



IMS Handbook

**2021 – 2022  
Handbook for  
Students and Parents**



**6339 Carolina Beach Road  
Wilmington, NC 28412**

**[www.im.school](http://www.im.school)**

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*“Follow the child”*

### **Maria Montessori**

Maria Montessori, born in 1870, was the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. She worked in the fields of psychiatry, education, and anthropology. She believed that each child is born with a unique potential to be revealed, rather than as a "blank slate" waiting to be written upon. Her main contributions to the work of adults raising and educating children are in these areas:

- Preparing the most natural and life-supporting environment for the child
- Observing the child living freely in this environment
- Continually adapting the environment for the child to fulfill his or her greatest potential -- physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually

#### **THE EARLY YEARS**

Maria Montessori was always a little ahead of her time. At age thirteen, against the wishes of her father but with the support of her mother, she began to attend a boys' technical school. After seven years of engineering, she began pre-med, becoming a physician in 1896. In her work at the University of Rome psychiatric clinic,

Dr. Montessori developed an interest in the treatment of special needs children and, for several years, she worked, wrote, and spoke on their behalf.

In 1907, she was allowed to study "normal" children, taking charge of fifty poor children of the dirty, desolate streets of the San Lorenzo slum on the outskirts of Rome. The news of her unprecedented success in Casa dei Bambini, "House of Children", soon spread around the world. People came from far and wide to see the children for themselves. Dr. Montessori was as astonished as anyone at the realized potential of these children:

*“Supposing I said there was a planet without schools or teachers, study was unknown, and yet the inhabitants - doing nothing but living and walking about - came to know all things, to carry in their minds the whole of learning: would you not think I was romancing? Well, just this, which seems so fanciful as to be nothing but the invention of a fertile imagination, is a reality. It is the child's way of learning. This is the path he follows. He learns everything without knowing he is learning it, and in doing so passes little from the unconscious to the conscious, treading always in the paths of joy and love.” Maria Montessori - The Absorbent Mind, p. 36*



## **Introduction**

Welcome to Island Montessori School! We are pleased that you have selected a Montessori education for your child and we strive to make the experience fulfilling for you and your child.

We are a North Carolina public charter school. Island Montessori Charter is a non-profit school that is run by a board of directors under the name of Cape Fear Montessori Village, Inc.

Island Montessori School seeks diversity in its student/parent body, faculty, staff, administration, and board. IMS does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or any category protected by law, in its recruitment of students, recruitment of staff, educational policies, employment practices, and all other school-administered procedures and programs.

### **General Information**

#### **School Calendar and Staff Directory**

The IMS calendar and staff contact information can be found on our website. **[www.im.school](http://www.im.school)**

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Island Montessori School is to enable children of diverse backgrounds to learn and grow at their own pace, by offering a developmentally appropriate and challenging academic Montessori environment that models grace and courtesy and fosters a peaceful community of lifelong learners.

Island Montessori School guides the growth and development of the whole child in an environment that:

- Fosters a love of learning
- Maximizes individual potential
- Promotes academic excellence
- Inspires creativity
- Celebrates diversity
- Encourages mutual respect
- Nurtures compassion and humanitarianism
- Advocates stewardship of the environment
- Graduates responsible, productive citizens of the world

*"To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely."* Maria Montessori



## **Student Attendance**

### **General Requirements**

Regular attendance of the children is a vital requirement of the program; the children who benefit the most from the school are the ones who attend regularly. Students must be present to be full members of the learning community. We expect parents to support the mission of our school by limiting their child's absences to the greatest extent possible. There is no substitute for the uninterrupted, consistent connections between teachers and students in the classroom environment, where materials and lessons are carefully planned and guided by the lead teachers.

The primary responsibility for school attendance rests with students and parents. IMS has the responsibility for properly recording absenteeism and tardiness, notifying parents when needed, and discouraging excessive absences per state law. G.S. 115C-307 (f)

### **Lawful, Excused Absences**

Pursuant to state law G.S. 115C-378 and the rules and regulations of the N. C. Department of Public Instruction, School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual, the following shall constitute a lawful excused absence, provided satisfactory evidence is given to the appropriate school official:

1. **Illness or injury:** An illness or injury, which prevents the child from being physically able to attend school.
2. **Quarantine:** When isolation of the child is ordered by the local health officers or the State Board of Health.
3. **Death in the immediate family of the child:** Defined to include, but not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers, and sisters.
4. **Medical or dental appointments:** When approved by the Head of School in advance, except in the cases of an emergency.
5. **Court or administrative proceedings:** Attendance at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
6. **Religious observances:** When the tenets of a religion to which a child or his parents adhere require or suggest the observance of a religious event unless the religious observance or the cumulative effect of the religious observance is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the child.
7. **Immediate demands of the farm or home:** When it is demonstrated that the needs of the farm or home require the presence of the child to perform work and when it is demonstrated that assistance to meet this need is not otherwise available and cannot be secured.
8. **Educational opportunity:** When the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity, such as travel. The Head of School and the teacher must approve such an absence five days before the absence. An inquiry project related to the educational opportunity may be required.



9. **Absence related to deployment activities:** - A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting to visit the parent or legal guardian. (G.S. 115c-407.5 Article V (E) )

### **Unexcused Absences**

Absences for reasons other than those listed above may be deemed unexcused.

The Head of School and their staff shall take appropriate action to prevent excessive absences and/or provide counseling for students with a history of excessive absences. Parents must be notified of their child's excessive absences, and the teacher shall then work with the student and the family to analyze the causes and determine the steps to eliminate the problem.

**A written note excusing the absence must be brought or e-mailed to the teacher within 48 hours of the student's return to school. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused.**

### **Rule of Procedure in Law Enforcement**

G.S. 115C-378 provides that "every parent, guardian, or other person in the state having charge or control of a child **between the ages of 7 and 16 years** shall cause such child to attend school continually for a period equal to the time which the public school to which the child is assigned shall be in session."

The law also purports that students under the age of seven **who are already enrolled in public school** must abide by the compulsory attendance law unless the parent withdraws the student from school.

Teachers may consider the student's number of absences in the computation of the student's grades.

The school will notify parents of excessive absences under the following conditions:

1. After the **third** unexcused absence, the lead teacher shall notify the parent/guardian within 24 hours.
2. After the **sixth** unexcused absence, the Head of School shall notify, by mail, the parent/guardian of the student's excessive number of unexcused absences from school that she/he may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policies of IMS.
  - a. Notification of the parent shall be mailed and shall state that the parent of any student between the ages of 7 and 16 years of age may be prosecuted under the General Compulsory Attendance Law if these absences cannot be justified under established policies (see G.S. 115C-378).
  - b. A copy of the notice will be directed to the teacher who will work with the student and family to remedy the problem (see G.S. 115C-378). If warranted, the Head of School may take legal action.
3. After the **eighth** unexcused absence, the Head of School shall notify the parent/guardian of the student's excessive number of unexcused absences from school and will request that the parent and student attend a meeting with the IMS Attendance Council. The IMS





Attendance Council shall be composed of a guidance counselor, the student's teacher, the Head of School, and other members at the discretion of the Council.

The Council will outline the consequences of continued attendance violations, answer the families' questions and provide any additional pertinent or requested information. The student, parents, and Council will enter into an attendance contract which includes an individualized case plan. The Council has the authority to change Unexcused Absences to Excused Absences upon presentation of appropriate documentation.

4. After the **ninth** unexcused absence, the Head of School shall notify the parent/guardian of the student's excessive number of unexcused absences from school and may request that the parent attend a meeting of the Judicial Advisory Council in New Hanover County. The JAC is composed of school social workers, counselors, a county judge, the District Attorney, DSS officials, and IMS representatives.
5. After the **tenth** unexcused absence, the Head of School must review any report or investigation prepared under G.S. 115C-381 and must confer with the student and their parent, guardian, or custodian, if possible, to determine whether the parent, guardian, or custodian has received notification and made a good faith effort to comply with the law. If the Head of School determines that a parent, guardian, or custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the Head of School shall notify the district attorney by filing a criminal report at the magistrate's office and notify the Department of Social Services in the county where the child resides.

### **Student Chronic Absenteeism:**

"Student Chronic Absentee" is a student who is enrolled in a North Carolina public school for at least 10 instructional days at any time during the school year, and whose total number of absences is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days(20 excused or unexcused days) that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.

### **20-Day Absence Policy:**

When a student is absent from school, whether that be excused or unexcused, for 20 cumulative days, the Attendance Council must meet to determine the future course of action for that student. The Attendance Council will meet when a student reaches 20 total absences (excused or unexcused) to prepare the parent for possible retention of the student. The Head of School or designee will inform the parent of the time and date of this meeting. A recommendation will be made by the Attendance Council about possible retention. The final decision will be made by the Head of School.

At 10 total absences (excused or unexcused) a letter will be sent to notify parents to remind them about the 20-day policy and possible retention.

### **Tardy Policy**

Because IMS is a school of choice and does not provide transportation, parents have made the personal commitment to bring their children to school on time. The responsibility of arriving at school on time rests solely with the parent/guardian.



At IMS, we believe that building a strong community in the classroom enhances learning and teaches children to care about others and the world around them. This belief is a cornerstone of our school's philosophy. We expect all children to arrive at school on time every day. Students are tardy at the Charter School if they are not in their classrooms by 8:15 a.m. Students are tardy at the Children's School if they are not in their classrooms by 8:30 a.m. If a child arrives at school late, a parent must come into the building to sign him/her in at the front office.

**Oversleeping, car trouble, and traffic delays are not considered excused tardies.**

**THE ONLY EXCUSED TARDY IS A SITUATION WHERE THE STUDENT HAD A DOCTOR OR DENTAL APPOINTMENT IN THE MORNING.**

### **Excessive Tardy Procedure**

- After the **fifth** unexcused tardy, the teacher shall contact the parent/guardian to determine the cause of the tardiness.
- After the **tenth** unexcused tardy, the Head of School shall notify the family that they are not complying with the mission of IMS. A meeting with the Head of School and/or teacher will be requested.
- After the **twelfth** unexcused tardy, the Head of School shall notify the parent/guardian of the date and time that the Attendance Council will meet and decide a course of action, which could lead to the reporting of the parent to outside agencies.

### **Early Check Outs**

Just as absent or tardy students cannot fully participate in the learning community, students who are checked out early miss valuable classroom time. Parents should consult the school calendar, and make doctor and other appointments after school or on teacher workdays when possible.

**Students checked out for the day before 11:30 a.m. are marked absent for that day.**

When a student is being checked out, the parent must sign the child out in the front office. The school will not honor requests that the child waits in the front office at a specific time or meet their parent in the parking lot. Students will not be released to siblings less than 18 years of age. Parents should allow time for following the procedure above.

Students will not be allowed to check out after 2:30 p.m. unless notified in advance. The end of the day is a very busy time for students, teachers, staff, and our driveway.

### **Student Release**

Each student must have a list of people on file, who are permitted to pick up the student from school. Though it may cause an occasional inconvenience, this policy is essential for each child's safety. If students are to ride with someone not on their list of people who are permitted to pick up, a signed note **MUST** be sent by a parent giving permission. Students will not be allowed to use the telephone to arrange transportation during the school day.

### **Transportation**

#### **Transportation Plan**

When the founders of IMS set priorities in how resources would be utilized, they chose to emphasize quality teachers and safe facilities over providing a transportation system for students.



That means the school does not provide buses or vans for transportation to and from school. All parents are asked to provide transportation. Neighborhood carpools are encouraged. According to NC Charter School Law (§ 115C-238.29A), each charter school “shall develop a transportation plan so that transportation is not a barrier to any student who resides in the local school administrative unit in which the school is located.” IMS’s transportation plan is to provide a means for parents to generate their carpool connections if transportation is an issue. A student’s parent(s) or legal guardian is ultimately responsible for transportation to and from IMS.

### **Arrival at School**

Students must arrive at school by 8:15 a.m. at the Charter School and 8:30 a.m. at the Children’s School. Early morning care is available to parents starting at 7:45 a.m. Students should not be on either campus before 7:45 a.m., because there is no one available to supervise them and the building is open to staff only.

### **CHILDREN’S SCHOOL**

Please drive in the designated line and drop your child off at the main entrance walkway. A teacher, staff member, or parent volunteer will greet your child at the car upon arrival. If you need to go into the school, please park in the school parking lot and accompany your child into the school.

### **CHARTER SCHOOL**

#### **DROP OFF**

- Once your vehicle enters the IMS driveway, stay right.
- Enter the coned area to the right as you approach the building pulling up towards the front doors of the school building.
- Pull all the way forward to stop before the roundabout. Cars should remain in a single file line.
- Your child(ren) should exit their vehicle quickly and proceed to the main entrance of the school.
- Please continue around the corner of the parking lot and exit the campus onto Carolina Beach Road.

*If parents come into the school, please park in the parent parking lot next to the school, not out in front of the school. Thank you.*

### **After School Pickup**

### **CHILDREN’S SCHOOL**

#### **Dismissal is at 2:45 pm**

For primary students, please wait in a designated line and pick up your child at the main entrance walkway. For ease of dismissal, please remain in the parent pick-up line and wait for your child to be walked to the car by a teacher. Parents and guardians are responsible for buckling children into their car seats.

### **CHARTER SCHOOL**

- **Dismissal is at 3:00 p.m.**



- A staff member will be at the head of the driveway calling names with a walkie-talkie.
- Please have your sign with your child's name in the car window
- Please move into the loading area that will be coned off.
- Children are to enter their cars ONLY by the orange cones. Students should not get into their cars outside of this zone—it is a safety hazard.
- Please do not call your child or blow the horn.
- If your child does not come when called, you may be asked to pull forward to a holding area or the back of the car line.

