

Swan River Montessori  
Charter School

Parent & Student Handbook

2024 - 2025

Adopted by the Swan River Board of Directors August 2005  
Revisions adopted by the Swan River Board of Directors 8.27.24

## ***Mission of Swan River Montessori Charter School***

The mission of Swan River Montessori Charter School is to provide a child-centered environment for self-directed and personalized learning in a small community based public school with an emphasis on the natural environment.

## ***Vision of Swan River Montessori Charter School***

Swan River Montessori Charter School's vision is to employ an interdisciplinary approach to education by teaching the whole child (heart, mind, and soul). The Montessori learning environment is designed to foster this whole child approach by meeting the child's inherent needs of self-discovery, creativity, independence, and competence.

Swan River Montessori Charter School will create a kind, respectful environment where each child has a sense of belonging. Learning at Swan River Montessori Charter School involves the student, the student's family, the teachers, and the larger community. Swan River supports family and community participation in each child's education by utilizing and appreciating community resources and the natural world as a learning environment.

Swan River Montessori Charter School welcomes students of any race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, and sexual orientation. Swan River Montessori Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, status with regard to public assistance, disability, or sexual orientation in the administration of its educational policies or programs. All related policies are posted on the school's website at [www.swanrivermontessori.org](http://www.swanrivermontessori.org).

# **SCHOOL HOURS, ATTENDANCE & TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

## **School Hours**

Swan River Montessori Charter School and Children's House classes are held Monday through Friday and follow the Monticello School Calendar (District #882).

7:00- 8:00 a.m.	Extended Morning Care
8:00 – 2:10	Grades PreK – 6 <sup>th</sup>
2:10-5:00 p.m.	Extended Afternoon Care

## **Tardiness & Absenteeism**

Regular attendance is necessary to obtain the maximum benefits of our instructional program and is correlated to successful academic achievement. Consistent attendance is one means by which a student develops responsibility and self-discipline. For this reason, student absence from school should be limited to genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Attendance records are an important part of your child's permanent school file. Our school day runs from 8:00 a.m. through 2:10 p.m.

If your child must be absent, please call the main office as soon as possible so the school is aware the child is not in attendance. All tardies (arrival after 8:00 a.m.) and absences require either a phone call to the school, a written note/email, or a prior in-person verbal notification from the parent or guardian. If proper notification is not received, the tardy/absence is counted as unexcused.

Your child's success in school depends on consistent attendance. Therefore, parents will be notified if there are excessive absences and/or tardiness. Please see Board Approved Attendance Policy for further information (located in the main office as well as on our website at [www.swanrivermontessori.org](http://www.swanrivermontessori.org)). It is recommended that elective medical or dental appointments be made after school hours and during vacations when possible.

Swan River Montessori Charter School discourages any trips during the school year on days school is in session, other than for emergencies. Families taking vacation during the school year should give the office staff and classroom teacher advance notice.

## **Medical Excuses from Activities**

If a student has been advised to limit or be excused from participation in physical education or other school related activities, a signed and dated medical excuse is required by a licensed doctor. A reinstatement permission slip from a doctor is also required before the student may again participate. This is to ensure the safety and physical well-being of the child.

## **Arrival & Dismissal Procedures**

Having a designated drop off/pick up helps eliminate the confusion as to the direction of traffic, where and how to drop off/pick up children, and most importantly, knowing all children will be safely accompanied into and out of the school.

Students who are dropped off or picked up during the school day by a parent or designee will be released through the office only. Parents or the designee are required to sign their child in/out. Students are not permitted to leave the school building during school hours without a proper permission from the parent or guardian. This policy is to assure the safety and whereabouts of your child at all times

## Drop Off / Pick Up Times & Areas

For all students arriving by vehicle, the assigned drop off time is from 7:45 - 8:55 a.m. Pick up times are from 3:10-3:30 p.m. During these designated times, the assigned entrance, located on the **south side of the building on 5<sup>th</sup> Street (NOT the front door on Maple Street)**, will have staff members available to assist students to and from your vehicle and the school building. Please note that these staff members will assist in your child getting in and out of the vehicle, however, they are not able to assist your child with safety belts and/or car seats.

It is important that no cars are parked on 5<sup>th</sup> Street on the south side of the building between 7:45-8:00 and 2:10-2:30.

All students are expected to proceed to their lockers. Outside shoes and outdoor clothing should be properly placed in the locker. A separate pair of clean, inside shoes/slippers should be put on. The child will then proceed immediately to the classroom. Every student is required to be in the classroom by 8:00 a.m. After 8:00, students are marked tardy.

All students should be picked up by 2:30 p.m. The staff is obligated to remain with your child until a responsible adult picks him/her up. Please be respectful of their professional and personal time. If your child is sent to extended care due to non-pick up by 3:40, there will be a charge of \$15.00.

## Extended Care Drop Off / Pick Up

Swan River opens daily at 7:00 a.m. and remains open after school until 5:00 p.m. to accommodate pre-registered extended care students. When dropping off a child(ren) for extended care, please park your vehicle and accompany your child(ren) to and from the extended care classroom. All children will remain under the supervision of the extended care staff until regular school classes begin in the morning and/or until the child is picked up by a parent or designee after school.

For more information regarding the extended care program, please contact our main office. Signed contracts and prepayment are required for participation.

## Busing Procedure

If you live within the Monticello School District boundaries, you should receive a letter from Hoglund Transportation, District #882's contracted bussing company, with your child's bus number. Swan River cannot provide you with specific bussing information. All communication should be directed to the contracted bussing company.

To School:

1. Your child will be bused from your home or daycare location to Pinewood or Little Mountain Elementary.
2. When the bus arrives at Pinewood or Little Mountain Elementary, all children will exit from their bus when the school bell rings. Swan River students will go to the designated Swan River bus and board. The shuttle bus will then depart for Swan River.
4. The Swan River shuttle buses will transport the children to the school and drop them off at the Maple Street entrance (front entrance of the school). A staff member will be at the entrance to make sure that the children safely disembark from the bus and enter the school building. All students are expected to proceed to their lockers. Outside shoes and outdoor clothing should be properly placed in the locker. A separate pair of clean, inside shoes should be put on. The child will then proceed immediately to the

classroom. Every student is required to be in the classroom by 8:00 a.m. Loitering or playing in the hallway is not permissible.

