



# **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

## **PROJECT SAVE AND SAFETY PLAN**

423 East 138<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, NY 10454

Abeku Hayes, Principal

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## Introduction

Emergencies in schools must be treated in an efficient and effective manner. Schools are at risk of acts of violence, natural, and man-made disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in schools.

NYC Montessori Charter School (NYCMCS) supports the SAVE legislation and will facilitate the planning process in order to be prepared, protect its students and staff, and disseminate information quickly to parents and guardians.

## **Section I: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES**

### **A. Purpose**

NYC Montessori Charter School's Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 to properly plan for and address appropriate responses to a variety of emergency situations.

### **B. Vital Educational Agency Information**

NYC Montessori Charter School opened its doors in 2011 to 104 Kindergarten and First Grade students. In 2012, the school moved to its permanent location in one building at 423 East 138<sup>th</sup> Street near Willis Avenue. NYCMCS currently serves 325 students and employs 58 staff members.

The mission of the NYC Montessori Charter School (NYCMCS) is *to empower children to be critical thinkers and creative problem solvers with strong social skills so that they can succeed in their world and continue to learn in their pursuit of higher education as they prepare for careers needed in the 21st Century.*

As a public charter school, NYCMCS is free to all residents of the New York City and admits students via a public lottery and waitlist. The students attending NYCMCS are mostly from District 7, and have the typical transportation needs of New York City students. The school has made arrangements for its students to ride yellow buses if they qualify. The remaining students are dropped off and picked up by family members each day.

See Appendix A for a local street map of NYCMCS's location. See Appendix B for a staff directory that includes the position, email address, extension, and mobile phone number for all administrative staff. For a list of key officials and local emergency services contact information, please refer to Appendix C, the School's Crisis Plan. (See page 16 for a full list of Appendices).

### **C. Identification and Designation of School Teams**

NYC Montessori Charter School has developed three emergency teams with their respective functions described below:

1. **School Safety Team:** Responsible for helping to identify possible risks, assist with the planning process, and assist with subsequent revisions of the School Safety Plan. The School Safety Team is made up of the following positions:
  - a. AP of Operations (Incident Commander)
  - b. AP of School Culture
  - c. Faculty
  - d. Board Members

In addition, the Principal plays a role in reviewing the School Safety Plan.

2. **Emergency Response Team:** Key staff members who are highly informed and well-versed in the procedures outlined in the School Safety Plan will act as primary coordinators for carrying out the plan in an emergency. The following staffing positions comprise the Emergency Response Team:
  - a. Principal
  - b. AP of Operations
  - c. AP of School Culture
  - d. Operations Assistant
  - e. Local emergency responders

3. **Post-Incident Response Team:** A group of individuals who are particularly well prepared and skilled to assist in the recovery process subsequent to an emergency. This team includes:

- a. Principal
- b. AP of Operations
- c. AP of Curriculum of Instruction
- d. Faculty (2 teachers)
- e. Family Association (FA) President
- f. Appropriate local medical personnel
- g. Appropriate local mental health workers/staff mental health worker

4. **Incident Commander:** The following chain of command will apply in assigning the role of Incident Commander:

- a. Principal
- b. AP of Operations
- c. AP of Curriculum & Instruction

Please refer to Appendix B or C for a list of current contact information of staff holding these positions.

#### **D. Concept of Operations**

The initial response to all emergencies at NYCMCS will be by the Emergency Response Team. Upon activation of the Emergency Response Team, the AP of Operations (or Incident Commander) will be notified, and, where appropriate, local emergency officials. County and state resources through existing protocols may supplant efforts.

#### **E. Plan Creation, Review and Comment**

This plan was written and reviewed by the School Safety Team. The plan has been made available for the participation of the Board of Trustees, school staff members, parents, and any other interested parties in September 2011 and following any subsequent revision.

The subsequent required annual review will be completed on or before July 1 of each year prior to approval by the Board of Directors. Local officials including police and fire responders will be consulted for advice and assistance in revising the Safety Plan on an annual basis.

Pursuant to Commissioners Regulation, Section 155.17 (e) (3), a summary of this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The plan is to be adopted by the Board of Directors of NYC Montessori Charter School.

This building-level plan shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.

Full copies of this building-level plan will be provided to local police within 30 days of adoption.

### **Section II: RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

#### **A. Purpose**

To maintain school safety, NYCMCS believes that building a strong school culture built on high expectations and respect promotes the safe learning environment necessary for students to learn, and to prevent violent behaviors from ever occurring. To build this culture, NYCMCS dedicates staff and resources towards: 1) a range of programs that promote high student involvement and individual growth as well as facilitate the development of highly-effective channels of communication between students and

staff concerning potentially violent behaviors and conditions; 2) trainings and acculturation to assure that staff can identify, intervene early, and respond quickly to violent behaviors; and 3) ensuring preparedness of frontline and administrative staff in emergency situations.

## **B. Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

NYCMCS has both explicit and implicit strategies designed to prevent violence in its school.

### **1. Community Building**

NYC Montessori Charter School consciously works to foster a strong sense of community amongst students, staff and parents/guardians and to create a positive, safe learning environment. All members of the school community are expected to uphold the standards set forth by the school and included in the Family Handbook. See Appendix D.

In order to work and learn in school, children must feel the desire to do so. To nurture this desire, the NYCMCS seeks to create a safe, attractive, comfortable, nonthreatening social and emotional climate where children feel accepted, understood, respected, and fairly treated. To this end, the NYCMCS's discipline policy is based on the premises that prevention is better than cure, that the most effective way to manage inappropriate behavior is through its logical consequences rather than the imposition of arbitrary punishments, that conflicts are a natural part of all human relationships and that children learn and need to be taught appropriate behavior. In this respect, all students receive ongoing training in social skills such as empathy, impulse control, social problem solving, emotion management, and conflict mediation.

NYCMCS is a Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth grade school with classes of 26 students with a teacher and an associate, which focuses on individual student achievement, and has a longer school day. NYCMCS's design reinforces its belief that students best achieve when we work with families over a long period time. Additionally, it allows NYCMCS to develop deep relationships with families to help prevent and address potentially violent behaviors. With longstanding relationships with families, NYCMCS can recommend interventions to support a student's academic, behavioral and emotional growth, as well as leverage family relationships to promote community. With bi-monthly information sessions, frequent community events, three parent-teacher conferences annually, and an open door policy that encourages family participation in the classes, NYCMCS has ample opportunities to address individual behaviors and build community.

To maintain and further build this community, students are acculturated at the beginning of the school year with NYCMCS's expectations.

Teachers seek to promote compliance with the school's code of conduct by involving students in its re-creation as their "own" code of conduct. The school wide code of conduct upholds the Montessori values of grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility. It includes the following general rules.

All members of the school community will:

- treat all others with respect, kindness and courtesy
- maintain a tranquil working environment
- treat physical objects and the school's installations with care and responsibility
- assume the consequences of their own actions

Further discussion of these principles and how they are expressed and exhibited are outlined in the Family Handbook, which is provided to every family at the beginning of the school year, and is signed by the parent/guardian. These principles are further discussed and interwoven into classroom discussions by individual teachers.

**School climate and family participation.**

The NYCMCS will adopt a series of strategies to be friendly and inviting to families. Families are expected to be partners with the school in the education of their children, and it is important for them to remain well informed and involved in all aspects of their child's school experience.

***Family Association***

Given that the school's students may come from non-traditional families, and other members of the children's families or legal guardians may assume parental roles, the NYCMCS talks about family involvement rather than parental involvement, and has created a Family Association (FA) in place of the traditional PTA.

The Family Association (FA) provides more formal opportunities for participating in school governance. At least one seat on the Board is reserved for the parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the school, as an ex-officio nonvoting trustee. The Family Association (FA) elects this member whose term of office will be one year. The FA provides a forum to support discussion of family concerns, proposals and suggestions for school support, school improvement and problem solving.

Communication with families begins at the time of the student's enrollment at the NYCMCS. Family Information Sessions provide an overview of Montessori philosophy and methods, and describe the school's expectations of families in the life of the school and in their children's education.

**2. Prevention and Intervention Program Initiatives**

In addition to preparing for immediate response to violent incidents, NYCMCS has designed and implemented prevention and intervention programs for its students, based on the belief that providing students with constructive outlets and resources for growth, models of respectful behavior, clear expectations, and instruction in appropriate strategies for dealing with conflict, these programs also help promote NYCMCS safe learning environment.

***Intervention Programs***

In addition to the group-based programs, NYCMCS utilizes targeted interventions to address the needs of individual students and students with common issues.

The NYCMCS addresses factors affecting academic success and behavior in the Montessori approach of individualized instruction and continuous assessment, the prepared and predictable environment, and the direct teaching of work routines. The NYCMCS deals immediately with all aggressive or bullying behavior, either through teacher mediated conversations between the students involved or through the application of previously agreed upon consequences. When a student repeatedly engages in disruptive or antisocial behavior, the teacher keeps records to chart changes over time.

***Active Needs Assessment***

When teacher interventions are insufficient to produce reasonable change, the teacher involves families in designing home supports for behavioral change, in conferences, which may include the Principal and other school staff.

The programs implemented by NYCMCS do not replace continued monitoring by staff of potential issues. If a matter such as bullying or student aggression arises as a school wide concern, the school administration takes appropriate action including bringing in outside facilitators as needed, and creating opportunities for students concerned with bullying or violence to receive assistance.



NYCMCS also implements regular professional development for staff on early detection and response to potentially violent behaviors, including topics such as bullying and mandated reporting of child abuse.

### ***Parent Workshops***

Families receive adequate and timely written information on upcoming and past school events in regular newsletters in Spanish and in English. Bi-monthly, the school will host meetings that will include opportunities to discuss topics of interest to the families and which staff members consider are important. The Principal and the AP of Curriculum & Instructional have an open door policy so families can contact them at any time. Families also participate in workshops that focus on effective communication and behavior management in the home.

## **C. Risk Reduction**

### **1. School Security:**

There is a Security Guard on duty from 6:30 am to 4:30 pm any day that the school is open. The AP of School Culture is in charge of supervising morning arrival and the AP of Operations, along with the Operations Assistant is in charge of supervising afternoon dismissal. One person is at the front door receiving the children who are dropped off by DOE buses, and welcoming children who are dropped off by their family members.