Parents are expected to pick up their child(ren) within 15 minutes of the dismissal time. It is the parents' responsibility to communicate the expectations listed above to any other individuals who may pick up their child.

Please make sure that the alternate person is:

- Identified to the school by note or phone call in advance
- Listed on the emergency contact form
- Has proper identification

Dismissal is not a time for parents to conference with teachers. The teachers are trying to make sure that every child gets home safely. It is a busy time of the day and the teacher cannot give parents their full attention. Be respectful of the teachers' need to focus on the students at dismissal. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange a time to have a parent conference.

**\*If your child is not picked up by 3:30 p.m. you will be charged \$5 for every ten minutes you are late. This charge will go into effect the second time late pick-up occurs. Payment is expected at the time of pick up.**

### **After-School Vans**

If your child will be riding a van to an after-school care provider, it is your responsibility to call the van service if your child will not be riding that day.

### **Comprehensive Student Discipline Program**

All discipline procedures must conform to the requirements of state law. Procedures and classroom rules are structured to foster the growth of self-direction and self-discipline. These expectations are based on three simple rules:

**Respect Yourself**

**Respect Others**

**Respect the Environment**

Our classroom management presumes that behavior will be followed by natural and logical consequences. If a child behaves inappropriately in the classroom we:

- Remind the child of the classroom rules
- Separate the child from the situation
  - Ask the child to put away work that is being mishandled
  - Ask the child to move to a different location
- Ask the child to come and stay by the teacher (to watch someone else's lesson or complete work)



- Ask the child to stay in a particular spot (at a table or chair) to complete their work.
- Remove the child from the classroom until the child will be invited back when the teacher deems that the child is ready with appropriate behavior, or until a parent has been contacted to pick up the child. Your child will continue to be visually supervised by an administrator or other staff member.

We minimize the use of negative phrases by following the guidelines of positive discipline. Classroom management is a shared responsibility amongst the children and adults in the prepared environment.

Repeated behavioral problems will result in a request for a parent-teacher conference. This conference will enable us to try to solve the problem together and help us gain insight into the possible causes of the behavior.

### **Reportable Offenses**

IMS is obligated by law (North Carolina General Statute 115C-288) to report the following incidents to the State Board of Education. The Head of School may choose to contact law enforcement authorities. The definitions will be available at the front office.

**Arson**

**Assault**

**Assault resulting in serious injury**

**Battery**

**\*Bullying**

**Dangerous Weapon**

**Discrimination**

**Disability Harassment**

**Disruption of the Learning Environment**

**Drugs, Alcoholic Beverages, etc.**

**Explosives, Fireworks, and Foul**

**Substances**

**Extortion**

**Forgery**

**Gambling**

**Harassment**

**Hazing**

**Indecent Exposure**

**Insubordination**

**Littering**

**Neglecting Responsibility**

**Obscenity**

**Persistent Disobedience**

**Possession or Using Weapons**

**Rape**

**Sexual Assault**

**Sexual Harassment**

**Sexual Misconduct**

**Sexual Offense**

**Smoking or Using Tobacco Products**

**Throwing Stones or Other Missiles**

**Theft**

**Trespass**

**Truancy**

**Vandalism**

\*Bullying is a series of deliberate and hurtful actions inflicted by one or more students who are perceived to be or are stronger, more confident, and/or more aggressive than the target, or who simply outnumber the target. Bullying may be: 1) physical, 2) verbal, 3) social/relational, and/or 4) sexual harassment. Social/relational bullying consists of indirect, covert attempts to affect the target's reputation or social standing. It may or may not include "cyberbullying," which is the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, and defamatory personal polling web (such as "Facebook" or "Instagram") sites to intentionally harm others.

Bullying is to be reported to North Carolina State Disciplinary Data Collection after repeated, deliberate acts (e.g. threats, shoving, chasing, pinching, etc.) are observed or reported over time. Bullying does not have to be reported in



conjunction with any other act. A teacher or the Head of School may deem a student to be bullying simply because of the repetitiveness of the harassment of another student, especially after warnings to stop the behavior. Reporting bullying is a State Board requirement.

## **PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

(IMS POLICY #255/257)

The IMS Board of Directors acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The board will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities.

### **A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS AND CONSEQUENCES**

#### **1. Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying:**

Students, school system employees, volunteers, and visitors are expected to behave civilly and respectfully. The board expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Students are expected to comply with the behavior standards established by board policy and the student code of conduct. Employees are expected to comply with board policy and school regulations. Volunteers and visitors on school property also are expected to comply with board policy and established school rules and procedures.

Any violation of this policy is serious, and school officials shall promptly take appropriate action. Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial actions ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including dismissal. Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate.

When considering if a response beyond the individual level is appropriate, school administrators should consider the nature and severity of the misconduct to determine whether a classroom or school-wide response is necessary. Such classroom or school-wide responses may include staff training, harassment and bullying prevention programs, and other measures deemed appropriate by the Head of School to address the behavior.

#### **2. Retaliation**

The board prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy, or participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy.

After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and per applicable federal, state, or local laws, policies, and regulations, the Head of School shall



determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.

## **B. APPLICATION OF POLICY**

This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and bullying by students, employees, volunteers, and visitors. “Visitors” include persons, agencies, vendors, contractors, and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school. This policy applies to behavior that takes place:

1. In any school building or on any school premises before, during, or after school hours;
2. On any vehicle as part of any school activity;
3. During any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity;
4. At any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel; and
5. At any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools.

## **C. DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

### **1. Discrimination**

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category such as race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, ideology, physical characteristics or disability or as otherwise defined by federal or state law. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

### **2. Harassment and Bullying**

a. Harassment or bullying behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:

(1) Places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or

(2) Creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

“Hostile environment” means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment or bullying. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, the behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic or motivated by an individual’s association with a person who has or is perceived to have a differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability.





Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal taunts, name-calling, and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying.

#### **D. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR BULLYING**

Employees are required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy. Students, parents, volunteers, visitors, or others are also strongly encouraged to report any actual or suspected incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying. All reports should be made to one of the school officials identified in that policy. Reports may be made anonymously, and all reports shall be investigated per that policy.

#### **E. TRAINING AND PROGRAMS**

The IMS Board directs the Head of School to establish training and other programs that are designed to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and bullying and to foster an environment of understanding and respect for all members of the school community. Information about this policy and the related complaint procedure must be included in the training plan. As funds are available, the board will provide additional training for students, employees, and volunteers who have significant contact with students regarding the board's efforts to address discrimination, harassment, and bullying and will create programs to address these issues. The training or programs should (1) provide examples of behavior that constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying; (2) teach employees to identify groups that may be the target of discrimination, harassment, or bullying; and (3) train school employees to be alert to locations where such behavior may occur, including locations within school buildings, on field trips, and cell phones and the Internet.

#### **F. NOTICE**

The Head of School is responsible for providing effective notice to students, parents, and employees of the procedures for reporting and investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. This policy must be posted on the school website, and copies of the policy must be readily available in the Head of School's office. Notice of this policy must appear in all student and employee handbooks and in any school system publication that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for students and employees.

#### **DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND BULLYING COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

The IMS Board of Directors takes seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The process provided in this policy is designed for those individuals who believe that they may have been discriminated against, bullied, or harassed. Individuals who have witnessed or have reliable information that another person has been subject to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying also should report such violations to one of the school officials listed in subsection C.1. of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously.

#### **A. DEFINITIONS**





1. Alleged Perpetrator - The alleged perpetrator is the individual alleged to have discriminated against, harassed, or bullied the complainant.
2. Complaint - A complaint is an oral or written notification made by a person who believes he or she is the victim of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
3. Complainant - The complainant is the individual complaining of being discriminated against, harassed, or bullied.
4. Days - Days are the working days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, vacation days, or holidays, as outlined in the school calendar. In counting days, the first day will be the first full working day following receipt of the complaint. When a complaint is submitted on or after May 1, time limits will consist of all weekdays (Monday–Friday) so that the matter may be resolved before the close of the school term or as soon thereafter as possible.
5. Investigative Report - The investigative report is a written account of the findings of the investigation conducted in response to a complaint.
6. Investigator - The investigator is the school official responsible for investigating and responding to the complaint.
7. Report - A report is an oral or written notification that an individual, other than the reporter, is a suspected perpetrator or victim of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

#### **B. REPORTING BY EMPLOYEES OR OTHER THIRD PARTIES**

1. Mandatory Reporting by School Employees- Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that an individual may have been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied must report the offense immediately to an appropriate individual designated in subsection C.1., below. An employee who does not promptly report possible discrimination, harassment, or bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.
2. Reporting by Other Third Parties- All members of the school community including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are also strongly encouraged to report any act that may constitute an incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
3. Anonymous Reporting - Reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying may be made anonymously but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely based on an anonymous report.
4. Investigation of Reports- Reports of discrimination, harassment, or bullying shall be investigated sufficiently to determine whether further action under this policy or otherwise is necessary, and school officials shall take such action as appropriate under the circumstances. At the option of the alleged victim, the report may be treated as a complaint by the alleged victim under this policy.

#### **C. COMPLAINTS BROUGHT BY ALLEGED VICTIMS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR BULLYING**

1. Filing a Complaint- Any individual, who believes that he or she has been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied is strongly encouraged to file a complaint orally or in writing to any of the following
  - a. the Head of School
  - b. an immediate supervisor if the individual making the complaint is an employee;
2. Period for Filing a Complaint - A complaint should be filed as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after disclosure or discovery of the facts giving rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after the 30 days may be investigated; however, individuals should recognize that



delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to such complaints.

3. **Informal Resolution** - The board acknowledges that many complaints may be addressed informally through such methods as conferences or mediation, and the board encourages the use of such procedures to the extent possible. If an informal process is used, the Head of School or other designated personnel must (1) notify the complainant that he or she has the option to request formal procedures at any time and (2) make a copy of this policy and other relevant policies available to the complainant. In those circumstances in which informal procedures fail or are inappropriate or in which the complainant requests formal procedures, the complaints will be investigated promptly, impartially, and thoroughly according to the procedures outlined in the remainder of this policy.

#### **D. PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED INCIDENTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR BULLYING**

##### 1. Initiating the Investigation

- a. Whoever receives a complaint of discrimination, harassment, or bullying under subsection C.1. shall immediately notify the appropriate investigator who shall respond to the complaint and investigate. The investigator of a complaint is determined as follows:
  - i. If the alleged incident occurred under the jurisdiction of the Head of School, the investigator is the Head of School or designee, unless the alleged perpetrator is the Head of School or a member of the board. If the alleged perpetrator is any other employee, the Head of School or designee shall investigate in consultation with the Human Resources Coordinator or designee.
  - ii. If the alleged perpetrator is the Head of School, the Human Resources Coordinator shall bring the matter to the Executive Committee of the board who will serve as investigator.
  - iii. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the board, the Executive Committee is the investigator. If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the Executive Committee, that person shall be excused from the investigation.
- b. The investigator shall explain the process of the investigation to the complainant and inquire as to whether the complainant would like to suggest a course of corrective action.
- c. Written documentation of all reports and complaints, as well as the school's response, must be maintained per standard administrative procedures.
- d. Failure to investigate and/or address claims of discrimination, harassment, or bullying shall result in disciplinary action.

##### 2. Conducting the Investigation

- a. The investigator is responsible for determining whether the alleged act(s) constitutes a violation. In so doing, the investigator shall impartially, promptly, and thoroughly investigate the complaint. The investigator shall interview (1) the complainant (2) the alleged perpetrator(s); and (3) any other individuals, including other possible victims, who may have relevant information.



- b. Information may be shared only with individuals who need the information to investigate and address the complaint appropriately. Any requests by the complainant for confidentiality shall be evaluated within the context of the legal responsibilities of the school. Any complaints withdrawn to protect confidentiality must be recorded per standard administrative procedures.
  - c. The investigator shall review the factual information gathered through the investigation to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, harassment, or bullying, considering all factual information, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, the age and maturity of the complainant and alleged perpetrator(s), and any other relevant circumstances.
3. Investigative Report
- a. The investigator shall submit a written investigative report to the Head of School.
  - b. The investigator shall notify the complainant of the results of the investigation within 15 days of receiving the complaint unless additional time is necessary to conduct an impartial, thorough investigation. The investigator shall specify whether the complaint was substantiated and if so, shall also specify:
    - i. reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, corrective action intended to end the discrimination, harassment, or bullying and prevent it from recurring;
    - ii. as needed, reasonable steps to address the effects of the discrimination, harassment, or bullying on the complainant; and
    - iii. as needed, reasonable steps to protect the complainant from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint.
  - c. Information regarding specific disciplinary action imposed on the alleged the perpetrator(s) will not be given to the complainant unless the information relates directly to the complainant (e.g., an order requiring the perpetrator not to have contact with the complainant).
  - d. If the investigator determines that the complaint was substantiated, the perpetrator(s) shall be subject to discipline or other corrective steps. If the corrective steps involve actions outside the scope of the investigator's authority, the Head of School will be notified so that responsibility for taking the corrective steps may be delegated to the appropriate individual.
  - e. Each alleged perpetrator will be provided with a written summary of the results of the investigation regarding whether the complaint was substantiated, whether the alleged perpetrator violated relevant law or board policies by his or her actions, and what, if any, disciplinary actions or consequences will be imposed upon the perpetrator per board policy. The perpetrator may appeal any disciplinary action or consequence per board policy and law. However, an appeal by the perpetrator of disciplinary action does not preclude school officials from taking appropriate action to address the discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
4. The Appeal of an Investigative Report
- a. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the investigative report, he or she may appeal the decision to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors per the procedure described in subsection E.4.b below. The appeal must be submitted in



writing within five days of receiving the investigative report. The Executive Committee may review the documents, conduct any further investigation necessary or take any other steps it determines to be appropriate to respond to the complaint. The Executive Committee shall provide a written response within 30 days after receiving the appeal unless further investigation is needed.