From School:

1. The child will be excused from the classroom to go to the locker. The student should change into his/her outside shoes and outdoor clothing. Inside shoes should be properly placed in the locker. The child should then proceed to the front door on Maple Street to meet the shuttle buses to Pinewood and Little Mountain Elementary schools.
2. All students will be escorted from the building by a staff member who confirms each child is boarding the appropriate bus.
3. The Swan River shuttle buses will then proceed to Pinewood and Little Mountain Elementary schools where students will board the afternoon buses taking them to either home or day care.

## **Skateboard/Rollerblades**

Skateboards and rollerblades may not be brought to school due to storage and safety reasons. The wheels that fit into Heelies may not be brought to school.

## **Change in Departure Plans**

If the student's usual after school departure plan has been changed (i.e. going home with someone else or should go to the carpool line instead of boarding the bus), a signed and dated note, phone call or email **MUST** be received by 1:00 that day. Under **NO** circumstances will a child be allowed to alter his/her end-of-day without appropriate permission. We also require that any alternate plans be made with both parties in advance to avoid confusion and miscommunication during or after the school day. The safety of our students is our greatest concern and this includes assuring a communicated departure plan.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**The Swan River Montessori Charter School Board of Directors and staff have carefully considered the guidelines set out in this handbook in order to provide a healthy, safe, and enjoyable learning environment for your child.**

## **Access to the School during School Hours**

The school building will be locked and protected by a monitored security system during the school day. This is for the safety of all students and staff. No child will be released to any person(s) not listed on the emergency contact form unless consent is given by a parent prior to pick-up. A staff member will call you if there are any questions about the release of a child. It is the responsibility of the parents to keep the emergency contact form up-to-date and accurate. A government issued Photo ID is required for any unknown persons before the child is released. Visitors are welcome but must sign in via the main office before entering the classrooms.

## **Animals on School Premises**

Prior permission must be obtained from the classroom teacher before any animal, other than classroom pets, are allowed into the classrooms. The owner/handler must properly restrain all animals and be present throughout the duration of the animal's stay in the classroom.

**\*\*Important:** Our classrooms may have small pets present in the classroom for learning purposes. If your child has any pet allergies, please note this allergy on your child's emergency form and inform the child's teacher directly.

## **Computers/Internet Usage**

Swan River Montessori Charter School has computer labs and/or students will have access to computers in their classroom. The internet and other computer skills will be taught as a life skill; to conduct research and properly communicate with others.

Internet access is a privilege, not a right. Computer and network storage areas and disks/drives will be treated in the same manner as school lockers. School officials may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are engaging in responsible activities. Users should not expect that files stored on computers and disks/drives will be private. Any faculty member has, at his/her sole discretion, the right to terminate the privileges of a student who misuses any computer or electronic device such as iPads. Violations could result in disciplinary action.

Respect and proper use of educational resources are a large part of the goals and objectives for all students. Inappropriate activities on the network include, but are not limited to:

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using profanity or obscene language
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging computers, network systems or software programs
- Violating copyright laws and software licensing and illegally obtaining material that belongs to others
- Trespassing in another person's folders, work or files
- Wasting limited resources or work time
- Using the network for financial or commercial gain
- Using another's password
- Obtaining network access through disguise or bypass of legitimate log on procedures.

The Board Approved Internet Acceptable Use & Safety Policy details the policies and procedures regarding internet use in full and it is the expectation and requirement of the Board that each student and parent/guardian familiarizes him/herself with the policy. The policy is available in the school office as well as on the school's web site.

## **Discipline & the Discipline Rubric**

The chart on the following page lists a number of typical school behaviors and describes the ways we have agreed upon to respond to these behaviors at school. In many ways the major categories listed on the next page happen every day in classrooms. It is a fairly common occurrence for some children to not follow directions, to jostle or push one another, to use inappropriate language or to bring something inappropriate (but not necessarily dangerous) to school. Our teachers use a wide range of approaches to respond to such occurrences depending on the needs of the individual child and the specific behavior(s).

For example, a teacher might respond to a student not following directions by making eye contact, standing closer to the student, moving the student to a different seat, talking with the student (immediately or at a later time), restricting some privileges, etc. Using his/her professional judgment about what might work best for the individual child, the classroom teacher will try to help the child learn to behave in ways which will help promote the student's own learning and will enhance the learning environment for everyone in the classroom.

The consequences listed on the next page happen only after the classroom teacher has exhausted all internal classroom remedies, has determined that the behavior represents a serious concern, and the behavior rises to the level of offense as described in the "Behavior Infractions" column of the chart. As you can see, for each level of offense we have listed a number of possible consequences. The flexibility of having a number of possible responses to student behaviors will allow us to choose the response that, in our best judgment, will help each individual child learn appropriate behavior.

To see Swan River's Harassment and Violence Prohibition Policy (aka Bullying Prohibition Policy), please see Attachment 1 of this handbook.

## DISCIPLINE RUBRIC

BEHAVIOR INFRACTION	1 <sup>st</sup> Offense	2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense	3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense
<b>FOLLOW DIRECTIONS</b> Refusal to comply with adult request or school rules, defiance or rude behavior toward staff.	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>BE READY TO LISTEN AND LEARN</b> Significantly disrupts teaching and learning.	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>USE SCHOOL APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE</b> Vulgarity, profanity, name calling, disrespectful comments and/or gestures.	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>KEEP HANDS, FEET AND OBJECT TO YOURSELF</b> Pushing, poking, slapping, shoving, grabbing, spitting, throwing objects and/or any other unwelcome contact.	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>RESPECT PROPERTY</b> Misuse/abuse of personal or school property.	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>INAPPROPRIATE OBJECTS</b>	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>SEVERE BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS</b> (Incident Reports filed for all offenses)	1 <sup>st</sup> Offense	2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense	3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense
<b>FIGHTING/ASSAULT</b> Physical aggression with intent to harm.	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>SEVERE DEFIANCE</b> Refusal to comply with adult request resulting in unsafe circumstances.	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>HARASSMENT/THREATS</b> Any act of harassment, including sexual, racial, religious harassment, repeated unwelcome teasing, bullying or threats.	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>DESTRUCTION/THEFT/VANDALISM</b>	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<b>WEAPONS</b>	Level 4 or 5	Level 5	