During normal hours of operation the door is locked and the security guard is on duty until 4:30 pm. Anyone entering the building has to be buzzed in and must sign a guest roster, be announced by the security guard, and wear a visitor's badge.

In addition, the following security measures are in place.

Office personnel, with the assistance of teacher aides and teachers, perform the following functions:

#### **Morning Duties**

- Greet students upon their arrival from 7:45-8:15.
- Security measures begin at early morning arrival: the AP of School Culture greets children at the main door.
- Students walk independently to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor for breakfast, or directly to classrooms where teachers are ready to greet them. No parent/guardian are allowed up the stairs to drop off their children after 8:15am.
- Teachers and aides supervise the children in the Dining area (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) until they are ready to go to their classroom.
- Any student that arrives after 8:15am is signed in by their parent/guardian and is escorted to class by a member of the Operations Team. Teachers submit Attendance no later than 9am.

Throughout the day, the AP of Operations and the Operations Assistant

- Limit the release of students during non-dismissal hours to those with a Medical note from the nurse, or those with medical appointments and who are accompanied by an approved guardian as deemed by school records and policy
- Uphold and maintain all aspects of NYCMCS's school safety plan, including but not limited to fire, shelter and intruder drills
- Reinforce student expectations at all times.
- Ensure that school's front entrances are either closed or monitored by a staff member at all times.

### Dismissal

- Assist student pick-up at 3:30pm (12pm/1pm on Thursday's) by identifying incoming visitors who are not on the authorized pick up lists.

### School Day Tasks

Partner with facilities management in the event of a flood or other occurrence to notify need for assistance.

### School Security Guard

- Access control: verify and log the identity of all school visitors and late students; prevent entry of individuals restricted from building entry, etc. Notify main office of any intruders.
- Alert faculty and staff members of visitors upon their arrival
- Assist with "All Clear" at the end of the day.
- Ensure door is locked at main entrance.
- Reinforce student expectations at all times.

## **2. Physical Space**

NYCMCS occupies a six-floor building. Building security is an important issue, and measures have been taken to ensure that adults supervise children at all times throughout the building. The staff is well trained and alert to ensure immediate response to any potentially violent or unsafe situation. The Main Office, as well as the Principals is located on the second floor, within clear view of the elevator and stairs. Additional administrative offices are on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors of the building, near classrooms. Administrators routinely observe classes and hallways each day to assess instruction, address any behavioral issues, and maintain a presence of safety at NYCMCS.

Each room also has a telephone with an intercom that teachers can use to contact an administrator, administrative assistant, or main office for immediate assistance. All administrators are also equipped with cell phones and walkie-talkies that they can use to contact emergency services as well as each other in the event of a crisis.

## **3. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors:**

Incidences and the potential of violence, aggression, bullying, and vandalism are taken with the utmost seriousness at NYC Montessori Charter School. Any and all incidents of violence are reported first to the Principal. In most cases, the AP of School Culture and the AP of Operations are consulted or included in response efforts. Serious consequences, up to expulsion, are recommended for violent infractions. See within Appendix D for Behavior Matrix

Developed by administrative staff trained in detecting potentially violent behaviors and developing a constructive behavioral plan for students, the continuum of consequences requires behavioral and family intervention at each stage. See Appendix E for NYCMCS's discipline policy.

## **D. Training, Drills and Exercises**

### **1. Drills and Tests of Emergency Response Plan**

Fire Drills are conducted according to regulation, at least twelve times per school year, with eight prior to December, following the same evacuation routes as outlined in Appendix C. NYCMCS varies its drills to ensure preparedness of its students and staff. Drills are unannounced, and may take place during lunch times, and staff may block passageways so that staff and students are prepared to safely look for alternate exits. A log of drills is kept in the main office.

In addition to the 12 fire drills, NYCMCS conducts an intruder drill at least twice each year and bus drills at the beginning of the school year and before a school event requiring transportation.

## **2. Multi-Hazard Drills and Training**

Staff members will receive training and information on how to respond to a variety of hazards including bomb threats, severe natural disasters and weather emergencies at monthly staff meetings. One exercise will be completed during the first month of each school year to outline local evacuation procedures, roles, and responsibilities. Local emergency responders and preparedness officials will be consulted and invited to participate in our emergency response training.

CPR and Emergency response training will be provided annually to assure there is the requisite number of staff trained. Members of the Emergency Response Team will be required to attend as necessary to maintain their certifications, and all staff will be encouraged to attend at no expense to them.

Students will be instructed in basic emergency response to hazards such as fire, weather, and electric emergencies. This training will be age appropriate and provided by the local authorities through their outreach programs. Teachers will also provide instruction in the classroom with various curriculum packages provided by the Red Cross, local fire, and power authorities.

## **3. Coordination with Emergency Responders and Preparedness Officials**

### **a. Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government**

As Incident Commander, the AP of Operations or his/her designee will contact three entities to obtain Emergency Assistance:

- 1. Local Authorities:** NYCMCS will call 911 and 311 to secure Emergency Services, as well as the local 40<sup>th</sup> Precinct of the Police Department for guidance.
- 2. New York State Education Department:** As NYCMCS 's authorizer, NYSED can provide immediate guidance on available resources.
- 3. New York City Center for Charter School Excellence:** As a support organization for all New York City charter schools, the Charter Center works closely with the department of Education to identify, contact and secure local and state assistance in times of emergencies.

See Appendix C for a current list of contacts at NYSED and DOE.

### **b. Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials and Other Resources**

NYCMCS does not work in a vacuum when conducting tests of its emergency response plan. Twice annually, the New York City Fire Department conducts an inspection of NYCMCS's facility. During these inspections, the Department conducts an exhaustive check of the fire alarm systems, sprinklers, fire, emergency exit lights, alarm systems, and any potential fire hazards. Each morning, the school's facility staff checks and logs that the fire alarm is operational. Each week, the sprinkler system is tested. At this time, it also reviews NYCMCS's Safety Plan for fitness. See Appendix C. In the case of any deficiencies, the Department contacts the AP of Operations.

## **C. Potentially Hazardous Sites**

The School Safety Team has identified the following local sites to be potential hazards:

- **138<sup>TH</sup> STREET:** The Avenue is very high traffic area. This could pose a threat in the case of an emergency, with the sheer volume of people and vehicles, so close to the school.

## **Section III: RESPONSE**

### **A. Assignment of Responsibilities**

In the event of an emergency or perceived emergency, the members of the Emergency Response team, the Principal, and the Director of Operations will determine the correct action to take and will divide responsibilities according to the nature of the emergency.

In the case of fire or other threats to the facility, students will be immediately evacuated according to Fire Exit procedures outlined below. Should reentry not be possible, students will follow the building evacuation procedures outlined below.

### **B. Access to Floor Plans**

Interior floor plans have been provided to the local fire department, police department, and our security company. Detailed floor plans are also stored in the Main offices. Floor plans are also posted in each classroom and office. See Appendix F.

### **C. Protective Actions for School Day Disruptions**

**1. Cancellation of School:** NYCMCS will cancel school if the New York City School district cancels school. All families have been notified in the Parent Handbook to follow these same guidelines.

In cases of a regional circumstance or building issue requires consideration of school cancellation, the Principal and AP of Operations will determine with local authorities as required whether a school cancellation is warranted, no later than 5:15am.

- The Principal will notify News 12, the AP of Curriculum & Instruction, and the NYCMCS Board President;
- The AP of Operations will notify all members of the Main Office team, send an email to all staff and families registered for email service; and change the outgoing message on our phone system to announce school closures;
- The AP of Curriculum & Instruction will contact all teaching staff;
- A sign will be placed, when possible, on the outside of the school notifying families of the situation.

**2. Early Dismissal:** The school will enact an early dismissal only in the event of an imminent threat and required evacuation, or in the case of extreme weather conditions. NYCMCS will contact, and any students remaining after the determined early dismissal time will be relocated to the appropriate evacuation site. See Appendix C.

#### **3. Evacuation Procedures:**

NYCMCS employs three types of evacuation procedures:

- a. **Code Red:** A Code Red is a procedure used when there is an immediate and imminent threat inside the building. It is designed to evacuate students and staff from the building to safety. A fire drill is the most common Code Red. The Principal may also call a Code Red for any reason that necessitates school evacuation. The Emergency Response team triggers a Code Red by pulling the fire alarm. Upon sounding of the fire alarm or flashing of the emergency strobe lights all students and staff will exit the building calmly and quickly.

NYCMCS's goal is to have the entire building cleared within 5 minutes of the alarm. Should evacuation be longer than 30 minutes, all students and staff will walk to our local evacuation site where families will be notified. It will be the responsibility of the Emergency Response Team to bring the contact information for all students to the Evacuation Site.

During non-school hours, everyone will be required to exit the building from the nearest exit. A final verbal and visual sweep will be made by the most senior staff on hand to ensure the facility is empty.

- b. **Code Yellow:** A Code Yellow is a procedure used when there is an immediate and imminent threat outside of the building. It is designed to move students and staff away from the outside threat by moving them to the hallway of the building. School staff and students are secured in the hallways and no one is allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved. Code Yellow may be used when there is a hurricane, tornado, or fire outside of the building. The Emergency Response team triggers a Code Yellow via an announcement over the Intercom System.
- c. **Code Orange:** A Code Orange is a procedure that is used when there is an immediate and imminent threat to students and staff due to an intruder or crisis within the building. School staff and students are secured in the rooms in which they are currently located and no one is allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved. The Emergency Response team triggers a Code Orange via an announcement over the Intercom.

In all cases, the Incident Commander will assume responsibility for the following:

- Assuring that student needs – meals, bathroom, etc. – are met
- Assigning a public relations person to continuously update support staff of the situation and contact local media as necessary
- Assigning support staff to handle any parent calls or questions
- Assigning personnel to remain on premises until all students have returned home.

See Appendix C for explicit instructions on all of these evacuation procedures.

**4. Sheltering/Evacuation Site:** When possible, children will remain in their classrooms. Please see Appendix C for our evacuation sites, depending on the type of emergency.

#### **D. Notification and Activation**

**1. Notification of Other Schools/Agencies:** NYC Montessori Charter School is considered a one school district, and as such cannot notify another location. When relevant, the NYCMCS will notify any school/business occupying the buildings 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> floors.

