.
- Reviewing and developing our policies and procedures using an anti-bias lens, especially in the areas of admissions, staff recruitment, and family engagement.
- Integrating the five tenets of Anti-Bias Education:
  - Build on children’s innate sense of empathy.
  - Foster the development of healthy, complex identities.
  - Develop respect and appreciation across differences.
  - Acquire the ability to name, notice and reject bias, prejudice and stereotypes.
  - Practice the skills needed to stand up to injustice (teasing, bullying, harassment, or exclusion) for self and others.

These tenets are the AMAZEworks model of Anti-Bias Education, based on *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* by Louise-Derman Sparks, Julie Olsen Edwards and Catherine M. Goins.

## School History

The first school on this property, Mayflower Nursery School, was founded in 1961 by members of Mayflower Community Congregational Church. The nursery school, later renamed Mayflower Preschool, was one of the longest community outreach programs in Mayflower Church history, serving families of all faiths and denominations.

In 2008, the church congregation voted to expand its early childhood education offerings to include a full-day, year-round program to serve families of Minneapolis, including families living in the newly constructed Creekside Commons building adjacent to its property. In 2010, the new full-day Montessori learning environment opened along with a 3-day Montessori program. In 2011, CMS was awarded Parent Aware “Four Star” status. In 2012, CMS became recognized by Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). In 2014, CMS added a Toddler Community. The Toddler Community became AMI recognized in 2015. In 2023, we officially changed our name to Creekside Montessori School, a change that came out of community-wide collaboration, to better represent our identity. We currently offer five-day Montessori programs for children ages 3-6 (four Children’s House classrooms), and a Toddler Community for toddlers ages 16 to 33 months. Our Four-Star Parent Aware Rating is renewed every two years and our AMI recognition is renewed every three years.

## Montessori Education

Montessori education was developed over 100 years ago in Italy by [Dr. Maria Montessori](#). It is a scientific method of education. Through research and observation, Montessori discovered that children move through specific developmental levels in which they exhibit different learning characteristics and needs. Montessori believed that a child's educational setting must change at each developmental level and should correlate with the psychological characteristics of that plane of development.

## Montessori Resources

Creekside Montessori has many resources to help you understand Montessori education. Our Family Engagement Center has Montessori books and articles. Many of our parent workshops are specifically geared toward understanding the Montessori method. We ask that all new parents attend a Montessori workshop

offered this fall and/or attend a guide-led Coffee Connect Hour in the FEC. Our Administration is working to revitalize our workshops to be culturally relevant and equity focused, as part of our mission to provide equitable access to Montessori and to early childhood educational opportunities for ALL children and families. Our website has many Montessori Resources and a “Parent Portal” with opportunities for families to engage with each other for meaningful learning experiences.

## Our Programs

Creekside Montessori program goals:

- To guide your child to a lifelong love of learning
- To help build within your child a sense of fairness and compassion for others
- To develop your child’s curiosity and wonder about the world
- To provide a safe and peaceful learning environment

Creekside Montessori is not a substitute for your home; rather, it is a supplement. A child’s home environment is the primary source of love, security, and stability. When you enroll your child in our program, you are entering a partnership. This partnership between the parents and the school is critical to a child’s success.

Records are kept of each child’s progress in all areas of development, and these are shared and discussed with parents at parent conferences, and through Transparent Classroom, the organizational software tool that we use. All parents have access to their child’s records on Transparent Classroom.

Our five-day Montessori programs are open year-round.

Creekside Montessori is licensed through the Department of Human Services, State of Minnesota. Full and half day students typically spend at least a half hour outside each day, through all seasons. (We do make adjustments for rain or extreme heat or cold, providing activities in our upstairs activity room or large downstairs church dining room.)

*“It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience.” —Maria Montessori*

Our Montessori programs provide rich learning environments for children ages 16 months to 6 years. Our AMI-trained Montessori guides and assistants engage the children in a prepared environment using a curriculum that spans a 3-year cycle (for Children’s Houses) and 16 months (for Toddler Community). We call our classrooms *Children’s Houses* and *Toddler Community* because they are set up as home-like environments with everything (furniture, materials, and tools) child-sized for the children.

Our programs have the following characteristics:

- Mixed ages (3-6 years, Children’s House, 16-33 months, Toddler Community)
- Specific materials for language, mathematics and sensorial
- 3-hour uninterrupted work cycle; 2-hour work cycle in the Toddler Community
- Staffed by AMI-trained Montessori guides and assistants
- Reading, grammar, spelling, handwriting, literature and poetry
- Science, including botany and zoology
- Everyday living skills, also called “practical life”
- Sensory awareness activities, also called “sensorial materials”
- Gardening
- Music
- Arts and crafts
- Physical education
- Prepared outdoor environments

Everything in the classroom is designed to meet the developmental needs and interests of the children. There is no limit to what children can learn, and they are able to advance through the developmental activities, as they are ready, without being limited by the progress of their peers.

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

In the Montessori Children's House (ages 3-6) the *prepared environment* contains four subject areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, and Language. The children are given *presentations* to understand how to manipulate the materials in each area, and they can choose what they will work on during what's called the morning *work cycle*. Individual work and group work occurs under the direction and observation of the guide (teacher) and assistant.

The children are encouraged to work independently and cooperatively. They learn to be responsible for the materials and to each other. Their love of learning is led by their curiosity and their concentration. A Montessori classroom is one that is dedicated to a sense of peaceful cooperation and community.

**Throughout this handbook and in all other materials, you will see us refer to the lead teachers in each classroom as *guides*. In Montessori education, the teacher is often referred to as a guide, as that more aptly suits the role s/he plays in the classroom.**

Our guides take great care in preparing the classroom so that materials are arranged sequentially, children have comfortable workspace, and there is freedom of physical movement. It is understood that each child develops in his/her own way and time, and the guides are prepared to assess each child individually.

### ***Toddler Community***

Our Toddler Community is a safe, beautiful and ordered environment prepared to respect, support and respond to the basic needs of toddlers 16 to 33 months old. In this program we seek to help the toddler follow his or her natural path of development, gain independence, be motivated from within by a natural curiosity, interact with the environment as an active explorer, and cultivate the desire to learn.

Toddlers are encouraged and assisted to develop skills in caring for themselves, such as dressing and undressing. Through their own observations, toddlers develop an interest in using the toilet. Simple, easily manipulated clothing assists the toddler in developing this independence.

Activities to care for the physical environment aid a toddler's development of movement, language, and concentration, while helping them learn to sequence a series of actions and adapt to the culture of the community. Toddlers spend much of their day joyfully washing hands, watering plants, sweeping, scrubbing tables, preparing food, and setting a beautiful table in order to practice the skills needed to be independent. To read more about our Toddler Community, please visit our [website](#).

*Little children, from the moment they are weaned, are making their way toward independence.*

—Maria Montessori

### ***Before Care***

To add Before Care to your contract, please email [admin@cmsmpls.orgg](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.orgg). Before Care fees are listed on our website.

**Children's House Before Care:** Children may arrive at 7:30am for before care; children will be together outside; at 8:30am, the before care staff will escort children to their classrooms.

**Toddler Before Care:** Toddlers may arrive at 7:30am to be greeted at the Diamond Lake Road entrance. They will be escorted by administration to the Toddler Community.



## ***After Care***

To add After Care to your contract, please email: [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org). After Care fees are listed on our website.

**Children's House After Care:** Children gather with the After Care Staff at the end of the school day to have a snack and to engage in Montessori activities as well as crafts and games. After Care takes place outside in the courtyard and in extra classrooms set up for rainy days and nap.

**Toddler All Day Montessori:** Toddlers who stay for **All Day Montessori** continue their activities within the classroom. Weather permitting, they also go to the Naturescape.

- **Children's House After Care** – 3:30 PM to 5:25\* PM
- **Toddler Community All Day Montessori** – 3:30 PM to 4:55\* PM
- **\*For late afternoon pickups**, we ask that parents arrive 5 minutes prior to the After Care program closing time. **Please be at the pick-up location by 4:55 pm for toddlers and 5:25pm for children's house.** Children need time to transition to your care and we want to respect our staff's schedules.

**Late fees:** If you arrive after 5 pm for TC and 5:30pm for CH, you will be charged a late fee at these rates:

- Up to 5 minutes \$5.00
- 6-10 minutes \$10.00
- 11-15 minutes \$15.00
- +16 minutes \$1.00 per minute

**If you need Drop-In After Care**, we ask that you email requests to [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org).

***As we need to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios, we cannot guarantee that there will be space available to accommodate After Care Drop-In requests made less than 48 hours in advance.***

## **Creekside Staff 2023-24**

We value our dedicated and gifted staff, and appreciate their efforts to support our school community. The staff of Creekside Montessori works together in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and appreciation with a common commitment to serving the needs of children. We value work, intellectual stimulation, and depend on each other for inspiration and support. The staff meets regularly to discuss routine matters and to plan for school events. All staff complete continuing education hours required by the State of Minnesota, and complete first aid and CPR training.

The staff is the link between your child and the classroom activities and materials. Each member of our professional staff has been carefully selected by the Head of School based on his/her specific qualifications, education, and genuine love and concern for children. Each staff member's credentials meet or exceed State Department of Human Services licensing regulations, and each member is required to complete related training and education on a continual basis throughout involvement with the school.