### Possible Consequences

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Note home</li> <li>● Phone call home</li> <li>● Office notification</li> <li>● Temporary move to office</li> <li>● Temporary move to another classroom</li> <li>● Loss of 1 recess</li> <li>● Stop/Think form</li> <li>● 1 Lunch detention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mandatory:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Office notification</li> <li>○ Home contact</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Parent conference</li> <li>● Office visit</li> <li>● Observation by another teacher</li> <li>● Loss of 1+ recesses</li> <li>● 1+ Lunch detentions</li> <li>● Restitution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mandatory:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Office visit</li> <li>○ Home contact</li> <li>○ Parent conference</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Behavior contract</li> <li>● Referral to Child Find Team, if applicable</li> <li>● Restitution</li> <li>● In-school suspension</li> <li>● Out-school suspension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mandatory:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Office visit</li> <li>○ Home contact</li> <li>○ Parent conference</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Restitution</li> <li>● Student sent home immediately</li> <li>● In-School suspension</li> <li>● Out-School suspension</li> <li>● Police notification</li> </ul>	When deemed necessary, expulsion may be pursued within the guidelines of the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act of 1974, as amended.

\*\*SRMCS reserves the right to skip or insert steps when deemed appropriate to have the consequence meet the nature of the offense.



## Student Dress Code Policy

Shoes: Many children prefer to do their schoolwork on the floor. To assist with keeping the classrooms clean and sanitary please adhere to the following requirements:

- All students need to have a second pair of shoes reserved for indoor classroom use only.
- Students need to have shoes for gym class when applicable.
- Students need to have weather appropriate shoes (*boots and socks for winter month versus sandals/flip flops*).

Clothing: It is the responsibility of both the parent(s) and the student to ensure the following clothing requirements are met at all times. Any clothing or attire that is distracting is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Clothing that reveals too much skin, hats/caps, and headwear.
- Clothing must cover the belly button/stomach/mid-section, shoulders, back and chest/cleavage.
- All clothing must be weather appropriate (*shorts, tank tops, flip flops are not permitted when snowing, etc.*)
- Shirts must have no less than two inch straps on shoulder.
- Shorts, skirts, dresses must be long enough to extend beyond student's fingertips when arms are relaxed at sides.
- Undergarments must be covered at all times.
- Inappropriate and/or obscene references and/or communicated by or on clothing or attire are prohibited. This includes but not limited to the following: illegal substances, drugs, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, sexual innuendos, abuse, discrimination, war-like depictions (tanks, guns and other weapons), or any other inappropriate topics.
- Outerwear, such as jackets or coats will be stored in student's locker.
- Wearing attire that prevents the identification of students such as masks, face paint, disguises, or grooming is prohibited.
- Young children must dress appropriately so they may use the restroom without difficulty.

Cold Weather Clothing/Winter Gear: It is the responsibility of both the parent(s) and the student to ensure all cold weather clothing/winter gear requirements are met at all times. All students participate in outdoor activities daily throughout the winter unless the temperature reaches below -10 degrees Fahrenheit with wind chill i.e. "feels like" temperatures.

Below is a list of outdoor winter gear that are *required to be at school for every student every day the temperatures fall below 40 degrees Fahrenheit*. It is at the discretion of the child's teacher and/or the School Director whether or not certain winter items are (or are not) required to be worn outside during the school day and extended care on a day-to-day basis.

Required Winter Gear:

- Snow boots
- Snow pants
- Heavy winter coat
- Gloves/mittens
- Thick winter hat that covers both ears

Optional (but encouraged!) Winter Gear:

- Scarf
- Sweater/sweatshirt (for an addition layer and/or for use indoors)
- Extra pair of socks

Swimwear: It is the responsibility of both parents and students to ensure the following swimwear requirements are met at all times.

- The use of one piece swim suits or swim shirts are encouraged.

- Long tankinis are permitted with **no more** than two inches of stomach/mid-section exposure.
- All swim bottoms must be modest. Thongs, string bikinis, etc. are not permitted.
- Male swim shorts/trunks must be long enough to extend beyond the student's fingertips when arms are relaxed at his sides.
- Bikinis are not permitted.

All offenses or incidents where swimwear is deemed inappropriate by the School Director or staff, student will be provided with a T-shirt that must be cleaned and promptly returned to school. All incidents will be documented.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Parents will be notified via email or phone call that their student has a dress code violation.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** An official letter of dress code will be sent to parents. This letter will require the parent signature acknowledging the following:

- That the second offense occurred.
- The parent(s) understands the SRMCS Dress Code in its entirety.
- The parent(s) understands the possible consequence should a third offense occur.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** The behavior will be considered insubordination and will be subject to consequences as outlined in the school's *Discipline Rubric*. When situations arise that are not specifically covered in this policy, administration will interpret the situation in light of the spirit and/or intent of this policy.

Possible disciplinary actions include but not limited to the following:

- All consequences as listed above
- Office visit
- Parent phone call
- Loss of one or more recess periods
- One or more lunch detentions
- Parent conferences
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Student sent home immediately

## Electronics

Electronic devices such as cellular phones, iPods, iPads, laser pointers, radios, walkie-talkies, electronic games, etc. are not allowed for any reason unless specific permission is granted by a staff member. All students are asked to keep these devices at home. Staff will place these items in the office if found. They may be picked up at the end of the day or be given to a parent. The school is not liable for electronic or any other item(s) inappropriately brought to school and subsequently broken or stolen.

**\*\*Parents/guardians may NOT undermine this policy by granting their child permission to bring/use these types of items at school, particularly cellular phones.**

## **Fire, Tornado & Severe Weather Safety and Nuclear Emergency**

Fire: Swan River Montessori will take all precautions to prevent fires from occurring. The school will hold five fire drills annually. Each room has a posted primary and secondary evacuation route as well as emergency phone numbers at all times. The staff is trained in building evacuation procedures yearly.

