

Family Information Guide

Administrative Office
 2549 West 8th Street
 Erie, Pennsylvania 16505
 814-833-7771
www.mrscserie.org

Family Information Guide 2018-2019	4
Mission Statement	4
Guiding Principles	4
School Hours	4
Student Dismissal	5
Car Pool	5
Bus Transportation	6
Please Contact Your Local School District Bus Garage:	6
Please Contact MRCS:	7
WALKERS	7
INCLEMENT WEATHER	7
Birthdays	7
Dress Code	8
Food Service Program	9
Communication	9
Video Surveillance Policy	10
Policy & Purpose:	10
Guidelines:	10
Procedure:	10
Signage	11
Recorded Information Storage, Retention and Release	11
Attendance	12
Code of Conduct	16
Parent Responsibilities	17
MRCS Staff Responsibilities	18
Student Discipline	19
Electronics Policy	24
Academics	25

Philosophy	25
MRCS Curriculum	25
MRCS Teachers	25
Homework	25
Homework is not optional	25
Homework will:	26
Conference/Progress Reports	26
During the conferences, teachers will:	26
Parent/Teacher Communication	26
Classroom Placement	26
Health Policy	27
Your child should be kept home if he/she:	27
If your child gets sick at school:	27
In the case of a medical emergency	28
If your child needs medication during school hours	28
If your child needs medication on a field trip	28
Health Screenings Provided	28
Height / Weight/ BMI Measurement	29
Vision Screenings	29
Hearing Screenings	29
Scoliosis Screening	29
Physical Examination Screenings	29
Dental Examinations	29
A Few Health Topics	29
SKIN CONDITIONS	29
CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINKEYE)	30
LIFE THREATENING ILLNESS	30
HEAD LICE POLICY	30
Electronics Policy	30
Definition of digital media device:	31
Before and After School Care	31
Field Trips	32
Lost and Found	32
Fire and Safety Drills	32
Notice of Non-Discrimination	33
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	35
Notice for Directory Information	35
Notification of Rights Under the	36
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	36

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of	38
Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)	38
Programs for Eligible or Protected Handicapped Students	39
Services and Programs	39
Gifted Education	40
Screening and Evaluation	41
Protected Handicapped Children	41
I.D.E.I.A.	41
What's Next?	42
Confidentiality	42

Family Information Guide 2018-2019

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a superior Montessori Program of Study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences.

Guiding Principles

- To encourage independence and self-reliance
- To honor, respect and value individual differences
- To commit to multi-age, multi-ability and multicultural classroom environments
- To provide safe, prepared environments, filled with developmentally appropriate, tactile materials
- To maintain a highly qualified staff and administration
- To recognize parents role in our educational process
- To be a resource for our community as a center of Montessori training and awareness

School Hours

<u>Lower Elementary Campus School Hours</u>	<u>Upper Elementary Campus School Hours</u>
8:30 am – 3:00 pm (Doors open at 8:00am)	8:15 am – 2:45 pm (Doors open at 7:45am)
Grades Kindergarten to 3	Grades 4 to 6
2910 Sterrettania Road Erie, PA 16506	606 Raspberry Street Erie, PA 16502
(814) 833-7771	(814) 833-7771

Student Dismissal

Important Note: *If you are having another adult pick up your child on any day, please make sure that you call, email or send a note to the school authorizing the pickup. If we do not receive authorization, we will ask that the driver come into the front office so that we can contact you.*

We want you to know that at dismissal, your child's **safety, security and a stress free environment is our highest priority.** At MRCS we make it our business to know the dismissal plans for each and every child, every day. We need your help in fulfilling this goal! **Please take a moment to read over the following** and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at 833-7771.

We know that sometimes dismissal plans will change. If you must change your end-of-day transportation plans, please talk to your child to prepare him/her for the change before your child leaves for school in the morning. Then, make us aware of the change by:

1. Sending an email to dismissal@mrcserie.org
2. Sending a note to school that day – addressed to transportation office, or by
3. Calling the school **before 2:00 pm** at 833-7771, ext. 170 *In the case of family medical or other emergencies, please notify the school office as soon as possible to enable us to support you and your child's dismissal needs.*
4. Please know, we do not permit early dismissals of students **after 2:30pm** due to end of the day routine and heavy bus traffic the the school parking lot at that time.

Regarding shared custody, when a parent has provided a copy of a Court Order which decrees shared custody of a child, MRCS recognizes the right of each parent's access to their child and dismissal from MRCS to either parent. We hope that you can appreciate our neutrality and that it is inappropriate for any school employee to discuss custody schedules, complaints, or disputes with either parent.

Carpool

Your Back to School Packet contains two (2) car plackets to be used for any day that you are participating in carpool pickup. This placard should be placed on the driver side dashboard.

Lower Elementary Campus Carpool

Upper Elementary Campus Carpool

Morning: 8:00-8:25 am	Morning: 7:45-8:10 am
Afternoon: 3:00-3:30 pm	Afternoon: 2:45-3:15 pm

FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM CELL PHONE USE WHILE IN THE CARPOOL LINE.

Please take the following into consideration regarding carpool dismissal:

- Children under 80 lbs. /8 years of age are required by law to have car seats.
- Please restrain family pets so they will not interfere with students being assisted in or out of vehicle

Bus Transportation

Each local home school district is responsible for transporting students residing in their district to and from Montessori Regional Charter School. Students must live within 10 miles' driving distance from the school property. Transportation is provided on days that MRCS is in session, and this includes days when the local school district may be closed.

The local home school district will assign the student bus route and time to and from one address only. The address must be within the boundaries of the local home school district.

Please Contact Your Local School District Bus Garage:

1. If the bus is running late
2. If the bus didn't stop or
3. For bus safety

School District Bus Garage	Phone Number
Erie	838-1602
Fairview	474-3171
Ft. LeBoeuf	796-2146
General McLane	273-1033
Girard	774-2100

Harborcreek	899-5681
Iroquois	899-8848
Millcreek	838-1602
Wattsburg	824-4113

Please Contact MRCS:

- If you have moved (and need a bus route change)
- If you would like to start bus service
- If your child will no longer ride the bus

Phone: 814-833-7771 X206

Email: office@mrcserie.org

WALKERS

The law provides for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to review potentially hazardous walking routes. Because Montessori Regional Charter School Lower Elementary is abutted by two busy roads, *students who do not have a primary residence within the zone below must choose a default dismissal of car pool or bus transportation.*

The designated no-transport zone is: north of West 26th Street (Pennsylvania Route 20) and south of West 32nd street, and east of Wellington Street to Sterrettania Road (Pennsylvania Route 832.)