- b. If the Executive Committee was the investigator, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Directors within five days of receiving the Executive Committee's response. The board will review the documents, direct that further investigation be conducted if necessary, and take any other steps that the board determines to be appropriate to respond to the complaint. Upon request of the complainant, the board will hold a hearing in a closed session. The board will provide a written response within 30 days after receiving the appeal unless further investigation is necessary or the hearing necessitates that more time is taken to respond.

#### **E. TIMELINESS OF PROCESS**

The number of days indicated at each step of the process should be considered a maximum. Every effort should be made to expedite the process.

If any school official charged with investigating the complaint or reviewing the investigation fails at any step in the process to communicate a decision within the specified time limit, the complainant will be entitled to appeal the complaint to the next step unless the official has notified the complainant of the delay and the reason for the delay, such as the complexity of the investigation, review or report. The school official shall make reasonable efforts to keep the complainant apprised of progress being made during any period of delay. Delays that interfere with the exercise of any legal rights are not permitted. Failure by the complainant at any step in the process to appeal a complaint to the next step within the specified time limit will be considered acceptance of the decision at that step unless the complainant has notified the investigator of a delay and the reason for the delay and the investigator has consented in writing to the delay.

#### **F. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. No reprisals or retaliation of any kind will be taken by the board or by an employee of the school against the complainant or other individual on account of his or her filing a complaint or report or participating in an investigation of a complaint or report filed and decided under this policy unless the person knew or had reason to believe that the complaint or report was false or knowingly provided false information.
2. All meetings and hearings conducted under this policy will be private.
3. The board and school officials will consider requests to hear complaints from a group, but the board and officials have the discretion to hear and respond to complainants individually.
4. The complainant may be represented by an advocate, such as an attorney, at any meeting with school system officials.
5. Should, in the judgment of the Head of School designee, the investigation or processing of a complaint require that an employee be absent from regular work assignments, such absences shall be excused without loss of pay or benefits. This shall not prevent the Head of School or designee from suspending the alleged perpetrator without pay during the investigation.



## **G. RECORDS**

Records will be maintained as required by standard administrative procedures.

Location of Misconduct:

All rules governing student misconduct shall apply to any incident that is

1. On school grounds during, before, and after regular school hours
2. On school grounds at any other time when the school is being used for a function or by any school group
3. Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event
4. During the transporting of students to include the period before boarding the car/bus, in the car/bus and getting off the car/bus, or in the proximity of the car/bus stop when under the supervision of the driver
5. Off school grounds but which may affect the school climate or have a direct and immediate effect on the general welfare of the school.

## **Title IX Sexual Harassment Prohibited Conduct and Grievance Process**

The purpose of this policy is to support victims of sexual harassment. This policy is to support and protect students and staff. IMS prohibits discrimination/misconduct based on sex. Anyone regardless of race, sexual orientation, disability, or gender status may be a victim or perpetrator of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment might consist of verbal, physical, or other types of misconduct that target a person based on their sex and that the person finds unwelcome. A school's enforcement of Title IX must be consistent with everyone's free speech rights.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment and other terms used in policy:**

***Sexual Harassment:*** Sexual harassment is the conduct based on sex that meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. "Quid pro quo" harassment. Staff member use of sexual conditioning as an educational benefit or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct. Quid pro quo may be more identifiable as a school employee but the other two definition areas can apply to any person, including students, any person may perpetuate the other two areas of misconduct.
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to a school's educational program or activity.
3. "Sexual assault", "dating violence", "domestic violence" or "stalking" as those terms are defined under the other Federal laws called the Clery Act and the Violence Against Women Act.

***Investigator:*** The investigator is the school official responsible for investigating and responding to a formal complaint.



**Decision-Maker:** The decision-maker is the school official responsible for deciding regarding responsibility in response to an investigation of sexual harassment triggered by a formal complaint. This person can not be the Title IX Coordinator.

**Complainant:** The complainant is the individual(s) who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

**Respondent:** The respondent is the individual(s) who has been reported to be the perpetrator of

**Disciplinary Sanctions:** Disciplinary sanctions are consequences imposed on a respondent when the respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment.

**Report:** A report is an oral or written notification that an individual is an alleged or suspected perpetrator or victim of sexual harassment.

**Formal Complaint:** A formal complaint is a document signed and filed with the Title IX coordinator by a complainant or signed by the Title IX coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that school officials investigate the allegation(s). At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activities of the school system.

**Grievance Process:** The grievance process means the process for investigating and reaching a final determination of responsibility for a formal complaint of sexual harassment.

**Investigative Report:** The investigative report is a written account of the findings of the investigation conducted in response to a formal complaint.

**Remedies:** Remedies are individualized measures provided to a complainant designed to restore or preserve the complainant's equal access to the education program and activities of the school system when a respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment.

**Supportive Measures:** Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school system's education program and activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the school system's educational environment or deter sexual harassment.

**Title IX Coordinator:** The Title IX coordinator is a school official who is designated to coordinate the school system's response to sexual harassment and allegations of sexual harassment. Contact information for the Title IX coordinator is posted on the school system's website.





**Actual Knowledge:** “Actual knowledge” means a school employee has notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment.

**Education Programs and Activities:** This includes locations, events, and circumstances where a school exercises substantial control over the context of the alleged harassment and the person accused of committing sexual harassment. Schools must always respond to sexual harassment that happens in school-related circumstances such as on a field trip, academic conferences, or on a bus. A school’s duty to respond to sexual harassment does not relate directly to whether the misconduct happened on-campus or off-campus.

**Reporting of Sexual Harassment:** Actual knowledge is not limited to a school official (administrator, head of school, etc.). Any employee (e.g., aide, specials teacher, EC coordinator, counselor, social worker, psychologist, teacher, substitute, or contracted custodian) has notice of sexual harassment, IMS shall respond and investigate. A report to any school employee will begin the notification process. Any person, whether the alleged victim or a parent, friend, or bystander, has the right to report sexual harassment. The Title IX Coordinator can be given notice of sexual harassment by phone, email, mail at anytime day or night. Reports can be verbal or written.

**Student Reports:** Any student who believes he or she is a victim of sexual harassment occurring in the school system’s education programs or activities is encouraged to report the matter to the Title IX coordinator. Reports may also be made to a teacher, counselor, administrative staff, teacher assistant, or any other school employee. Reports may be made online through [Title IX Grievance Form\(LINK\)](#).

**Mandatory Reporting by School Employees and Board Members:** Any employee or member of the board of directors who has actual knowledge of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment occurring in the education program or any activity of the school system must report that information immediately to the Title IX coordinator.

Any of the following confers “actual knowledge” and must be reported immediately:

- a. a report of sexual harassment from a student or other person;
- b. the employee or board member witnesses conduct that is or reasonably could be sexual harassment;
- c. the employee or board member discovers evidence of sexual harassment, such as sexualized graffiti on school property, or otherwise has reliable information or reason to believe that a student or employee may have been sexually harassed in violation of this policy, even if no one has reported the sexual harassment.

Employees who observe an incident of harassment are expected to intervene to stop the conduct in situations in which they have supervisory control over the perpetrator, and it is safe to do so. An employee with actual knowledge of possible sexual harassment in violation of this policy who does not promptly report the conduct and/or take proper action as required by this subsection, or who knowingly provides false information about the incident, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Any doubt about whether particular conduct is possible sexual harassment must be resolved in favor of reporting the conduct.



**Written Grievance Procedures/Process**

School grievance procedures can not treat people differently based on sex when the school investigates or reaches determination regarding responsibility.

The following are required for a written complaint:

- 1) The report should include the date of the report, the date of the incident, persons involved, a description of the incident, and any supporting documentation.
- 2) Reports, other than mandatory reports by employees, may be made anonymously, but anonymous reports may limit the school system’s ability to respond fully if the alleged victim is not identified.
- 3) Reports by students and third parties can be made at any time. During non-business hours, reports can be made by using the contact information for the Title IX coordinator provided on the school website or by **filling out the form on the school website**. A report should be made as soon as possible after disclosure or discovery of the facts related to the report. Delays in reporting may impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to any subsequent formal complaint.

Once the report is received,

- 1) The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant and the complainant’s parent or guardian confidentially. This contact must occur within three days, excluding weekends, absent extenuating circumstances. If an employee is a complainant or respondent, the Title IX Coordinator shall notify the human resources director and/or President of the Board of Directors.
- 2) When contact is made, the Title IX coordinator is to review the following with the complainant and guardians(if necessary) to include:
  - a) options for supportive measures available with or without the filing of a formal complaint and consider the wishes of the complainant concerning supportive measures
  - b) explain the process for filing a formal complaint with the Title IX coordinator and the response required of the school when a complaint is filed, including all the following:
    - i. that a formal complaint will initiate the grievance process
    - ii. that a formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail;
    - iii. the major steps in the grievance process, including
      - (1) a notice of the allegations that will be provided to the respondent that includes identification of the complainant and the allegations made;
      - (2) an investigation of the allegations of sexual harassment in which both parties will have the opportunity to have an advisor, present witnesses, review evidence, pose written questions of the other party, and receive a copy of the investigative report;
      - (3) a decision on responsibility in which a decision-maker objectively evaluates all relevant evidence and determines whether the





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respondent engaged in the alleged sexual harassment in violation of this policy; and

(4) the opportunity for either party to appeal the decision;

iv. the approximate time frame for concluding the grievance process;

v. that school officials will treat both parties equitably by

(1) providing remedies to the complainant if the respondent is found responsible, and

(2) by not imposing disciplinary sanctions on the respondent without first following the grievance process

vi. the circumstances under which a formal complaint might be consolidated with other formal complaints or dismissed; and

vii. that the Title IX coordinator may have an obligation to initiate the grievance process in the absence of a formal complaint filed by the complainant and the time frame in which that decision will be made

### **Supportive Measures:**

#### Title IX Coordinator Arranges Implementation of Supportive Measures

After considering the complainant's wishes, the Title IX Coordinator shall arrange the effective implementation of appropriate supportive measures unless, in the exercise of good judgment, the Title IX coordinator determines that supportive measures should not be provided. If supportive measures are not provided to the complainant, the Title IX Coordinator shall document why supportive measures were not provided and why not providing supportive measures is not deliberately indifferent to known sexual harassment.

If the complainant is a student with a disability, the Title IX coordinator may need to consult with appropriate school personnel to determine whether adjustments to the student's IEP or Section 504 plan are needed to implement any supportive measures to be provided and/or whether the student's plan requires adjustment to the proposed supportive measures.

#### ***Examples/Requirements:***

- Free, individualized services are designed to restore or preserve equal access to education, protect safety, or deter sexual harassment.
- Must remain confidential for either the complainant and/or respondent to access and receive supportive measures as long as it does not impair the school's ability to provide a supportive measure.
- Support a student. They are not punitive or disciplinary concerning another student.
- Supportive Measures don't unreasonably burden any other person.
  - Examples of Supportive Measures
    - Counseling
    - Extension of deadlines
    - Modification of work or class schedule
    - Campus escort services
    - Increased security or monitoring of parts of campus
    - Mutual restrictions on contact between individuals in question



Title IX Coordinator is responsible for the supportive measure options provided and the effective implementation of the supportive measures.

### **Formal Complaints**

A formal complaint is an official document alleging sexual harassment. The school must investigate the allegations claimed in a formal complaint. It is filed by the student(or legal guardian) or in some cases by the Title IX Coordinator. A formal complaint can be filed to the Title IX Coordinator in person, email, phone, or mail and any other method the recipient allows.

In cases where an alleged victim does not file a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator might initiate grievance procedures where discipline is appropriate.

### ***Title IX Coordinator Determines Whether to Sign a Formal Complaint***

If the complainant declined to file a formal complaint, the Title IX coordinator shall determine on a case-by-case basis whether to sign, i.e., file, a formal complaint to initiate the grievance process.

The Title IX coordinator should file a formal complaint

- (1) if the respondent is a school employee and the complainant is a student
- (2) in other cases where, in the exercise of good judgment and consultation with the school attorney as appropriate, the coordinator determines that a grievance process is necessary to comply with the obligation not to be deliberately indifferent to known allegations of sexual harassment.

Factors that may be considered when deciding whether to file a formal complaint include but are not limited to:

- whether there is a pattern of conduct by a perpetrator;
- whether violence or weapons are involved;
- the seriousness of the alleged harassment;
- the age of the student harassed;
- whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment against the alleged harasser;
- whether any available supportive measures are adequate to restore or preserve the complainant's or respondent's equal access to the school system's education program and activities
- whether an investigation and potential disciplinary action against a respondent is required to preserve every individuals' equal access to the school system's education program and activities or to comply with the law.

The credibility or merit of the complaint will not be prejudged when determining whether to file a formal complaint. A decision by the Title IX coordinator to sign a formal complaint is not to be construed as supportive of the complainant or in opposition to the respondent or as an indication of whether the allegations are credible or have merit, or whether there is evidence sufficient to determine responsibility. Signing a formal complaint does not make the Title IX coordinator a complainant or party to the complaint nor relieve the Title IX coordinator from any responsibilities under this policy. The Title IX Coordinator shall document the decision of whether to sign a complaint and the reasons for that decision.

Emergency Removals



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- 1) A school can remove a respondent from the school's education programs or activities on an emergency basis if the respondent poses an immediate threat to anyone's physical health or safety.
- 2) If the respondent is a school employee, the administration has the option to place that employee on administrative leave during the investigation.