**2. Notification of Families:** In the event of an evacuation, violent incident, (or other emergency at the discretion of the Principal), the Incident Commander will designate a responsible party to notify families of the situation and the proper action required from them. Emergency contact information is kept electronically in our student database, in addition to hard copies kept by each classroom teacher, and in the main office.

**3. Available Equipment:** Equipment on hand that can be used in the event of an emergency includes: telephones, cell phones, walkie-talkies, and local media communications. See Attachment G for available equipment and supplies.

In the event of an emergency, the following steps will be taken:

- An incident or hazard will be reported to the Principal, his designee, or other member of the Emergency Response Team as soon as possible following its detection.
- In the event of an emergency the Principal, his designee, or other member of the Emergency Response team will notify all building occupants to take the appropriate protective action.
- Portable radios are not to be used in the event of a bomb threat.

## E. Situational Responses

**1. Hazard Guidelines:** This section provides specific actions to be taken in the event of various hazards.

**a. Fire:** When a smoke or fire emergency occurs the fire alarm and flashing and chirping strobes will be activated. This is the signal to exit the building. Should a fire emergency arise, the fire department will be automatically notified via our fire protection system.

### **b. Medical Emergencies:**

If there is a medical emergency, a Code Blue may be called. This will alert staff with CPR and AED training that there is a medical emergency. Anyone with training may respond in an emergency. Once the nature of the emergency is defined, other procedures will be followed as listed below.

**Asthma:** Our school nurse will administer the students' prescribed medication. Should a child not carry appropriate medication, the child's parent, guardian, or emergency contact will be notified, OR should time be of the essence, an ambulance called to assist the child. In all cases, we will err on the side of caution and call emergency services to care for a child who needs assistance.

**Allergic Reaction:** There is a list of children with allergies posted in the nurse's office, the dining room, and in the main office. Children with severe allergies may require an Epi-pen. Parents will provide us with two properly labeled and documented Epi-pens. One will be kept in the nurse's office and one in the child's classroom. Teachers who have children with allergies will be trained in the use of the Epi-pen. If a child is having an allergic reaction, the nurse will be summoned immediately. If the child has a prescribed Epi-pen, the teacher or the nurse may administer the dosage. In all cases of severe allergic reactions, emergency services will be called.

**Cardiovascular Failure:** As per state law, we are required to have on site and at all events an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). There is an AED on the first floor near the main entrance, and on the third and fifth floors near the elevators. We will have at least two designated and trained staff member (per floor) capable of using this equipment should the need arise, with one in attendance at any school function where children are present. A current list of staff certified in CPR and AED is available in main office. See Appendix C.

The AED should only be used on children older than 1 years of age AND when the child or adult displays ALL of the signs of cardiac arrest. Only the current charging pads should be used according to American Heart Association guidelines. The AED will only be placed on the victim after the following symptoms are confirmed:

- Victim is unconscious.
- Victim is not breathing.
- Victim has no pulse and/or shows no signs of circulation such as normal breathing, coughing, or movement.

In any medical emergency, NYCMCS will call emergency services as soon as possible.

**c. Natural/Weather Related:** In situations where the school is made aware of an imminent or possible severe weather or natural emergency, an early dismissal will be called. Wherever possible, the school will remain open until all children are picked up. If the school appears to be unsafe, we will relocate to our evacuation center.

Families will be contacted immediately and notified whether to pick their children up at the school or our evacuation site.

In sudden emergencies, such as severe sudden storms, students will remain in the building until parents and guardians are able to pick them up.

**d. School Bus Accident:** In the case of a school bus accident, all families of students who normally ride the bus will be contacted immediately and updated on the situation. They will be informed of the nature of the accident, and whether there were any injuries. If so, parents/guardians will be directed to the hospital where students have been brought for treatment.

**e. Gas Leak/Hazardous Material:** In the event of a gas leak in the building, emergency services will be called, and all students will be evacuated to our evacuation site to await pickup. The building will be immediately ventilated and all electrical systems shut down prior to the arrival of emergency services.

## 2. Criminal Activity

**a. Threats of Violence:** All threats of violence will be treated seriously, and treated on a case-by-case basis. Anyone privy to a threat of violence against the school or any staff member or student will immediately report the threat to either the Principal or Director of Instruction. They will use their most conservative judgment in deciding what further action needs to be taken. Some examples of actions to be taken include contacting families of students making threats, and possible police intervention. In all cases where a threat may be serious the police will be called.

**b. Intruders and Kidnappings:** If an intruder is found in the building during business hours, school staff will attempt to escort the intruder out of the building. If any doubt exists as to the safety of the situation, police will be called immediately. NYCMCS will immediately proceed to a Code Orange Drill. See Appendix C. If an intruder is found in the building during non-business hours, the police will be called immediately.

In the event of a kidnapping, NYCMCS will immediately contact police and affected families. The school personnel will lock all school entrances.

**c. Explosive/Bomb Threat:** Since NYCMCS’s phone system is configured to direct outside calls to the main office or certain designated extensions, all staff whose extensions can receive direct calls will receive a copy of the Telephone Bomb Threat Checklist so that they are prepared to respond in the event of a threat. Please see Appendix H. If the threat is made by phone, the person should try to get as much information as possible by using the form. In addition, the call should not be hung up. The person receiving the call should use a different phone or ask someone else to call 911.

If the threat is written, the Incident Commander will immediately contact 911. At this point, the entire Emergency Response Team should be notified. The local authorities and/or Principal or AP of Operations will determine whether to evacuate the building according to our standard evacuation procedures.

**d. Civil Disturbance/Terrorist Activity:** In cases of civil disturbance or terrorist activity in the area, the Principal or AP of Operations will consult the local police for instructions. Where no police recommendations are available, children will be secured in the building until parents or guardians are able to pick them up.

### **3. Security of Crime Scene**

In instances of violent crimes on school property, the following procedures are used to secure and restrict access to the crime scene in order to preserve evidence from being disturbed or destroyed:

- a. The Incident Commander will contact 911 and notify custodial staff of a crime scene to prevent contact with the area.
- b. If students and staff are injured during a violent incident, priority will be placed on rescuing and aiding those people. Extra care will be taken to ensure that any movement of students or staff that requires transport over a crime scene does not disrupt vital evidence.
- c. If students and staff are located within a room of a crime scene or in the vicinity of a crime scene, the Incident Commander or her designee will provide clear, direct instructions for students and staff to exit the scene, one at a time.
- d. Once all persons have exited the crime scene, the Incident Commander will observe the steps taken by the custodial staff to secure the crime scene area by locking the doors or applying caution tape around the affected area.
- e. The Incident Commander will not leave until relieved by local authorities.

## **Section IV: RECOVERY**

The school’s Post-Incident Response Team has enacted the following protocols post-incident recovery:

### **A. Short-Term**

1. **Mental Health Counseling Resources for students and staff:** NYCMCS will work with its AP of School Culture to coordinate counseling services for students. In the event that the school’s needs outstrip the counseling services available in-house, NYCMCS will seek additional services from trusted partners.
2. **Building Security:** NYCMCS will work its staff to ensure that all building security needs are met.



3. **Facility Restoration:** NYCMCS will work with community service officers from the Police Department and with officials from the New York State Education Department to support our short-term facility restoration needs.
4. **Post-Incident Response Reflection and Critique:** NYCMCS will work with its Response Teams, its Board of Directors, and the Family Association to reflect and critique our post-incident response.

**B. Long-Term**

1. **Mental Health Counseling Resources for students and staff:** NYCMCS will contract with trusted service providers to address any long-term counseling needs.
2. **Building Security:** NYCMCS will work its staff to ensure that all building security needs are met.
3. **Mitigation:** NYCMCS will implement suggestions discussed and approved by our Board of Directors and FA upon reflection and critique of our post-incident response.

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## **I. Trained Emergency Personnel**

The following staff members have certification in CPR and AED:

Wanda Andujar  
Dorleen Bowers  
Patricia Daugett  
Yenifel DeLaCruz  
Eileen Filpo  
Brett Goldstein  
Abeku Hayes  
Alyssa Norris

## **II. Communication Systems**

To communicate information to staff members, we will use the following system:

1. All announcements can be heard in classrooms using Intercom System in the main office.
2. Administrators will walk room-to-room to communicate the information if the other system does not work.
3. All Administrators carry cell phones and walkie-talkies.
4. Administrators will carry walkie-talkies during emergencies. Channel 10 connects all NYCMCS devices.

## **III. Crisis Alert**

A crisis will be defined as any circumstance that may jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of students and/or staff.

When a staff member is alerted to a crisis (e.g., the main office receives a call from a parent about an explosion in the city), he or she must refer the crisis immediately to the Principal (or the person in charge of the building as outlined in the Chain of Command).

The Principal makes the determination that a crisis has occurred and declares one of three responses.

1. Code Orange (Threat in the Building)
2. Code Yellow (Threat Outside of the Building)
3. Code Red (Evacuation or Fire Drill)

In the event the Principal is not on-site, the next person in the chain of command determines the response and communicates to the AP of Operations to implement.

### **A. Code Orange (Threat in the Building)**

A Code Orange is a procedure used when there is an immediate and imminent threat to students and staff due to an intruder or crisis within the building. School staff and students are secured in the rooms in which they are currently located and no one is allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved.

***Steps to Implement Code Orange:***

Whatever member of staff sees an intruder and suspects a dangerous situation goes to the nearest phone and call the main office to alert the AP of Operations. They will then use the intercom (DIAL 2021) to say: ALERT. THIS IS A LOCKDOWN. That person also dials 911 if it is a dangerous situation.

1. In the event that the Intercom doesn't work, school personnel will alert classrooms.
2. Classroom teachers will respond as follows:
  - Quickly look in the hallway and pull any student/staff member into their classroom.
  - Lock the door.
  - Turn off classroom lights
  - Move students away from the doors of the classroom. Students should not be visible from the windowpane in the hallway. \*If second teacher in the classroom, this should be done while Teacher #1 does steps 1-3
  - Try to keep children as quiet as possible.
  - Take attendance. Notify AP of Operations or Principal using a cell phone if any child is missing. \*Also notify of any additional student/staff that are in the classroom.
  - Continue to supervise students and keep them quiet until situation is resolved.
  - Remain calm and reassure students that they are safe.
3. If a child or an adult is not in a classroom or office, they should find the nearest room and lock the door. They should keep quiet and out of site of any window. If possible, call the AP of Operations or Principal.
4. The AP of Operations will announce over the intercom "All Clear" once it is confirmed that the threat has been taken care of.