### ***Administration***

**Anne Estes, Head of School**, Ed.D, M.Ed, M.A., B.A., AMI Assistants to Infancy Diploma, AMI Primary Diploma

**Kimberly Sims, Family Outreach Coordinator**, B.A.

**Stephanie Melander, Business Manager**, B.S., M.Ed, AMI Primary Diploma

**Arulai Mathis, Administrative Coordinator**

**Saleha Asim, Administrative Support**, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma

### ***Children's House 1***

Laura Gerhardt, **Guide**, B.A., M.Ed., AMI Primary Diploma  
Richard Escandon, **Assistant Guide**, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma  
Deja Barber, **Aide**, AMI Assistants Training  
Zara Idris, **Aide**, AMI Assistants Training

### **Children's House 2**

Heidi Quiring, **Co-Guide**, AMI Primary Diploma  
Christy Love, **Assistant Guide**, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma  
Fariya Osman, **Aide**, AMI Assistants Training

### **Children's House 3**

Sarah Walker, **Guide**, B.A., M.Ed., AMI Primary Diploma  
Medora Schou, **Assistant Guide**, B.A., M.Ed., AMI Primary and Elementary Assistants Training  
Gina Hoffman, **Aide, Aftercare Lead Guide**, B.S., AMI Primary Diploma

### **Children's House 4**

Gaby Orozco-Delmont, **Guide**, B.A., AMI Primary Diploma  
Tammy Ray, **Assistant**, AMI Primary Diploma  
Dewita Nuryana, **Aide**, B.A., AMI Assistants Training

### **Toddler Community**

Natalie Friesen, **Guide**, B.A., M.Ed., AMI A to I Diploma, AMI Primary Diploma  
Janette Leslie, **Guide**, B.A., M.Ed., AMI A to I Diploma, AMS 3-6 Diploma  
Sarura Yerro, **Aide**, AMI Assistant Training

*"If we could say, 'We are respectful and courteous in our dealing with children, we treat them as we should like to be treated ourselves,' we should have mastered a great educational principle and be setting an example of good education."  
--Maria Montessori*

### **Support Staff**

Chyanne Barber, **Aide**

Nikki Barber, **Aide**, AMI Assistants Training

Tamira Omer, **Aide**, AMI Assistant Training

Mingus Robson, **Aide**, A.A. Liberal Arts

### **Board of Directors**

The Board supports the mission of Creekside Montessori. Members may be current and former parents, community members, or members of Mayflower Church. Board members serve three-year terms. The tenure of Board members is staggered so that the Board always has a mix of new and experienced members. The Board is self-perpetuating. If you would like to serve on the board, or nominate someone to serve, please contact the Head of School or any Board member. Board meetings are held every other month.

- Melanie Ferris, Chair
- Nathan Sellers, Treasurer
- Andrea Roethke, Secretary
- Rachael Peters
- Kris Norman
- Tyler Hoch

## **Creekside Montessori Committees**

*All parents are encouraged to sign up for participation via the Wednesday Weekly email newsletter or by emailing [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org).*

### **Parent Involvement Committee – Recruiting Now!**

The Parent Involvement committee is led by an enthusiastic and committed team of parents who help to create a warm and welcoming community that includes all families in all school and parent initiated events. The PIC team is primarily made up of two “Lead Parents” per classroom. It is led by two parent co-chairs (experienced Lead Parents) and guided by a staff liaison. All parents who have children attending CMS should also consider themselves members of the PIC.

PIC members understand that community participation and volunteerism sends an important message to children about how much we value our community—teaching them about building, sustaining, and reaping the benefits of being a part of something bigger.

Specific tasks of the PIC are to:

- Welcome new families
- Oversee parent participation during events such as open houses, orientations, parent workshops, school picnics, the All Family Sing.
- Organize the meals provided to the staff during parent teacher conferences
- Regularly communicate with guides and assist them in completing projects for their rooms as needed
- Organize family-fun gatherings outside of school and/or create other community building initiatives
- Participate in CMS’s annual Fundraiser preparations
- Attend scheduled meetings
- Support parent involvement in the CMS Community Facebook group.

### **Development Committee – Recruiting Now!**

Development activities at the school are important for funding that portion of the budget which is not covered by tuition. The participation of every family in development efforts is necessary to ensure the financial wellbeing of the school. Your generous support allows us to provide our students with extraordinary staff and learning environments, to offer tuition assistance for families with need, and to keep tuition costs as low as possible.

- Annual Giving – In the fall of each year, we invite families to make tax-deductible donations to the school during our Annual Giving campaign. These funds are designated for our scholarship fund and staff development.
- Receipt Box at Kowalski’s- Look for Creekside Montessori’s receipt box at the Kowalski’s Lyndale Market at 53<sup>rd</sup> and Lyndale Ave. Put your receipt in! A percentage of sales go towards our school. Thank you!
- Box tops for Education – General Mills makes a donation to Creekside for every box top we turn in. We use the funds from this program to purchase playground toys. This year, you can hand your box tops to the staff person greeting you at drop-off.
- Spring Fundraiser – Creekside PLANT SALE—our annual spring fundraiser – all parents are invited to share their ideas and efforts for this fun fundraising event.
- Amazon Smile

### **Building and Grounds Committee – Recruiting Now!**

This is a committee which seeks leadership and members. The primary purpose of the building and grounds committee is to support and help plan for the outdoor environment used by the children: the Naturescape, the courtyard, and the playground set. The committee also addresses indoor facility needs and improvements.

# General Information

## Hours

The Creekside Montessori school building is open from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday, year-round (with the exception of school closures listed on our calendar). Please see the section on After Care for specific pick up and drop off times. Our phones are answered between the hours of 7:30 am and 5:30 pm.

**We ask parents to arrive at least five minutes before the school closes.**

## Holidays and School Closures

We follow the Minneapolis Public Schools for winter and spring breaks, as well as some severe weather closings. CMS is closed in observance of the following national holidays: Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, Eid, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving, two weeks in December for winter break and one week at spring break. We also close for parent conferences, MEA staff development, preparation of the classrooms before the start of our summer program, and before the start of the school year.

Please consult the [school calendar on our website](#) for a complete list of school closures. Should a traditional holiday occur during a weekend, we will observe the holiday in accordance with the national Monday Holiday Bill. The tuition schedule takes school closings into account; hence, no discount is available for school closures or absences.

## Childcare During Some School Closings

We offer Childcare for Parent Conference Days and select days during Winter and Spring Breaks. Please refer to the school calendar for these dates. Sign-up for childcare takes place two weeks in advance of the date and is limited to space. Daily Schedule

### Children’s House

The schedule may vary slightly depending on weather and other occurrences.

7:30-8:30 AM	Before Care ( <b>parent/caregiver drops off Room 104</b> )
8:30-8:45 AM	Drop-off ( <b>parent/caregiver drops off at Blue Welcome Desk</b> )
8:45–11:45 AM	3-hour uninterrupted work cycle
11:45AM	Half day children depart ( <b>pick up at CMS hallway 11:45-11:55</b> )
11:45 AM – 1:00 PM	Lunch, clean-up, outdoor play
1:00–3:00 PM	Younger children nap (full day program)
1:00-3:30 PM	Older children work in classroom (full day program)
3:30 PM	End of school day ( <b>pick up at CMS hallway 3:30-3:45</b> )
3:30-5:30 PM*	After Care ( <b>pick up Room 104/Courtyard/MUCC Youth Room 4:40-5:25</b> )

*\* Latest pickup is 5:25PM*

## Toddler Community

7:30-8:30 AM	Before Care ( <b>parent/caregiver drops off at Room 104</b> )
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8:30-8:45 AM	Drop-off ( <b>parent/caregiver drops off at Blue Welcome Desk</b> )
8:45-10:45 AM	Two-hour work cycle
10:45-11:45 AM	Collective (stories and songs), then outdoor play
11:45 AM	Half Day Toddlers depart ( <b>pick up at CMS hallway 11:45-11:55</b> )
11:45 AM-12:45PM	Lunch, cleanup
1:00-3:00 PM	Nap
3:30 PM	End of school day ( <b>pick up at CMS hallway 3:30-3:45</b> )
3:30-5:00 PM**	All Day Montessori ( <b>pick up Toddler Community or CMS hallway 4:40-4:55</b> )

\*\* Latest pickup is 4:55PM

## Drop-Off

Beginning at 8:30AM, the guides will be prepared to greet your child in the classroom. We ask that you say a brief goodbye to your child during drop-off at the Blue Welcome Desk.

Your child's guide will receive your child at the classroom door and greet your child. Your child will independently hang up her coat, put on her indoor shoes, wash her hands, and begin her classroom work.

## Pick-Up

Guides, assistants, and support staff will assist your children in getting ready for their half day, full day, or aftercare pick up time. Caregivers will enter through the main Mayflower Church entrance and meet their child either on the courtyard or in the main hallway, depending on half day, full day, or aftercare pick-up.

We will release a child only to the parent who enrolled the child or to someone they have specifically authorized as an authorized guardian on the Emergency Information form. This designated guardian must be at least 16 years of age. We will request to see photo identification if we are unfamiliar with that person. We are required by law not to release a child to anyone who is inebriated or appears to be impaired in any way. We will not release a child to an unauthorized person, or to a person who is incapacitated or suspected of abuse. If for some reason a child should not be released to a parent or guardian, the family should provide appropriate documentation of this to the school. If the individual picking up the child is intoxicated, we will call 911 to ensure the safety of that child. CMS abides by all legally-served court orders. We ask that you provide appropriate documentation for our files regarding parental custody matters.