Tornado/Severe Weather: The school has designated severe weather shelter areas to be used in case of a tornado warning. The staff will have a radio and flashlight for use in these emergencies. The school will conduct at least one tornado drill during the months of April through June. If there is a warning, staff will take the children to the designated severe weather area.

Nuclear Emergency: In the event of a nuclear emergency, students and staff will be transported via school buses to Maple Grove Senior High School, 9800 Fernbrook Lane, Maple Grove, MN. Students or staff will not be allowed to make phone calls as lines must be kept open for emergency communications only. All regularly employed staff members will take a class roster, evacuate with students, and remain with them at Maple Grove Senior High School until they are picked up by a parent/guardian/designee. Staff will carefully monitor/track that all students are accounted for at all times.

## **First Aid**

ALL staff members working with children in any capacity are required to have First Aid and Child/Adult CPR certification. An AED (Automatic Electronic Defibrillator) is also available on premises.

School staff will administer First Aid based on their training. If the staff, at any time, believes that an injury or illness is beyond their ability, they will call emergency personnel immediately.

Parents or an emergency contact will be contacted as soon as possible.

## **Food: Peanut Safe School, Hot/Cold Lunches, Milk Program & Snacks**

Peanut Safe School: Peanut products of any kind (peanut butter, peanut butter cookies, granola bars with peanuts, etc.) are prohibited at all times. Our goal is to maintain a safe learning environment for everyone. If your child has any allergies to food and/or something in the classroom/school environment, be sure to communicate this to your child's teacher immediately. Should any items containing peanuts or peanut products be found, a staff member will immediately confiscate it from the student, place it in a plastic baggie, and will return it at the end of the day to be taken home. A note or email may be sent home reminding the parent(s) of our Peanut Safe Policy.

Hot Lunch: Swan River does offer a daily hot lunch program. A meal calendar will be provided the month prior for sign up with a payment due date listed on the calendar. All hot lunches are transported to Swan River from a contracted catering company. All federal/state mandated nutrition guidelines are followed at all times. Swan River is monitored by the Department of Health and receives annual site visits to ensure compliance.

Cold Lunch: If you choose to provide your own lunch, please note that the State guidelines require that we ensure children get a balanced meal, including a fruit, a vegetable, and a protein source. Please keep this in

mind when preparing your child's lunch. The Montessori methodology of learning emphasizes practical life skills that children obtain as they progress through various developmental stages. One of these skills is proper nutrition; including the planning, preparation, and clean-up of a meal. We feel that each family should control what the child is eating, to reflect their own beliefs, dietary choices, and preferences. Similarly important, each family can also monitor how well the child is eating based on what comes back in his/her lunch box. Please DO NOT send any soda, juice, or other sugary beverage with your child for lunch. All students should have milk and/or water only during the school day unless there is a documented medical need for a different type of drink.

**\*\*Important: PLEASE LABEL YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH!**

Microwaves will be available for use. Please note that no food item should take longer than two (2) minutes to warm up and should be brought to school in a container suitable for the microwave. Young children will be supervised and will have assistance in operating the microwaves.

Milk Program: If a student orders a hot lunch, a carton of milk is included with that lunch. Students have the choice of skim, 1%, or chocolate milk each day. If you wish for your child to only drink a certain type of milk offered at school, please let your child's teacher know.

Milk is also available for students who pack cold lunches. This must be indicated on the hot lunch order form. Additional milk cartons are available for purchase on a daily basis. Please contact the main office for current milk carton prices.

Snacks: Swan River Montessori Charter School requires that any food intended to be shared with classmates and staff be commercially prepared. This policy follows state guidelines and is expressly concerned with homemade foods. It is not meant to limit the preparation of foods or treats related directly to the school curriculum.

## **Grievance Policy**

Swan River Montessori Charter School strives to create and maintain a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable learning environment for every child, regardless of sex, race, gender, or ability level. We do this in several ways:

- By respectfully treating every person as an individual and encouraging each individual's maximum developmental potential;
- By recognizing that each person is essential to the success and growth of not only him or herself, but of other students and the school in general;
- By maintaining direct communications with each family and ensuring that each family can speak directly with teachers, the Operations Coordinator, and the School Director.

We believe that open, respectful, and honest communication is best for all parties involved. You will always find an open door and an attentive ear at Swan River Montessori Charter School. We expect you to come directly to us with any concerns you have regarding your child's educational experience. We would rather address a problem/concern early, before it becomes a larger, more emotional issue.

Please be aware that we expect all families to utilize the proper channels of communication. Issues should be addressed first with the child's teacher, even if the concern involves the teacher him or herself. The Director will become involved if either you or the teacher believes it is necessary and/or appropriate.

The Board of Directors (School Board) is responsible for the governance of the school. Board members are not to become individually involved with the daily management or operations of the charter school. In other words, Board members will not "micromanage" the school day, but oversee and manage the governance and application of state and federal laws with regard to operating a public school.

School Board meetings are open to the public with published monthly meeting dates and times. If you would like to address the Board, you may attend these meetings to speak during the "Community Comments" time, or you can request that your concern be placed on the agenda. Please check the school's web site for meeting dates, times, and board minutes.

## **Harassment**

It is the policy of the school district to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence. Swan River Montessori Charter School prohibits any form of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence.

Everyone at Swan River Montessori Charter School has the right to feel respected and safe. Harassment towards staff or students will not be tolerated. Harassment may include abusive/threatening/intimidating/profane/obscene language or actions toward others. Harassment can be in written, oral, or in electronic form, or displayed through gestures, stalking, unwanted or unpleasant touching, or other inappropriate actions. Harassment may include the following when related to religion, race, sex or gender:

- Name calling, jokes, teasing or rumors
- Inappropriate comments on or unwelcome touching of another person
- Graffiti
- Notes or cartoons done "in poor taste"
- Offensive or graphic pictures, posters, or book covers
- Displaying private body parts to another
- Obscene gestures imitating or implying sexual content

Appropriate conflict resolution techniques will be emphasized and taught at Swan River Montessori Charter School. Please inform your child that if these techniques are not effective and s/he is being made to feel uncomfortable, fearful, or being "picked on," the classroom teacher should be alerted. We take all reports of religious, racial, sexual harassment, or any type of bullying or violence VERY seriously. Administration will take all appropriate actions based on your report and any history obtained from witnesses. Your right to privacy will be respected to the furthest degree possible.