**B. Code Yellow (Threat outside of building)**

A Code Yellow is a procedure used when there is an immediate and imminent threat outside of the building. It is designed to move students and staff away from the outside threat by moving them to an internal hallway in the building. School staff and students are secured in the hallway and no one is allowed to leave until the situation has been resolved. Code Yellow may be used when there is a hurricane, tornado, or fire outside of the building.

***Steps to implement Code Yellow:***

1. The AP of Operations calls 911 and communicates with emergency management authorities.
2. Movement within the building ceases. Students return to their classrooms. Teachers lock doors behind them.
3. Halls and bathrooms should be swept as in a fire drill situation. AP of Operations should be alerted via cell phone of any missing children.
4. Teacher takes classroom attendance and compares with class list. Missing students are reported to an administrator. Teachers should not leave their class unattended to look for any missing child.
5. Students sit quietly in classrooms. Silent reading is encouraged. Administrators will make the determination if students need to assume protective posturing (students kneel, face the wall, and cover their heads with their hands.)
6. The main office and administrators will coordinate phone calls to families if deemed necessary by Principal.

7. If any classes are outside the building during a Code Yellow, they will be instructed by the Principal or the AP of Curriculum & Instruction to stay away from the building until it is safe to return to the building. If the dangerous situation is outside the building, and they can safely return to the building, they will be instructed to do so.
8. Once the “All Clear” is given, movement within classrooms resume normalcy.

### **C. Code Red (Evacuation or Fire Drill)**

A Code Red is a procedure used when there is an immediate and imminent threat inside the building. It is designed to evacuate students and staff from the building to safety. A fire alarm is the most common Code Red. The Principal may also call a Code Red for any reason that necessitates school evacuation.

#### ***Steps to Implement Code Red:***

1. Fire alarm sounds. This automatically notifies the Fire Department.
2. The AP of Operations or Principal will call 911 if Police presence is also needed.
3. Exiting Procedures
  - a. Teacher brings classroom attendance and class list.
  - b. Students exit the building according to instructions for the area in the building, without stopping to retrieve jackets.
  - c. Teachers lead their students to the nearest exit, using the map and route directions posted in their classroom near the door.
    - i. Once out of the building, they will go left beyond the building, to the right towards the corner of Willis Avenue or across the street.
  - d. If a teacher is missing children, or his/her class or part of a class is with a specialist, he/she reports it to the Principal or the AP of Operations so that the rest of the class can be located and all children accounted for.
  - e. Once at the spots, they remain in line, quietly waiting for signal that it is safe to return to the building.
4. Administrator Duties
  - a. The **Administrative Assistant** stands by the front door, monitors student exit, and directs all classes that leave to go to their designated area.
  - b. The **Security Guard** takes the Early Dismissal Log and the Fire Alarm Log Book and records the time the alarm was sounded, the time that all students were out of the building, and the time that all teachers announced All Accounted For.
  - c. Designated staff members conduct sweeps of the classrooms and bathrooms of their assigned floor before proceeding outside:
5. Once outside, teachers review their class attendance and compare with class list. Teachers report any missing students to the AP of Operations.
6. An Administrator confirms that the school is all clear by conducting a roll call of the classes and signals to the AP of Operations that all students have been cleared.
7. Administrator on duty provides “All Clear” signal to return to the building.
8. If any students are out of the building at the park, the teacher is instructed to stay there until the All Clear is announced and it is safe to return to the building, or will join the other classes at one of the two waiting areas for further instruction if the building is unsafe.

### **Fire Drill Procedures – Stairwells and sweepers:**

There are three stairways that will be used during an evacuation of the building, including fire drills.

### **VIII. Evacuation Sites**

For drills and real emergencies, NYCMCS will evacuate to the Bronx Charter School for Children, 388 Willis Avenue, between 143<sup>rd</sup> and 144<sup>th</sup> street.

Evacuation Site #1:

### **IX. School Cancellation or Changes – Snow or other Emergency**

NYCMCS follows the lead of the NY City Department of Education in making decisions about school cancellations or other school opening or closing changes. Specifically, if other DOE public schools are cancelled for weather or any other emergency, we will cancel school.

If the DOE schools are on holiday, an announcement on our website, a School Messenger and an email to parents will be sent out.

### **Appendix D: Continuum of consequences**

**Phase 1** refers to everyday classroom discipline. It includes the following general rules. All members of the school community will:

- treat all others with respect, kindness and courtesy
- maintain a tranquil working environment
- treat physical objects and the school's installations with care and responsibility
- assume the consequences of their own actions

Typical consequences emphasize apology and making amends.

**Phase 2** of the discipline policy comes into effect when a student repeatedly and continuously engages in antisocial behavior or flouts the code of conduct in such a way that his behavior endangers other students or impedes his learning or that of others. The NYCMCS will deal immediately with all aggressive or bullying behavior, either through teacher mediated conversations between the students involved or through the application of previously agreed upon consequences. When a student repeatedly engages in disruptive or antisocial behavior, the teacher will keep records to chart changes over time.

When teacher interventions are insufficient to produce reasonable change, the teacher will involve families in designing home supports for behavioral change, in conferences which may include a social worker or guidance counselor. In cases where such parent conferences and guidance interventions are not effective and a student continues to engage in behavior that is substantially disruptive, the teacher will separate the student from the group for an hour or more and send him/her to a location within the school where they will receive continued educational services, including class work, differentiated instruction, ELL services (as needed) and homework.

**Phase 3** comes into effect when repeatedly disruptive behavior continues once the student returns to the classroom or when a student displays any of the behaviors listed below

- Engaging in conduct which endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Attempting to assault any student or staff member
- Using force or threats that reasonably place the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury
- Throwing things at others
- Engaging in acts of verbal or physical sexual harassment
- Making a false bomb threat or pulling a false emergency alarm
- Vandalizing school property causing minor damage
- Leaving the school premises without permission
- Engaging in insubordination or failing to comply with disciplinary sanctions
- Stealing, or attempting to steal, or possessing property known by the student to be stolen
- Repeatedly using obscene or abusive language or gestures
- Bringing tobacco or alcohol to school
- Committing any other act which school officials deem warrants short-term suspension

In these cases, the Principal will impose a short-term suspension of up to five days, unless he/she decides to make an exception on the basis of the individual circumstances surrounding the incident or the student's disciplinary record or use other disciplinary actions prior to suspension, such as exclusion from extracurricular activities. There follows a list of the behaviors meriting short term suspension:

**Phase 4** comes into effect in extreme cases. Unless the Principal decides that an exception should be made on the basis of the circumstances surrounding the incident or the student's disciplinary record, he will impose a long-term suspension (removal from the school for a period of more than five days) or expulsion (permanent removal of a student from the school) on any student who displays any of the behaviors of the infractions listed below:

- Assaulting any other student or staff member
- Intentionally causing physical injury to another person, except when student's actions are reasonably necessary to protect him or herself from injury
- Possessing, using, attempt to use, or transfer any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student in school
- Committing, or attempt to commit arson on school property
- Vandalizing school property causing major damage
- Committing any other act which school officials deem warrants a long-term suspension

Due process will be followed for all disciplinary actions consistent with federal case law pursuant to *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565). The student will have the opportunity to present his/her version of events to the Principal in person. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal shall immediately notify the parents or guardian in writing that the student may be suspended from school. This notice will be in their dominant language and provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed. It will inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. The parents or guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to ask questions of the complaining witnesses indirectly through the teacher or the principal. The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the school's complaint process. Before any expulsion, the Principal will consult the Board and immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing, in their dominant language. Long-term suspensions or expulsions will only be imposed after the student

has been found guilty at a formal hearing. The hearing shall include the Principal, staff members involved with the incident, and the student with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). The student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

Federal and State law require the expulsion from School for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at School. The Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). "Weapon," as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC§8921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214(3)(d) effectuates this federal law.) The Principal shall refer a student under the age of sixteen who has brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act.

## **Appendix G: Emergency Supplies Inventory**

### **Emergency Supplies Inventory and Locations**

**Large First Aid Kit:** contains bandages, gauze, band-aids, anti-bacterial ointments, eye-wash, mouth to mouth resuscitation aid, burn ointment, ice packs

*Location:* Nurse's Office/Main Office supply closet

**Mini First-Aid Kit:** Contains bandages, band-aids, anti-bacterial ointment, ice packs

*Locations:* Classrooms/Main Office/Nurses Office

**Medical supplies:** Nurse's office

**Automatic External Defibrillator:** AED for use on children over the age of 8, and adults.

*Location:* Front entrance, Third Floor near elevator, Fifth floor neat elevator

### **Public Announcement System:**

*Location:* Main Office (primary); all classrooms have function if needed.

## **Appendix H: Telephone Bomb Threat Checklist**

### **Telephone Bomb Threat Checklist**

*Exact Time of Call* \_\_\_\_\_

*Exact Words of Caller* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Questions to Ask***



1. When is the bomb going to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it look like? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of bomb is it? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What will cause it to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you place the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where are you calling from? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your address? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

***Caller's Voice (Circle all that apply.)***

Calm	Disguised	Nasal	Angry	Broken
Stutter	Slow	Sincere	Lisp	Rapid
Giggling	Deep	Crying	Squeaky	Excited
Stressed	Accent	Loud	Slurred	Normal

If the voice is familiar, whom did it sound like? \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any background noises? \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Person who received Call \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number call received at: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Call was reported immediately to: \_\_\_\_\_

New York City Montessori Charter School

Family Handbook  
2019-2020

*Approved by:  
New York City Montessori Charter School Board of  
Trustees in July 2019*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Families,

Welcome to the New York City Montessori Charter School!

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education.

We believe that parents and families make a very important contribution to their child's education and we look forward to a rewarding partnership with you over the next few years. We are sure that together we can provide your child with an education that will develop his or her individual talents and provide a strong basis for academic and personal success in the future. This is the thrust of our mission as a school.