## Late Pick-Up at After Care

For Children's House, the last pick-up is at 5:25 PM, or at least 5 minutes before the school closes. For the Toddler Community, the last pick-up is at 4:55 PM. If you are running late, please call the front desk: 612-825-5914. Please refer to **Late Fee Policy** below.

If no parent has contacted the school by 5:30pm, the staff will attempt to call the parents first, and then the people listed in the emergency list. If the staff cannot reach anyone to make arrangements for pick up, they will wait until one half hour after closing. The *Minnesota Department of Human Services* prohibits us from personally transporting a child; therefore, after 45 minutes after closing, the child will be turned over to the Minneapolis Police. The police, along with the school staff and Head of School, will determine whether the child will be brought to St. Joseph's Children's Home. A note will be posted at the pick-up location to let the parents know where the child can be picked up.

## Late Fee Policy

**Late fees:** If you arrive after 5 pm, you will be charged a late fee at these rates:

- Up to 5 minutes \$5.00
- 6-10 minutes \$10.00
- 11-15 minutes \$15.00
- +16 minutes \$1.00 per minute

## Attendance and Tardiness

Attendance, arrival and morning/afternoon transition are all a part of the Montessori method, and support the whole child development of the Montessori approach to parenting and schooling. A reliable daily routine answers your child's most basic need for order and consistency. Bringing your child to school on time gives your child stability and includes them in the Montessori morning transition. Tardiness disrupts the work in the classroom, and the transition into the classroom for a child.

**If your child arrives after 8:45 AM, please call 612-825-5914 or email [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org) to let administration know when you will arrive. Your child will then upon arrival be escorted to his classroom where he will wash his hands and get ready for the morning work cycle.**

However, we understand that emergencies, sick days, and vacations are inevitable. Please notify the school in advance if your child is going to be out of school. Because staff assignments are based on enrollment, we are unable to extend any credit for absences due to illness or for vacations. Please call the attendance line (612-825-5914x124) or email [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org) **AND your child's classroom** to leave a message if your child will not be in school because of illness or emergency.

Each classroom maintains an attendance record, and attendance is taken daily. We will check the identification of any individual picking up children who we do not recognize. Parents should list names of all persons authorized to pick up their child(ren) in Transparent Classroom and **include phone numbers and addresses of all adults.** (This is a DHS licensing requirement.) Attendance records are kept in Transparent Classroom.

## Absences

Please notify the school via our attendance line: 612-825-5914 x124 and if possible email [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org) **AND your child's classroom** if your child is going to be absent. Our phone is answered and/or monitored starting at 8 AM daily. If your child is ill, let us know the nature of the illness and the symptoms, as we are required to post a notice if your child is diagnosed with certain contagious illnesses (such as strep). You are charged tuition for absent days. Please refer to *Illness* for more guidelines.

[TC@cmsmpls.org](mailto:TC@cmsmpls.org)

[CH1@cmsmpls.org](mailto:CH1@cmsmpls.org)

[CH2@cmsmpls.org](mailto:CH2@cmsmpls.org)

[CH3@cmsmpls.org](mailto:CH3@cmsmpls.org)

[CH4@cmsmpls.org](mailto:CH4@cmsmpls.org)

## Classroom Policies and Procedures

### Nap/Rest Period (Full-Day Program)

To balance the day, we schedule a nap after lunch for the younger children. We encourage your child to rest quietly during that time. Each child has his/her own napping cot. A cotton sheet is attached to each cot.

**If your child will be napping, please bring one blanket and optionally one small pillow in a cloth bag.** Cots are cleaned once a week, sheets are washed, and your child's nap bag and all its contents are sent home (on Friday) for laundering. We will use four classrooms as Nap Rooms (Rooms 204, 205, 206 on the second floor and Room 104 on the first floor) with Children's Houses divided within the room. Toddlers nap in their classroom.

The transition from nap to spending the afternoon in the classroom is based on the child and his/her readiness to be incorporated with the older children in the afternoon program as well as their resting needs. The staff continually observes the child for readiness. The criteria for readiness includes the ability to choose work, focus on activities chosen, rested and alert to focus on work, and comply with guidance given to older children.

NOTE: If your child is under 5 and you believe they should have shorter naps or no nap, please discuss this with your guide. Guides will collaborate with families and create a plan for your child that works for your family as well as the children's house community. DHS requires that we offer all children under 5 years of age 30 minutes of rest per day when staying full days.

## **Outdoor Play**

Fresh air and exercise are important to a child's good health. Weather permitting, we take all of the children outside daily. We carefully monitor outdoor activities and provide adequate water and shade (see Playground Guidelines). Children should have appropriate clothing for all seasons. Sunscreen can be applied at home before school. Snow pants, mittens, boots and a hat are required clothing for recess during the winter. During extreme weather, we provide indoor activities.

## **Playground Guidelines**

All children are required to be outside for recess. If your child cannot participate in outdoor recess, please call the Head of School to discuss the issue. In most cases, if a child cannot participate in outdoor recess, he/she should not be at school.

It is important that all children understand and adhere to our playground rules. These rules ensure that the outdoor environment will be safe and enjoyable for all children. Please discuss these rules with your child.

### **Play safely**

- Pushing, pulling, hitting, tackling games, wrestling, kicking, fighting, blocking other children's activities, or throwing snow, ice, sand, wood chips or equipment in the play area is not allowed. We encourage children to include other children in games and activities.

### **Toys and equipment**

- No toys, games, bats, balls, dolls, action figures or other materials are to be brought from home for recess use. The school supplies buckets, shovels, brooms, rakes, appropriate garden tools, and balls for work and play.

### **Conflict resolution**

- Children should come to an adult if they have a problem they cannot resolve themselves. We encourage children to "use their words" when in conflict. All of the adults supervising the playground carefully observe the playing children for any such conflicts, and are prepared to help the children resolve them peacefully.

### **Respect for materials**

- Children are expected to respect all materials, tools and equipment, and to use all playground materials for their intended use.

#### Slides and Monkey Bars:

- Children are not allowed to climb on the inside or outside of any slide. There is one person at a time on the slide, and no head first sliding is allowed. Hanging upside down on the monkey bars is not permitted.

#### Fence

- If a ball goes outside the fence, children should tell an adult so s/he can retrieve it. There is no climbing on the fences.

#### Bushes, trees, plants, grass

- Unless children are gardening, they should avoid digging in, pulling on, picking at, breaking off, or hanging on vegetation. We have a large sand area for digging, and lots of sand toys for the children's enjoyment. Our enclosed Naturescape is an environment that toddlers will use daily and older children will use in small groups with a staff member.

If a child does not adhere to the playground rules, the adult supervising the playground will discuss the matter with the child, and reiterate the rules. If the child continues to break the playground rules, he/she will be asked to take a five-minute rest. If, after the child returns to play, he/she continues to break the playground rules, he/she will be removed from the playground and brought into the school in the company of an adult for the remainder of recess. If an adult is not free to leave the playground (in order to maintain required adult/child ratios), the child will be seated for the remainder of recess. Repeated unsafe play outdoors may result in the child losing his/her playground privileges for one or more days. We will discuss this with the parent, should it occur, and encourage the parents to talk with the child about playground safety.

## Lunches and Snacks

When preparing your child's bag lunch, remember to pack a food item from each of the four food groups: protein, carbohydrate, fruit, and vegetable. Please choose food items that contain no more than 10 - 12 grams of sugar. We ask that you do not include a dessert (**this means no chocolate pudding, candy, cakes, cookies, etc**). **Sugary treats will not be served to your child if they are included in the lunch.** Yogurt in containers is preferred over drinkable yogurts or Go-Gurts. Since we do not have a microwave to warm up food, we recommend that warm lunches be sent to school in a thermos. Items can also be kept cool in your child's lunchbox by adding an ice pack.

Please pack a morning snack for your child each day. Again, we ask that you do not include a dessert (**this means no chocolate pudding, candy, cakes, cookies, etc**). **Sugary treats will not be served to your child if they are included in their snack.** There will also be 1-2 supplemental snacks offered throughout the day. These snacks will be provided by one family per week who volunteers to purchase groceries for the classroom. Because of these snacks, the children are not extremely hungry at lunch time. Please keep this in mind when packing the lunch, as we find that children often have more food than they need in their lunchboxes. We provide 1% organic milk and water. If another type of milk is needed for your child, we ask that you provide this milk to us and we will offer it to your child.

Creekside Montessori is a nut-free environment. **Because several of our children have severe nut allergies, please do not send any item containing nuts, peanut or almond butter or other nut products to school. A good alternative to nut butters is "sun butter"—from sunflower seeds. If you include an alternative butter that could appear to be a nut butter, that food item needs to be clearly labeled as the alternative butter.**  
**Thank you!**



## Grocery List

Each classroom will have a grocery list for parents to purchase supplemental snacks for children to eat throughout the day. CMS will provide a snack at 3:30 PM to those children staying for After Care. Each week each classroom guide will assign one family a grocery list to provide items needed for snack as well as a bouquet of flowers for flower arranging. The grocery list varies weekly, depending on needs in the classroom. Each family will have one or two turns in a school year. The grocery list is given to the parent the week prior, and we ask that you bring the items the following Monday. Please contact the Head of School if purchasing groceries is cost prohibitive. CMS can provide funds to the parent in advance of the grocery purchase if needed.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated in the classroom. Your child's guide will tell you what the guidelines are for birthday treats and celebrations in the classroom. If you do not wish us to celebrate your child's birthday, please let your guide know.