### **Written Notice to the Parties**

When the school begins an investigation, it has to provide the parties with written notice of certain information. It has to include: notice of the school's grievance process and whether there is an opportunity to engage in informal resolutions.

Details of Written Notice:

- 1) The actual allegations and facts would constitute sexual harassment. Key details of the alleged sexual harassment include who was involved, the date and location of the incident if known, and the alleged misconduct that constitutes sexual harassment.
- 2) The presumption of innocence. Written notice must include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible at the outset of the process and can only be held responsible after the grievance process concludes.
- 3) A statement that the parties are entitled to the adviser of their choice. The adviser can be an attorney but does not have to be.
- 4) A statement that the parties can request to inspect and review certain evidence.
- 5) Information regarding the code of conduct and false statements.

A satisfactory notice has to be provided to the parties before any initial interview with a respondent occurs and has to give the parties sufficient time for a respondent to prepare before an initial interview.

IMS will investigate every formal complaint and send the initial written notice as soon as a formal complaint is received.

### **Mandatory Dismissals**

IMS will dismiss a complaint:

1. that does not describe conduct that meets the definition of sexual harassment
2. that alleges sexual harassment that did not occur in the school's education program or activity
3. that alleges sexual harassment that did not occur in the United States at all

IMS can still address these complaints under their code of conduct, even if the misconduct is not sexual harassment under Title IX.

### **Discretionary Dismissals**

A complaint will be dismissed if:

- 1) if the complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant wishes to withdraw the formal complaint or some of its allegations
- 2) if the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school



- 3) if specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination about the allegations.

Whenever a formal complaint is dismissed, or any allegations in it, the school has to send written notice of the dismissal and the reasons to the parties. Both parties have the right to appeal the school's dismissal decision.

### **Evidence Process**

IMS must give both parties specific, equal rights and protections. These rights and protections apply whether the complainant filed the formal complaint, or whether the Title IX Coordinator began the investigation by signing the formal complaint. IMS must obtain written consent before gaining access to a party's records if they are maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or another professional for treatment of the party.

IMS must provide an equal opportunity for the parties to have witnesses and evidence, including expert witnesses, as well as inculpatory or exculpatory evidence. The school can't restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence. The school has to provide the same opportunities to the parties to have others present during the grievance proceedings, including access to an adviser of choice for any meetings or hearings.

IMS has to provide written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare for both the complainants and respondents. The school must also provide equal opportunities for the parties and their advisors to inspect and review the evidence obtained by the school as part of its investigation if the information is directly related to the allegations raised in the formal complaint. That could include documents, notes from interviews with students or employees, or other types of evidence that the school gathers. It also includes evidence that the school doesn't think it will use or plan to use before reaching a determination. The evidence can be sent in electronic format or hard copy. That evidence must later be available at any hearing if a hearing occurs. After gathering evidence, the school needs. The school also has to give the parties a meaningful opportunity to respond to the evidence after the school has provided it.

### **Investigative Reports**

The report must summarize the evidence that the school has gathered about the alleged incident. After gathering evidence, the school needs to prepare an investigative report on the allegations of the formal complaint. A school has to give the parties at least ten days to respond to the evidence in writing. If a response is submitted, the school must consider that response before finalizing the investigative report. The investigative report can then be finalized and provided to the parties. That report must be circulated to the parties at least another 10 days before any determination of responsibility, or 10 days before a hearing if a hearing needs to occur.

### **Hearings**



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IMS has the option to choose whether a hearing is necessary or needed. Even without a hearing, the school must give the parties equal opportunity to submit relevant, written questions to each other, before the decision-maker reaches a determination. If the decision-maker opts not to ask a question, it has to explain to the parties why the question isn't relevant to the issues in the hearing.

IMS has to create an audio or audiovisual recording, or a transcript, of any live hearing, and make it available to the parties for inspection and review. IMS must **always** comply with disability law, so that individuals with disabilities who participate in a school's grievance process are appropriately accommodated, including concerning the use of technology and the reliance on visual, auditory, or written modes of communication.

### **Decision-making**

Whether or not a hearing was held, the school's decision-maker needs to objectively evaluate the relevant evidence and reach conclusions about whether the respondent is responsible for the alleged sexual harassment.

A school's decision-maker needs to use independent judgment, so the decision-maker cannot be the same person who conducted the investigation or gathered the evidence during the investigation and cannot be the school's Title IX Coordinator.

Decision-makers must be free from conflicts of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents and must receive special training about how to be impartial and how to decide what evidence is relevant. The decision-maker will weigh the relevant evidence and decide whether it meets the school's standard of evidence for sexual harassment.

### **Determination Written Notice**

After the evidence has been weighed, the determination has to be written. It must include:

1. The portion of the school's policies that were violated.
2. A description of the procedural steps that were taken by the school to come to the decision. This includes describing all of the notices and interviews that took place, any site visits that occurred, and the hearing itself.
3. A finding of fact section where the decision-maker explains what facts were introduced at the hearing.
4. A section that concludes after applying the facts to the portion of the school's policy that applies. For each allegation that was made in the formal complaint, the written determination has to provide a statement and rationale for the conclusion as to each allegation in the formal complaint.
5. A statement and rationale for the ultimate determination of responsibility.
6. Describe any disciplinary sanctions that the school will impose on the respondent, and state whether the school will provide remedies to the complainant. Where the respondent is determined responsible for sexually harassing the complainant.
7. A statement and rationale for any remedies for the complainant, addressing how those remedies will restore and preserve equal access. These remedies might be some of the same individualized services that schools must offer as supportive measures, but because the respondent has now been found responsible for sexual harassment, remedies may burden the respondent. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effectively implementing remedies for the complainant.



8. A statement of the recipient's procedures, a statement that the parties have a right to appeal the initial determination regarding responsibility, and the permissible basis for appeal.

The school must send the written determination to the parties simultaneously, along with information about how to appeal the determination.

The decision is final either:

1. If the parties do not appeal;
2. After the appeal, if either party files an appeal.

A school has the discretion to set deadlines for when an appeal must be filed, bearing in mind the obligations to conclude the entire grievance process and bring resolution to the situation for both parties, within a reasonable time frame. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for carrying out the remedies contained within the written decision.

### **Appeals**

A school has to offer both parties an opportunity to appeal.

Appeals can be taken from two different steps in the process:

- After a dismissal before the grievance process, whether mandatory or discretionary.
- The ultimate finding of responsibility at the end of the grievance process

Either a complainant or the respondent can appeal because:

- 1) a procedural irregularity affected the outcome of the matter.
- 2) New evidence has been discovered that was not reasonably available at the time of the determination on responsibility or dismissal.
- 3) A conflict of interest on the part of the Title IX Coordinator, an investigator who compiled evidence, or a decision-maker, and the conflict of interest affected the outcome.
- 4) Schools can offer additional grounds for appeals, if they want to, so long as the grounds apply on an equal basis to both parties.

### **Process of Appeal**

1. The recipient has to notify both parties in writing and implement appeal procedures equally.
2. Both parties must have equal opportunity to submit a written statement supporting or challenging the outcome.
3. The person who decides the appeal cannot be the same person who reached the determination regarding responsibility or the same person as the investigator or Title IX Coordinator.
4. After considering the parties' written statements, the decision-maker on appeal has to issue a written decision and send it to the parties simultaneously.

The school's determination about whether the respondent is responsible for the sexual harassment allegations becomes final after the appeal.

### **Informal Resolution**

Schools can offer a voluntary, informal resolution of the formal complaint.

**\*\*EXCEPT** when the respondent is an employee of the school.



## IMS Handbook

Informal resolution may only be attempted if each party enters the process completely voluntarily. A school can never force, threaten, or require any party, complainant or respondent, into going into formal resolution.

Schools can not force students to agree to informal resolutions ahead of time, as a condition for going to school. Schools can not force employees to agree to informal resolution as a condition of employment. If informal resolution proceeds, the school must provide a facilitator who is free from conflicts of interest or bias, and who has received special training.

The school still needs to provide complainants and respondents with notice of the allegations, notice of their rights, information about whether an informal process is confidential, and about withdrawing from the process to return to the grievance process before an agreement has been reached.

### **Record Keeping**

This extends for 7 years and must include:

- 1) Records of the school's investigation including any determination of responsibility - this includes audio or transcripts of any hearings;
- 2) Record of any discipline against the respondent or remedies provided to the complainant;
- 3) Records of any appeal and the materials associated with the appeal - including written statements provided by both parties;
- 4) Records of any informal resolution process such as notices that go out to the parties;
- 5) All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution; These materials also have to be posted on the recipients' website, or made available for public inspection if the recipient doesn't have a website.
- 6) Records of the supportive measures that they took in response to a report or complaint of sexual harassment. This includes situations when a recipient offers supportive measures to a complainant only, and where the alleged victim of sexual harassment opts not to proceed with a formal complaint. Even in these cases, the school's record-keeping has to include the basis for its belief that it was not deliberately indifferent, and that it took measures designed to restore and preserve equal access to its education program or activity.

These recordkeeping requirements help hold schools accountable for meeting their Title IX obligations. If the department needs to investigate whether the school responded appropriately to a sexual harassment situation, the school will have documentation describing its response.

Requiring these types of records also reminds a school to carefully consider every response to sexual harassment, making it more likely that every complainant and every respondent will receive the rights and benefits provided in this law.

### **Retaliation**

No school or person is allowed to retaliate against anyone for exercising rights under Title IX.

IF any person believes they have been intimidated, threatened, or coerced, or discriminated against to stop the exercise of Title IX rights, the person should file a complaint with the school. Any person retaliated against can file a complaint with the school and the school must have procedures in place for the prompt and equitable resolution of such complaints.





### **Weapons, Violence and School Safety**

The Island Montessori Board of Directors believes that students and staff are entitled to learn and work in a school environment free of violence, threats, and disruptive behavior. Students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and by Board policies, reasonable unwritten behavior expectations, and applicable state and federal laws.

School staff is required to immediately report incidents of prohibited conduct by students to the Head of School or their designee for investigation and appropriate action.

#### **Prohibited Conduct:**

Students, staff, and all other persons are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct per General Provisions, Section B:

1. Possession and/or use of articles commonly used or designed to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person except when used in an approved instructional activity. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to firearms, BB guns, pellet guns, any other kind of gun, ammunition, explosives, crossbows, brass knuckles, switchblades, knives, chains, clubs, Kung Fu stars, and nunchucks;
2. Use of any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and /or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but not limited to bats, belts, picks, pencils, compasses, objects capable of ignition (e.g., matches, lighters), files, tools of any sort, and replicas of weapons (including toys);
3. Violent or threatening behavior including but not limited to fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property (e.g., verbal or written death threats, threats of bodily harm, bomb threats);
4. Verbal or written statements (including those made on or with the use of technological devices, (e.g., computers, text phones) which threaten, intimidate, or harass others, which tend to incite violence and/or disrupt the school program;
5. Willful and malicious damage to school or personal property;
6. Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property;
7. Lewd, indecent or obscene acts or expressions of any kind;
8. Violations of IMS drug/alcohol and tobacco policies;
9. Violations of state or federal laws; and
10. Any other conduct that may be harmful to persons or property.

#### **Disciplinary Action:**

The Head of School or their designee shall suspend and/or recommend expulsion of students who violate this policy based upon facts of each case and per applicable state and federal laws. The disciplinary action set forth below applies to all students who are at least 13 years of age. If a student under the age of 13 commits any of the misconduct 1-10 above, the disciplinary action was taken against the student, if any, is left to the discretion of the Head of School or their designee.

- A. #1 and #2 - Possession of a firearm and making of a false bomb report or bomb hoax results in Mandatory Suspension for 365 Days.
- B. #1 and #2 - Possession of any other weapon will be investigated by the Head of School and will result in a 5 day to 365-day suspension.





- C. #3 - Violent physical behavior of any kind will result in a 3 day to 365-day suspension depending on the severity as determined by the Head of School.
- D. #3, #4, #9, and #10- Violent/harmful/threatening behavior of any kind will result in a 1 day to 365-day suspension depending on the severity as determined by the Head of School.
- E. #5 and #6 – Consequences will be determined by the Head of School and based on the financial seriousness of the violation.
- F. #7 – Inappropriate behavior will result in a 1 to 10-day suspension as determined by the Head of School.
- G. #8 – please refer to the IMS drug/alcohol and tobacco policies.
- H. #9 and #10 will be left at the discretion of the Head of School

### **Drug Tobacco and Alcohol Use by Students**

The Board of Directors for IMS and the IMS Community recognizes chemical use as a major health problem for today's youth and views chemical dependency as a treatable disease.

Definition of chemical – Any substance which, when taken into the body in any form, is known to cause changes in mental, physical, or behavioral patterns. “Chemical” shall include but not be limited to prescription drugs, look-alike drugs, drug paraphernalia, non-prescription drugs, tobacco products, alcohol, hydrocarbons, and aerosols.

Please refer to Policy #460 (Medication) regarding students taking prescription and non-prescription drugs. **Students are not to have in their possession any kind of medication (including over-the-counter medication) while on the school grounds.**

Chemical Use and Abuse by Students:

Student health problems are primarily the responsibility of the parents and guardians. However, the school and community share in that responsibility because chemical health problems often affect learning and development.

The Board of Directors views the welfare and safety of the student body to be of paramount importance. It recognizes that using punitive measures as the sole means of addressing the problem of chemical use usually masks rather than eliminates it. As far as applicable statutes allow, all contacts with involved individuals will be treated in the strictest confidence and the medical records of students involved with chemical use will be subject to the same school policies as other medical and school records. ***Students do not get a clean slate every year when it comes to the Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol Policy. The offenses are collective throughout the student's whole time of attendance at IMS.***

Prohibited Conduct:

The exchange, possession, or use of illegal drugs, alcohol, or any other illegal substance including tobacco is prohibited while participating in or attending school events held at or away from school. This prohibition applies to fake substances or facsimiles thereof.