INCLEMENT WEATHER

You will be informed of school cancellations through our Broadcast call system and on the local TV stations after 5:15 am. Look for news about **Montessori Regional Charter School** – we are not associated with any other Montessori School.

More information about [Winter Weather School Closure](#).

Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating and recognizing student birthdays in the classroom. Families who would like to send in a treat may send in a non-edible item to be shared with the class. Families are welcome to, but not required to send in a non-edible item.

Some examples of non-edible food items include:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- Stickers
- Bookmarks

In our continuing efforts to provide a healthy and safe environment for our students, and in recognition of the increasing number of food allergies and dietary restrictions we have updated our policy. MRCS will no longer allow edible treats/snacks in school for any reason. Any edible treat or snack sent to school will be sent back home with your child.

To avoid hurt feelings, party invitations will be passed out only if there is one for each child in the class. Privacy laws prevent the distribution of student names or home addresses.

Birthday flowers, balloons or gift bags brought or sent to the school will be kept at the office and given to the student at dismissal time.

Dress Code

MRCS does not have a uniform. We ask that parents send students to school dressed **neat, clean** and in **comfortable, appropriate clothing** for school. Please consider the weather since we will have outdoor recess if it is over 28 degrees (with wind chills factored in) and not raining. For the safety of all students and staff, no hats or hoods will be permitted to be worn inside the school building.

If a student arrives at school wearing inappropriate clothing (t-shirts with unacceptable pictures or words, shirts that do not cover completely, shorts or skirts that are immodest or shoes that are unsafe) parents/guardian will be called to bring in alternate clothing. Students will not be allowed to wear anything provocative or disruptive to the classroom or school procedures.

GYM CLASS - For safety reasons, students must have the proper footwear to participate in gym class. Shoes with a rubber sole that fit securely on the foot (such as tennis or gym shoes) are best. Boots, flip-flops, slippers and dress flats are not allowed. Participation in gym class is an important life skill. If your child cannot participate in gym on any given day, due to illness or

injury, please send in a doctor's note excusing the child from class and indicating the duration of the excuse from class.

Food Service Program

Food Service Program Information can be found on the school website at www.mrcserie.org/parents/food-service

Communication

It is our intent to ensure timely and effective communication of policies, procedures and programs while being respectful of the environment and “green” practices whenever possible. Please help us stay in touch with your family by making sure that we have accurate address and phone information for all parents/guardians. If your child has multiple households, please be sure to inform the office so that we can make sure all parents/guardians are receiving timely school information.

We will communicate with you in several ways:

- **Weekly Backpack Communication folder** – This is information from your child's teacher regarding classroom academics, upcoming field trips, homework and/or classroom activities
- **ParentSquare Communication** – School-to-Family communication will delivered in a timely manner via ParentSquare (email, text and/or app). These notifications are generally sent for information that is more immediate in nature such as reminders of upcoming activities or programs, changes in time or location of various athletic events and **school closures due to weather or emergencies**. Please be sure you keep the office informed of any email or phone number changes.
- **MRCs website** – www.mrcserie.org. Our website contains the school calendar of events, information on After School programs and activities and policy information. The office updates the website on a regular basis.

Email us at office@mrcserie.org and your question/concern will be directed to the correct person. Please allow 2 business days for a response. Thank you.

Video Surveillance Policy

Policy & Purpose:

It is the policy of Montessori Regional Charter School ("MRCS") to conduct video surveillance of all or a part of its operation, with or without notice, in order to assure a safe, efficient facility. MRCS may employ video cameras and digital recorders ((DVR) on the property for purposes of quality assurance, investigations, student safety, employee safety, deterring crime, and protection of property.

Surveillance cameras will be used in a professional, ethical and legal manner. Their use will avoid unnecessary intrusion upon freedom and individual civil liberties such as privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. The surveillance system shall not be installed in, or used to monitor or record areas, where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy in accordance with accepted social norms, such as restrooms, locker rooms or similar facilities. Additionally, the surveillance system shall be used in a manner consistent with other policies, including those pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, privacy and freedom of expression.

Guidelines:

- Video surveillance for the purpose of this policy is defined as continuous observation of a place, person, group, or ongoing activity in order to gather information.
- Video surveillance **will not** include areas identified as private. Private areas include but are not limited to restrooms, locker rooms or similar facilities.
- Only authorized personnel will be permitted access to the cameras and images produced in accordance with applicable law.
- Access will be permitted to:
 - Designated authorized administrative staff or official first responders
 - Solicitor

Procedure:

- Parents/guardians will be informed of and sign the surveillance notification upon a student's enrollment at MRCS. Parents and students will also be notified of the policy by its placement in the student handbook.
- All staff will be informed of the surveillance upon hire. New hires and current employees will review and sign an acknowledgement of this policy along with other policies found in the employee handbook.

- All visitors will be informed of this policy via facility signage.
- Video surveillance will be accessed for the purposes of gathering information regarding, but not limited to, the following events:
 - Student accusations against staff members
 - Student accusations against each other
 - Student injuries
 - Staff injuries
 - Accidents that occur on the campus
 - Unknown origin of property destruction
 - Vandalism
 - Theft
 - Other illegal access or activity on school premises

Signage

- Signs will be posted throughout the facility at common surveillance locations.

Signage will contain the following or similar language: **This area may be subject to video surveillance and recording for security/safety purposes.**

Recorded Information Storage, Retention and Release

- Surveillance images obtained will be stored in a secure location and configured to prevent their unauthorized access, modification, duplication or destruction.
- Surveillance images will be maintained for no longer than 90 days. After an incident, images will be maintained per solicitor recommendations and applicable law.
- All requests for release of surveillance images must be made in writing. Release of surveillance imaging may only be released when authorized by the solicitor, applicable law or court order.
- Videos are exempt from the definition of a "public record" under Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law for one or more of the following reasons: the disclosure of the video would risk the loss of Federal or State funds; the video is a record relating to a non-criminal investigation; or the disclosure of the video increases the risk to the security of MRCS' building or the safety of individuals. MRCS reserves the right to assert further defenses to disclosure of the video as those defenses may be applicable to a particular situation.

Attendance

As a public school, Montessori Regional Charter School follows Public School Code of 1949 (P.S. §§ 1-101 - §§ 27-2702) which contains the state mandated attendance laws. MRCS strongly believes, and research shows that daily, on time attendance at school is critical to your child's academic, social and emotional success at school.