## Clothing and Personal Belongings

Because the children participate in many daily activities, both indoors and out, it is important that they be dressed in comfortable, durable, weather-appropriate play clothes that will adapt to food spills, paint, sand, and water play.

Children should wear closed-toed shoes at all times. Sandals, flip flops, and other open toed shoes may not be worn to school. Shoes with lights or wheels are also not to be worn at schools. Tennis shoes or other soft-soled shoes are recommended. Children will need a pair of indoor shoes that will remain in the classroom. Choose a pair of shoes or slippers that are plain and easy for your child to independently put on and take off.

Your child's comfort is important to us. Please bring a spare set of clothing for your child to change into in case of toilet accidents or water spills/art work soils. Please keep in mind that toys, jewelry, hats, party dresses, and other clothing and lunch boxes with media images (action figures, movie and animated characters) may create a disruption in the classroom, and are discouraged. Media images include those of super heroes and animated characters that encourage violent or excited play. We sympathize with you about the pressures that the media creates with these images; however, it does create a great distraction not only to your child, but also to other children in the classroom.

Your child should be able to put his/her clothing on and off without assistance. When you buy clothing and shoes, take care that your child can put them on independently. We recommend good quality shoes that slip on or have Velcro straps; elastic waists so the child can get them off; shirts with sleeves that do not hang down over the child's hands. Soft comfortable clothing is best. Children sometimes have toileting accidents because they cannot get their pants unbuttoned, unbuttoned or unzipped in time!

### ***Please Label All Clothing***

Every year, we have an extensive Lost and Found of children's clothing: sweatshirts, outerwear and dozens of socks. We encourage you to mark all of your children's clothing with a permanent marker or purchase iron-on name tags which can be [purchased online at a reasonable price](#). Write your child's name on the outside of his/her lunchbox. Should your child lose clothing or other possessions, we will have Lost and Found boxes that we occasionally bring to the drop-off and pick-up location (because of COVID policies, parents will not have access to them in the building). Creekside Montessori is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

## Reusable Water Bottle or Reusable Cup Policy

Please bring a labeled reusable water bottle for your child when they begin at CMS. The water bottle will remain at school and be sanitized every day.

Reusable water bottles or reusable cups, when used, are used only for water and are clearly labeled with each child's first and last name. Our staff will monitor the labels so that they do not rub off or become removed; when this occurs, we will promptly re-label them. These reusable water bottles and reusable cups will be continuously monitored by our staff to ensure that the correct child is using his or her own water bottle or cup. Our staff will do this by matching the labeled name on the bottle or cup to the child. Furthermore, we will store reusable water bottles and cups on carts and in children's personalized baskets, which will further reduce the risk of a child using the wrong water bottle or cup.

Reusable water bottles and/or reusable cups will be sanitized at least once daily by being washed, rinsed, and placed in a National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) sanitizer.

## Pets

Parents are always informed of the presence of a pet in the classroom. We have guidelines to follow regarding pets. Pets are chosen carefully, considering animal temperament, ease of maintaining, and risk of disease transmission. We obtain pets from a licensed pet source. Any pet, indoors or outdoors, should be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, and be a friendly companion for children. Pets should be routinely tested and inoculated. Pets and cages are prohibited from food prep, food storage and eating areas. Pets should be accessible to children only under staff supervision. Staff is responsible for routine care, cleaning cages, obtaining pet care supplies (stored out of reach of children), arranging for weekend/vacation care, feeding and exercising. Animal waste is discarded in a covered container away from children and food areas.

## Transitions

Your child's guide will discuss upcoming transitions as they occur (from Toddler to Children's House, or Children's House to elementary school). The child's records of observation using the Montessori method of observation as well as their records on Transparent Classroom, will stay with the child during his/her entire stay at CMS, so that a complete record of progress can be available to the parents and future schools.

## Admissions and Tuition

### Admissions

CMS is an equal opportunity provider and accepts children ages 16 months through six years of age. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, gender, national origin, or special needs. We encourage parents to visit our school after hours and/or view our online virtual tours as well as set up a time to have a conversation with the Head of School and/or Family Engagement Coordinator before applying.

Enrollment priority is given to returning families and families in need of tuition assistance. Families do need to submit an enrollment agreement and follow the Admissions procedures as outlined in our Admissions process and on the website. We encourage all families to register their child for pre-kindergarten screening through their local public school district. *Our preschool license requires children attending Children's House (ages 33 months – six) to be toilet trained upon admission. **Student information forms, Immunization***

**records, emergency information and Health Care Summary must be on file by the first day of your child's attendance at CMS.**

## Registration Fees and Forms

When filing the initial application to the school, there is a non-refundable application fee of \$80.

Re-enrollment in the spring for the following school year will require a tuition deposit of \$200. We also ask for a non-refundable materials fee (\$250).

Upon enrollment, appropriate registration forms, medical forms, and other pertinent information must be filled out and submitted before the first day of school via Transparent Classroom online software. Current immunization records and a Health Care Summary completed by the child's health care provider must be on file, as well as medical and emergency information. All paperwork needs to be on file before a child may begin the Fall school year.

## 2023-24 Tuition

### Toddler Community

Half-day (8:30am-11:45am): \$1041

Full-day (8:30am-3:30pm): \$1607

All Day Montessori (8:30am-5pm): 3 days/ week \$1798; 5 days/week \$1925

### Children's House

Half-day (8:30am-11:45am): \$967

Full-day (8:30am-3:30am): \$1405

### Aftercare (3:30pm-5:30pm)

5 days/week: \$300

Drop-in (if space available): \$15/day

### Beforecare (7:30-8:30am)

\$130/month

The total cost of our program is divided into equal monthly payments for our families. The number of school days in each month may change, but the tuition remains the same. Your child's tuition is for days present and absent. The school does not give refunds or prorate tuition for days a child is absent from school. Any changes to a child's schedule should be submitted in writing prior to the change so that the school can determine if it can accommodate your request.

Tuition is billed monthly, and is due on the first day of the month. Please mail tuition checks to CMS or place in an envelope and give to a staff member at drop off. **Note:** A \$25 late fee will be charged for payments received after the 10th of the month without prior arrangement. Arrangements can be made to have your payment come to us electronically. Ask our Business Manager, Stephanie Melander ([stephanie@cmsgms.org](mailto:stephanie@cmsgms.org)) for details. Failure to pay tuition and other fees on time may result in termination of enrollment and/or denial of future registration. Please talk with the Head of School if you are having difficulties meeting tuition payments.

***Please note: during the 2023-24 school year CMS may have Covid-related closures. We will do everything we can to make these closures as limited as possible but there are aspects of the pandemic that are beyond our control, such as state-mandated closures or MDH directives to quarantine a classroom. With closures, all families are required to pay their monthly tuition.***

## Tuition Assistance

Creekside Montessori welcomes the opportunity to provide financial support where possible to help families send their children to our school. Tuition assistance is available to families that qualify based on need, to the extent that funds are available. Because families' financial status can change from year to year, families must reapply for tuition assistance every year. Application forms will be emailed or printed upon request. Please direct your inquiries to Anne Estes at [anne@csmpls.org](mailto:anne@csmpls.org), Kimberly Sims at [kimberly@csmpls.org](mailto:kimberly@csmpls.org) or Stephanie Melander at [stephanie@csmpls.org](mailto:stephanie@csmpls.org). We ask that each family applying for Tuition Assistance contact Hennepin County Child Care Assistance to inquire about qualifying for Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP). Families on Tuition Assistance are also asked to apply for Early Learning Scholarships, a state program. The Family Outreach Coordinator, Kimberly Sims, has information on these programs and will work with families during the application process.

## Child Care Assistance

Creekside Montessori is qualified to accept children receiving Child Care Assistance. Please ask our Family Outreach Coordinator if you have questions about this program, or visit your county's CCAP program online. We ask that all families applying for Tuition Assistance from Creekside Montessori also call the Child Care Assistance hotline to see if they qualify for help paying for child care. Some families qualify for a sliding scale payment system; other families qualify for almost their entire tuition. Most often, families are put on a waitlist. It may take several months for them to move to the top of that waitlist, but being on the waitlist is important to our funding sources at Creekside Montessori.

## Safety

### Security

Your child's safety and security are of utmost importance to us. Children are supervised by staff members at all times. Please see that he/she is under supervision before leaving the school. It is very important that a child not be left unattended at any time anywhere in the school. We sign your child in and out daily.

CMS has an Emergency Procedure plan in place. Staff are trained to be prepared for an emergency. Please address your questions about these procedures to the Head of School.

### Parking Lot Safety

A parent or caregiver must assist a child to the main entrance. **Please hold your child's hand as you cross the parking lot.** Creekside Montessori asks that ALL drivers be extremely conscious of small children in the parking lot.

### Entrance/Exit and Hallway Safety

Children may not enter or exit the building without an adult. Please give attention to your child as you walk together to your vehicle.