Disciplinary Action Procedures:

Type One Offense: Possession/Use

- A. First Offense



- a. Confiscate, verify and seek medical attention as necessary.
- b. The Head of School or their designee meets with the student.
- c. The Head of School or their designee notifies and meets with the parent/guardian.
- d. The student will be dismissed from school under the supervision of the parent/guardian.
- e. Disciplinary action will be 5 days out-of-school suspension.
- f. Notification of the police at the Head of School's discretion.
- g. The student meets with the guidance counselor who will make a referral to appropriate services as necessary.

B. Second Offense

- a. Confiscate, verify and seek medical attention as necessary.
- b. The Head of School or their designee meets with the student and notifies the parent/guardian.
- c. The Head of School or their designee notifies the police.
- d. The student will be dismissed from school under the supervision of the police or parent/guardian (this decision will be made by the police).
- e. 10-day out-of-school suspension and the student must be assessed by a community-based licensed substance abuse counselor at the expense of the parent/guardian.
- f. The student shall follow the recommendation(s) of the counselor.
- g. If the student is not assessed within 10 school days, a meeting with the parent/guardian and student and the Head of School or their designee shall occur before the return to school. Note: If parents do not seek assistance for the student, DSS will be notified.
- h. If the offense is for tobacco, the student will participate in 5 smoking cessation classes at the expense of the parent/guardian and not have to be assessed by a substance abuse counselor.

C. Third and Subsequent Offense

- a. Confiscate, verify and seek medical attention as necessary.
- b. The Head of School or their designee meets with the student and notifies the parent/guardian.
- c. The Head of School or their designee notifies the police.
- d. The student will be dismissed from school under the supervision of the police or parent/guardian (this decision will be made by the police).
- e. Suspended until the next Board of Directors Meeting where the Board of Directors will consider expulsion.

Type Two Offense: Furnishing/Selling

A. First Offense

- a. Confiscate substance.
- b. The Head of School or their designee meets with the student and notifies the parent/guardian.
- c. The Head of School or their designee notifies the police.
- d. The student will be dismissed from school under the supervision of the police or parent/guardian (this decision will be made by the police).



- e. 10 day out of school suspension and the student must be assessed by a community-based licensed substance abuse counselor at the expense of the parent/guardian.
- B. Second Offense
  - a. Confiscate substance.
  - b. The Head of School or their designee meets with the student and notifies the parent/guardian.
  - c. The Head of School or their designee notifies the police.
  - d. The student will be dismissed from school under the supervision of the police or parent/guardian (this decision will be made by the police).
  - e. Suspended until the next Board meeting where the Board and Head of School will consider expulsion.

Role of the School Staff:

1. Any staff member who has a reasonable basis to suspect any student of possession, use, or selling a prohibited substance has the responsibility to:
  - a. Take immediate action to secure the health and safety of the involved student(s);
  - b. Report the case immediately to the administration.
2. Voluntary Referral – Any staff member who is approached by a student who is seeking help shall maintain the confidentiality of the student and refer her/him to the school counselor. A staff member may respond to the student seeking help with a chemical issue without being compelled to use the information in a disciplinary manner.

**Corporal Punishment**

The IMS Board of Directors prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any form. For this policy, corporal punishment shall be defined as any kind of physical punishment inflicted upon the body of the student. Any employee shall be responsible for notifying the Head of School of any observed or suspected incidence of corporal punishment.

School personnel may use reasonable force to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in those situations when necessary, such as:

1. To quell a disturbance threatening injury to others.
2. To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects within the control of a student.
3. For self-defense.
4. For the protection of persons or property
5. To maintain order on school property, in the classroom, or at a school-related activity on or off school property.

LEGAL REF: NCGS 115C-390-392

**Dress Code**

Our school community prides itself in guiding children toward becoming respectable, principled citizens. As part of this responsibility, the school implements a dress code outlining appropriate dress and personal appearance. IMS recognizes that the type of clothing and style is, to some extent, a matter of personal choice. We want to support those choices in freedom of expression



where possible, so long as it is safe, not disruptive to the learning process, and does not advocate values that contradict the values of our school.

Due to the nature of Montessori classrooms, while children are working they are often utilizing workspaces that require them to sit on a chair, stool, or even sit or lay down on the floor.

Children should dress in a way that is conducive to the learning style present in our school.

Clothing that defames, degrades, or is offensive to gender, race, color, religious creed, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, a physical or mental impairment or culture will not be allowed under any circumstances.

Parents receive and sign the student handbook, which contains the dress code policy. It is our expectation, indicated by your signature, that parents will help their child(ren) respectfully follow this policy.

If a child arrives at school in violation of one or more of the dress code guidelines, the following actions will take place:

1. The child will be asked to change clothes. When possible, the classrooms will have a change of clothes for the child. A parent will be notified.
2. A parent or guardian will be called and asked to bring a change of clothes to school for the child. The child will remain out of the classroom until the parent or guardian arrives and the child has changed clothes. A parent will be notified.
3. If either the child does not have a change of clothes, a parent or guardian is unable to bring a change of clothes, or the child refuses to change, IMS may then institute further disciplinary action. These actions may include in-school and/or at-home suspensions, as well as expulsion. A parent will be notified.

Procedures and processes for implementing this policy when repeated offenses occur will be drafted by the administrative staff.

We received input from children, staff, and parents, and we have come up with the following guidelines to assist our children in determining the appropriate, comfortable attire for school days while in our care:

1-8 Dress Code:

- ❖ Shoes need to be appropriate for safely moving about indoor and outdoor spaces. Shoes should fit properly. A child, who wears shoes that pose a danger to his or her safety, or the safety of others, will not be permitted to participate in activities, such as physical education or recess. Flip flops are not acceptable for physical education and environmental education and some physical activities. Students must have appropriate shoes on those days.
- ❖ Clothing containing any offensive language or content on shirts and sweatshirts, such as drug, alcohol references, gangs, sex, or violence will not be allowed.
- ❖ Hats, of all types, and hoodies are appropriate for outdoor wear, but please make certain they are removed inside the buildings. Hoodies may be worn inside, so long as hoods are removed from the head.
- ❖ Shirts should touch the top of a child's pants, skirts, or shorts, and should cover the stomach and back when reaching upwards.
- ❖ Shorts, skirts, and dresses need to be long enough to allow the child to sit comfortably on the floor, move or bend without revealing undergarments or private body parts. Using a measurement around fist length is suggested.



- ❖ Ripped jeans are permitted, as long as undergarments and private body parts are not showing.
- ❖ Tank tops with 1-inch shoulders and small armholes are permitted, so long as undergarments are primarily covered.
- ❖ Children cannot wear excessively baggy clothing. If required to keep pants from sagging, belts should be worn, and undergarments and private body parts must not show.
- ❖ Children cannot wear dangerous clothing, jewelry, or accessories.
- ❖ The final arbitrator for all issues dealing with girls shall be determined by a female administrator or designee, when possible. All issues dealing with the boys shall be determined by a male administrator, or his designee, when possible.
- ❖ Religious and cultural accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis.

We ask each parent of kindergarten students to send in a complete change of clothes for your child (including underwear and socks) labeled in a gallon-size ziplock bag. Remember, as the seasons change, the spare clothing will need to be changed out to reflect current weather conditions.

### **Cell Phones**

All student cell phones shall be turned off and put away (out of sight) during school hours. Student cell phones are not to be used in the building during school hours for any reason. Cell phones will be confiscated by staff if a student is found using one during school hours.

**First offense** - Teacher returns phone at the end of the day and follows up with the parent.

**Second offense** - Cell phone is given to the Head of School until a parent comes to pick it up.

### **Electronic Equipment**

IMS is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged electronic equipment brought to school by a student. If a teacher deems that a student is using a piece of electronic equipment inappropriately or at an inappropriate time, the teacher has the right to confiscate the electronic equipment. Students who choose to use their laptops must comply with the IMS Computer Use Policy.

### **Playground Expectations**

Students should:

- Try to keep balls low (beneath the waist)
- Put equipment away unless another student asked to use it
- Use equipment for its intended purpose
- Put trash in trash cans and pick up trash when they see it
- HAVE FUN!

Students should not:

- Move or stand on picnic tables
- Lean, hang, or climb on any fence
- Go outside of the fence unattended
- Shake, move, or climb on the basketball goal
- Play with or near storage equipment



- Play on the patio area outside classroom doors

Faculty should:

- FIRST AND FOREMOST monitor and interact with STUDENTS by spreading out around the playground
- Discuss and enforce playground expectations with their class
- Take out trash cans during each recess
- Monitor playground to ensure equipment is used for its intended purpose
- Put away teacher-directed equipment in locked storage
- Survey the playground to make sure students have put away trash and general student equipment
- Keep storage containers LOCKED at all times

Parents should:

- Reinforce appropriate playground behavior with their child
- Acknowledge that because of liability, the IMS policy states that students are not permitted on the playground before or after school hours or at any time without the supervision of their teacher/teacher's designee

### **IMS Internet, Network, and E-Mail Expectations**

Internet access and electronic mail (e-mail) will be available to all students upon approval by the Head of School. We believe the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in school by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. To gain access to the Internet, all students must obtain parental permission and must sign and return the User Agreement and Parent Permission Form.

The IMS wide area network (WAN) connects hundreds of users to electronic information, communication tools, and the World Wide Web. This WAN utilizes a complex association of both hardware and software throughout the IMS. The integrity and stability of this network and the services it provides rely on the proper conduct of its users and strict adherence to acceptable use guidelines established in this policy.

Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries and databases while exchanging messages with Internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that some material accessible via the Internet could contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people.

Students are permitted to access personal email accounts only for appropriate school-related activities. Teachers are to monitor any such access to ensure compliance with this rule.

I. IMS utilizes a technology protection measure that monitors and filters Internet access. The filtering service utilizes a customizable database that denies access to sites that are identified as obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors. IMS will do its best to filter out inappropriate content but must warn that some material does get through the firewall.

II. Students will not be allowed access to e-mail, chat rooms, and other forms of electronic



communication except as it relates to special projects and only under direct supervision by authorized personnel. Activities must be related to the educational program and determined not to be harmful to minors.

While we intend to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages; ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

To that end, IMS supports and respects each family's right to decide whether to apply for access. The network is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network service is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required. Access is a privilege – not a right. Access entails responsibility. Individual users of the IMS computer networks are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. It is presumed that users will comply with IMS standards and will honor the agreements they have signed. Beyond the clarification of such standards, IMS is not responsible for restricting, monitoring, or controlling the communications of individuals utilizing the network.

### **Online Responsibilities**

**I. Acceptable Use** - The goal of providing network/Internet access for students and staff is to support education and research consistent with the educational objectives of the IMS System. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state regulations is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material in violation of IMS Board policies.

**II. Privileges** - The use of the network/Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the suspension of that privilege. All user accounts are the property of the IMS. School staff or system administrators may deny access at any time that it is deemed necessary. Serious and/or repetitive infractions will be reported to school administrators and handled according to the school's student discipline policy.

**III. Network Etiquette** - While each user has the right to free speech, all are expected to abide by the IMS acceptable Code of Conduct. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. During school, teachers will guide students toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they engage with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive media.

The following are specifically not permitted:

A. Accessing, producing, posting, sending, or displaying offensive material. This includes obscene, discriminating, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or sexually suggestive language or images, including images of exposed private body parts.

B. Harassing, insulting, or attacking others.





- C. Knowingly or carelessly performing an act that will interfere with the normal operation of computers, terminals, peripherals, or networks, including vandalism and the creation, upgrading, or dissemination of computer viruses.
- D. Violating copyright laws. All communications and information accessible via the network is private property unless otherwise stated.
- E. Using another's ID or password.
- F. Illegally using, destroying, or manipulating data in folders or work files.
- G. Intentionally wasting limited resources. This includes distributing mass e-mail messages, participating in chain letters, creating and participating in unauthorized newsgroups, sending large graphic files unrelated to school district operation, and storing files on file servers without proper authorization.
- H. Employing the network for commercial purposes.
- I. Using the system for political lobbying.
- J. Revealing or disseminating personal or family identification information (e.g., name, address, or phone number).
- K. Arranging or agreeing to meet with someone you met online.
- L. Attempting to gain unauthorized access to the IMS network.
- M. Engaging in any illegal activities or accessing material advocating illegal acts of violence. This includes pornography and hate literature.
- N. Posting information that could be disruptive, cause damage, or endanger students or staff.
- O. Posting false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- P. Downloading files without prior approval from supervising staff.
- Q. Accessing chat rooms unless assigned by a teacher/administrator for a valid educational purpose

**IV. Security** - Security on a computer system is critical, especially when the system involves many users. Proper procedures for logging on and off the network must be followed. If a security problem is identified, the user must notify a system administrator or staff member; the problem may not be demonstrated to other users. Unauthorized use of accounts is strictly prohibited. Attempts to log on to the network as a computer system administrator will result in immediate cancellation of user privileges. Users who have a history of problems with other computer systems or who have been identified as a security risk for any other reason will be denied access to the network. Unauthorized access, including hacking, is prohibited.