This handbook should provide you with all the information you may need to understand the aims and methods of our school and the ways in which you can contribute to creating a safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment for your child. The handbook sets forth our policies and procedures, describes what happens in the everyday life of the school and explains how we deal with common problems. It indicates what we expect of parents and what parents can expect of us.

We look forward to a long, productive relationship with you and hope that this handbook is of use in forwarding that relationship. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the school and we will do our best to answer them.

Yours sincerely,

Abeku Hayes, Principal  
The Board of Trustees of the NYCMCS  
The Staff of the NYCMCS

## II. ABOUT THE NEW YORK CITY MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL (NYCMCS)

### History

The NYCMCS was created in order to offer the South Bronx community an innovative educational program adapted to the particular needs of its children and their families. This program is rigorous and has high expectations for student achievement, which creates a strong foundation for future academic success.

### Charter School

The NYCMCS is a charter school. This means that it is a public school run by an independent group of educators. Admission is open to any student living in New York City and students do not pay tuition to attend. Enrollment is done through a lottery system.

Charter schools are public schools that operate according to a five-year performance contract with the State, or "charter." They are held accountable for students' academic performance and the specific goals set forth in their charter. Like all public schools, charter schools must meet state standards and the requirements of all state and federal laws regarding health, safety, civil rights, and student assessment.

The governing body of the NYCMCS is its Board of Trustees, which may have between 5 and 13 members. At least one seat on the board is reserved for a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the school, as a non-voting member. The Family-School Association elects this parent each year for a term of one year that can be extended to two. The Board of Trustees meets monthly. Anyone interested may attend, in accordance with the Open Meetings Law. The Board's activities are guided by a Code of Ethics that stresses transparency and accountability. (Appendix 4)

Since the NYCMCS is a public school, admission is open to any interested student. We hold a lottery each year to admit new students. Students are accepted in the order in which their names are pulled from the lottery. Siblings of students already attending the school and siblings of students accepted in the lottery are automatically accepted, if there is a place available. Once all the places are filled, the remaining students are placed on a waiting list. After being accepted, students must formalize their enrollment by turning in the required documents. If accepted students do not enroll within a certain time, the next student on the waiting list is notified of the vacancy and invited to enroll.

### Mission

*The mission of the New York City Montessori Charter School is to empower children to be critical thinkers and creative problem solvers with strong social skills so that they can succeed in their world and continue to learn in their pursuit of higher education as they prepare for careers needed in the 21st Century.*

### Educational Approach

The New York City Montessori Charter School follows the educational approach developed by Maria Montessori. This is based on her observations of how children learn in diverse cultures. She observed that all children are naturally motivated to learn and that all children are different. They are interested in different things. Some know more, some know less. They learn in different ways. Some learn best by listening, others by watching and others by touching, building things, moving things around, smelling and even tasting them! Some learn quickly and others work slowly and deliberately until they master something.

On the basis of these observations, Maria Montessori's approach to education uses and stimulates

children's natural motivation to learn. Montessori teachers respect and value the individuality of every child by preparing different learning activities for each one - activities that take into account the particular child's needs, interests, and learning style. At the same time, they give children the opportunity to progress at their own pace, regardless of ability level or age, until they achieve mastery of a topic. Research shows that the Montessori approach is successful with almost all kinds of learners, including English language learners, and children with special needs. Students in Montessori schools learn to be self-motivated, independent, and respectful of others, lovers of learning, hard workers, self confident, and critical thinkers.

Today, Dr. Montessori's ideas influence teachers in schools throughout the world. In the United States alone, there are 400 public schools and close to 5,000 private schools that follow the Montessori approach.

In the New York City Montessori Charter School, we apply the Montessori approach in all our classrooms. These are bright, inviting spaces filled with learning materials that appeal to all the senses and stimulate logical thought. Children are assigned work with these materials on their own or in collaboration with a friend. One teacher goes around the classroom observing and helping them as they work. Another teacher works with small groups of children to give them lessons on particular topics. Every day, both teachers make careful observations of their students' progress in order to decide what to teach next, introduce changes when necessary and ensure that all students are successful in reaching their educational goals.

In order to develop independence, all children in the NYCMCS are given freedom within limits. For example, we allow our students to choose between several equivalent follow-up tasks after a lesson, to participate in planning their day or week, to decide on the order of their tasks during work time, to choose the topics they will write upon within our writing units, and to select the topics they will investigate within class projects. We also believe it is important for children to do as much as they can all by themselves. They should only ask for help after they have tried on their own. This means we expect them to tie their own shoe-laces by first grade, carry their own backpacks, put on their own jackets, brush their own teeth, put their own dishes in the sink and washing up their own dish. They should clean up after themselves, help others in need, read to their classmates, and help organize materials. If a child is physically able, he or she can, and should, do it!

These freedoms help develop self-confidence and we encourage children to exercise them through encouragement and practice. At the same time, we expect children to respect one another and the environment and to follow the basic rules of polite behavior. We model and expect children to show grace and courtesy in their social interactions, for example, to say "please" and "thank you", to push their chairs back under the table when they get up, to hold the door open for the next person, and to show kindness to others.

### **III. ROUTINE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **Schedule**

The NYCMCS's schedule maximizes student learning. Children in Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grades benefit from an extended school day, from 7:45 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Every Thursday, school for students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grades ends at 12p.m., so that the teachers can attend full staff meetings and professional development workshops, or have extended planning time. Pre-Kindergarten is dismissed at 1:00pm on Thursdays.

#### **Arrival**

##### ***Pre-Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade***

Arrival is at 7:45 a.m. Children who arrive on the bus before 7:45a.m. will be escorted to the waiting area until breakfast is served. Parents who bring their children must stay with their child outside of the building until 7:45a.m. and the school doors are open. Parents cannot leave their children with the security guard.

If a child is going to have breakfast in school, the parent should take him or her to the Dining Room on the second floor. If a child is **not** going to have breakfast in school, the parent should take him or her directly to their classroom.

### ***Late arrivals***

Classes begin after breakfast, at 8:15 a.m. If a child arrives after 8:15 a.m., this is considered a late arrival for official purposes. If you arrive after 8:15am, parents must sign in their child with Security, and students are escorted upstairs to classrooms by an Office Personnel. Parents are not allowed above the lobby floor after 8:15a.m. If you are running late, please call the Main Office by 8:30am, to notify Office Personnel of your expected arrival time.

### **Dismissal**

#### ***Pre-Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade***

Dismissal is at 3:30 p.m. except for Thursday's, when it is at 12:00 p.m. for Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grades, and 1:00pm for pre-Kindergarten. Shortly before dismissal time, the children finish up what they are doing, put away their things, use the bathroom, and put on their outdoor clothing.

Children leaving by bus are escorted to the proper bus leader. Children who will be picked up stay in their classrooms and wait for a parent/guardian/approved adult, for pick-up.

#### ***Pick-up***

Children must be picked up only by a parent or guardian or one of the persons named on the child's blue card. If a parent wants their child to be picked up in the afternoon by someone not named on the blue card, they must inform the office staff before 11 a.m., who will notify the classroom teacher of the authorized persons name.

If someone other than the parent or authorized persons shows up to collect a child, the school will call the parent or guardian and ask them to authorize the dismissal. In no case will a child be dismissed to an unauthorized person or to a person under the age of 15. All persons picking up children must show proper identification. No exceptions.

#### ***Late pick-up***

We ask families to be prompt and pick up their children at the appropriate dismissal time. Late pick-up is unfair to teachers and staff; they must give up their time, stay beyond their working hours or neglect other duties in order to attend to children who are waiting. For this reason, there will be a 5-minute grace period after the hour of dismissal. After that, the school will charge a late fee of \$5 for every additional 10 minutes of lateness.

#### ***Early pick up***

If a child needs to leave school early to go to a medical appointment, the parent or guardian must inform the office before 11a.m. However, we strongly advise families to avoid scheduling appointments during school hours, since this is disruptive to the child and to the class. NYCMCS reserves the right to ask for documentation for any absence.

If a child becomes sick at school, the nurse will phone the family and ask them to come and pick the child up early.

### **Attendance**

The school is required to report attendances and absences each day to the Department of Education. If a child cannot attend school for any reason, the family must phone the office before 8:30 a.m. to explain why. **It is especially important that families inform us promptly if a child is absent because of a communicable disease (e.g. pink eye, strep throat, etc.).**

#### ***Absences***

We ask parents to keep sick children at home in order to protect other children from infection. **If a child is absent from school because of illness, the parent or guardian must send the school a *doctor's note*.** If a

child is absent and has not seen a doctor, the parent must send a note explaining the reason. If a parent knows that their child is going to be absent for any other reason, such as travel, they must contact the school to arrange for alternate education, and provide proper proof of travel to the Main Office.

### ***Frequent absences***

The school is obligated to be on the alert for frequent absences as this may indicate educational neglect, which must be reported to the authorities. If a child is frequently absent, the school will contact the family and request documentation or information regarding the student's absence. The parent may also be asked to come in for a meeting with staff to understand the situation and plan ways to improve it. If absences continue to be frequent and/or inadequately explained, the school may be obliged to consider this as educational neglect and report it to the Administration for Children's Services. Frequent absences also put children at risk for retention.

### ***School closure because of severe weather***

In the event of severe weather conditions, e.g., a snowstorm, freezing rain or high winds, families should listen to the radio or TV. If any announcement is made that New York City Public Schools will be closed, the NYCMCS will also be closed. A recorded message on the school's phone will also indicate that the school will be closed. Parents should update the Main Office with any changes to their home telephone number.

### ***Clothing***

Children should wear seasonally appropriate, comfortable clothing that allows them to move safely and easily. Young children should wear elasticized pants; we ask parents **not** to send Preschool children to school in pants with belts, since belts make it difficult for children to use the bathroom independently. Designs printed on T-shirts and sweaters should be age appropriate. All clothing should be labeled with the child's name.

Children should wear sneakers or other rubber soled shoes, preferably with Velcro fasteners. Flip-flops, high heels and backless shoes are not permitted. If children wear boots in winter, they should bring a pair of sneakers to wear in school.

As a precautionary measure, we ask all parents of Pre-K students to send the school a bag with a complete change of clothes for their child: socks, underwear, pants, T-shirt and shoes.