### Accidents

Creekside Montessori maintains an *Injury Log* of all injuries/incidents at the school. Parents are given a copy of an injury/incident report to sign via Transparent Classroom. In the event of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and then contact the parents. We require a parent's written authorization for emergency

transportation before a child begins attending Creekside Montessori. You or your designated substitute will be asked to transport your child in less serious situations. In serious cases, an ambulance will transport your child to the hospital. Creekside Montessori's staff members are not trained to make medical decisions and are required by applicable licensing authorities to call 911 for medical emergencies. However, in the case of an emergency, the staff will apply first aid to the degree they are trained (all staff have First Aid/CPR training) until the 911 call is responded to. *The school will neither accept nor honor requests to withhold emergency care or do not resuscitate (DNR) / do not intubate (DNI).*

## Fire and Severe Weather

Creekside Montessori has a well-defined plan for emergency evacuation. Evacuation plans are posted at appropriate locations in the doors of the school, and we schedule and document monthly emergency drills. Should an emergency occur that requires evacuation to an emergency shelter, you will be called immediately and a notice will be posted at the school. During severe winter weather, please check KARE11.com. We most often follow the Minneapolis Public Schools on severe weather closings. ***If school is closed, a notice will be sent by email and text to parents.***

## Heat Day

Creekside Montessori will consider closing in the event of excessive heat. Excessive heat means:

- Heat index of at least 105 degrees F for more than three hours per day for two consecutive days, or
- Heat index of more than 115 degrees F for any period of time, or
- Heat index of between 91-103 for three consecutive days or more

## Cold Day

Creekside Montessori will consider closing if the wind chill forecast for 6:30 a.m. the following day is -35° or colder, with winds of at least 5 to 10 miles per hour.

## Snow Day

Creekside Montessori will consider closing if road conditions are such that travel becomes too hazardous for buses and cars. Creekside Montessori will consider closing school if travel delays become so great that staff cannot reach the buildings in order to teach students or staff/families will be out at bus stops for an excessive amount of time.

This *may* happen if it snows 6 inches or more in 12 hours, or 8 inches or more in 24 hours. *Every winter storm is different, so it is possible that classes will still be held even if snowfall reaches these limits.*

We *may* also close school if conditions approach blizzard criteria, even if snowfall amounts are lower.

## Missing Children

In the event that a child is missing, we will call 911 and then contact the parent(s). We will provide the authorities with the child's name, hair color, eye color, general description, clothing, ability to communicate, medical history, a recent photo of the child and information regarding a divorce or custody situation.

# Medical

## Illness

We take every precaution to safeguard your child against illness. Parents should not bring a sick child to school. Children who are too sick to go outside are too sick to be at school. Please refer to the General Exclusion Guidelines for Children/Staff Hennepin County Dept. of Health (at the back of this handbook) as a guideline for when your child should not be at school.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will call you to pick up your child. We will provide a quiet place for your child to rest until you arrive. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will call the emergency contacts for the child. **Parents or other designated persons should pick up their child within one hour of being notified that the child is ill at school.**

If your child is exposed to any infectious disease outside the school, please report it to us immediately. If your child has a contagious reportable disease such as strep, lice (live and nit), scabies, impetigo, ringworm, or chicken pox, please report that to us. We are required to communicate to parents if a child in the school has been diagnosed with certain contagious conditions. Your child must be nit-free to return to school.

**Your child should be free of fever (100 degrees or above) and vomiting, and off of all fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before he or she returns to school. If your child is given antibiotics to treat an infection, s/he can return to school 24 hours after the antibiotic has begun. Children returning to school before they are well are more susceptible to illness and may expose others. Please do not give your child medication to treat a fever and then send them to school.**

## Illness – Exclusion of Sick Children

A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors is a sick child and must be excluded from school. We reserve the right to make decisions regarding illness exclusions and symptoms at any time. We are required to exclude a child:

- With a reportable illness or condition that the commissioner of health determines to be contagious and a physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others;
- With chicken pox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over;
- Who has vomited (**child may not return to school until 24 hours vomit-free**)
- Who has abnormally loose stools;
- Who has contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye;
- Who has a bacterial infection such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy;
- Who has unexplained lethargy;
- Who has lice (both live and nit), ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others;
- Who has a 100 degree Fahrenheit axillary (under the arm) or higher temperature (**child may not return to school until 24 hours fever-free**)
- Who has an undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition;
- Who has significant respiratory distress;
- Who is not able to participate in our program activities with reasonable comfort;
- Who requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in our care.

An email will be sent out to parents that an infectious disease has been reported.

## Medical Forms

By law, you are required to submit your child's current immunization record upon admission to the school. Immunizations must be up to date at this time, and **it is your responsibility to notify the school when your child receives new immunizations and to furnish proof to the school.** On the first day of school each year, you must furnish the health care summary (that is sent to you via Transparent Classroom). It is important that your child's physician, dentist, and preferred hospital be listed in our records.

## Allergy Prevention and Response

(a) Before admitting a child for care, Creekside Montessori must obtain documentation of any known allergy from the child's parent or legal guardian or the child's source of medical care. If a child has a known allergy, CMS must maintain current information about the allergy in the child's record and develop an individual child care program plan (ICCPP) as specified in Minnesota Rules, part [9503.0065](#), subpart 3. The ICCPP must include but not be limited to a description of the allergy, specific triggers, avoidance techniques, symptoms of an allergic reaction, and procedures for responding to an allergic reaction, including medication, dosages, and a doctor's contact information, including use of an Epi-Pen.

(b) CMS must ensure that each staff person who is responsible for carrying out the individual child care program plan review and follow the plan. Documentation of a staff person's review must be kept on site--on the Licensed Child Care Center Orientation Checklist.

(c) At least annually or following any changes made to allergy-related information in the child's record, CMS must update the child's individual child care program plan and inform each staff person who is responsible for carrying out the individual child care program plan of the change. CMS must keep on site documentation that a staff person was informed of a change.

(d) A child's allergy information must be available at all times including on site, when on field trips, or during transportation. A child's food allergy information must be readily available to a staff person in the area where food is prepared and served to the child.

(e) CMS must contact the child's parent or legal guardian as soon as possible in any instance of exposure or allergic reaction that requires medication or medical intervention. CMS must call emergency medical services when epinephrine is administered to a child in the license holder's care.

All staff will sign and date the Allergy Prevention and Response Training documentation with the correlated training date.

CMS is a nut free environment. **No child or adult may bring products containing peanuts or tree nuts to school.** We thank you for your full cooperation!

## Preschool (Early Childhood) Screening Through Minneapolis Public Schools

We encourage families to sign up for Early Childhood Screening through the Minneapolis Public Schools. This screening can identify health or learning concerns. Screening is for vision and hearing, growth and development, immunizations and family history. Call 612-668-3715 to make an appointment.

# Parents

## Overall Communications

It is very important for us to maintain our commitment of excellence in providing an early childhood education for your child. If you have a question, concern, or comment, please talk with Head of School, Anne Estes. Anne is available by phone, video call, email, or in-person meetings during school hours.

## Communications with Classroom Staff

Creekside Montessori knows the importance of being well informed about each and every child. Because a child's general behavior and daily eating and resting habits can significantly affect behavior, our staff attempts to informally talk with you to inform you of anything unusual, as well as your child's progress. In addition, we wish to hear updates from you about your child's habits and changes. This allows both parents and staff to better anticipate a child's behavior and, equally important, to better understand your child.

To facilitate communication, you may email the guide. You can also request a phone call, virtual meeting, or in-person meeting if there is a matter you wish to discuss when the child is not present. Please be aware that your child's guide is not expected to respond to email or phone calls in the evening. Our staff will respond to requests from parents during school hours.

## All-School Communications

Please check our electronic newsletter which is sent to the email address you provide to us. Please report to us any changes to your email address. Our website is another way to stay informed.

## Conferences

Parent/Guide conferences are scheduled each fall and spring. Please refer to the [school calendar](#) on our website for the exact dates. These conferences are an opportunity to meet (virtually) one-on-one with your child's guide to discuss your child's progress. Transitions to the next level of education are also discussed at conference time. It is important to us that parents make every effort to attend (virtual or in-person) conferences twice a year. You will receive a written report at the time of your parent conference.

## Family Engagement Center (FEC)

Our Family Engagement Center is a space dedicated to supporting parents during the important years of raising young children. Our Family Outreach Coordinator, Kimberly Sims, coordinates current and prospective family outreach. As part of our mission, we invite all families to be a part of Creekside Montessori, of all backgrounds, religions, and languages. We encourage parents to communicate and lead discussions, connect with each other, and engage in new ways with one another.

The FEC serves as a vibrant place in our community. It is a gathering spot for parents as they meet, converse, enjoy coffee and tea, and find quiet time to read or reflect. Our lending library of parent resource materials will be available digitally later this fall.

## Parent Feedback

We value your opinion about our programs and want to communicate with our families in a variety of ways. The Head of School, Anne Estes, is available on a daily basis. Please feel welcome to contact her. We send out



a parent participation form to find out more about you and to help you find the right committee or activity to participate in that supports this school. Guides are available to discuss specific questions or concerns you may have about your child in person, by phone or email. Additionally, you may meet with the Family Outreach Coordinator to supplement your conversations with the guides and find additional resources of support.

## **Visits (Observations)**

We will continue our parent/caregiver observations in the classroom this year beginning in November. The observations will be 30 minutes in length, Thursday mornings, at 9-9:30am. After the observation, you will debrief your experience in the FEC with fellow parents as well as Montessori-trained staff. Look for the observation sign-ups coming soon!

## **Volunteerism**

An important way for parents to be involved is to volunteer at school. Volunteering on committees is an excellent way to meet other families and help Creekside realize its vision of being a high quality early childhood program. The realization of the school's vision is a collaborative effort among the key stakeholders in the community, namely the children, the parents, the staff, the board, and the administration. Our main fundraiser in the spring is the Creekside Montessori Annual Plant Sale. The Plant Sale is also an important Creekside Montessori community event with a number of opportunities for which families may volunteer. We greatly appreciate learning of your volunteer interest. Your completion of a parent participation form allows us to see where you might be interested in helping at Creekside Montessori. Thank you!