The Montessori program uses "hands on" manipulatives and experiential learning on a daily basis. Therefore it is difficult to provide homework or make up work for lost classroom time. The Montessori method requires students to be present in the learning environment. Please support your child's education by ensuring that they are at school, on time and prepared, each and every day. If you are having difficulties with attendance, please call the school immediately so that we can work together to find solutions that ensure your child's presence at school and support their academic success.

Please read the following outline of Pennsylvania law regarding attendance. A complete copy of **Public School Code of 1949 (P.S. §§ 1-101 - §§ 27-2702)** may be found on our website.

1. An Excused absence is any absence for one of the reasons set forth below **and** a parent/legal guardian sends in a written excuse note within three days.
 - a. Illness
 - b. Family emergency
 - c. Death of a family member
 - d. Authorized school activities
 - e. Educational family travel with prior approval – Please obtain an Educational Travel form from the office or from the MRCS website.
 - f. Religious holidays observed by bona fide religious groups and religious instruction not to exceed 36 hours per year.
2. An Unexcused absence is any absence for any other reason, an absence that would be considered excused but the school does not receive a note within 3 days, or any absence in excess of 10 days (cumulative for the school year) that is not accompanied by a physician's note.

3. A maximum of **ten** (10) days of cumulative absences per school year will be considered lawful ***if the school receives written parental notification within three days of the absence.***

Educational Family Travel

Montessori Regional Charter School recognizes that there may be educational family travel during the academic year. A written request must be filled out and must outline the educational components of the trip. The Parent Sponsored Educational Trip form can be found on our website or obtained through the school office.

When returning from a Parent Sponsored Education Trip, the student will be required to complete an oral or written report that outlines their educational experience while on the trip.

Approval may be denied for reasons such as:

- During the standardized testing window
- Student identified as Truant or Habitually Truant
- Trip taken without prior approval

Absence

If your child is absent please contact the school by telephone or email to let us know. When your child returns to school, please make sure that you send a written excuse directed to the attendance office, stating:

1. your child's name
2. teacher's name
3. date of absence
4. reason for absence
5. Signature of parent/guardian

Truant and Habitually Truant (Reference Act 138 2016)

Truant

"Truant" shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When the child is truant, the school will notify in writing the child's parent or legal guardian of the child's violation of compulsory school attendance within 10 school days of the child's third unexcused absence. The notice will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant and an offer to attend a school attendance improvement conference.

If the child continues to incur unexcused absences after the school has issued the notice the school will offer by advance written notice a school attendance improvement conference to the child and the parent/ guardian of the child. The conference will occur even if the parent/ guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference. The outcome of the conference will be documented in a written school attendance improvement plan.

Habitually Truant

"Habitually truant" shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a child subject to compulsory school attendance. When a child is habitually truant the school will:

1. Refer the child to either of the following:
 - a. A school-based or community-based attendance improvement program.
 - b. The county children and youth agency for services or for possible disposition as a dependent child under the provisions of 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to juvenile matters).
2. May file a citation in the office of the appropriate judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the child.
3. When referring a habitually truant child to the county children and youth agency or filing a citation with the court because a child has been habitually truant, the school shall provide verification that a school attendance improvement conference was held.

Accumulated Absences

A notice will be sent to your home after a student has incurred 3 or more unexcused absences (Truant) and will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant and an offer to attend a school attendance improvement conference. A notice will also be sent home when the student has 6 unexcused absences (Habitually Truant).

A notice will be sent to your home after a student has incurred 7 (excused or unexcused) absences, and when a student reaches 10 excused absences.

Montessori Regional Charter School will continue to report absences to resident school districts throughout the school year. Montessori Regional Charter School will also report unexcused absences directly to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Unaccounted Absences (Reference 55 Pa. Code§ 11.24.)

Students whose names are on the active membership roll, who are at any time in the school term absent from school for 10 consecutive school days, shall thereafter be removed from the active membership roll unless one of the following occurs:

- (1) The district has been provided with evidence that absence may be legally excused.
- (2) Compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued.

Definitions: (Reference Act 138 2016)

"Compulsory school age" shall mean the period of a child's life from the time the child's parents elect to have the child enter school and which shall be no later than eight (8) years of age until the child reaches seventeen (17) years of age. The term does not include a child who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.

"School attendance improvement conference" shall mean a conference where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance, with or without additional services. The following individuals shall be invited to the conference:

- 1) The child.
- 2) The child's person in parental relation.
- 3) Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
- 4) Appropriate school personnel.
- 5) Recommended service providers.

"School-based or community-based attendance improvement program" shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a child's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C.

Tardy Policy

The school day at North campus begins at 8:15 am and at South campus at 8:30 am. Students will have a nutritious breakfast and begin their academic routine at that time, including, where appropriate, circle time, homework review and the morning "eye opener" exercises. Students who arrive late have a more difficult time settling in to the school day. Please make every effort to have your child at school on time every day.

If you arrive after 8:15am at the north campus/ 8:30 am at the south campus, please park your vehicle and accompany your child to the office. For the safety and security of your child, parents must sign their children in after 8:15/8:30 am. We cannot allow students to walk into the school unaccompanied by an adult.

- A student is considered tardy if they arrive after 8:15 (N) /8:30(S) am and before 10:15 (N) / 10:30 am (S).
- A student who arrives after 10:15 am at North Campus / 10:30 am at South Campus without a doctor's note will be marked absent for the whole day.

Early Dismissal

In the event your child has an appointment during the day and must leave school early please contact the school in the following manner:

- Send a note to school with your child addressed to the office
- Send an email to dismissal@mrcserie.org
- Call the office and leave a message with the attendance department


Please be sure to inform us of the child's name, teacher's name, reason for early dismissal and time of pick up. You will be asked to sign your child out at the time of pickup.

Please be aware that due to the high activity level between 2:30 and 3:00 pm, it is difficult to release children safely during that period. **Student must be picked up prior to 2:30 for early dismissal.** *Thank you for your consideration of your child's school schedule when making appointments!*

Code of Conduct


Montessori Regional Charter School is committed to providing a superior Montessori Program of study that will develop lifelong learners in a safe, respectful environment. MRCS takes a proactive approach to student discipline based on the Montessori philosophy of education. All school discipline is based on improving the whole child and addressing the core reasons for the improper behavior. This process is designed to empower the child, with the ultimate goal of having the child use their skills and talents in a positive and productive manner.

The MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy procedure will be presented to and discussed with students annually. Teachers will review the Mustang Pride Values with the students and set clear expectations surrounding the Mustang Pride Values.