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or hallway. Communications on the network are often public. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, as well as regional and state networks. The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of all users who adhere to strict guidelines. The guidelines, which call for efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the network resources, are provided here so that users are aware of the responsibilities they are about to assume. In addition, guidelines from other service providers must also be followed. **Violations of any of these provisions may result in access being suspended and/or future access being denied.**





Individual users of the Internet are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. The following are not permitted:

- Accessing any sites with adult content and/or discussions
- Sending e-mail that is offensive and/or inappropriate (if you have any doubts, let your teacher read first)
- Using computers to cause problems for others. For example, writing that is hurtful to others; deleting, destroying, or changing the work of others; and/or anything that an adult has warned you about.

In the event a student engages in any of the above-referenced activities, their access privileges will be revoked and other disciplinary measures may result.

- The student could lose computer privileges permanently for the rest of the year or a period that the teacher or Head of School determines befitting.
- The student will be financially responsible for any damages that they do to equipment, physically, or electronically.

### **Student Discipline and Liability:**

Computers and networks must be protected from misuse and abuse by users, so they can serve their instructional purpose. Engaging in behavior that damages communications equipment and/or programs or interferes with the use of these resources by others will not be tolerated.

Unacceptable use includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Abusive or objectionable language
2. Malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user
3. Transmission of material in violation of any US or state regulation
4. Use for commercial purposes or political lobbying
5. Violation of copyright laws
6. Plagiarism

More serious violations include:

7. Deletion or alteration of any network files or configurations
8. Planting a virus on a network
9. Running software designed to access passwords
10. Perform any act, which leads to significant damage to network operations.

Students who are found to have committed any of the above violations or other prohibited computer-related actions will be subject to consequences possibly including suspension of computer privileges and suspension from school. The teacher and Head of School or designee will confer to determine the specific circumstances and consequences on a case-by-case basis.

If abuse of computers, peripherals, or networks causes damage, which is permanent or requires repair or replacement, the student will be liable for any charges and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on IMS servers would be private.



### **Warranty**

IMS makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it provides. IMS will not be responsible for any damage suffered. These include, but are not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, miss-deliveries, service interruptions, or personal errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's risk. IMS specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through Internet access.

### **Sanctions**

Violations of any of the above provisions may result in access being suspended and/or future access being denied. Disciplinary action related to inappropriate use of electronic resources will be determined by existing board policies as stated in the IMS Policy Manual. When deemed necessary, the infractions may be referred to law enforcement agencies for appropriate legal action.

### **Educational Information and Services**

#### **Placement Policy**

The current and prospective teachers decide on class placement for all students. All information available will be considered in making classroom placements for each child. Parents who wish to have input regarding their child's placement should discuss concerns with their child's teacher. Requests for a certain teacher must be in writing to the Head of School. Those requests will be considered when specific educational needs are of concern. Tentative class placements will be made by the end of July. Students who were homeschooled or do not have standardized test scores from their previous schools are required to meet with the appropriate teachers and/or complete testing before being placed in a class. The final determination is made by the Head of School per G.S. 115C-288.

#### **Curriculum**

As a public charter school, IMS uses the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) as a guideline for our curriculum. The NCSCOS objectives are a foundation for instruction. Through the Montessori curriculum, classes and individuals may go beyond these expectations. Please refer to our school website for information regarding the curriculum and levels in Montessori. For information on specific grade level objectives visit <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/> to access NCSCOS standards, curriculum, and instruction.

#### **Field Trips/ "Going-outs"**

Children learn best through experience. Field study is an excellent way to provide these experiences. Each teacher will arrange for appropriate field studies that support and expand learning at each grade level.

Students should attend all field study events/field trips if at all possible, as field studies serve as valuable foundations for the Montessori curriculum. If a student does not go on a field trip, he/she will complete work related to the field study in another classroom at school.



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Every precaution will be taken to ensure student safety. Parents will receive prior, written notification of each field study including any known risks involved. Parents should understand that unknown risks may also exist. IMS will provide transportation for field studies with the use of charter school busses. In some special cases, parent drivers may be needed.

### PERMISSION SLIPS:

All students must have a signed permission form and the appropriate funds to participate in a field trip by the deadline set by the teacher(s).

Parents must sign permission forms AND send in an appropriate car seat or booster seat if their child is younger than 8 years old, or weighs less than 80 pounds.

### *TRANSPORTATION:*

IMS will provide transportation for field studies with the use of charter school busses. In some special cases, parent drivers may be needed.

If the field trip is over 100 miles away, there must be a parent meeting to decide by consensus whether a bus will be chartered (at the cost of the parents) or parent drivers will be used. Any time parent drivers are used the following must be adhered to.

### *PARENT DRIVERS/CHAPERONES MUST:*

- Have a complete understanding that, (a) since the field trip is an extension of the classroom and (b) for safety, the teacher(s) has ultimate control of all decisions about the field trip.
- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Make certain that there is one working seat belt for each rider in the car.
- Make certain that each child in the car who is younger than 8 years old or who weighs less than 80 pounds is in an appropriate booster or car seat.
- Transport students ONLY to and from the field trip site. They may only deviate from the sites designated on the field trip form in the event of an emergency with the teacher's permission. It is the driver's responsibility to notify the teacher if an unexpected event transpires.
- Try their best to stay with the group (convoy).
- Stop at only designated stops preplanned by the teacher. The stops may be planned so that there are several food/rest opportunities at the same exit. A time and meeting point should be set to continue the convoy.
- Provide information on the Field Trip Driver Information form that includes the car insurance companies and policy numbers and license tags for the cars that may be used on the trip. Provide a copy of a current driver's license and have proof of current liability insurance. If the driver's Field Trip Driver Information form is not on file with the teacher, then that driver will not be assigned as a field trip chaperone.
- Make certain that their vehicles are registered, insured, and in good working order.
- Do not smoke, use drugs or alcohol, or use profanity any time during the field trip.
- Adhere to all speed limits and driving laws.
- Do not use cell phones while driving unless it is to communicate with the teacher about the trip.



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- May not bring school-aged siblings on a field trip. Parents may bring preschool children, but may not be the solo chaperone for a group of students because they cannot give full attention to their preschooler and the students; these parents may drive, but another parent or teacher needs to be present in the car to chaperone the students.

*\*For the safety of all students, student and chaperone participation is at the teacher's discretion.\**

If the teacher believes that these mandates were not followed, the teacher must document thusly, using an incident report and providing the report to the parent/chaperone and the Head of School. The teacher and/or Head of School may deem a parent ineligible to serve as a chaperone or driver for future trips based on information provided in an incident report.

The Cape Fear Montessori Village, Inc. (IMS) is not liable for any damage done to your car during a field trip. IMS reserves the right to review a driver's driving record if it is deemed prudent and is in the interest of student safety.

All field trips must start and finish at the IMS school building. Students who do not start the trip from the IMS school building but show up at the field trip site will be considered absent/unexcused and will NOT be allowed to participate with the class at the field trip site.

IMS does not permit parents from signing their students out from a field trip. Signing students out at this time jeopardizes available car seats for the class's return trip to the IMS school building. All sign-outs (except for emergencies) must be prearranged in writing with the teacher before the permission slip deadline.

### *EXPECTATIONS:*

Appropriate behavior is required on field trips by all students and chaperones. Inappropriate behavior by students will be addressed by having parents pick up their child from the field study experience. Students who are sent home from a field trip for inappropriate behavior may also lose the privilege of attending the next field trip opportunity, and/or maybe suspended for the following school day.

### *COSTS:*

Any money collected for field trips is to be turned in to the Business Manager daily per Handling Cash Policy.

### **Multi-Tiered System of Support-MTSS (Student Support)**

NC MTSS is a multi-tiered framework, which promotes school improvement through engaging, research-based academic and behavioral practices. NC MTSS employs a systems approach using data-driven problem solving to maximize growth for all.

Following the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004, states were given the option to determine eligibility categories (limited to Specific Learning Disabilities in the state of NC) through a process that would determine a student's response to appropriately selected scientific research-based interventions as a part of the comprehensive evaluation process. In addition, research supports that when all children receive the interventions



they need to learn at their optimal level early in their education, later referral rate for special education services is significantly reduced.

**Tier I** – Observation and data collection/monitoring of all students in each classroom. Basic daily interventions as needed that would be used by any student at any particular time.

**Tier II** – Documented meeting(s) between regular education teacher(s), other building specialists (i.e.: EC Coordinator, SST team member, as needed), and the parents

- a. Analysis of Tier I scientific research-based intervention(s), and data points
- b. Documented modifications or discontinuation of the intervention(s) or the implementation of another scientific research-based intervention
- c. Progress monitoring data collected and reviewed
- d. Documented parent and teacher assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention(s) and
- e. Summary of the conference(s) with the parent(s) and other school staff.

**Tier III** - Documented meeting between regular education teacher(s), EC Coordinator/MTSS Coordinator, and other building specialists (i.e.: SST team member, Curriculum Coordinator, School Psychologist, as needed) and the parents.

- a. Analysis of Tier II scientific research-based intervention(s)
- b. Documented modifications or discontinuation of the intervention(s) or the implementation of another scientific research-based intervention
- c. Progress monitoring data collected and reviewed
- d. Documented parent, staff, and problem-solving team assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention(s)
- e. Summary of the conference(s) with the parent(s), school staff, and the problem-solving team
- f. Informal Observation by an independent observer (this may be the psychologist, Instructional coordinator, or EC Coordinator) for intervention and to inform instruction
- g. Meeting Determination –  
Option 1 – Modify Tier III intervention (frequency, intensity, duration, or content) and implement the modifications; or  
Option 2 – Complete referral for special education. If Option 2 is chosen, receipt of the completed referral for special education by school personnel begins the 90-day timeline and requires that informed parental consent for evaluation be obtained

## **504 PROCEDURES**

Some students' needs are not best met through a 504 designation instead of an IEP. Students who are identified as needing a 504 usually have health-related issues which impact their academic progress, but which do not warrant an IEP. Some examples of these health-related issues are (but are not limited to): ADHD; Diabetes, severe allergies, physical handicaps or disabilities such as CP, sickle-cell anemia, hearing or vision impairment, asthma, and other chronic illnesses.

A teacher who has a student with one or more of the above-mentioned conditions may feel it would be advantageous for the student to utilize a 504 plan to receive special modifications and



adaptations in the classroom or testing situations. In these cases, the teacher should refer the student to the 504 Coordinator to set up a meeting with the parents and the student's teacher(s). When a student qualifies as needing a 504, there are also legal obligations placed upon the school and teacher. Section 504 is a Civil Rights statute and comes under the auspices of the Office of Civil Rights. The federal government does NOT provide additional funding to assist schools in serving students who are identified as 504.

At IMS, the Curriculum Coordinator is appointed the 504 Coordinator. At the beginning of each school year, the 504 Coordinator, in coordination with the EC Coordinator, reviews all of the students' files that are identified as 504. The 504 Coordinator then provides copies of the 504 accommodation plans to all regular education teachers designated to teach these students for the current academic year. At the point of the annual review, the 504 Coordinator needs to contact the parents and set a meeting to review the modifications and adaptations which are in place for that student and to then determine if the strategies/modifications are working well or whether there should be changes made to the 504 for the following year. The General Education Teacher is to be included in these meetings while the 504 Coordinator is responsible for the maintenance of the 504 files.

Parents or teachers may also request a meeting to review/revise a 504 document more frequently than the yearly re-evaluation, but a meeting MUST be held once a year for the school to remain in compliance with the Section 504 statutes.

### **Exceptional Children's Program**

The Exceptional Children's Program at IMS is served by certified Exceptional Children's staff. The EC Coordinator acts as the liaison between the Department of Public Instruction and the school community (teachers, students, and parents) to maintain compliance with all NC EC Policies and Procedures. Additional responsibilities include the supervision of all student EC services, contract personnel, academic and behavioral supports, maintenance of student records and files, and staff development/training. EC teachers are scheduled by the EC Coordinator to meet the needs of students K-8. All work to provide the needed instruction and support is outlined in each student's IEP. Support services are contracted regularly. They include a School Psychologist, Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, and a Physical Therapist (as per the child's IEP). A collaborative team approach is utilized to service and meet each student's individual needs. The EC department provides direct services to each exceptional child and also works closely with the regular education teachers to support the success of the students through effective instructional practices, assessment, and accommodations to ensure each student's access to the NCSCOS. The EC program is driven by the students' IEPs as well as the team recommendations as to what is best for each particular child. As a school model, IMS includes the children into the regular classroom setting to the greatest extent possible. The practice of maintaining students in the least restrictive environment appropriate for each child's needs is decided as a team at each child's annual review of their IEP. Information to address student progress toward mastery or non-mastery of goals, as outlined in the student's IEP, is provided at the same time general education classroom progress reports are sent home.



### **Retention Procedure**

(Attendance concerns will follow attendance policy and that team will speak with parents about possible retention and document those conversations as well.)

Step 1-

- When an academic concern is identified, teachers will review all academic data and communicate their concerns with parents and the SST team.

Step 2-

- Before Winter break, the Head of School will be notified about potential retention.
- A MANDATORY parent meeting concerning possible retention will be scheduled before the **LAST FRIDAY in January**. The meeting agenda will include a review of academic interventions and student growth. This is a formal retention consideration meeting.

Step 3-

- A MANDATORY parent meeting concerning probable retention will be scheduled before the **LAST FRIDAY in March**. The meeting agenda will include the MTSS plan and continued support.

Step 4-

- A MANDATORY final parent meeting to determine retention will be scheduled **after EOGs**.

The final retention decision is made by the Head of School. (North Carolina General Statute 115C-288)

### **Extracurricular Activities**

All extracurricular activities are subject to the Head of School's approval.

Any parent interested in starting an extracurricular group should find a faculty member willing to sponsor him/her. The faculty member can help the parent set up the program and make certain that it meets the guidelines. A faculty member or other school employee must be present at any event, practice, or session conducted as part of any extracurricular activity.