## **Surveys**

The school conducts a survey of parents once a year to solicit ideas and opinions about different aspects of our programs. It is available online (sent via email), or by hard copy. Your opinions are important to us, and we welcome full participation in these surveys. The results of our parent surveys are reviewed by the Head of School and Board of Directors, and used to plan programming for the future. We also value hearing feedback from you after each of our Parent Workshops on our workshop survey.

## **General Policies and Procedures**

### **Cell Phone Use at Creekside Montessori**

Please refrain from using your cell phone in any way, including texting and gaming, when dropping your child off at Creekside. Many children are overjoyed to see their families after a busy day and often have something they'd like to share with you. As a demonstration of respect for the child, please give him/her your undivided attention during these transitions. Not using your phone while waiting for your child also allows you the opportunity to interact with other parents, at a safe distance, building community! We encourage returning parents to introduce themselves to new parents.

The staff also pledge to use cell phones only when on breaks and away from the Creekside Montessori community. Staff occasionally use their phones to take photographs.

### **Termination of Enrollment**

Creekside Montessori's commitment to you is to provide a stable, nurturing environment for your child. Our staff members sign school year contracts with us, and we seek to have long term working relationships. It is also our hope that all families will remain with us for the entire school year. **If you decide to withdraw your**

**child from the school for any reason, please provide at least 60 days written notice to Creekside Early Childhood Center.** This gives the school two months to replace your child's enrollment with another student. For a withdrawal notice of less than **60 days**, you are required to pay tuition for the full **60 days** following the formal written notice. We strive for stability both in our staff and our community of children and families. Scheduling decreases (from full day to half day) and mid-year enrollment withdrawals jeopardize the operating budget and disrupt the consistency we strive for in the classrooms.

## **Behavior Guidance**

Our philosophy is that every child has a right to learn and that no student may prevent another from learning. Every child has the right to be safe at school. In our classrooms, your child will learn and acquire skills in practical living, socialization, and academics. To facilitate the learning process, we have established basic rules such as following directions and working independently. Our goal is to provide all children with peaceful learning environments.

Unacceptable behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate talk (swearing or sexual talk)
- Demeaning name-calling
- Teasing or purposefully hurting feelings
- Consistent noise-making
- Disrespectful talk to any person
- Hitting, spitting or kicking
- Aggressive play, or any form of guns or weapons "play"
- Inappropriate sexual touching
- Purposeful destruction of class materials or equipment
- Biting
- Running away (not responding to and/or running from a staff member)
- Disrupting another child's work
- Interfering with the health and/or safety of another

CMS practices behavior guidance by providing the children with challenging and absorbing activities and by treating them with dignity and respect. We establish clear and realistic limits that are developmentally appropriate and are enforced firmly and consistently. The school will take immediate steps to work with a child and family whose behavior is harmful to him/her, or to the other children in the classroom.

## **Persistent Unacceptable Behavior**

Although most children respond positively to this approach, we recognize that some will continue to test the boundaries established. We will work diligently with the parents and child in these situations.

If the child's behavior threatens him/herself or other children, we will request a meeting with the parents to discuss the situation. The purpose of this meeting is to agree on ways to address the unacceptable behavior, and whether to consult an outside child care specialist who will observe the child. (Any expenses related to this observation will be covered by the parents.) Goals and timeframes will be set at this meeting, and will be documented.

It may also be necessary to separate the child from the group. If a child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, five times or more in one week or eight times in two weeks, the child's parents will be notified and a meeting between the teacher, parents and Head of School will be held within one week. The guides will observe and record the behavior of the child and the staff's response to the behavior. (Note: if the child's behavior is harmful to him/herself or other children, a lower threshold may be appropriate. For instance, if a child is overly violent, the school may call the parents and ask that they pick the child up immediately.)

If a child is sent home, the Head of School will provide a list of suggestions for the parents on how to manage the child's behavior at home. In addition to the child's guide, our Head of School and Family Outreach Coordinator are also available for consultation.

If the school recommends that the family consult with a professional (psychologist or counselor), the family must promptly pursue this course of action. After the child has been observed by an outside professional or child care specialist, a meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the guide, the Head of School (and the specialist, if available) to share observations and develop a written plan with specific goals and timeline for the goals to be reached. If at the end of the timeline the behavior is still present, the family may be given a termination notice.

CMS hopes to work constructively with families of children exhibiting persistent behavior problems. However, the school reserves the right to terminate at any time the enrollment agreement due to behavior problems which are hurtful to the child, other children, or the staff. The school may also terminate enrollment if a family refuses to allow a recommended observation by a child care specialist, or refuses to cooperate with the goals set up at the parent/school meeting.

Decisions regarding continued enrollment or enrollment termination are made only after careful deliberations, making sure to balance the needs of individual students with the classroom as a whole, particularly when there may be behavior problems which are hurtful to the child, other children, or the staff; or create disruption to the learning environment of the classroom.

CMS does not allow the use of physical punishment or emotional abuse by our staff. If you have specific concerns regarding our behavior guidance techniques, we encourage you to discuss them with the Guides and/or the Head of School.

## **Biting Policy**

Biting is a serious health hazard because of HIV, HBV and other contagious diseases spread through this practice. We have adopted the following supportive approach to safeguard the welfare of the children and the staff in our community, as well as work with families to best serve the child.

- If a child bites, the child is separated from the child s/he bit. The child is redirected to another activity (see Persistent Unacceptable Behavior). Parents and teachers must work together to help the child cope with anger and/or frustration in a respectful, non-violent manner. Younger children usually need to be given the language to express their emotions. Older children need to be guided toward positive conflict resolution.
- If biting is a recurring behavior, caregivers, guide, Head of School, and Family Engagement Coordinator will create a plan to best serve the child who is biting as well as support the classroom and children where the biting is occurring.
- The biting policy for Toddlers is adjusted due to developmental differences. If biting is recurring for a toddler, the Toddler Community Guide, parents, and possibly the Family Engagement and Outreach Coordinator along with the Head of School will come up with a plan to best serve the child who is biting as well as support the classroom and the children where the biting is occurring.

## **Grievance Procedure**

We hope to have open and honest communications with all of our families. In the event that a parent has a complaint they wish to formally make, s/he may use the following procedure to address grievances with CMS:

- Submit the grievance in writing to any of the staff. If you wish to receive a written response, you must sign your grievance.

- Submit the grievance anonymously by putting it in the tuition box in the Family Engagement Center. The Head of School will address this grievance at a staff meeting.
- If your grievance has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you may request a meeting with a staff member and the Head of School for mediation and resolution.
- Meet with a staff member, the Head of School, and a Board representative for resolution.

## Licensing

Creekside Montessori is licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services. Our operations meet or exceed the programming standards established for children ages 16 months to 6 years. These standards are related to our facility, staff, health and safety, nutrition, staff-to-child ratios, and record keeping. State and city health, fire, and licensing officers routinely inspect our center. A complete review of our Health and Safety Procedures are conducted annually with all staff members. If you have questions, contact the **Department of Human Services, 444 Lafayette Road, St Paul, MN 55155, 651-431-6500**. We are also licensed through the Hennepin County Department of Health, which annually examines our kitchen, bathroom and classroom facilities for health safety.

## Insurance and Health Consultations

CMS carries general liability insurance which meets or exceeds the limits required by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. We do everything possible to minimize accidents through various safety programs, frequent inspections, and regular maintenance. To maintain its high quality of service, CMS annually has a consultation with the Minnesota Visiting Nurses Association. For the health and safety of all children enrolled at CMS, it is important that parents provide complete information on their children and keep it updated at all times (via Transparent Classroom). **It is important for parents to report any changes in address, cell phone numbers, emergency numbers, employment, and persons who may or may not pick up your child.** Report this information to the Administrative Assistant (admin@cmsmpls.org, 612-825-5914).

## Record Keeping

We maintain a record of any emergencies, accidents, incidents, and injuries that occur at our center. We have written policies for first aid and safety rules, daily inspection for hazards, fire prevention, disaster procedures, missing child procedures, unauthorized pick-up of a child, medical emergency, recording procedures and annual analysis of center policies. Children and staff records are maintained according to current regulations.

## Data Practices Notice

CMS strictly complies with the Minnesota Data Practices Act. The Head of School has been designated the responsible party to collect, use, and disseminate data considered private and confidential. Information is only accessed when necessary for the administration and management of our school or as authorized or required by state or federal law. The Hennepin County Community Services Department is an agency with whom we share client data on an “as required” or “as needed” basis. You may choose not to provide us with this information. However, we may not be able to admit your child for school without this information. We only request information required by law or regulations promulgated by the state or federal government.

## Staff Development

Staff development includes a review of the policies and procedures of the Department of Human Services (Rule 3), the health policies from the Department of Health, the school’s Health and Safety Policies and Procedures, and the renewal of our commitment to providing the highest quality early childhood education. The staff is required yearly by the Department of Human Services to meet a certain number of hours of

continuing education in our field. These hours are based on each staff member's education and experience. Records are kept for each staff member's continuing education hours.

## **Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting**

This form may be used by any provider licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, except family child care. The form for family child care providers can be found in eDocs #7634C.