MUSTANG PRIDE VALUES

- 1** Be Respectful of People and Property
- 2** Move Safely Through the Environments
- 3** Be Ready to Listen and Learn
- 4** Understand, Ask, Do Your Best



Montessori
Regional Charter School

Students will learn, understand and utilize:

- The six pillars of Character Education
 - Trustworthiness
 - Respect
 - Responsibility
 - Fairness
 - Caring
 - Citizenship
- Self-control and behavior management techniques
- Strategies for positively [dealing with bullying](#)
- Appropriate problem solving techniques inside and outside of the classroom
- The expectations for appropriate student behavior as explained in the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy.
- The consequence process for inappropriate student behavior as explained in the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy.

Parent/ Family Responsibilities

Each parent / family will:

- Provide physical, emotional, and academic support for his/her student
- Explain and discuss The MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy and behavior expectations and consequences to his/her student
- Instill in his/her student the obligation to demonstrate appropriate behavior and comply with the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy
- Fully cooperate with MRCS school personnel whenever support services and/or disciplinary consequences are indicated for his/her student
- Understand and utilize the Mustang Pride Values with his/her student

Due to federal confidentiality laws, schools cannot share with parents/guardians disciplinary consequences given to students other than their own child.

MRCS Staff Responsibilities

Each staff member at MRCS is committed to implementing The MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy with fairness, fidelity, and consistency. Each staff member will honor, respect, and value the individual differences of every student. At the same time, problem solving strategies will be taught to empower each student to become independent and self-reliant as they interact appropriately in the school environment.

Each staff member will:

- Maintain a positive learning environment with meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences during the school day.
- Model respectful, positive, appropriate behavior when interacting with students and peers.
- Explain, discuss, and model the difference between inappropriate and appropriate school behavior to the students.

- Support and reinforce the appropriate behavior strategies taught to the students using the Mustang Pride Values
- Be consistent in explaining and enforcing the MRCS School Wide Discipline Policy to every student.

Students, Parents, and MRCS staff working cooperatively as partners; will empower our students to choose positive, appropriate behaviors that will result in a safe, productive learning environment with high academic expectations.

Student Discipline

MRCS takes a proactive approach to facilitating appropriate and positive student behavior, ensuring that every student has access to a safe, meaningful learning environment. Student behaviors can be defined under the following levels: Each behavior will be aligned with our MRCS Mustang Pride Values and progress will be reviewed quarterly.

Level I

Level I behaviors are typically addressed by a classroom teacher or teaching assistant. The student is often redirected so that the behavior does not interfere with student learning or safety.

Be Respectful of People and Property

- Teasing another student
- Inappropriate words; name calling; inadvertent swearing
- Misuse of school property

Move Safely Through the Environment

- Pushing and Shoving; Horseplay
- Dress Code Violation

Be Ready to Listen and Learn

- Non-compliance

Understand, Ask, Do your Best

- Minor class disruptions (excessive talking)
- Minor Temper Tantrum

Student behavior related to Level I infractions may result in:

- Student conference with teacher or teaching assistant.
- Notification to parents/guardians by email and/or telephone
- Utilization of self-control and behavior management techniques

Level II

Level II behaviors are those that are considered to be inappropriate behaviors. These behaviors may disrupt the orderly classroom environment, student learning and/ or safety. These behaviors will be addressed by the classroom teacher.

Be Respectful of People and Property

- Profanity: Including these forms, but not limited to: gestures, symbols, verbal, written, etc.
- Destruction of property
- Verbal altercation

Moving Safely in the Environment

- Cell phone violation

Be Ready to Listen and Learn

- Major disrespect/ Insubordination

Understand, Ask, Do Your Best

- Cheating: Using or copying another student's work to turn in as your own

Student behavior related to Level II infractions may result in:

- Student conference with teacher
- Utilization of self-control and behavior management techniques
- Notification to parents/guardians by telephone
- Group instruction on Mustang Pride Values
- Parent/School conference

Level III

Level III behaviors are those that are considered to be intentional behaviors. These behaviors disrupt the classroom environment and interfere with student learning or safety. These behaviors will first be addressed by the classroom teacher and may lead to referral to an administrator.

Be Respectful of People and Property

- Verbal, physical or mental acts committed by a student to harass, intimidate, spread rumors, name call, or offensive remarks about another person.
- Stealing: Taking another person's property without the owner's knowledge

Move Safely Through the Environment

- Intent to hurt: Student attacks another student without provocation

Be Ready to Listen and Learn

- Defying authority: Threatening, intimidating or using physical or verbal abuse towards any school personnel

Understand, Ask, Do Your Best

- Major classroom disruption/ tantrums

Student behavior related to Level III infractions may result in:

- Student conference with teacher/ administrator
- Utilization of self-control and behavior management techniques
- Notification to parents/guardians by telephone, email or letter home
- Group instruction on Mustang Pride Values
- Parent/School conference
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension

Level IV

Level IV behaviors are behaviors that are considered aggressive in nature. These behaviors will result in immediate contact with a school administrator.

Be Respectful of People and Property

- Inappropriate language or touching: discussing or touching parts of the body that are covered by a bathing suit, making sexual jokes or overtures.
- Bullying and Cyber-bullying: Intentional, electronic, verbal, written, or physical act that is directed at another student or students in a school setting which is severe, persistent, or pervasive. It has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education creating a threatening or substantially interrupting the orderly operation of the school or school setting.

Move Safely Through the Environments

- Fighting: Physical altercation between 2 or more students.
- Threats or acts of violence: Attempt or threaten to attempt to injure or damage another student or school personnel

Be Ready to Listen and Learn

- Bringing pornographic or violent pictures to school or accessing pornographic or violent websites during school

Understand, Ask, Do Your Best

- Possession of illegal or controlled substances in school at any time, real or imitation

Student behavior related to Level IV infractions may result in:

- Conference with teacher/administrator
- Utilization of self-control and behavior management techniques
- Notification to parents/guardians by telephone, email or letter home
- Group instruction on Mustang Pride Values
- Parent/School conference
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension

This policy outlines possible steps to be followed. Alternative disciplinary procedures may be followed at the discretion of the The Board and Administration.

Exclusions from school (Reference 22 Pa.Code § 12.6)

(a) The governing board shall define and publish the types of offenses that would lead to exclusion from school. Exclusions affecting certain students with disabilities shall be governed by § 14.143 (relating to disciplinary placements) and 34 CFR 300.519—300.529 (relating to discipline procedures).

(b) Exclusion from school may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

(1) Suspension is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.