### ***Belongings***

All belongings that the child brings to school should be labeled with the child's name and go home with the child each day. Children should leave valuable jewelry, toys, games and electronic items at home, since such things are easily lost or damaged and are a distraction. The NYC Montessori Charter School is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Students should not bring the following items to school: balls, frisbees, chewing gum, glass containers, scooters or skateboards.

### ***Lost Property***

All misplaced clothing and belongings are placed in the Lost and Found bin. Parents should revise the bin when they come to parent-teacher conferences. Clothing that is not picked up will be donated mid-year and at the end of the school year.

The learning materials used in the NYCMCS are very attractive and children may be tempted to take small pieces home. We ask parents to be on the alert for any such pieces in pockets and backpacks, and to return them to the teacher, since incomplete materials cannot be used again for learning purposes.

### ***Birthday Celebrations***

We mark every child's birthday in some special way at school. Our celebrations are simple and quiet, with cupcakes and juice. The school does NOT allow balloons, decorations, goody bags, or packed food. We invite parents to get in touch with the Main Office to plan for birthday celebrations. We ask parents to



request a date for a birthday celebration no later than 1 week prior to the requested date. We ask parents **not** to bring sugary snacks or candies for the celebration. Simple snacks such as muffins, cupcakes, or healthy foods such as fruit, or veggie dips are appropriate. The snacks **should not** contain tree nuts/peanuts or seafood (the NYCMCS is a nut and seafood-free environment) and parents should consult with the teacher to find out if they should avoid other foods that could produce allergies in their child's classmates. Birthday celebrations are approved by the Main Office, not the classroom teacher.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are important learning experiences, and complement what the children learn in the classroom. For this reason, all children must attend all the fieldtrips arranged for their class. These range from walks in the neighborhood to visits to parks, museums and theaters. At the beginning of the year, we ask families to sign a general consent form for all fieldtrips and visits. The school will notify parents ahead of time of any field trip outside the neighborhood. In some instances, teachers may require that a family member accompany a child on a trip as a condition for his/her participation. A child may require a chaperone due to a medical or behavioral issue. Students are not allowed to be dismissed from a field trip; all students must return to the school for dismissal. Parents who wish to take their child home after a field trip must contact the Main Office before 11:00am to request for an early pick-up.

### **Homework**

Children are expected to read every night with their parents. At first the parent reads the books aloud while the child follows along, but later on in the year the child takes home books to read to the parent. First and second graders continue to read with their parent every night and have limited amounts of other types of homework that increase a little each year.

## **SERVICES**

### **Food**

**Allergies.** The NYCMCS is a **NUT & SEAFOOD-FREE** environment.  
**Families must inform the school of any food allergies their children may have.**

**Meals.** Each day students receive breakfast and lunch supplied by the Department of Education. Breakfast is light and lunch is a hot meal. Menus are posted each month on the DOE's website (<http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/menusandrecipes/menus.htm>) and on the bulletin board in the school's kitchen area. Breakfast & Lunch is free for all children as of September 2017. Parents are still required to fill out the Office of School Food's Meal Application Form.

**Packed lunches.** If a child has a special diet, or consistently refuses the school food, parents can send a packed cold lunch. Packed lunches should be balanced and not contain candies, peanuts, chips, snacks, cookies, cakes, sugary deserts, sodas or glass bottles. Families must inform the teacher, the Assistant Principal of Operations, or the Principal when sending packed lunches with a child. No school personnel are allowed to warm up/cook meals for children.

### **Transportation**

The Department of Education provides bus services. It designs all the bus routes and gets in touch with eligible families in order to give them the information they need about bus stops, pick-up and drop-offs. The Assistant Principal of Operations provides families with information on transportation procedures.

## **V. POLICIES**

### **Communication and family/school relationships**

Families are partners with the school in the education of their children. It is essential for them to be well informed and involved in all aspects of their child's school experience. For this reason, the NYCMCS is interested in establishing close communication between teachers and parents and family members.

**It is of the utmost importance that parents or guardians notify the office staff of any change of address and/or phone number, so that we can contact the family quickly and easily if necessary.**

It is also extremely important that parents let the school know of any changes in the family situation that could affect the child, such as a parent being away from home, illness or death in the family, moving to a new home, the arrival of a new baby, etc. Even changes that may seem ordinary to an adult may be unsettling to a young child who has not had as many years of experience in dealing with change. Since such changes often lead to different behavior in the classroom, the more we know about them, the more understanding, supportive and helpful we can be to the child.

There are many opportunities for communication with the school staff. There is *informal daily contact* at the times of arrival or dismissal. In addition, parents and guardians are welcome to visit their child's classroom after arranging the visit with the Main Office. If it is necessary to talk at greater length about a child, parents can arrange a date in person, or by calling the Main Office. If a parent wishes to speak to a teacher on the phone, they should call the office and leave a message; the teacher will return the call when they are free.

Other opportunities for communication include *Family Information Sessions* at the time of the student's enrollment: these give an overview of Montessori philosophy and methods and present the school's expectations for families in the life of the school and in their children's education. A *Curriculum Night* is held near the beginning of the year to introduce parents to the classroom routines. *Parent-teacher conferences* to discuss children's progress are held twice a year. In addition, the school hosts meetings throughout the year to discuss topics of interest to families and the Family Association organizes events that bring families and staff together.

### **Open Door Policy**

The Principal and Assistant Principal of Curriculum & Instruction have an open door policy so families can contact them at any time. We welcome all questions and concerns, as it helps us to examine and improve what we do. To speak to the Principal or the Assistant Principal of Curriculum & Instruction, parents should inquire at the Main Office to see if they are free or to make an appointment. They can also make an appointment by phoning the office or emailing us at [information@nycmcs.org](mailto:information@nycmcs.org).

When a serious problem or disagreement comes up, families have the right to request a conference with the principal to have their grievance heard. The procedures of the NYCMCS's Grievance Policy are spelled out in Appendix 1.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

There are three scheduled individual parent-teacher conferences during the year for each child. At each conference, families receive the child's report card. Fall conferences are geared toward sharing expectations for the year. Midyear conferences are for reviewing the student's progress and making joint plans, if needed, to support the learning process. Spring conferences may be scheduled for certain children; these are aimed at reviewing progress and planning for summer supports. Before the midyear conference, parents should have visited their child's classroom at least once, so that they understand what

their child's learning environment is like. All parents/guardians are expected to attend all parent-teacher conferences.

### **Family Participation**

Families have the opportunity to participate in workshops organized by the NYCMCS on topics such as ways to support their child's education at home, nutrition or behavior management. Families also have opportunities to *volunteer* for many different activities, such as planning a special event, cooking for a community event, volunteering for school trips, visiting the class as a guest speaker or activity leader, or helping in the school office. The **Family Association** (FA) provides more formal opportunities for participating in school governance. One seat on the School Board is reserved for the parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the school, as an ex-officio non-voting trustee. The Family Association (FA) elects this member whose has a term of office of one year that can be extended to two years. The FA offers families the opportunity to discuss their concerns, make proposals or give suggestions for supporting or improving the school.

### **Confidentiality**

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (Appendix 3), personal information about individual students is considered confidential, as are children's progress records and medical/health records, and parent or family information. These records are only available to those staff members who work with the students. This information is stored in student files that are located in a locked file cabinet. Files may not be removed from the building except when they are officially requested by another school.

A student's parent or guardian has the legal right to inspect and review their child's file upon written request to the Assistant Principal of Operations. Parents also have the right to representation during any review of their child's record. For the release of information to any organization, on-going school or an individual outside of the school, the parent's signed, written consent for release is required.

Conversations between teachers, administration, and parents/guardians about students, their specific educational concerns, or their past records are confidential. Information is not shared with staff members or school community members who are not directly involved with the student. If a parent believes that this confidentiality has been violated, he/she should inform the Principal. The Principal will review the situation and if she determines that a member of staff has violated the confidentiality policy, that person will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Promotion**

Families will receive three progress reports per year outlining the student's progress in literacy, math, other academic areas, work-study skills, and social skills.

In order to move successfully from grade to grade, students must demonstrate proficiency in the core subjects. The individualized instruction and system of continuous ongoing assessment and timely intervention in the NYCMCS are designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to acquire grade level skills.

To be promoted, a child should meet grade-level knowledge and content standards. Assessment information, teacher recommendation, and principal approval are all taken into account. The school reserves the right to make a decision for promotion even when standardized test scores do not match achievement as measured by classroom

assessments throughout the year, or when a child demonstrates potential for continued progress with additional supports.

If the school considers that a student may be incapable of dealing with the demands of the next grade, teachers will discuss the possibility of retention with the family in January, and then again in March. If a student is a candidate for retention he/she will be given a Learning Plan for the rest of the year; the school will provide additional academic support and will monitor the student's progress closely. If a student has to be retained, then the classroom teacher, principal, and family will meet to discuss ways to offer different and sufficient supports to ensure success in the upcoming year. If a child has an excessive number of absences, this is also a reason for retention.

### **Discipline policy**

In order to work and learn in school, children must feel the desire to do so. To nurture this desire, the NYCMCS seeks to create a safe, attractive, comfortable, nonthreatening social and emotional climate where children feel accepted, understood, respected, and fairly treated. To this end, the NYCMCS's discipline policy is based on the following premises: prevention is better than cure; children need to be taught appropriate behavior; the most effective way to manage inappropriate behavior is through discussion and reflection rather than the imposition of arbitrary punishments; conflicts are a natural part of all human relationships and children can learn and need to be taught how to resolve them amicably. To these ends, all students receive ongoing training in social skills such as empathy, impulse control, social problem solving, emotion management, and conflict mediation.

The NYCMCS's discipline policy is based on the Montessori values of grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility. The code of conduct includes the following general rules:

All members of the school community will:

- treat all others with respect, kindness and courtesy
- maintain a tranquil working environment
- treat physical objects and the school's installations with care and responsibility
- assume responsibility for their actions

Phase 1 of the discipline policy corresponds to everyday classroom discipline. Here, teachers seek to promote compliance with the school's code of conduct by involving students in its recreation as their "own". To do this, each teacher guides and shapes discussions of the reasons why the students come to school (for example, "to learn," "to make friends") and what they need in order to do these things (for example, "listen to my teachers," "be kind to my friends"). From these discussions and discussions of conflicts that arise in class, the teacher leads the group to express appropriate rules in their own words. The school-wide code of conduct is gently but firmly enforced in a consistent way in all school venues (for example, halls, gymnasium, outdoor areas), and by all members of staff.