What to report:

- Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions refer to Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03. Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years. Who must report
- If you work in a licensed facility, you are a "mandated reporter" and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility.
- In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment. Where to report
- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, should be made to the Licensing Division's Central Intake line at 651-431-6600.
- Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, or in a child foster care home, should be reported to the local county social services agency at or local law enforcement at . When to report
- Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours). Information to report
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident. Failure to report
- A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03. Retaliation prohibited
- An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at):
  - an employee for making a report in good faith; or
  - a child who is the subject of the report.
- If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties. Page 2 of 6 DHS-7634A-ENG 2-21 Staff training The license holder must train all mandated reporters on their reporting responsibilities, according to the training requirements in the statutes and rules governing the licensed program. The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14. Provide policy to parents For licensed child care centers, the mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment and must be available upon request. The definitions section (p. 3-6) is optional to provide to parents. The following sections only apply to

license holders that serve children. This does not include family child foster care per Minnesota Statutes 245A.66, subd. 1. Internal review

- When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care.
- The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:
  - related policies and procedures were followed;
  - the policies and procedures were adequate;
  - there is a need for additional staff training;
  - the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
  - there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care. Primary and secondary person or position to ensure reviews completed The internal review will be completed by CMS Head of School. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, CMS Board Chair will be responsible for completing the internal review. Documentation of internal review The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request. Corrective action plan Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder. Page 3 of 6 DHS-7634A-ENG 2-21 Definitions Found in Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03 Egregious harm (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 5) "Egregious harm" means harm under section 260C.007, subdivision 14, or a similar law of another jurisdiction. Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.007, Subd. 14: "Egregious harm" means the infliction of bodily harm to a child or neglect of a child which demonstrates a grossly inadequate ability to provide minimally adequate parental care. The egregious harm need not have occurred in the state or in the county where a termination of parental rights action is otherwise properly venued. Egregious harm includes, but is not limited to:
    1. conduct towards a child that constitutes a violation of sections 609.185 to 609.2114, 609.222, subdivision 2, 609.223, or any other similar law of any other state;
    2. the infliction of "substantial bodily harm" to a child, as defined in section 609.02, subdivision 7a;
    3. conduct towards a child that constitutes felony malicious punishment of a child under section 609.377;
    4. conduct towards a child that constitutes felony unreasonable restraint of a child under section 609.255, subdivision 3;
    5. conduct towards a child that constitutes felony neglect or endangerment of a child under section 609.378;
    6. conduct towards a child that constitutes assault under section 609.221, 609.222, or 609.223;
    7. conduct towards a child that constitutes solicitation, inducement, or promotion of, or receiving profit derived from prostitution under section 609.322;
    8. conduct towards a child that constitutes murder or voluntary manslaughter as defined by United States Code, title 18, section 1111(a) or 1112(a);
    9. conduct towards a child that constitutes aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring, or soliciting to commit a murder or voluntary manslaughter that constitutes a violation of United States Code, title 18, section 1111(a) or 1112(a); or
    10. conduct toward a child that constitutes criminal sexual conduct under sections 609.342 to 609.345. Maltreatment (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 12)

"Maltreatment" means any of the following acts or omissions:

1. egregious harm under subdivision 5;

2. neglect under subdivision 15;
3. physical abuse under subdivision 18;
4. sexual abuse under subdivision 20;
5. substantial child endangerment under subdivision 22;
6. threatened injury under subdivision 23;
7. mental injury under subdivision 13; and
8. maltreatment of a child in a facility. Mental injury (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 13) "Mental injury" means an injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child as evidenced by an observable or substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard to the child's culture. Page 4 of 6 DHS-7634A-ENG 2-21 Neglect (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 15)

A. "Neglect" means the commission or omission of any of the acts specified under clauses (1) to (8), other than by accidental means:

1. failure by a person responsible for a child's care to supply a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, health, medical, or other care required for the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so;
2. failure to protect a child from conditions or actions that seriously endanger the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as a failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect;
3. failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangements appropriate for a child after considering factors as the child's age, mental ability, physical condition, length of absence, or environment, when the child is unable to care for the child's own basic needs or safety, or the basic needs or safety of another child in their care;
4. failure to ensure that the child is educated as defined in sections 120A.22 and 260C.163, subdivision 11, which does not include a parent's refusal to provide the parent's child with sympathomimetic medications, consistent with section 125A.091, subdivision 5;
5. prenatal exposure to a controlled substance, as defined in section 253B.02, subdivision 2, used by the mother for a nonmedical purpose, as evidenced by withdrawal symptoms in the child at birth, results of a toxicology test performed on the mother at delivery or the child at birth, medical effects or developmental delays during the child's first year of life that medically indicate prenatal exposure to a controlled substance, or the presence of a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder;
6. medical neglect, as defined in section 260C.007, subdivision 6, clause (5);
7. chronic and severe use of alcohol or a controlled substance by a person responsible for the child's care that adversely affects the child's basic needs and safety; or
8. emotional harm from a pattern of behavior that contributes to impaired emotional functioning of the child which may be demonstrated by a substantial and observable effect in the child's behavior, emotional response, or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child's age and stage of development, with due regard to the child's culture.

B. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to mean that a child is neglected solely because the child's parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's care in good faith selects and depends upon spiritual means or prayer for treatment or care of disease or remedial care of the child in lieu of medical care.

C. This chapter does not impose upon persons not otherwise legally responsible for providing a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, education, or medical care a duty to provide that care. Physical abuse (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 18)

A. "Physical abuse" means any physical injury, mental injury under subdivision 13, or threatened injury under subdivision 23, inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care on a child other than by accidental

means, or any physical or mental injury that cannot reasonably be explained by the child's history of injuries, or any aversive or deprivation procedures, or regulated interventions, that have not been authorized under section 125A.0942 or 245.825.

B. Abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child administered by a parent or legal guardian that does not result in an injury. Abuse does not include the use of reasonable force by a teacher, principal, or school employee as allowed by section 121A.582.

C. For the purposes of this subdivision, actions that are not reasonable and moderate include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

1. throwing, kicking, burning, biting, or cutting a child;
2. striking a child with a closed fist;
3. shaking a child under age three;
4. striking or other actions that result in any nonaccidental injury to a child under 18 months of age;
5. unreasonable interference with a child's breathing;
6. threatening a child with a weapon, as defined in section 609.02, subdivision 6; Page 5 of 6 DHS-7634A-ENG 2-21
7. striking a child under age one on the face or head;
8. striking a child who is at least age one but under age four on the face or head, which results in an injury;
9. purposely giving a child: i. poison, alcohol, or dangerous, harmful, or controlled substances that were not prescribed for the child by a practitioner in order to control or punish the child; or ii. other substances that substantially affect the child's behavior, motor coordination, or judgment; that result in sickness or internal injury; or that subject the child to medical procedures that would be unnecessary if the child were not exposed to the substances;
10. unreasonable physical confinement or restraint not permitted under section 609.379, including but not limited to tying, caging, or chaining; or
11. in a school facility or school zone, an act by a person responsible for the child's care that is a violation under section 121A.58. Sexual abuse (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 20) "Sexual abuse" means the subjection of a child by a person responsible for the child's care, by a person who has a significant relationship to the child, or by a person in a current or recent position of authority, to any act that constitutes a violation of section 609.342 (criminal sexual conduct in the first degree), 609.343 (criminal sexual conduct in the second degree), 609.344 (criminal sexual conduct in the third degree), 609.345 (criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree), 609.3451 (criminal sexual conduct in the fifth degree), or 609.352 (solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct; communication of sexually explicit materials to children). Sexual abuse also includes any act involving a child that constitutes a violation of prostitution offenses under sections 609.321 to 609.324 or 617.246. Sexual abuse includes all reports of known or suspected child sex trafficking involving a child who is identified as a victim of sex trafficking. Sexual abuse includes child sex trafficking as defined in section 609.321, subdivisions 7a and 7b. Sexual abuse includes threatened sexual abuse, which includes the status of a parent or household member who has committed a violation that requires registration as an offender under section 243.166, subdivision 1b, paragraph (a) or (b), or required registration under section 243.166, subdivision 1b, paragraph (a) or (b). Substantial child endangerment (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 22)

"Substantial child endangerment" means that a person responsible for a child's care, by act or omission, commits or attempts to commit an act against a child under their care that constitutes any of the following:

1. egregious harm under subdivision 5;
2. abandonment under section 260C.301, subdivision 2;



3. neglect under subdivision 15, paragraph (a), clause (2), that substantially endangers the child's physical or mental health, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect;
  4. murder in the first, second, or third degree under section 609.185, 609.19, or 609.195;
  5. manslaughter in the first or second degree under section 609.20 or 609.205;
  6. assault in the first, second, or third degree under section 609.221, 609.222, or 609.223;
  7. solicitation, inducement, and promotion of prostitution under section 609.322;
  8. criminal sexual conduct under sections 609.342 to 609.3451;
  9. solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct under section 609.352;
  10. malicious punishment or neglect or endangerment of a child under section 609.377 or 609.378;
  11. use of a minor in sexual performance under section 617.246; or
  12. parental behavior, status, or condition that mandates that the county attorney file a termination of parental rights petition under section 260C.503, subdivision 2. Page 6 of 6 DHS-7634A-ENG 2-21
- Threatened injury (Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subd. 23) A. "Threatened injury" means a statement, overt act, condition, or status that represents a substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse or mental injury.