- (i) Suspensions may be given by the principal or person in charge of the public school.
 - (ii) A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened.
 - (iii) The parents or guardians and the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended.
 - (iv) When the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements in § 12.8(c) (relating to hearings).
 - (v) Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period.
 - (vi) Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the governing board.
- (2) Expulsion is exclusion from school by the governing board for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing under § 12.8.
- (c) During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the governing board in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his normal class except as set forth in subsection (d).
- (d) If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.
- (e) Students who are under 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled and shall be provided an education.
- (1) The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the district's superintendent.
 - (2) Within 30 days of action by the governing board, the parents or guardians shall submit to the school district written evidence that the required education is being provided as described in paragraph (1) or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, the school entity shall, within 10 days of receipt of the notification, make provision for the student's education. A student with a disability shall be provided educational services as required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).

(3) If the approved educational program is not complied with, the school entity may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See § 12.1(b) (relating to free education and attendance).

In-School Suspension (Reference 22 Pa.Code § 12.7.)

- (a) A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.
- (b) Communication to the parents or guardian shall follow the suspension action taken by the school.
- (c) When the in-school suspension exceeds 10 consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the principal shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th school day in accordance with the procedures in § 12.8 (relating to hearings).
- (d) The student's school entity has the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension.

Hearings (Reference 22 Pa. Code § 12.8.)

- (a) *General.* Education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.
- (b) *Formal hearings.* A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. This hearing may be held before the governing board or an authorized committee of the board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the board. When a committee of the board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire governing board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed with regard to the formal hearing:
 - (1) Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
 - (2) At least 3 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
 - (3) The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
 - (4) The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.
 - (5) The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.

- (6) The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
 - (7) The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf.
 - (8) A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.
 - (9) The proceeding shall be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:
 - (i) Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
 - (ii) Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his rights under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).
 - (iii) In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.
 - (10) Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.
- (c) *Informal hearings.* The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended.
- (1) The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.
 - (2) The following due process requirements shall be observed in regard to the informal hearing:
 - (i) Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.
 - (ii) Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.
 - (iii) A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
 - (iv) A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf.
 - (v) The school entity shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.

Electronics Policy

The use by students of digital media devices (see definition below) shall be prohibited during the school day, or during school activities and programs. Devices that are brought to school must be turned off and made inoperable and stored in a personal backpack or locker at all times.

Parents should be aware that the school will not be responsible for, nor will investigate any lost or stolen digital media device. High value items should not be brought to school.

Violation of this policy will result in a Level Two referral (Misuse of Property) and confiscation of the device. Only a parent or guardian may retrieve the item upon notification.

Definition of digital media device:

Any item that can store information in a digital format, including but not limited to: cell phones, cameras, computers, recorders, PDA's, radios, mp3 players, DS gaming devices etc.

Academics

Philosophy

The Montessori Method of Education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori; Dr. Montessori observed children from birth to adulthood, recorded her observations and developed a child-centered educational approach. The development of the whole child (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) is carefully considered as the learning environment is prepared to encourage students to become independent, self-reliant, life-long learners and problem solvers.

MRCS Curriculum

The MRCS Montessori curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies including Language (Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening), Mathematics, and Cultures (History, Geography, Biology) and is fully aligned with Pennsylvania State Standards. All students in grades 3 through 6 participate in the state required PSSA Assessment administered each Spring. Mathematics and Language assessments are administered to grades 3 through 6 with grade 4 receiving a Science Assessment and Grade 6 receiving a Writing Assessment.

MRCS Teachers

All MRCS classroom teachers are Pennsylvania State Certified elementary education teachers and have completed training for and received a Montessori Teaching Credential for the age group they instruct. In addition, each classroom has the academic support of a Teaching Assistant who is a fully certified PA state instructor. The Specials teachers (Music, Art, Physical Education/Health, and Latin) are certified in their areas of expertise.

Homework

MRCS believes that homework should be academically meaningful and support independence and self-reliance in our students. All grade levels will receive homework on an age appropriate, regular schedule.

Homework is not optional

- Homework assignments are critical to the lesson plan.
- Homework assignments will support your student's academic foundation.
- Homework assignments need to be done completely and turned in when due.

Homework will:

- Reinforce a previously taught lesson.
- Some Research Projects that will need new information will be assigned as homework.
- Students will have learned the fundamental skills needed to locate the information.
- Have clear instructions.
- Explained so students understand the purpose of the assignment.
- Be corrected and returned with constructive feedback to the each student.

Conference/Progress Reports

Families will receive detailed progress reports for their student three times per year. MRCS schedules two 20 minute conferences per year – Fall and Spring – to discuss with parents/guardians their student's progress.

During the conferences, teachers will:

- Review the student's Progress Report.
- Explain specific components and academic requirements of each subject area in the curriculum.
- Discuss any areas of concern about the student's academic progress and behavior.
- Listen to parent's concerns about the student's academic progress and behavior.
- Explain and share the results of available assessments used to monitor student progress.

Attendance at conferences is extremely important for facilitating the home to school connection. If you are unable to attend a conference, the progress report will be sent to your home.

Parent/Teacher Communication

- Teachers may contact parents as needed to discuss concerns and issues affecting their academic needs.

- Please **do not** use Back to School night, school social events, or arrival and dismissal car pool times to ask teachers or teaching assistants for updates or to discuss specific issues about your child.
- Parents may **e-mail** teachers (not teaching assistants) to schedule an appointment to discuss and resolve specific academic issues.

Classroom Placement

Montessori classrooms are small communities where students work respectfully and harmoniously together as they learn independence and creative thinking. The student placement process at MRCS is thoughtfully done by the academic staff.

The classroom placement will reflect:

- The students' Academic needs.
- The students' ages.
- Social dynamics.
- Family relationships.
- Ratio of boys/girls.
- Personalities of the students and teachers.

The students' classroom placements are made with each student's individual needs in mind to facilitate a balanced, safe, empowering classroom environment.

Health Policy

The purpose of our health program during school hours is to provide first aid and medical care for injuries and illnesses. School nurses perform health screenings for all students, mandated by the state and provide support for those with special needs. There will be a focus on education, prevention, and overall wellness for the child. School nurses cannot diagnose, prescribe treatment, or give medications without parental permission or doctors' orders.

Please be aware that if you send your child to school then we expect them to participate in all to the planned activities of the day, including recess (indoor and outdoor) and gym.

Your child should be kept home if he/she:

1. He/she has a fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit for the past 24 hours without medication
2. Vomiting/diarrhea within the past 24 hours
3. Live head lice
4. Communicable disease such as flu or signs of chicken pox.
5. Pink eye with drainage or crusting may be contagious, however a student may be sent to school if the student has been on antibiotics for the past 24 hours (as indicated by a

physician's note) or has a written permission slip from a physician stating the conjunctivitis (pink eye) is not contagious.