Phases 2, 3 and 4 of the discipline policy come into effect in more extreme situations where ordinary, everyday discipline strategies are repeatedly ineffective with a particular student. These phases are described in Appendix 2.

#### **Students with special needs.**

The NYCMCS has a policy of fully integrating students with special needs within all learning activities. The particular personal strengths of students with special needs are incorporated into their Individual Work Plan (IEP) in order to support their development in academic areas, and their plans take into account the provisions of their IEPs. Special service providers work with the children in the classroom or collect them to work in small groups in specially prepared environments.

#### **English language learners**

English language learners are taught academic content in English. The multi-age classrooms and Individual Work Plans used in the NYCMCS adapt easily to the needs of English language learners. They can also accommodate a variety of special instructional strategies for developing English language skills together with academic skills. The NYCMCS has several Spanish-speaking members of staff who can give Spanish-speaking students extra support, especially in the early years. English language learners are identified using a citywide test.

### **IV. STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**The New York City Montessori Charter School is a NO SMOKING zone.**

#### **Emergency information**

The NYCMCS needs to know how it can reach parents during the day, in case of any emergency. All parents or guardians must fill out the mandatory blue card, which provides us with the address and telephone numbers of their work, as well as cell phone and/or pager numbers. Families should let us know **immediately** of any change in these numbers. During the registration process, parents/guardians fill out a form indicating the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of several other people who can be contacted in case of any emergency at the school. Parents/guardians should let us know **immediately** of any changes in this list. During registration, parents/guardians also sign a form giving the school written permission to take their child to a hospital in the event of any emergency during school hours.

#### **Immunization and health examinations**

All students must be immunized in compliance with New York State Law. Students who do not have the proper immunizations will be denied access to the NYCMCS until the immunizations are administered. The Department of Health requires that the school keep records of the health examinations and required immunizations of each child. Every year, parents must give the school copies of their child's immunization record signed by the doctor.

#### **Medications**

The NYCMCS has a nurse on staff that is authorized to dispense prescribed medication if, and only if, the parent or guardian submits signed documentation from the doctor. Children with chronic conditions that require the attention of the nurse must obtain a 504 Medical Form, and have it filled out by their physician. If a doctor indicates that a child should receive periodic medication over a short period of time (e.g., an antibiotic) and the parent wants the school nurse to administer it, the doctor must complete and sign an MAF form (Medical Administration Form), which can be obtained from the nurse. The parent/ guardian must also sign this form and hand it in at the school office. Students are not allowed to bring medications to school in their backpacks.

#### **Illness.**

If a child develops a fever or other signs of illness in school, the school will get in touch with the parent/guardian and asks them to come and pick up the child. If a child develops a fever of 100<sup>0</sup>F he/she should not be sent back to school until the fever has gone down. If a child is severely ill or develops a fever above 104<sup>0</sup>F and a parent/guardian cannot be reached immediately, the school calls 911 and notifies the family as soon they can be reached. A child with a communicable disease (ringworm, pink eye, etc.)

must be kept at home until the doctor authorizes their return to school. The school follows the emergency procedures indicated on the form signed by the families. Any student with a fever must be clear of fever for at least 24 hours before returning to school; a Doctor's note is required upon return.

### **Incident/Accident Reports**

If a child is involved in any incident or accident, school staff log the details in the schools Student Information System (SIS), which is submitted electronically to our Assistant Principal of School Culture. Minor incidents are reported to the parent at the end of the day. Serious incidents are reported to parents as soon as possible after they occur. Copies of Incident or Accident reports are kept in the child's file in the nurse's office and are available on request.

### **Suicide Threats**

If child threatens to commit suicide, the school will notify the parent and bring in a counselor to evaluate the case. If the counselor considers that the child is in danger or in crisis, he/she will contact the family and require that the child be remitted for psychological evaluation before returning to school. If deemed necessary, 911 will be called to assist the student. The counselor must provide written notice indicating that the child is no longer in crisis or danger. If the family does not cooperate, the counselor is obliged to report this immediately to the Administration for Children's Services.

### **Mandated reporting of Child Abuse/Maltreatment**

All staff at the NYCMCS is required to attend the New York State Mandated Child Abuse course. They are "Mandated Reporters" in compliance with state law. This means that if they suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, they are obligated to report their suspicion to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Signs of abuse or neglect that they must be alert to include but are not limited to physical traces such as bruises and cuts, children who repeatedly come to school dirty or unkempt, patterns of lateness to school and absence from school, and repeated late pick-up from school or the school bus stop. If the school calls 911 because a child is ill and a parent or guardian can't be reached, the school and/or the medical personnel are obligated to call ACS.

### **Fire Alarm Checks and Emergency Plan**

The NYCMCS conducts regular fire drills with the children in accordance with the Regulations of New York State, as detailed in the school's safety plan and pursuant to commissioner's regulation 155.17. The emergency plan is posted in each classroom.

## **APPENDIX 1 Grievance Policy**

Complaints should be submitted in writing to the Principal. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Principal will respond in writing or in person within ten business days. If this does not resolve the complaint, or if the complaint pertains to the Principal, then the individual or group may submit the complaint, in writing, to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Any individual or group may submit a complaint directly to the Board of Trustees of New York City Montessori Charter School.

If the complaint is submitted to the Board of Trustees five business days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at that Board meeting. If the complaint is submitted fewer than five business days

before a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board of Trustees shall render a determination in writing if appropriate or required.

The names of Trustees, including the Secretary of the Board, are included in this handbook. Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m. The agenda is posted at the school before each meeting.

In accordance with Education Law § 2855(4), if after presentation of such a complaint to the Board of Trustees, the individual or group believes that the Board has not adequately addressed the complaint, that individual or group may present the complaint to the School's charter entity, the New York State Education Department, which shall investigate and respond appropriately.

If, after presentation of the complaint to the NYSED, the individual or group determines that the charter entity has not adequately addressed the complaint, they may present the complaint to the Board of Regents, which shall investigate and respond. The NYSED and the Board of Regents shall have the power and the duty to issue appropriate remedial orders to the Board of Trustees of the Charter School under their jurisdiction to effectuate the provisions applicable under Education Law.

Contact information for the NYSED Charter Schools Office is prominently posted at the school.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Discipline Policy**

*Phase 2* of the discipline policy comes into effect when a student repeatedly and continuously engages in antisocial behavior or flouts the code of conduct in such a way that his behavior endangers other students or impedes his learning or that of others. To address these behaviors, the school will adopt a preventive approach, nurturing positive behavior by research supported techniques such as appropriately delivered adult praise for positive behavior, reinforcement contingencies and time out. Other factors related to learning positive behaviors and reducing the level of aggressive behaviors are academic success and an orderly environment. The NYCMCS addresses both these factors in the Montessori approach of individualized instruction and continuous assessment, the prepared and predictable environment, and the direct teaching of work routines. The NYCMCS will deal immediately with all aggressive or bullying behavior, either through teacher mediated conversations between the students involved or through the application of previously agreed upon consequences. When a student repeatedly engages in disruptive or antisocial behavior, the teacher will keep records to chart changes over time.

When teacher interventions are insufficient to produce reasonable change, the teacher will involve families in designing home supports for behavioral change, in conferences that may include a social worker or guidance counselor. In cases where such parent conferences and guidance interventions are not effective and a student continues to engage in behavior that is substantially disruptive, the teacher will separate the student from the group for an hour or more and send him/her to a location within the school where they will receive continued educational services, including class work, differentiated instruction, ELL services (as needed) and homework.

*Phase 3* comes into effect when repeatedly disruptive behavior continues once the student returns to the classroom or when a student displays any of the behaviors listed below. In these cases, the Principal will impose a short-term suspension of up to five days, unless he/she decides to make an exception on the basis of the individual circumstances surrounding the incident or the student's disciplinary record or use other disciplinary actions prior to suspension, such as exclusion from extracurricular activities. There follows a list of the behaviors meriting short term suspension:

- Engaging in conduct which endangers or threatens to endanger the health, safety, welfare, or morals of others
- Attempting to assault any student or staff member
- Using force or threats that reasonably place the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury
- Throwing things at others
- Engaging in acts of verbal or physical sexual harassment
- Making a false bomb threat or pulling a false emergency alarm
- Vandalizing school property causing minor damage
- Leaving the school premises without permission
- Engaging in insubordination or failing to comply with disciplinary sanctions
- Stealing, or attempting to steal, or possessing property known by the student to be stolen
- Repeatedly using obscene or abusive language or gestures
- Bringing tobacco or alcohol to school

- Committing any other act which school officials deem warrants short-term suspension

*Phase 4* comes into effect in extreme cases. Unless the Principal decides that an exception should be made on the basis of the circumstances surrounding the incident or the student's disciplinary record, he/she will impose a long-term suspension (removal from the school for a period of more than five days) or expulsion (permanent removal of a student from the school) on any student who displays any of the behaviors of the infractions listed below:

- Assaulting any other student or staff member
- Intentionally causing physical injury to another person, except when student's actions are reasonably necessary to protect him or herself from injury
- Possessing, using, attempt to use, or transfer any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student in school
- Committing, or attempt to commit arson on school property
- Vandalizing school property causing major damage
- Committing any other act which school officials deem warrants a long-term suspension

*Due process* will be followed for all disciplinary actions consistent with federal case law pursuant to *Goss v. Lopez* (419 U.S. 565). The student will have the opportunity to present his/her version of events to the Principal in person. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Principal shall immediately notify the parents or guardian in writing that the student may be suspended from school. This notice will be in their dominant language and provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed. It will inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. The parents or guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to ask questions of the complaining witnesses indirectly through the teacher or the principal. The Principal's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian in accordance with the school's complaint process. Before any expulsion, the Principal will consult the Board and immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing, in their dominant language. Long-term suspensions or expulsions will only be imposed after the student has been found guilty at a formal hearing. The hearing shall include the principal, staff members involved with the incident, and the student with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). The student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

Federal and State law require the expulsion from School for a period of not less than one year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at School. The Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis, if such modification is in writing, in accordance with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (as amended). "Weapon," as used in this law means a "firearm," as defined by 18 USC §8921, and includes firearms and explosives. (New York Education Law §3214(3)(d) effectuates this federal law.) The Principal shall refer a student under the age of sixteen who has brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding consistent with Article 3 of the Family Court Act.