To see Swan River's Harassment and Violence Prohibition Policy (aka Bullying Prohibition Policy) in full, please refer to Attachment 1 of this handbook.

## Hazing

“Hazing” is defined as committing an act against a student or coercing a student into committing an act that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose.

Swan River Montessori Charter School strives to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of Swan River Montessori Charter School and are prohibited at all times.

Students, teachers, administrators, volunteers, contractors, or other employees of Swan River Montessori Charter School shall not permit, condone, or tolerate hazing. This policy applies to behavior that occurs on or off school property, before, during and after school hours. A person who engages in an act that violates the school hazing policy or other law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Any person who has knowledge of a violation of this policy or has been the victim of hazing should report the alleged acts immediately to school and/or law enforcement officials. Upon receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, Swan River Montessori Charter School shall undertake or authorize an investigation and may take immediate steps to protect the complainant, reporter, or others pending the completion of an investigation of hazing. Upon completion of the investigation, the school will take appropriate action, including any of the following: warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, student transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge.

## Health & Student Well-being

Required Forms (General): The safety and well-being of each child is a matter of highest importance at Swan River Montessori Charter School. To keep our records current, please let us know if any of your child’s information on the following forms changes throughout the year. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide accurate health information for the duration of the child’s enrollment, including allergies, medications the child may be taking, etc.

- Immunization Record: This information must be turned in to the office at the time of enrollment or by the first day of school.
- Emergency Information: This information must be turned in to the office at the time of enrollment or by the first day of school.

Sick Child: It is often difficult to know when your child is too ill to attend school. Please be mindful that most infections (including viral infections) are contagious to one degree or another. When making decisions regarding whether to send your child to school, please be respectful of your child’s classmates and school staff by attempting to minimize the spread of germs. The following illnesses/conditions are typically the most common in a school environment. If your child’s symptoms meet any of the following thresholds, s/he must remain at home:

- An underarm temperature of >100 degrees Fahrenheit, BEFORE fever-reducing medication is given. Your child must be free of fever for 24 hours WITHOUT medication before returning to school.

- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours. The child should be able to eat fairly well before returning to school.
- Undetermined rash of which the source is unknown.
- Difficulty breathing or is experiencing any type of respiratory distress.
- Head lice/nits, ringworm, shingles, or scabies that has not been treated and is contagious to others.
- A sore or discharging ear or eye (including, but not limited to, pink eye).
- Bacterial infection such as streptococcal (strep throat) or impetigo that has not been treated and is contagious to others.
- Untreated chicken pox or shingles. In the case of chicken pox, all lesions must be scabbed over and dry before returning to school.
- Continual runny nose, sore throat, and/or severe cough, with or without fever, at the teacher and/or School Director's discretion.
- Any contagious disease or illness. For any illness requiring antibiotics, the child must have had a full 24 hours of antibiotic treatment before returning to school.

If a parent is in doubt about sending a child to school, please call the school first to discuss the situation. We are happy to assist you.

**\*\*Important:** Swan River Montessori Charter School staff will follow the same guidelines to determine if your child is sick while at school. Please note that the school does not employ a nurse to assess or care for your child during the school day.

If your child experiences any of the previous ailments, a staff member will contact a parent immediately. If no parent can be reached, emergency contacts will be used. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to ensure the child is picked up promptly. The child will be isolated from the other students until he or she is picked up. Parents and/or emergency contacts **MUST** pick up an ill child within **ONE HOUR** of the initial phone call. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to inform the school if a contagious illness is present within 24 hours of being sent home.

Staff will do their best to keep families informed about contagious illnesses reported in your child's classroom. The school will circulate a fact sheet about the illness so that you are aware of potential symptoms in your child.

If your child has a significant medical history that could result in physical or mental health concerns while at school (e.g. seizures, gastro-intestinal diseases, etc.), please be sure to have a direct conversation with your child's teacher and the School Director to ensure they are fully aware of these issues. Never assume that this information is fully disclosed in previous student records. An action plan should be devised and placed in your child's file so that staff can respond in the most appropriate fashion should your child experience difficulties during the day.

Medication Policy: Medication may be stored for and administered to a child at school only if the medication is in its original container, the label is clearly intact, and a Medication/Treatment Authorization Form has been completed and signed. No staff member will administer medication of any kind if these procedures have not been followed. The form must be given directly to a staff member, preferably the child's teacher or administration, so any questions may be answered thoroughly at that time.

The staff of Swan River considers any sprays, creams, ointments, etc. to be medication (e.g. bug spray, Benadryl/hydrocortisone). The proper form must be completed before these are applied to a child's skin. We strongly encourage that these items be applied prior to coming to school. These items are not allowed to be kept in your child's back pack, locker, lunch box, cubby, etc. They must be given to and stored by either the child's teacher or the main office.

Over-the-counter lotions/sun screens are permitted and may be used with verbal/written parent permission at any time. The student is responsible for application and storage of any OTC lotions.

**\*\*Important:** ALL Swan River Montessori Charter School staff retain the right to refuse medication administration if they feel uncomfortable doing so for any reason.

## **Homework**

Swan River Montessori Charter School expects that children will be fully engaged and actively enjoying the thrill of learning at school, including time for independent study. We respect your family time and do not feel that a great deal of that time should be spent on homework assignments. We do, however, highly recommend that all families read together on a regular basis. Mathematics can easily be incorporated into activities of daily living in such a way that your child learns practical life skills at the same time s/he is working on mathematics. These skills can even be practiced by playing games. We do not want these activities to be burdensome or loathsome, they should be engaging to the student.

Your child's teacher may assign occasional homework, but if you feel your child is overly frustrated or the family is spending an inordinate amount of time on homework assignments, please consult with your child's teacher.