If your child gets sick at school:

The school will assess your child and determine whether or not he/she needs to be sent home.

Your child will be sent home if:

1. He/she has a fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
2. Vomiting/diarrhea
3. A pink eye with drainage or crusting
4. Live head lice
5. Severe, persistent cough
6. Communicable disease such as flu or signs of chicken pox.

If your child presents any of these symptoms, you will be called at the number(s) you have provided for us in your child's emergency contact list. It is very important for us to have an accurate and up to date phone number in order to call you in case of an emergency. Please contact the office immediately if there is any change in your contact numbers.

In the case of a medical emergency

The school will contact you at the emergency numbers that you have provided. If we are unable to reach you, and it is medically necessary, we will contact 911 and a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital emergency room. In the health questionnaire, please specify what hospital you would prefer your child be sent in the case of an emergency. The school will make every effort to notify you regarding your child.

If your child needs medication during school hours

If at all possible, medications should be administered at home. If it is medically necessary that a child must take medication during school hours the medication must be hand delivered by an adult to the office personal with a parent and a physician's signature and the medication **MUST** be in its original container.

Students are not to carry any medications with them during school hours unless a physician's permission is obtained (i.e.: inhalers, EpiPen).

If your child needs medication on a field trip

If your child is scheduled to participate on a school field trip and it is necessary for him/her to take a daily medication, please take the following steps:

1. Enclose and seal the medication in an envelope or original container

2. Print clearly your child's name, the name of the medication, amount to be administered, as well as the time it should be given (ie: lunch time) and signature on the envelope or on a permission slip
3. Please, have an adult hand deliver medication to the office. For the safety of your child and others please never send your child to school with their medications in a backpack
4. Please bring medication at least one day before the field trip.

Health Screenings Provided

Height / Weight/ BMI Measurement

K-6 grade students are screened annually. The purpose of this measurement is to screen for possible weight concerns (under and over). BMI is used as a screening tool that calculates a child's weight to his/her height.

Vision Screenings

K-6 grade students will have both near and distance vision checked annually. Color vision and depth perception need to be checked only once, and these are usually done in first and second grade respectively. A referral slip is sent home if the screening indicates potential vision problems so the parent can arrange for an examination by a vision specialist.

Hearing Screenings

K, 1, 2, 3 students will have their hearing checked annually.

Scoliosis Screening

6th grade students will be screened for scoliosis and parents will be notified for any abnormal findings for referral to a physician.

Physical Examination Screenings

As mandated by Public Health Act 404, Kindergarten and 6 grade students must receive a physical examination by their family doctor or a screening by the school physician. You do have the option to be examined by the School Physician at no cost.

Dental Examinations

As mandated by the state, K, and 3 grade students must have a dental examination and evaluation by their own dentist or a screening performed by the school dentist at no cost.

A Few Health Topics

SKIN CONDITIONS

There are varieties of skin conditions that can be seen in the school setting ranging from insect bites to ringworm. It is the role of the school nurse to determine whether or not the condition is contagious and if the student should be excused from school. Rashes associated with internal disease such as chickenpox, are contagious and the student will be excused from school until released by a physician to return to school. Other contagious conditions that should first be evaluated by a physician before returning to school are impetigo, ringworm, and scabies.

CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINKEYE)

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the eye(s) that causes redness, tearing, and irritation. Some cases are caused by allergies. However, if the eye has discharge or is crusted over the cause is most likely bacterial or viral in nature, which is very contagious. If the pinkeye appears to be caused by allergies, the child will be monitored for the day. If the pinkeye appears infectious the child will be sent home from school and referred to a physician.

LIFE THREATENING ILLNESS

If your child has a life threatening illness such as asthma or severe allergy the school nurse will make an individualized health plan (IHP) for your child's needs. This health plan will include an emergency action plan. This plan will be shared with the student's teacher as well. If your child requires a medication (for example an Epi-Pen or rescue inhaler), please refer to our medication policy segment.

HEAD LICE POLICY

Head lice, while a nuisance, are not a health hazard and are not responsible for the spread of disease. Some schools have adopted a "no-nit" policy, however, there is no evidence that a no-nit policy prevents or shortens outbreaks. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American School Nurse Association, and the Center for Disease Control discourage the use of a "no nit policy". The Center of Disease control recommends a no-lice policy. Here at MRCS we are utilizing a No-Lice Policy. This means if we find live head lice on your child's head, he or she will be sent home with recommendations on how to treat the head lice.

After thorough investigation, the school believes that the best method for eliminating head lice is a two-step approach: use natural, non-pesticide products to kill live lice (such as olive oil) and to do a comprehensive "nit" check for 21 days. The school nurse can provide you with both information and training on how to detect and remove head lice.

A chronic case of head lice can be defined as a child infested three separate months of the year or for 6 consecutive weeks. Chronic head lice can result in unnecessary school absences, long-term discomfort to the child, and infections from long term scratching. Chronic cases of head lice may signify other family or socioeconomic problems. These cases should be addressed by a multidisciplinary work group to determine the best approach to help identify and resolve this issue. Members of this group may consist of the school nurse, health department, social services, and other necessary members to achieve the best outcome for the child's health.

Electronics Policy

The use by students of digital media devices (see definition below) shall be prohibited during the school day, or during school activities and programs. Devices that are brought to school must be turned off and made inoperable and stored in a personal backpack or locker at all times. Parents should be aware that the school will not be responsible for, nor will investigate any lost or stolen digital media device. High value items should not be brought to school.

Violation of this policy will result in a Level Two Peace Room referral (Misuse of Property) and confiscation of the device. Only a parent or guardian may retrieve the item upon notification.

Definition of digital media device:

Any item that can store information in a digital format, including but not limited to: cell phones, cameras, computers, recorders, PDA's, radios, mp3 players, DS gaming devices etc.

Before and After School Care

Our childcare program is staffed by our teaching assistants. During afternoon child care, your child will receive a snack, participate in homework or quiet reading time and then have a free playtime, either outside or indoors depending on the weather. **Please be aware that the school discipline policies will be followed during childcare.** Our child care program is voluntary and a privilege. If a child does not follow MRCS rules and policies during child care, they will not be allowed to participate.

Child Care enrollment forms can be found on our website or from the office.

Child Care is offered at minimal cost and is designed to support our families. Families will be billed at the end of each week for participation. As a public school we expect that families who utilize this service will pay their bills promptly. *If a childcare bill is not paid within 30 days, your child will not be able to participate until the bill is paid in full.*

If you are experiencing financial problems and are unable to pay your bill in full, please contact us immediately so that we provide you with information regarding community support services.