#### **Discipline Provisions for Students with Disabilities**

If a special education student violates the school's Disciplinary Code and is being considered for a suspension or removal, the school will ensure due process protections in accordance with Sections 300.530-300.537 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The school will make the provisions described below for students with special needs who engage in extreme behaviors meriting suspension or expulsion. Furthermore, a student who has engaged in behavior that violated the school's Disciplinary Code who has not been determined to be eligible for special education services but qualifies under 34 CFR 300.534 as a student suspected of having a disability may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions.

For a student whose behavior merits suspension or expulsion and who is either identified as a student with special needs under 20 USC §1400 et seq. or qualifies as a student suspected of having a disability under 34 CFR 300.534, the school will:

- Provide a free and appropriate education in accordance with 20 USC §1400 et seq. to students who are suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons for more than ten school days (as defined in 34 CFR 300.536);
- Address behaviors that result in suspensions or removals for more than ten school days (as defined in 34 CFR 300.536) by providing functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans in accordance with 34 CFR 300.530;
- Conduct a manifestation determination review in accordance with 34 CFR 300.530 to determine the relationship between the behavior and the student's disability when a suspension or removal would result in a disciplinary change of placement;
- Provide the parent of the student a copy of the procedural safeguards notice in accordance with 34 CFR 300.530 and 34 CFR 300.504;
- Expedite the resolution of disagreements between parents and the school regarding certain disciplinary actions;
- Ensure protections for students who qualify under 34 CFR 300.534; and



- Expedite evaluations of students suspected of having a disability during the suspension period.

The school will work closely with the Committee on Special Education to establish clear guidelines for communication and decision-making on disciplinary matters. The school will maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of both general education students and special education students. These records will include the name of the student, a description of the behavior, the disciplinary action taken, the names of staff members involved in the incident, and the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. Student records will be stored in locked cabinets and a record access log will be maintained listing all persons who reviewed the information and when such information was reviewed.

*Alternative educational services.* The NYCMCS will ensure the provision of alternative educational services to any student who has been suspended or expelled, to the extent required by applicable law. Instruction for suspended students shall be sufficient to enable them to make adequate academic progress, and shall provide them with opportunities to complete assignments, learn the curriculum and participate in assessments, and it will take place in a suitable site. For a student who has been expelled, the school will provide alternative instruction to the extent required by applicable law for suspended students, until the student enrolls in another school or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

### APPENDIX 3

#### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Under FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, a parent or eligible student has a right to inspect and review the student's education records and to seek to have them amended in certain circumstances. A parent or eligible student must also provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from education records.

### APPENDIX 4

#### Code of Ethics

The Board of Trustees recognizes that sound, ethical standards of conduct serve to increase the effectiveness of school board trustees and their staff as educational leaders in the community. Actions based on an ethical code of conduct promote public confidence and the attainment of school goals. The Board also recognizes its obligation under the General Municipal Law to adopt a code of ethics consistent with the provisions of the General Municipal Law, setting forth the standards of conduct required of all school trustees, officers, and employees.

Therefore, every officer and employee of the New York City Montessori Charter School, whether paid or unpaid, including Board Trustees, shall adhere to the following code of ethics:

1. *Gifts:* The Board welcomes and encourages the writing of letters or notes expressing gratitude or appreciation to staff members. Gifts from children that are principally sentimental in nature and of insignificant financial value may be accepted in the spirit in which they are given.
2. *Confidential information:* An officer or employees shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of his or her official duties or use such information to further his or her own personal interest. In addition, he/she shall not disclose information regarding any matters discussed in an executive session of the Board, whether such information is deemed confidential or not.
3. *Representation before the Board:* An officer or employer shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school board.
4. *Disclosure of interest in matters before the Board:* A member of the Board of Trustees and any officer or employee of the school, whether paid or unpaid, who participates in the discussion or gives official opinion to the Board on any matter before the Board shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of any direct or indirect financial or other private interest he or she has in such matter. The term "interest" means a pecuniary or material benefit accruing to an officer or employee.
5. *Investments in conflict with official duties:* An officer or employee shall not invest or hold any investment directly in any financial, business, commercial or other private transaction that creates a conflict with his or her official duties.
6. *Private employment:* An officer or employee shall not engage in, solicit, negotiate for or promise to accept private employment or deliver a service when that employment or service creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his or her official duties.

7. *Future employment:* An officer or employee shall not, after the termination of service or employment with the Board, appear before the Board or any panel or committee of the Board, in relation to any case, proceeding, or application in which he or she personally participated during the period of his or her service or employment or that was under his or her active consideration. This shall not bar or prevent the timely filing by a present or former officer or employee of any claim, account, demand or suit against the school on his or her own behalf or on behalf of any member of his or her family arising out of any personal injury or property damage or for any lawful benefit authorized or permitted by law.

#### *Distribution of Code of Ethics*

The Principal shall cause a copy of this Code of Ethics to be distributed at the beginning of each school year to every officer and employee of the school. Each officer and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment.

#### *Penalties*

In addition to any penalty contained in any other provision of law, any person who shall knowingly and intentionally violate any of the provisions of the Board's code of ethics may be fined, suspended, or removed from office or employment, as the case may be, in the manner provided by law.

### **APPENDIX 5 POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETINGS LAW**

Meetings of the NYCMCS's board of trustees, including committee meetings, shall be open to the general public.

#### **Public Notice**

1. A calendar of all board meeting dates will be posted at the NYCMCS at all times.
2. The school will provide notice of the time and place of any board meeting that is *scheduled at least one week in advance* to the news media and shall conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at least 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.
3. The school will provide notice of the time and place of any board meeting that is *scheduled less than one week in advance* to the news media (to the extent practicable) and shall conspicuously post such notice in one or more public locations at a reasonable time in advance of the scheduled meeting. To the extent possible, the school will publicly post notices of board of trustees meetings immediately after each meeting date is determined.
4. Trustees may participate in board meetings in person or by videoconferencing. The board of trustees shall provide an opportunity for the public to attend at any site where a member participates. If videoconferencing is to be used, then the public notice must say so, identify the locations from which members will participate, and state that the public has a right to attend at any of these locations.

#### **Minutes of Meetings**

1. The secretary of the board of trustees will take minutes at all open meetings. All minutes will contain the date of the meeting, a summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions and any other matter formally voted upon as well as a record of how each board member voted.
2. Minutes from open meetings will be made available to the public within two weeks of the meeting date. Minutes will be available at the school.

#### **Executive Sessions**

The school shall conduct all executive sessions as part of an open meeting; they are not considered separate meetings per se. An executive session may be called via motion and majority vote by the board of trustees to enter an executive session. The motion must specifically identify the general area or areas of the subjects to be considered. All board members may participate in executive sessions, and the board may authorize others to attend as well. An executive session shall only be conducted by the board of trustees for one or more of the following matters:

1. Matters which

new york city  
**montessori**  
charter school



- litigation;
5. When such law applies to charter school employees, collective negotiations that are within the scope of Article 14 of the Civil Service Law;
6. The medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
7. The preparation, grading or administration of examinations; and
8. The proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value.

- will imperil the public safety if disclosed;
2. Any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
3. Information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
4. Discussions regarding proposed, pending or current

In no case shall public funds be appropriated during an executive session.

#### **Exemptions**

The following matters are exempted from the Open Meetings Law and therefore need not be discussed at open meetings:

1. Judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings (for example, suspension hearings and employee grievance hearings); and
2. Any matter made confidential by state or federal law (for example discussions regarding a particular student's records or children with handicapping conditions in violation of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

#### **Enforcement**

Any individual wishing to assert a violation of the New York State Open Meetings Law has standing to bring a proceeding in accordance with Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules and/or action for declaratory or injunctive relief.

### **APPENDIX 6 Freedom of Information Law POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW (FOIL)**

It is the policy of New York City Montessori Charter School (the "School") to allow the public access to information and records where required by the Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL"), Article 6 of the Public Officers Law ("POL").

#### **PROCEDURES**

- I. Requests for public information must be in writing and submitted to the School's Records Access Officer who shall be designated by the Principal (Director of Operations). Upon the receipt of a request, the School will respond in the following manner: Within five business days of receipt of a request, the School will, depending on the requested information, either make the information available at the School during normal business hours to the person requesting it, deny the request in writing, or provide a written acknowledgment of receipt of the request that supplies an approximate date for when the request will be granted or denied.
- II. If the School determines to grant access to the requested information, and if circumstances prevent disclosure to the person making the request within twenty (20) days of the acknowledgement of receipt of the request, the School shall state in writing both the reason for the delay and a date certain, within a reasonable period of time, depending on the circumstances, when the request will be granted in whole or in part. Failure to conform to the provisions detailed above shall constitute a denial of the request for information.

III. If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, he or she may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the secretary of the board of trustees. Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, the school will, within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, fully explain, in writing, the reasons for further denial or provide access to the record(s) sought. The Charter School also will forward a copy of the appeal, as well as its ultimate determination, to the New York State Committee on Open Government.

IV. In the event an appeal for records is denied, the person requesting the information may bring a proceeding for review of such denial pursuant to Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

The School may deny access to requested records for one or more of the following grounds:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- Such records are trade secrets or are submitted to the School by a commercial enterprise or derived from information obtained from a commercial enterprise which if disclosed would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of such enterprise;
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law § 87 (2)(3);
- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- Such records are computer access codes;
- Such records are inter-agency or intra-agency materials that are not statistical or factual tabulations of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, or a final policy or external audits.
- Such records constitute examination questions or answers

## *Acknowledgement*

Every parent or guardian has the responsibility of reading the NYCMCS Family Handbook in order to understand the school's policies and procedures. *If parents have more than one child attending the school, they should complete one of these acknowledgement forms for each child and return it to the school.*

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PLEASE PRINT

Today's Date     /     /

Child's name : \_\_\_\_\_

Grade the child is entering \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I have received the *New York City Montessori Charter School Handbook for Parents* and understand that it is my responsibility to read it.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_