B. Threatened injury includes, but is not limited to, exposing a child to a person responsible for the child's care, as defined in subdivision 17, who has:

1. subjected a child to, or failed to protect a child from, an overt act or condition that constitutes egregious harm under subdivision 5 or a similar law of another jurisdiction;
2. been found to be palpably unfit under section 260C.301, subdivision 1, paragraph (b), clause (4), or a similar law of another jurisdiction;
3. committed an act that resulted in an involuntary termination of parental rights under section 260C.301, or a similar law of another jurisdiction; or
4. committed an act that resulted in the involuntary transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a child to a relative under Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 260C.201, subdivision 11, paragraph (d), clause (1), section 260C.515, subdivision 4, or a similar law of another jurisdiction.

C. A child is the subject of a report of threatened injury when the local welfare agency receives birth match data under section 260E.14, subdivision 4, from the Department of Human Services. Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy for DHS Licensed Programs;

### **Staff Training**

The school must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (MN Statutes, section 626.556). The school must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under MN Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

## **Violence and Harassment Policy**

It is the policy of CMS to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, or violence in any form. Harassment, in any form, will not be tolerated at CMS by any of its employees, enrollees, students, or parents. This includes harassment based upon a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and/or other protected category. This policy applies to all employees, enrollees, students, or parents. If, after appropriate investigation, harassment is found to have occurred, the initiator will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances, up to and including termination of the relationship with CMS.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student, enrollee, parent, or employee of CMS to harass or intimidate another parent, student, enrollee, or employee through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. Similarly, conduct which is disparaging of another's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and/or other protected category is not allowed at CMS.

It shall also be a violation of this policy for any parent, student, enrollee or employee of CMS to be violent towards another parent, student, enrollee, or employee.

CMS will act to investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment, intimidation, or violence and to discipline (or to take action against) any parent, student, enrollee, or employee who harasses or is violent towards another parent, student, enrollee or employee of our school.

## **Definitions**

Violence is an intentional physical act of aggression. Violence may include, but is not limited to: Touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another person; or coercing or forcing the unwanted touching of another. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category, or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates and that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfacing with an individual's work performance or ability to enjoy the benefits of the school; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities or ability to enjoy the benefits of the school.

Sexual Harassment is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) as: unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or enjoyment of the benefits of the school, submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual or is used as a basis for determining whom will enjoy the benefits of the school; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfacing with an individual's work performance or enjoyment of the benefits of the school or otherwise creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Examples: harassment can occur intentionally or unintentionally. Some examples of conduct that is prohibited by this policy are listed below. Please note that these are not the only examples: Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category; written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category that is placed on walls, bulletin boards or elsewhere on Creekside Montessori's premises or circulated throughout the facility; unwanted sexual comments, innuendos, flirtations, propositions, suggestions or invitations to social events; use of offensive words of a sexual nature describing body parts or the sexual act, telling "suggestive" jokes or stories, and conversations about sexual exploits, sexual preferences, and desires or suggestive or sexist remarks about a person's clothing or body; displaying, in the facility, pictures, objects, cartoons, pornographic magazines, or representations of any action or subject which is sexual in nature, depicting nude, scantily clad or suggestively posed women or men and which can be perceived as offensive; sabotaging another individual's character, reputation, effects, or property because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, creed, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or other protected category; direct and/or indirect suggestions, requests, or demands that an employees' job security, job assignment, conditions of employment, or opportunities for advancement

depend in any way on the granting of sexual favors; or sexual relations accompanied by implied or overt threats or promises.

### **Reporting**

Persons who believe they have witnessed or have been victimized through harassment or violence should report those incidents so that we may promptly address the problem. You may make your concerns known by telling the person engaging in harassing or violent conduct or communication that the conduct or communication is offensive, against this policy and/or the law and must stop; by telling the Head of School of CMS both verbally and/or in writing. This option may be useful if the individual does not wish to communicate directly with the person whose conduct or communication is offensive, or if direct communication has been unsuccessful.

### **Determination**

All complaints involving a claimed violation of this policy will be examined impartially without prejudice and without malice toward the reporting party regardless of the status of the person accused. Information provided will be released only on a need to know basis. After an investigation of the allegations, a determination will be made and resulting action will be recommended by the Head of School. The investigation may include interviews with the person(s) making the charges, the accused individual and appropriate witnesses. All determinations are made on an individual basis. CMS has the discretion to apply any sanctions or a combination of sanctions to eliminate any unlawful conduct and remedy the impact of any discrimination, including termination of employment or enrollment. CMS encourages individuals to make accurate reports of complaints under this policy and provide as much information as possible so that we may properly and thoroughly investigate the report. CMS will not condone retaliation against any individual who reports possible harassment or violence or who assists in an investigation of possible harassment or violence. Under circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under the Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under the Maltreatment to Minors Act, Minn. Stat. 626.556, may be applicable. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the school from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, intimidation, violence or abuse.

**Thank you for reading this Parent Handbook. Please keep it handy throughout the year for questions about our program.**

# **APPENDIX 1: General Exclusion Guidelines for Children/Staff**

## **Hennepin County Dept. of Health**

The Hennepin County Department of Health recommends that children with any of the following be excluded from the school environment:

### **Illness**

Unable to participate in routine activities or needs more care than can be provided by the school staff.

### **Fever**

With an elevation of body temp above normal when accompanied by behavior changes, stiff neck, difficulty breathing, rash, sore throat and/or other signs or symptoms of illness; or is unable to participate in routine activities. Measure temperature before giving medications to reduce fever. Axillary (armpit) temp 100 degrees or higher. Oral temp: 101 degrees or higher.

### **Signs/Symptoms of Possible Severe Illness**

Until a health care provider has done an evaluation to rule out severe illness when a child is unusually tired, has uncontrolled coughing, unexplained irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child. (A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FORM form must be completed and signed by a health care provider before the child returns to school.)

### **Diarrhea**

Until diarrhea stops or until a medical exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a child's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form and/or stools that are watery, bloody, or contain mucus.

### **Vomiting**

Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless determined to be caused by a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

### **Mouth Sores with Drooling**

Until a medical exam indicates the child may return or until sores have healed.

### **Rash with Fever or Behavior Change**

Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not those of a communicable disease that requires exclusion.

### **Eye Drainage**

When purulent (pus) drainage and/or fever or eye pain is present or a medical exam indicates that a child may return.

### **Unusual Color of skin, eyes, stool, or urine**

Until a medical exam indicates the child does not have hepatitis A. Symptoms of hepatitis A include yellow eyes or skin (jaundice), gray or white stools, or dark (tea or cola colored) urine.

## **APPENDIX 2: Creekside Montessori School (CMS) Public Policy Procedures Overview**

### **Mission**

Creekside Montessori School's (CMS's) is an independent non-profit organization with a mission of providing high quality early childhood education to an economically diverse group of students.

CMS's public policy efforts are structured to meet the standards for civic engagement and public policy set forth in the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits **Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence:**

“Influencing public decision-making is a critical and legal means for nonprofit organizations to accomplish their missions. Open communication between policymakers and constituents contributes to well-informed policies and their effective implementation. To the highest extent possible, nonprofit organizations should educate their community, provide opportunities to deliberate on public policies and engage their constituents in advocacy activities in order to achieve their missions, and promote community interests. Because participation in government decision-making is a highly regulated and sometimes contentious area, nonprofit leaders need to be familiar with the regulations and requirements for nonprofit organizations to participate in policy making. They also need to know the reporting requirements and restrictions on partisan political campaign activity.”

CMS recognizes that our ability to succeed in providing care and education to an economically diverse population is related to the state, federal and local policies that govern early care and education and the resources dedicated to Minnesota's youngest children. Thus, CMS may and should advocate with state, federal and/or local policy makers in support of policies that help CMS advance our mission or with potential to significantly impact the families served by CMS and/or the our program and staff.

### **Policy Committee**

The CMS Board will establish a Policy Committee with responsibility for identifying policy proposals that impact CMS's ability to achieve its stated mission. The Policy Committee shall include the Board Chair, one other Board member and the CMS Head of School. The Policy Committee will review policy issues and identify positions consistent with CMS's mission that merit action by CMS. Those positions will be presented to the Board electronically and will become the official policy positions of CMS, unless a majority of the Board responds electronically in opposition to the positions taken by the Policy Committee.

When the CMS Policy Committee approves action on a policy issue, the Policy Committee should then alert CMS families, staff, and Mayflower Church's social justice ministry team about such proposals, and encourage them to take action if they are willing. CMS actions may include: testimony, letter writing, video testimonials, calls to action, lobbying, meetings with elected officials and other activities designed to advance or oppose policy proposals on which CMS has taken a position.

## Criteria for Issue Selection

The CMS Policy Committee will deliberate and recommend CMS's position on each proposed policy. The deliberation should be based on the intended impact of the proposed policy on CMS, including our economic diversity, our program quality, and our financial stability. Key criteria for issue and position selection by the include:

- Is the issue consistent with CMS's mission?
- How relevant is the issue to CMS's family, staff and/or program?
- Does CMS have expertise on the issue?
- Will CMS add value to the policy debate?
- Is there enough legislative/public interest in the issue that there is likely to be action on the issue?
- Is CMS likely to be perceived as a stakeholder and valuable source of information on this issue?
- Is the issue a high priority, in terms of its impact on CMS's mission?
- Does the issue merit investment of the time and other resources required for CMS to take action?
- Are there important CMS stakeholders who would oppose CMS's position on the issue?
- Are there important CMS stakeholders, including Mayflower Church, who would support CMS's position on the issue?

## Compliance

CMS's Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all policy actions are compliant with relevant 501c3 laws and reported to state and federal entities in accordance with the law.

CMS is grateful to the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits for their generous assistance in developing this document, including their permission to use language from their policy procedures overview.