Our childcare program begins on the first day of school and you will be billed at the end of each week according to the following fee structure:

7:30 am – 8:00 am	\$3.00 per day
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	\$5.00 PER HOUR
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm*	\$3.00 per day

****Please note there is a \$20.00 late fee for all pickups after 5:30 pm***

Field Trips

Field Trips are designed to support classroom learning and are an important part of the Montessori Curriculum. All Field Trips are staffed by our highly qualified academic personnel, which ensures that MRCS policies and conduct are maintained. Since students on field trips are representing Montessori Regional Charter School they should dress appropriately and behave according to school conduct code at all times.

All students must have complete permission slips turned in prior to the day of the trip in order to participate. Hand written or electronic permission slips will not be accepted.

Permission slips will be sent home in a minimum of three days prior to the trip and can also be found on our website. Students who elect not to participate in a field trip are expected to report to school and will be given alternate assignments.

Please note that in order to ensure student safety, parents or other relatives are not permitted to meet students at the field trip location.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found closet is located on the first floor of the South Campus and in the office at the North Campus. Lost articles may be claimed after school. Pocket books, jewelry, money,

and electronics will be turned into the office for safekeeping. As a reminder, please refrain from sending money or valuables to school.

Fire and Safety Drills

Fire and safety drills are conducted at least once a month. When the alarm signals a fire drill, all students will leave their room in single file and walk out of the building through the prescribed exit. Students will not have an opportunity to take personal items or coats with them. Complete directions for the fire and safety drills and proper exits are posted in each room throughout the building.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Montessori Regional Charter School is an equal opportunity education institution and does not discriminate in employment, education programs or activities based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, because a person is disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam Era or any other legally protected class, or for engaging in any other protected activities. This policy of non-discrimination extends to all other legally protected classifications. Publication of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Inquiries may be made by contacting the School at 814-833-7771.

Montessori Regional Charter School is obligated, pursuant to various federal and Pennsylvania laws, to notify the parents/guardians of District students of their rights regarding various issues. The following information will explain these important concepts and give required notifications of student and parent/guardian rights on the various topics set forth below.

1. **Right to request teacher and paraprofessional qualifications**

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that parents/guardian be notified they have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teacher/s including, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Whether their child's teacher has met state qualification or licensing criteria for their child's grade level and subject matter in which the teacher provides instruction.
- b. Whether their child's teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which Pennsylvania qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.

- c. What baccalaureate degree major their child's teacher has earned and any other graduate certification or degree held by their child's teacher and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- d. Whether their child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and, if so, their qualifications. Parents/guardians shall be notified by the District administration if or when their child is taught by a teacher who is not "highly qualified" for four consecutive weeks.

2. **Homeless children and youth**

The No Child Left Behind Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act require that homeless children and youth have full and equal access to an appropriate public education and that they experience success in school. Homeless students shall have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other students. Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated, or stigmatized based on their status as homeless. The District administration shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education.

Students enrolling in the charter school who are, or become, homeless students should notify the District of that fact so the District can better ensure the student's rights under federal and Pennsylvania law are explained to him/her and to his/her parents. "Homeless students" are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, which includes the following conditions:

- a. Sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
- b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- c. Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- d. Abandoned in hospitals.
- e. Awaiting foster care placement.
- f. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
- g. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
- h. Living as migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

3. **Migrant student education**

Pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act and Pennsylvania's Migrant Education Program, the Charter school cooperates and participates in the Northwest Pennsylvania Tri-County Intermediate Unit's ("IU") migrant education program for the benefit of migrant children attending the school. The school works in conjunction with the IU to improve and coordinate the educational continuity for the children of migratory workers who

attend the school and encourages the parents/guardians of migrant children to inform the school of that status so the school can better ensure the student's rights under federal and Pennsylvania law are explained to him/her and to his/her parents.

4. **Limited English proficient students**

The school complies with the language instruction for limited English proficient ("LEP") student provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. If your child is identified to participate in the school's LEP program, you will be notified of further details about your child's rights and participation in the LEP program at that time. Additionally, if your child participates in the school's LEP program, you will receive notice of opportunities to attend meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of students who are limited English proficient and identified for participation in the LEP program.

5. **Adequate Yearly Progress/school improvement/school choice**

Charter school students will be notified of their educational options and rights should the school fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act and relevant Pennsylvania standards.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Notice for Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Montessori Regional Charter School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the Montessori Regional Charter School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without prior written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with school procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Montessori Regional Charter School to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill showing your student's role in a drama production
- Graduation programs
- Sports activity sheets
- Musical concert programs

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's/eligible student's prior written consent unless the parent or eligible student has advised the charter school that they do not want the information disclosed without their prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class pictures, etc...

MRCS has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Photographs used to promote the charter school
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed

Directory information does not include a student's:

1. Social Security number, or
2. student identification (ID) number, user ID, or other unique personal identifiers used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, except those identifiers may be included in "directory information" if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

Questions or written requests should be directed to:

Montessori Regional Charter School (MRCS)
Jane Binder, Chief Operating Officer
2549 W. 8th Street
Erie, PA 16505
Phone: 833-7771

* This notice is available in several languages-Please contact the Office of Student Services

Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the Charter School receives request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the CEO (or other designated school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate or misleading or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask MRCS to amend a record should write to the CEO (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed.

If the charter school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the charter school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. While you may request a listing of all of the exceptions, the three most common of these exceptions to the prior consent rule are as follows:

- a. The charter school may disclose education records to “school officials” with “legitimate educational interests” without obtaining the prior consent of parent(s). A “school official” is a person employed by the charter school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, insurer, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a “legitimate educational interest” if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

- b. Upon request, the school will disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
 - c. Unless directed otherwise in writing by eligible students or parents, the charter school may disclose without consent “directory information,” which consists of the following information: the student’s name, address, telephone number (unless indicated as unlisted), date and place of birth, electronic mailing address, dates of attendance, grade level, photograph, major field of study, awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. For further information regarding directory information, see below.
- 4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Charter School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:**

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

*This note is available in several languages-please contact the Office of Student Services

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family
3. Sex behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request, and before administration or use:

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The charter school will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The charter school will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The charter school will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the charter school has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and are provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by MRCS.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services & Programs, Services for Gifted Students, & Services for Protected Handicapped Students

The Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit and its Member School Districts, Charter Schools
and Private Rehabilitation Residential Institution (PRRI)

Conneaut School District
Corry Area School District
Crawford Central School District
The School District of the City of Erie
Fairview School District
Fort LeBoeuf School District
General McLane School District
Girard School District
Harbor Creek School District
Iroquois School District
Millcreek Township School District
North East School District
Northwestern School District
PENNCREST School District
Union City Area School District
Warren County School District
Wattsburg Area School District
Erie RISE Leadership Charter School
Montessori Regional Charter School
Perseus House Charter School of Excellence
Tidioute Community Charter School
Robert Benjamin Wiley Community Charter School
Harborcreek Youth Services

Notice to Parents

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding child find responsibilities. School districts, intermediate units and charter schools are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled Implementation of Chapter 15. Also, school districts are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via 22 PA Code Chapter 16. For additional information regarding gifted services, the parent may refer to 22 PA Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedure in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district, intermediate unit, and charter schools of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children. In addition to this public notice, each school district, intermediate unit and charter schools shall publish written information in the handbook and on the website. Children ages 3-21 can be eligible for special education programs and services.