## **Lockers**

Students will be assigned a locker to store personal items, outdoor clothing/gear, and school-related supplies. All students are required to respect the property of others and of the school. All items should be properly stored within the confines of the locker and cubby and not left in the hallway (which is unsightly and a safety hazard). Younger children should have an extra change of clothing that remains in the locker for unforeseen accidents. Please replace this spare set of clothing if it has been utilized.

Valuables, especially electronics, should not be brought to school unless specific permission is granted. Please do not bring toys or games to school and note that no items of a violent nature will be permitted. We cannot assume responsibility for items brought from home. A Lost and Found is available at the school if your child misplaces any items. If necessary and with prior permission, the classroom teacher may safely store any valuables that must be brought to school in his/her classroom office. Swan River Montessori Charter School is not responsible or liable for lost or stolen items.

Pursuant to Minnesota statutes, school lockers are the property of the school district, and shall not be locked at any time. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students.



Please be aware that by use of a locker you agree to abide by the school policy Search of Student Lockers, Personal Possessions and Person's Self. This policy details the procedures regarding a search of lockers at Swan River Montessori Charter School. This policy is available in the main office as well as the school's web site.

## **Mandatory Reporting**

Swan River Montessori Charter School staff members are mandatory reporters for the State of Minnesota for any suspected abuse or neglect of a child(ren). If abuse or neglect is in question, Child Protection Services will be notified immediately.

**\*\*Important:** The reporting staff member has NO obligation to communicate this notification to ANYONE, including the Director, Board of Directors, other staff members, or the parent/family in question, prior to the report being filed with CPS. This is a trained, mandated procedure.

## **Pest Control Materials & Asbestos Notification**

Pest Control: Our district utilizes a licensed, professional pest control service firm for the prevention and control of rodents, insects, and other pests in and around the school's building. Their program consists of:

1. *inspection and monitoring* to determine whether pests are present, and whether treatment is needed;
2. recommendations for *maintenance and sanitation* to help eliminate pests without the need for pest control materials;
3. utilization of *non-chemical measures* such as traps, caulking and screening; and
4. application of *EPA-registered pest control materials* when needed.

Pests can sting, bite, cause contamination, damage property, and spread disease; therefore, we must prevent and control them. The long-term health effects on children from the application of such pest control materials, or the class of materials to which they belong, may not be fully understood. All pest control materials are chosen and applied according to label directions per federal law.

An estimated schedule of interior pest control inspections and possible treatments is available for review in the school office. A similar estimated schedule is available for application of herbicides and other materials to school grounds. Parents of students may request to receive, at their expense, prior notification of any application of a pest control material, should such an application be deemed necessary on a day different from the days specified in the schedule.

Asbestos Notification: Like many buildings in the United States built before the hazards of asbestos were known, the historic church portion of SRMCS has some asbestos containing material. Due to the asbestos in that portion of the building, we have an asbestos inspection every three years. The asbestos material is located where it is not easily accessible to the public and presents no immediate threat.

The only known remaining asbestos materials are located in the following locations:

- Floor tile underneath the floor in former church building
- Vermiculite insulation in wall cavities and above ceiling in the former church building

The new part of our building is asbestos free.

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance may from time to time be recited in the classroom under the guidance of a teacher and/or support staff, as appropriate for the Montessori curriculum.

Anyone who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reasons may elect not to do so. Students and school personnel must respect another person's right to make that choice.

The Pledge of Allegiance policy provides more detail regarding the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance while at school. The policy is available in the main office and on the school's web site.

## **Recess (Playground) & Physical Education**

Daily activity is very important for children and is planned whenever possible. It is our policy that if a child is well enough to come to school, s/he is well enough to play outdoors and fully participate in P.E. classes. Please supply appropriate clothing and shoes/boots for your child at all times. If your child is not prepared appropriately, spare and/or Lost and Found items will be given to your child to use for the day. A staff member may contact you if your child is not prepared appropriately on a regular basis. Please remember to label your children's belongings.

Students will go outside and participate in physical education classes with the exception of the following:

- Rainy Weather – Students will be supervised in their classrooms or may go to the Gathering Space or Community Center for gross motor activities.
- Extreme Cold Weather - A wind-chill factor ("feels like" temperatures) of 10 below zero or colder.
- Medical Excuse - Students who have, or are recovering from, a significant medical issue will need a note from a licensed medical physician if they are to stay indoors at recess time.

**\*\*Important:** A parent/guardian may not supersede this policy and ask or insist his/her child remain indoors during recess and/or not participate in P.E. for any reason unless a medical excuse is provided as stated above. Again, it is our policy that if a child is well enough to come to school, s/he is well enough to play outdoors and fully participate in P.E. classes.

## **School Closings**

Swan River Montessori Charter School follows the decision of the Monticello School District with regard to weather-related closings due to our shared bus transportation. These decisions will be announced over the following stations:

- KARE 11 TV, Channel 11

**\*\*Important:** Swan River Montessori Charter School will not necessarily be listed on these radio or television stations. Please follow any announcement(s) made for Monticello School District #882.

## **Student Progress - Assessments & Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Assessments: Students enrolled in grades 3 through 6 will be tested utilizing the state mandated Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment test (MCA). This test is given annually each spring. Parents will receive the individual student results once they are released by the State of Minnesota and the Department of Education.

Other educational data will be collected from students in the form of assignments, reports, assessments, and/or projects. This data will be used to assess each individual's progress throughout the school year. Swan River Montessori Charter School authorizes its teachers, administrators, support staff, counselors, and other educational professionals to receive and review this data only on an "as needed basis." Student records are stored and locked in the main office.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parent/teacher conferences will be held two times per school year both in late fall and early spring. During these conferences, you and your child's teacher will discuss your child's progress in all areas of development. If either the teacher or a parent feels that additional conferences are needed, those requests will be honored at a time agreed upon between the parent(s) and the teacher. The Director of Swan River may participate in these special conferences if requested by a parent, the teacher, or the Director. The staff of Swan River feels strongly about open communication and is eager to assist you and your child in any way possible.