### **Student and Parent Information**

#### **Visitors**

All visitors are welcome at IMS. Please enter the building through the main front door and proceed to the front office. All visitors must sign in, state their reason for visit, and receive a visitor's badge at the front office that must be worn while in the building. An ID may be requested before a visitor is allowed into the school building. Please remember that parents should not visit classrooms during dismissal times. (See dismissal section for further details.) Parents should also remember that class time is NOT a time to hold a parent conference. If parents want to volunteer in the classroom, they're welcome. If a conference is needed, parents should call or email the teacher to set up an appropriate time, free of distraction, where both parent and teacher can focus on the child.





### **Observation**

Parents are welcome to observe their children at any time. Please contact the Head of School to make arrangements for observation. We request that formal observations be scheduled after the first six weeks of class. At that time, you are welcome to observe in your child's or another classroom. Please check with the classroom teacher to schedule the best time.

### **Parent Participation**

Island Montessori School believes that the education of a child depends upon the positive collaboration between the school staff and the child's parents.

All parents are encouraged to:

- Attend school-sponsored workshops
- Read the classroom's weekly newsletter and the school handbook
- Educate yourself on the Montessori Method of education
- Check the school website, academic blog, and Facebook page for information and updates
- Become involved in the school life of your child
- Stay in communication with your child's teacher
- **Each family is encouraged to volunteer at least 20 hours a year to help in the classroom and at the school**

### **\*Suggested Montessori Books to Read:**

*Maria Montessori, Her Life and Work* / E.M. Standing

*Montessori, A Modern Approach* / Paula Lillard

*Montessori Today* / Paula Lillard

*The Secret of Childhood* / Maria Montessori

*Montessori from the Start* / Paula Lillard

*How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way* / Tim Seldin

*The Discovery of the Child* / Maria Montessori

*To Educate the Human Potential* / Maria Montessori

*Spontaneous Activity in Education* / Maria Montessori

### **Student and Parent Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of each student at IMS to respect others, our school building, and our learning materials. Students are also expected to be active learners, asking questions and fully participating in classroom activities. In addition, it is the parents' responsibility to support the mission of IMS, to nurture their child's learning, and to participate in their child's class in whatever way they can. This support includes bringing children to school on time and ready to learn, talking about the day's activities with their child, and extending what students are learning beyond the classroom. Parents are also expected to be respectful of our learning community on campus and on field trips.



We strongly encourage parents to thoroughly read and understand the IMS handbook. In addition, since each teacher will have rules and procedures for their classroom, parents are expected to become familiar with these as well.

### **Parent-Teacher Communication and Conferences**

Regular open communication between home and school is critical for student success. Conferences can be requested at any time by parents, teachers, or students. Conferences with teachers should be scheduled for a time other than class time, preferably after the end of the school day. Unscheduled conferencing with teachers before or after school takes away from student learning and cannot be accommodated.

Teachers must approve all class/grade level information sent out; whole-school communications must be reviewed by the Head of School or other appropriate administrative staff before distribution.

**A detailed communication plan/process can be found on our school website under the parent resources section on the parent page.**

***\*Please note that staff has a period of 24 business hours to reply to a call or email. If you email over a weekend or holiday, it may take longer to receive a reply.***

### **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA is a federal law that governs the maintenance of school records. Under the law, parents or guardians of students or students who are 18 years of age or older have the right to inspect all records kept by the school about the student and the right to correct inaccuracies in those records. Under FERPA, access to the records by persons other than the parents or guardians is limited and generally requires written consent by the parents, guardians, and/or students aged 18 or older. Requests to review student records and requests to correct inaccurate records may be made to the Head of School.

### **Personal Information**

IMS must have up-to-date personal information for all students including a correct address, phone number, and emergency contact numbers. Parents should remember to update this information if changes occur throughout the year. All personal information about students and families will remain confidential unless parents request it be disclosed.

### **Requesting/Forwarding Records**

When a student transfers into IMS, a request for records is sent to the student's previous school. When a student leaves IMS, the student's new school will request records from IMS. Records are not forwarded until students officially withdraw from our school. Parents should contact the school office with questions or concerns regarding the transfer of records.



### **Court and Custody Orders**

For student safety, relevant custody papers and/or court orders must be on file in the school office. Documentation should be presented to the Head of School who will notify appropriate personnel. Records will be kept in the student's cumulative file.

### **Committees**

Most IMS committees are composed of board members, IMS employees, and parents; however, some committee membership is limited to board and faculty members due to confidential matters. If you are interested in being involved on a committee, please speak with an IMS administrator or teacher for a list of available committees and their responsibilities.

### **Patriotic Exercises**

Each school day will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance will be followed by a moment of silence not to exceed one minute in duration. Such a period of silence shall be totally and completely unstructured and free of guidance of any kind from any source. No staff or students will be required to participate in either exercise. During the moment of silence and for those not participating in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, silence shall be maintained and no one may engage in any other activity.

Legal Reference: NC Statute 115 C-29.

### **Fundraising Policy for IMS**

There are two types of fund-raisers that may take place at IMS:

1. School-wide fundraisers are held **to benefit an agency outside of IMS**, such as the UNITE Project, UNICEF, the Heifer Project, the American Cancer Society, etc. All members of the IMS community are invited to contribute, and all of the proceeds go to the recipient agency. Only one of these fundraisers is allowed per semester. Anyone desiring to hold a school-wide fundraiser should take a written request to the Head of School to get it approved. The Head of School will inform the Board of the event and beneficiary/-ies chosen. The Head of School will put the event on the community calendar; inform the front office; inform the communications committee to place it in the school newsletter and post it on the IMS website.
  
2. School-wide, classroom, or grade-level fundraisers may be held **to benefit IMS students or programs**, such as the art, music, language, technology, or P.E. programs. To hold a fundraiser for IMS students/programs, one must:
  - 1) Get approval from the Head of School, who will check the IMS community calendar to make sure that there are no facilities conflicts or conflicts with other fundraisers scheduled.
  - 2) The Head of School will then notify teachers of the fundraiser via e-mail, and teachers will be asked to place a notice of the approved fundraiser in their classroom newsletters.



3) All contributions must be donated for items previously approved of or otherwise approved by the Head of School or the Board of Directors.

### **Raffles**

Items may be donated to the school for raffle purposes. The Head of School will ensure that the items offered are appropriate. The school may advertise raffle items, or if appropriate, a local radio station may be used to assist us in advertising. This service must be at no charge to the school. Proceeds from a raffle must be designated for a particular use before a raffle. All raffles will be held in compliance with state laws.

### **Donations, Gifts, and Contributions**

As a part of the operations of IMS, representatives of the school such as Board Members, Administration Team members, or other designated faculty and staff may accept gifts, donations, and contributions to the school. Island Montessori Charter School is a 501c3 non-profit. The following policy is designed to avoid potential conflicts of interest or perceptions of favoritism or bias for the school and its representatives when engaged in such activities.

1. No donation, gift, or other contribution should be given or accepted as a quid pro quo. No favorable treatment or bias should be expected or given to any individual, group, business, vendor, or other entity in return for any donation, gift, or contribution.
2. Donations, gifts, or contributions are not to be accepted from any vendor that is participating in a bidding process for a pending contract for services or merchandise with IMS.
3. Donations, gifts, or contributions are not to be accepted from any vendor that has been awarded a contract for services or merchandise by IMS within 60 days after the awarding of the contract or purchase.
4. Donations, gifts, or contributions from any vendor that has a current contract for services or merchandise with IMS beyond 60 days of the awarding of the contract or purchase are limited in amounts that are not substantial or material.
5. The Head of School shall not directly participate in any solicitation or collection of donations, gifts, or contributions from faculty and staff. The Head of School shall not know which staff members made such donations, gifts, or contributions or in what amounts.



### **Corporate Sponsors**

Donations may be accepted by IMS from corporate sponsors. Thank you letters and charitable contribution forms will be provided upon request for the donation and the sponsor may be recognized in the school newsletter. The Head of School must approve any other form of recognition such as a logo on a t-shirt, etc.

*Sales* – Students at IMS will not participate in door-to-door sales. Students may participate in “booth” type selling with certain restrictions. There can be no solicitation—patrons must approach the “booth” to purchase the item. Adequate adult chaperones must be present with the children at all times.

*Equipment* – IMS accepts donations of usable equipment in good working condition. If you have the equipment to donate, the Head of School or the Business Manager will determine if the school can use the equipment before you donate it by leaving it at the school.

All donations made to IMS must be recorded with the school Business Manager.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

As a community, the children gather together to honor the birthday child by telling the story of where and when he/she was born, and of important events of their childhood. As either the parent or the teacher tells the story of the child’s life, he walks slowly around a lit candle – which represents the sun – while holding a globe – which represents the earth – to celebrate the number of years of his life. Parent participation in all aspects of the birthday celebration is greatly appreciated. Please check with your child’s teacher about particulars.

We ask that you do not send food/snacks of any kind on your child’s birthday. If your child would like to do something for the class, we encourage you to donate a book (with their name and date of birth written on the inside cover) or a special gift for the class such as flowers, pencils, crayons, or sidewalk chalk.

Invitations to birthday parties outside of the school environment can be distributed at school as long as the whole class is invited. If you want to invite select friends to your child’s party, please mail them personally or reach out by phone.

### **Holiday Celebrations**

Island Montessori supports and encourages the enjoyment of holiday celebrations. Classroom and holiday celebrations may include games, crafts, or other activities.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost and found is a service provided to all members of the IMS community. Lost items are housed in the common area. Items such as keys and glasses are given to the office. Check the lost and found often. Clothing not claimed will be donated to charitable organizations. Notification of upcoming donations will be sent home.



### **Building Usage**

Classrooms may be used for meetings after school hours. Groups other than faculty or Board committees wishing to host a meeting must consult with the classroom teacher and Head of School. During meetings, children **MUST** be supervised at all times. Children **MAY NOT** use the playground or remain in classrooms without adult supervision

### **Integrated Pest Management Program**

Island Montessori School supports clean and safe facilities for its students, staff, and the public. To that end, IMS will use an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPMP) to prevent and control pest problems in the school buildings and grounds and minimize pesticide use. The IPMP means a comprehensive approach to pest management that combines biological, physical, chemical, and cultural tactics as well as effective, economic, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable methods to prevent and solve pest problems. The IPMP will emphasize pest prevention and provide a decision-making process for determining if, when, and where pest suppression is needed and what control tactics and methods are appropriate. The IPMP will utilize strategies including, but not limited to, training of staff, monitoring and inspecting facilities, communication and notification to staff and parents, and the use of pesticides as a last resort. When a decision is made to use pesticides, the staff will utilize the least toxic pesticide formulation and most targeted application method possible.

(Legal Reference: NC Statute 115 C-47)

### **Asbestos Notification**

No ACMs have been identified at The Island Montessori Charter School. Please refer to the letter on our website: [www.islandmontessorischool.com](http://www.islandmontessorischool.com)

### **Soliciting and Advertising**

No person, agent, representative, or salesman shall solicit or attempt to sell or explain any article of property or proposition to any teacher or student of Island Montessori Charter School on the school grounds or during the school day without having first secured the written permission and consent of the Head of School or their designee. No advertising, announcements, or e-mails, that do not concern educational matters or things of general community interest, shall be read to the students or distributed in the school rooms or on the school premises.

### **Distribution of Non-School Material to Students**

Students and the educational program must be the focus of schools. Therefore, the policy of Island Montessori School is to create a non-public forum for distributing materials from outside organizations to be taken home by students. Staff shall be required to distribute only three types of materials to students to be taken home.

1. Materials from Island Montessori School.
2. Materials from agencies/departments with the towns, county, state or federal government, and the state university system.



3. Nonprofit organizations providing programs for youth that are primarily designed to promote fitness, cultural arts, or academics consistent with the NCSCOS. Materials that primarily promote fundraising activities by these nonprofit groups will not be approved. Materials distributed through students shall not contain commercial advertising unless sponsored by groups identified in numbers 1-3 above. No other organizations may require school staff to distribute materials to be taken home by students.

The distribution of non-school materials should not interfere with instructional time. The Head of School or designee shall approve materials from all other school-related groups, as well as agencies, government branches, and nonprofit organizations before distribution.

Staff members may share information with individual students to inform them about community resources to supplement the education provided by IMS. Other than as authorized above, no materials shall be distributed or made available to students on Island Montessori School grounds or using any mode of communication operated by the Island Montessori School, except materials as may be allowed under “Distribution of Materials By Students”. This policy shall not be construed as creating a limited public forum or a public forum. Any person or organization may appeal a decision of the Head of School to disallow or restrict the distribution of materials. The appeal must be in writing to the Head of School. The Head of School or their designee shall render a written decision within seven (7) business days of receiving the written appeal.

### **Distribution of Materials by Students**

Students have a right, under the Constitution of the United States, to express their thoughts and opinions at reasonable times and places. However, certain kinds of speech, whether spoken, written, or symbolic, may be prohibited or regulated at school. It is the policy of Island Montessori School that students be allowed to distribute written materials at school or sponsored events with the Head of School’s or their designee’s permission, except as prohibited or regulated in this policy.

1. Students may not distribute any materials that are illegal, obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, indecent, libelous, or likely to incite violence or serious disruptions of the learning environment.
2. Students may not distribute commercial advertisements or solicitations from non-school-sponsored groups.
3. Students may not distribute any materials during instructional time or in a manner that interferes with instructional time or causes a disruption of the learning environment.
4. Students may not request or receive assistance from teachers or other school personnel in distributing materials under this policy.
5. Students may not be used as conduits by parents or others to distribute materials.

Students will be considered conduits for the distribution of materials when the primary motivation for the distribution rests with someone other than the student.