If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the school district where the child attends or the Director of Special Education for the NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit identified at the end of this public notice. Children age three through the age of admission to first grade are also eligible if they have developmental delays and, as a result, need special education and related services. Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners and at least three years of age and is considered to have a developmental delay when one of the following exists: (i) The child's score, on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25 percent of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas, or (ii) The child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized tests. Developmental areas include cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional and self-help. For additional information you may contact the Early Intervention Department at the Intermediate Unit. (See Evaluation Process below for contact info.)

Evaluation Process

Each school district, intermediate unit and charter schools have a procedure in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about procedures applicable to your child, contact the school, which your child attends. Parents of preschool age

children, age three through five, may request an evaluation in writing by addressing a letter to the Early Intervention Supervisor, NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5, 252 Waterford St., Edinboro, PA 16412 or call 1-800-677-8461.

Consent

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of the parents. For additional information related to consent, please refer to the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website at www.pattan.net. Once written parental consent is obtained, the school district, intermediate unit, charter schools, or PRRIs will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

Program Development

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and the parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the individualized education program (IEP) team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. Once the IEP team develops the program and determines the educational placement, school district staff, intermediate unit staff or charter school staff will issue a notice of recommended educational placement/prior written notice. Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

Confidentiality of Information

The school districts, intermediate units, charter schools and PRRIs maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the agency who have access to personally identifiable information. In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.624, please be advised of the following retention/destruction schedule for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and Keystone Exam related materials:

- PSSA, Keystone Exam, and PASA test booklets will be destroyed one year after student reports are delivered for the administration associated with the test booklets.
- PSSA and Keystone Exam answer booklets and PASA media recordings will be destroyed three years after completion of the assessment.

For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to the FERPA at the following URL: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

This notice is only a summary of the special education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents. For more information or to request evaluation or screening of a preschool or school aged child, public or private, contact the school or district where your child attends. Additionally one may contact the name and number or e-mail listed below:

Christine Carucci
Director of Special Education
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 252 Waterford Street
Edinboro, PA 16412
1-800-677-5610
christine_carucci@iu5.org

The school district, intermediate unit and charter school will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status or because a person is a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. No preschool, elementary or secondary school pupil enrolled in a school district, intermediate unit, or charter school program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status or financial hardship.

Programs for Eligible or Protected Handicapped Students

In compliance with Pennsylvania (22 Pa. Code 14.121) and federal (34 C.F.R 300.111) law, notice is hereby given by Montessori Regional Charter School (MRCS) that it conducts ongoing identification activities as a part of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services (eligible students) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. If your child is identified by MRCS as possibly being in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures. Special Education services are available, at no cost to parents, for children with disabilities, ages 3-21 years.

Services and Programs

Individualized services and programs are available for children ages 3 through 21 years who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to one or a combination of the following conditions:

Developmental Delays (Early Intervention)

Autism

Orthopedic impairment

Multiple disabilities

Deafness

Specific learning disability

Other health impairment

Mentally gifted

Mental retardation

Emotional disturbance

Traumatic brain injury

Speech or language impairment

Deaf-blindness

Hearing impairment

Visual impairment, including blindness

Potential Signs of Developmental Delays and Other Risk Factors This Could Indicate a Need For Special Education Services

Some indications that your child may be a child with a disability who is in need of special education are:

- Exhibition of an emotional disturbance over a long period of time which affects your child's ability to learn
- Consistent problems in getting along with others
- Difficulty communicating
- Lack of interest or ability in age-appropriate activities
- Resistance to change
- Difficulty performing tasks that require reading, writing, or mathematics; and
- When a child who is at least 3 years of age but before s/he has started school as a beginner, scores on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, which score indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas or if the child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on standardized test.

Gifted Education

In compliance with state law, MRCS provides services designed to meet the unique needs of gifted students. The school identifies “gifted” students on a case-by-case basis based on state law and school policy. Such students may possess superior IQ scores or met multiple criteria indicating gifted ability. If your child is believed to be in need of such services, you will be notified of evaluation procedures. If you believe your school-age child may qualify for gifted education services, you may contact the office of Student Services at any time to request a determination of eligibility. Please note that entitlement to gifted services includes only those rights proved for Pennsylvania law.

Screening and Evaluation

If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost upon your request. You may request a screening and evaluation at any time, however each request will be reviewed by the Charter School for appropriateness. Requests for evaluation and screening should be made to the CEO of MRCS or the Student Services Office, 2910 Sterrettania Rd, Erie PA 16506, at 833-7771. Parents of children ages 3 to school age, with requests for early intervention programs/services may request screening and evaluation by contacting the Early Intervention off of their home school district. Details regarding time and location of screening and evaluation activities conducted by MRCS for school children are available from these sources.

Protected Handicapped Children

In compliance with state and federal law, MRCS will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student’s abilities. . In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to tan aspect of the school program. These services and protections for protected handicapped students are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

I.D.E.I.A.

MRCS complies with the recent reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Procedural safeguards for students' ages 3 through 21 are available through the Student Services Department, 2910 Sterrettania Rd Erie PA 16506.

What's Next?

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time, and location), and rights to due process procedures, you may contact the Charter School, or Department of Student Services.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in the evaluation, identification, and programming of children who may require special education services is governed by confidentiality requirements under Pennsylvania and federal law, specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Records generated by this process as well as records sought from non-school agencies are confidential and protected by both federal and Pennsylvania legislation. Information to/from outside sources cannot be requested/released without written parental consent and the Charter School does not disclose personally identifiable information about students except as when so authorized under these laws. Information about confidentiality and access to your child's education records is available from Charter School CEO or the Office of Student Services and is also described in this Parent Information Packet.

Esta informacion es disponible en Espanol. Pongase en contacto MRCS.