## **Substance Use/Abuse**

Swan River Montessori Charter School has a "zero tolerance" drug, tobacco (including E-cigarettes, vapors, and any other similar substances and devices), and alcohol policy. The entire SRMCS campus is drug, tobacco, and alcohol free. This includes all school buildings, the playground and any other outdoor play spaces, the community center, and the library. It also applies to any school-sponsored field trips, events, and functions. State law declares the area surrounding a school as a tobacco, alcohol, drug and weapon free zone.

There are three primary school policies regarding substance use/abuse – Chemical Use & Abuse Policy, Drug Free Workplace & Drug Free School Policy, and Tobacco Free Environment Policy. These policies are available in the main office as well as on the school's web site.

## **Visitors/Volunteers**

Swan River Montessori Charter School encourages volunteerism throughout the school year, with the exception of the first 6 weeks of each school year. These first many weeks are when all students are in what Montessorians refer to as the "normalization period." This period allows students to fully engage in all aspects of the classroom without distraction and is critical to a well- functioning, successful school year.

Per SRMCS policy, every person (parents, grandparents, etc.) 18 years of age and older who wishes to have any contact with students during the school day (field trips, classroom parties, or any other classroom volunteering) MUST have a background check completed and on file in our main office. The entire process is completed online, costs \$15.00 per person, and is valid for 3 years.

Please note that SRMCS does not see any of the information provided for the background check. Rather, Swan River receives a report stating whether or not the applicant has received clearance. It is strongly encouraged that all potential volunteers complete this process right away. Should an applicant try to complete a background check last minute to attend a field trip, for example, the report may not be received in time and under no circumstances will this policy be bent or broken. Once a background check is approved and on file, you may coordinate volunteer time with your child's teacher at any time.

**\*\*ALL visitors/volunteers/non-employees must sign in and out in the main office for any and all visits.**

## **Weapons Policy**

Swan River Montessori Charter School has adopted a "zero tolerance" weapons policy. No student or nonstudent, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use, or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in Swan River's Weapons Policy (available in the school's main office and on the school's web site). The school will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer, or member of the public who violates this policy.

## **SRMCS CHILDREN'S HOUSE PROGRAM: PROCEDURES & POLICIES**

To provide children with the best educational foundation possible, Swan River Montessori Charter School operates what is called Children's House, a non-profit early childhood program for children ages 3 through 5. This program is a private, tuition-based program and is not considered part of the charter school. Per state charter law, entrance into the Children's House Program cannot guarantee entrance into the charter school. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the main office.

## **Trial Period**

The first 30 days of a child's enrollment in the Children's House Program are considered a trial period. Within those 30 days either the school or the parents may choose to withdraw the child from the program and all tuition payments will be prorated. In order to maintain an authentic Montessori environment that will allow all children to be successful, we retain the right to withdraw any student at any time for any reason.

## **Payment**

Full tuition payment is due on or by the 1st day of each month, unless prior arrangements have been made. Swan River Montessori Charter School reserves the right to assess a 10% charge on any past due balances. Any payment more than one month late, may result in the disenrollment of the child from the program. The Board of Directors reserves the right to pursue legal means to secure payments on delinquent accounts and further reserves the right to include any collection costs and attorney fees in the unpaid balance.

Should your family experience unusual and/or unpredictable financial hardship, please consult with the School Director as soon as possible. It is the Board of Directors policy to make every effort to assist families to make arrangements for payments.

### **Non-Sufficient Funds Checks**

Swan River Montessori Charter School will charge a handling fee of \$30 for the processing of any check returned to us because of insufficient funds. Upon receipt of a second NSF check, all future payments must be made with cash, cashier's check, or money order.

### **Termination and Notice Procedures**

Swan River Montessori Charter School requires a two weeks written notice of termination after the initial 30 day trial period. You will be responsible for payment of tuition for those two weeks whether or not your child continues to attend during that time.

### **Financial Assistance: SRMCS Scholarship Fund**

Financial assistance is provided to families who meet income requirements. Applications are available in the school office and on the school's web site. Please consult the School Director as early as possible if you have any questions. All assistance information is kept confidential.

### **Toilet Training**

Swan River Montessori Children's House Program only accepts children who are fully toilet trained and require no assistance in changing their clothes, including undergarments. Each Children's House classroom conveniently houses its own bathroom facility appropriately sized for children. We do understand that occasional accidents may occur and, therefore, request that a seasonally appropriate change of clothing be provided and left at the school for your child at all times. No child will be shamed or reprimanded when a toileting accident occurs. However, our teachers will call for a parent/teacher conference if continued accidents from any one child occur. The child may be asked to leave the school if the child is not deemed fully toilet-trained by the child's teacher and/or the School Director.

**\*\*Important:** Under NO circumstances, will any staff member assist a child with the cleaning/wiping of genital area(s).

## **SRMCS EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM: PROCEDURES & POLICIES**

### **Contracts & Schedules**

Enrollment in the Extended Care Program is completed via a contracted schedule. This contract is available on the school's web site or in the main office. The contract requires a set schedule of usage for AM and/or PM

care. Payment for the contracted schedule is required whether or not your child is in attendance. If you desire to modify your schedule, even temporarily, please contact the main office.

Swan River charges a fee of \$5.00 each day for morning extended care and \$15.00 per day for afternoon extended care for all part time schedules.

There is no registration fee for the Extended Care Program.

## **Payment**

Payment is due on or by the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month unless prior arrangements have been made. You will be billed for every hour included in your schedule as written on your contract for each month. Families are not charged for half days or any other days/times that school is not in session (winter break, teacher workshop days, etc.). There is a separate registration process for school days with early dismissal times. Two or more late payments may jeopardize your child's enrollment in the Extended Care Program.

Should your family experience unusual and unpredictable financial hardships, please consult with the School Director as soon as possible. It is the Board of Directors policy to make every effort to assist families to make arrangements for payments.

## **Emergency Care & Late Pick-Up**

Emergency care (any care provided for non-contracted students) is \$7.00 per student in the morning and \$20.00 per student in the afternoon.

Extended Care is open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 2:10 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. A late charge of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes, or any increment thereof, will be applied for any pick up after 5:00 p.m. This is a per student charge. Parents should call the school if a delay is inevitable.