### **Grievance Process**

As in most organizations, conflicts between parties arise. Some develop over differing interpretations of policies and procedures while others simply because of clashes of personality





or communication style. It is the policy of the IMS's Board of Directors that the large majority of these conflicts be resolved between the parties themselves in a civil manner.

If conflicts cannot be resolved despite the efforts of the parties these conflicts can be brought to the Head of School for resolution. When doing so, the parties agree to abide by the following procedure and understand that the opinions of the Head of School are to be considered the "last court of appeal." The only time the opinions of the Head of School are not the "last court of appeal" is when the original grievance is with the Head of School. At this time the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will become the "last court of appeal."

1. The parties involved in the dispute shall make an earnest effort to communicate with each other to resolve the dispute. If the dispute remains unresolved:
2. The disputing parties may officially request a meeting with the Head of School by communicating their position and complaint in writing to the Head of School (preferably by e-mail). The request should include a summary of the dispute, parties involved, and a brief review of the actions taken to resolve the dispute, including dates, participants, outcome, etc.
3. The Head of School shall decide, after reviewing the above-mentioned complaint:
  - a. to request additional information or clarification or;
  - b. forward the complaint to the other parties with a request for their written response and statement of position or;
  - c. dismiss the matter and decline further action.
4. After reviewing all the relevant position statements, the Head of School shall:
  - a. issue a final ruling to all parties or;
  - b. arrange a meeting of all parties for further discussion before issuing a final ruling (the Head of School may invite others with relevant experience or expertise to the meeting as needed) or;
  - c. take other actions as appropriate.

The final decision will be communicated in writing to the parties.

### **Food and Nutrition Recommendations:**

#### **Philosophy**

We believe overall well-being is a combination of a healthy body (through fitness and nutrition), a healthy mind (through fitness, nutrition, and healthy habits), and a healthy relationship with the surrounding community and the global environment. We believe four basic principles lead to a healthy and happy lifestyle.

- o Cultivating a positive relationship with food.
  - Establishing strong, healthy, and confident human beings, who love eating quality food, and working towards a balanced diet.
- o Embracing variety.
  - Choosing foods from a variety of food groups, including different colors and textures to ensure key nutrients and essential nutritional support.
- o Choosing whole foods as the core of your diet.
  - Eating fresh fruits and vegetables and a variety of healthy fats and whole grains. Learning how to identify the foods being consumed and how to trace them back to their source.



- o Mindful eating.
  - Becoming aware of hunger cues and taking time to establish proper serving sizes and learning the importance of understanding food labels.

### **Lunches/Snacks**

As meals are not provided on-site, parents are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch and snack from home.

#### **Snacks**

- **Preschool and Kindergarten** snacks are provided by IMS this year. Please provide your teachers with any dietary requirements on the first day of school.
- **Charter School** snacks are the responsibility of the children and parents to pack each day. Packed snacks should be nutritious and consist of fruit, vegetables, and other whole food items.

#### **Lunch**

Parents will provide their children with a packed lunch each day, including a healthy and balanced lunch of protein, whole grains, fruit, and vegetables. We suggest that lunches are free of high fructose corn syrup, sodium benzoate, dyes, and preservatives. We believe healthy food choices give children the energy and focus to continue learning throughout the day. Water is provided at lunchtime.

- o **Lunch boxes** should fit in a backpack or bag for the child to be independent when arriving and departing from school. **Please label your child’s lunchbox with their name and date each day.**

***IMPORTANT! We ask that you place a note on the front of the lunchbox (use masking tape) if your child’s lunch contains any type of nut product (peanut butter, nuts, or a mix).***

### **Food in Curriculum Related Lessons**

Food, other than daily snacks, is acceptable for curriculum-related events like practical life skills, nutrition classes, cooking classes, etc. Teachers will consult with the Head of School before any food is brought into the classroom. Teachers will notify parents in advance of any food preparation lesson that is to be completed during the school day. This notice will include the lesson, ingredients, and how the students will be using/handling the food.

### **Safety**

#### **Allergies**

Many children have food allergies. Please be mindful of this when packing lunches. If your child has a food allergy, we ask that you notify the office and teachers of the allergy and severity.

Nut allergies can cause serious and life-threatening conditions. IMS may have students at our school with severe nut allergies. Although we are **NOT** a nut-free school, we take this situation very seriously and will accommodate however possible to provide a safe environment (i.e., a “nut-free table” during snack and lunchtime in our classrooms).

### **Medication**

A physician’s authorization for medication is necessary if school personnel are to distribute



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medication at school or on field trips, including over-the-counter medication. This is applicable for short-term and long-term periods. All medication must be in an original labeled bottle. All medication will be kept in a secure location at the front office. Parents may come to school to administer medication.

**STUDENTS ARE NOT TO HAVE IN THEIR POSSESSION ANY KIND OF MEDICATION WHILE ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.**

**This includes but not limited to:**

- Over-the-counter medications**
- Cough drops**
- Sunscreen**
- Creams/antiseptics**

### Concussion Policy

IMS policy is available at the front office as needed.

### Health Policy

*If your child shows one or more of the following symptoms of poor health, they should stay home or will be sent home as soon as possible:*

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, determined by the provider
- Illness results in a greater need for care than the provider can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children, determined by the provider
- Suspicious rash that has not been seen by a doctor
- Excessive, colored discharge from the eyes, nose, or ears
- Fever of 99 degrees or more, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical professional evaluation finds the child able to be included at the facility
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness until medical evaluation find the child able to be included at the facility. Symptoms and signs include lethargy that is more than expected tiredness; uncontrollable coughing; inexplicable irritability or persistent crying; difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child
- Diarrhea, defined by more watery stools, decreased form of stool that is not associated with changes of diet, and increased frequency of passing stool, that is not contained by the child's ability to use the toilet;
- Blood in stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Vomiting illness (one or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until the vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines that the cause of the vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a healthcare provider determines that the child is noninfectious
- Head lice



- Strep throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment is completed
- Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted

\*Please notify your child's teacher if your child sustained any bumps or injury to the head – even minor – within the past 24 hours because concussions in children could show up hours after an injury.

Please keep your child at home for an additional 24 hours after the above symptoms disappear. Please do not send the child to school if he needs teacher-administered medication during the day.

Contagious diseases should be reported immediately to the teacher of your child's classroom. It is inevitable that when children are together, they will come in contact with other children's germs. Unfortunately, symptoms often do not appear until after the entire class has been exposed. We have found that by the third year of school, most children have built up a natural immunity to many viruses.

If your child gets sick during the school day, the teacher will call to ask you to pick up your child promptly, in the best interest of all. If your child needs to go home, we will make every effort to contact you. If we cannot reach you or you will be detained for some length of time, we will then contact the people you listed on the emergency contact sheet. You must keep this sheet up-to-date.

Please call ahead of time with questions on policy regarding any illness not listed. We also refer to the guidelines on exclusion related to the illness that is provided by the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education.

Please call the school office if your child will be out sick. A note should be provided upon return to school.

### **HEAD LICE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines regarding the control of head lice in Island Montessori School. The scope of this policy also applies to IMS staff.

#### **Procedures**

Upon identification of lice on a student, the school employee shall contact the school nurse or Head of School to verify head lice. The school nurse or Head of School shall:

- Directly examine the hair and scalp for lice and nits, especially at the nape of the neck and around the ears.
- If lice are verified, notify the student's parent/guardian and encourage picking up the student to go home for treatment. A letter shall be sent home to parents of students in the classroom notifying them that lice have been verified in their student's classroom.



- Reassure students that head lice are not a social disgrace and can be eliminated.
- Send home instruction sheets for lice control: “Stop Head Lice” and “Alternative Treatment for Head Lice”( <http://www.nhcs.net/forms.htm>). Answer all questions regarding lice treatment, removal of nits, and home cleaning that may cause recurrence of lice. **(Nits are head lice eggs – eggs are laid by the adult female louse and hatch in seven to ten (7-10) days from a viable nit (egg casing), which appears as a clear, grayish ellipsoid, firmly attached to the hair shaft at the junction of the scalp with 1/4” or less. Viable eggs camouflaged with pigment to match the hair color of the host. Hatched or empty casings (nits) can be distinguished by the milky white color and are easier to see. The empty nits are seen on the hair shaft further away from the scalp than the viable nits)**

**Requirement for the student to return to school**

- THE PARENT MUST ACCOMPANY THE STUDENT TO SCHOOL.
- Upon the student’s arrival at school, the school nurse or Head of School will examine the student’s hair and scalp.
- If the student was not treated for lice or lice are present, the student will be sent home.
- If only nits are present upon examination, the student may remain at school.

**Telephone Use**

Students may use the school telephone only in the event of an emergency such as sickness. Students may not use the telephone during the school day without faculty supervision. Transportation arrangements should be made before school.

**Immunizations**

Parents of all children must present to the school acceptable medical evidence indicating that the required immunizations have been received, which are:



**Kindergarten**

Vaccination requirements for kindergarten-age children can be found below:

Vaccine	Number Doses Required Before School Entry*
<a href="#">Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis</a>	5 doses
<a href="#">Polio</a>	4 doses
<a href="#">Measles</a>	2 doses
<a href="#">Mumps</a>	2 doses
<a href="#">Rubella</a>	1 dose
<a href="#">Haemophilus Influenzae type B (Hib)</a>	4 doses
<a href="#">Hepatitis B (Hep B)</a>	3 doses
<a href="#">Varicella (chickenpox)</a>	2 doses

**7th Grade**

Vaccination requirements for 7th grade age children can be found below:

Vaccine	Number Doses Required Before School Entry*
<a href="#">Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis</a>	5 doses
<a href="#">Polio</a>	4 doses
<a href="#">Measles</a>	2 doses
<a href="#">Mumps</a>	2 doses
<a href="#">Rubella</a>	1 dose
<a href="#">Haemophilus Influenzae type B (Hib)</a>	4 doses
<a href="#">Hepatitis B (Hep B)</a>	3 doses
<a href="#">Varicella (chickenpox)</a>	1 doses
<a href="#">Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis</a>	1 dose
<a href="#">Meningococcal conjugate</a>	1 dose

*Religious and/or medical exemptions must be appropriately documented and on file in the school office and submitted for review as to legal exceptions. Students noncompliant with the immunization policy will not be allowed to attend school.*

**Emergency Closing**

When IMS must dismiss students unexpectedly due to adverse weather conditions or other types of emergencies, teachers will call each of their parents, the Head of School will send out an informational e-mail and information will be posted on the front page of the website. When snow, ice, or other adverse weather conditions cause school to be canceled or delayed, teachers will utilize SchoolCues to text and email families. The Head of School will send out an informational email and information will be posted on the front page of the website as well as our social media pages. IMS may choose to open or close independently of the public school system. The Head of School will decide all closings, delays, and early dismissals. Please do not call the school office for this information.

**Lockdown Procedures**

A “lockdown” is a procedure followed during the threat of danger within proximity of school grounds. (For instance, occasionally individuals escape police custody, and the school is advised to bring everyone indoors as a precaution.) Once inside, the school day proceeds with caution and little distraction. In the event of a lockdown, the following actions will occur:

- 1) All outdoor areas will be evacuated.
- 2) All present IMS community members will be directed into the building.
- 3) The Head of School or designee will inform faculty and students of the lockdown.
- 4) Staff, volunteers, and all people present will be informed because all rooms will be checked and confirmed to be locked to the outside and safe.
- 5) All exterior doors will be closed and locked.
- 6) Teachers will make an immediate count of their students. That accounting will be



collected, confirmed, and noted on one document.

Pick up procedures during a lockdown will require that:

- 1) The faculty receives a notification to proceed with pick up at the time of dismissal.
- 2) All students wait indoors until escorted away from school by a recognized adult of the IMS community.
- 3) Parents will be informed in writing that a lockdown occurred by a note sent home with the students.

## **Student Admissions**

### **Statement of non-discriminatory policy**

The Island Montessori Charter School shall not discriminate against any student based on race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, age, disability or measure of intellectual ability, achievement, aptitude, athletic ability, sexual orientation, or any category protected by law, in its admissions or education programs. Tuition or admission fees shall not be charged to any student.

### **Application**

The Island Montessori Charter School accepts applications for prospective students starting each January for a set application period. Applications are made available at parent meetings held through the application period. These meetings will be announced and advertised. Students who are currently attending IMS do not need to reapply; however, if these students have siblings wishing to start at IMS, siblings do need to complete an application. Applications for siblings of currently enrolled students are available in the school office.

Admission to the school is based on a lottery system. Maximum class size limits determine the number of students in each class.

### **Enrollment**

Once a student is admitted to the Island Montessori Charter School, formal enrollment is required to reserve the student's space in the school. Enrollment will take place during March. The enrollment procedure will ensure that the school has all information it needs to meet State Board of Education records requirements for charter schools.

North Carolina State law requires all students to have complete immunization records on file within 30 days of starting school or the student may not be allowed to return to school.

A student who has been admitted but who has not fully enrolled by the last school day in March may be removed from the list of admitted students and may have to reapply to the school to gain entrance.

### **Disclaimer**

This handbook has been prepared to introduce parents and guardians to Island Montessori School and to acquaint them with the policies that apply to enrollment. These policies are not intended to provide fixed rules for dealing with all issues that arise at the school but rather, they set forth general guidelines, subject to amendment. In addition, policies and procedures are changed from time to time as the needs of our school dictate. **In the event a state law varies with any policy stated in this handbook, the school will comply with the applicable state law.**





## Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

**Please review the Parent/Student Handbook on our school website. It can be found in the parent section ([im.school/parents](http://im.school/parents)) under parent resources. Then sign and return this to the school by Friday, August 27th.**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the Island Montessori Parent/Student Handbook.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_