## **Drop Off & Pick Up of Students**

During all Extended Care times, parents are expected to park their vehicles and accompany their child to and from the Extended Care classroom. The Extended Care staff will not leave the Extended Care classroom at any time to assist in dropping off or picking up of a child. The children will remain under the supervision of the Extended Care staff until regular school classes begin or a designated adult arrives to pick up.

## **Non-Sufficient Funds Checks**

Swan River Montessori Charter School will charge a handling fee of \$30 for the processing of any check returned to us because of insufficient funds. Upon receipt of a second NSF check, all future payments must be made with cash, cashier's check, or money order.

## **Occasional Extended Care**

Families who normally do not utilize Extended Care, but have a special one-time need MUST make arrangements at least 24 hours in advance. Under these circumstances, we will try our best to accommodate your needs, but we cannot guarantee availability.

## SRMCS Extended Care Discipline Rubric

Our goal is to provide all children with an opportunity to learn, make friends, and have fun in a safe and caring environment. That said, not all extended day activities and clubs are right for every child. If a child is struggling with behavior regulation during extended care, we are committed to working with families to determine if our program is the right fit. To that end, we have outlined the following discipline code.

Please review the following general rules and disciplinary consequences that will guide the program. It is imperative that both students and parents understand the expectations of the program as well as the potential consequences. We ask that you discuss the information listed below with your child. We appreciate your efforts and thank you for your continued support in making appropriate behavior a priority for all children.

General rules:

1. Show respect to teachers, staff and fellow students at all times and always use respectful language when addressing teachers and students.
2. Always follow instructions set forth by extended care teachers and staff.
3. Responsible care of school property and equipment.
4. No disruptive behavior, including fighting, violence of any kind, or inappropriate language.
5. Comply with all other regulations set forth by teachers, staff and school administrators.

INCIDENT OR INFRACTION Physical, Aggressive or Violent Behavior	INCIDENT OR INFRACTION Uncooperative or disruptive behavior	DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE
1st Offense Engaging in physically aggressive behavior including minor altercations	1st Offense Violation of any rule listed above	Warning letter to parents
2nd Offense Engaging in physically aggressive behavior including minor altercations	2nd Offense Violation of any rule listed above	Warning letter to parents
3rd Offense Engaging in physically aggressive behavior including minor altercations	3rd Offense Violation of any rule listed above	Suspension for 1 day of extended care
4th Offense Engaging in physically aggressive behavior including minor altercations	4th Offense Violation of any rule listed above	Suspension for 1 week of extended care
5th Offense Engaging in physically aggressive behavior including minor altercations	5th Offense Engaging in physically aggressive behavior including minor altercations	Expulsion from the extended program for 1 semester or 1 year

1st Offense Engaging in physically aggressive behavior including major altercations		Immediate suspension or expulsion from the after-school program
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Swan River thanks you for taking the time to read through this handbook carefully. If you have any questions or would like to discuss a topic further, please contact the School Director at 763-271-7926.

**ATTACHMENT 1: HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE PROHIBITION POLICY**

Adopted: August 29, 2005

Revised: January 1, 2024

**Harassment and Violence Prohibition Policy  
(Bullying Prohibition Policy)**

**I. PURPOSE**

- A. It will be a violation of this policy for any student or district employee to harass a student or district employee through conduct (e.g., physical, verbal, graphic or written) that is based upon that student or employee’s actual or perceived race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, public assistance, or marital status or age [protected class] as defined by this policy. For purposes of this policy, a district employee includes school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the district. For purposes of this policy, school district includes charter schools.
- B. It will be a violation of this policy for any student or district employee to inflict, threaten to inflict, or attempt to inflict violence based upon a student or district employee’s actual or perceived protected class as defined by this policy.
- C. The school district will investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment and/or violence based upon a student or employee’s perceived or actual protected class and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student or school district employee who is found to have violated this policy.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions, which have been modified for purposes of this policy, are found in the Minnesota Human Rights Act. Please note that there is not a definition for every protected class.

- A. Disability. “Disability” means any condition or characteristic that renders a person a disabled person. A disabled person is any person who (1) has a physical, sensory, or mental impairment which



materially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.”<sup>1</sup>

- B. Discriminate. “The term "discriminate" includes segregate or separate and, for purposes of discrimination based on sex, it includes sexual harassment.”
- C. Educational institution. “Educational institution" means a public or private institution and includes an academy, college, elementary or secondary school, extension course, kindergarten, nursery, school system and a business, nursing, professional, secretarial, technical, vocational school, and includes an agent of an educational institution.”
- D. National origin. “"National origin" means the place of birth of an individual or of any of the individual's lineal ancestors.”<sup>2</sup>
- E. Sexual harassment. “Sexual harassment” includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
  - (1) submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining employment, ... [or] education...;
  - (2) submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment, ...[or] education...; or
  - (3) that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment, ...[or] education..., or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, ...[or] educational... environment.”
- F. Sexual orientation. "Sexual orientation" means having or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person or having or being perceived as having an orientation for such attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness.

### III. HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE GENERAL APPLICABILITY

- A. The anti-discrimination laws apply to all of the academic and nonacademic (e.g. athletic, and extracurricular) programs of the school district, whether conducted in school district facilities or elsewhere.
- B. For purposes of this policy, any student who is harassed or discriminated against, including subject to violence, by peers or school district employees based upon that student’s actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public

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<sup>1</sup> This includes students with an IFSP, IEP, and students who qualify for special education and related aids and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>2</sup> This includes harassment of students born in the United States who have relatives that are from other countries.

assistance, or marital status and age [protected class] may file a complaint as described more fully in section IV below.

- C. For purposes of this policy, any school district employee who is harassed or discriminated against, including violence, by students or other school district employees based upon that employee's actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age may file a complaint as described more fully in section IV below.
- D. The alleged harassment/violence consists of harassing conduct (e.g. physical, verbal, graphic, or written verbal or physical) based upon that student's actual or perceived protected class that interferes or limits the ability of that student to participate in, enjoy, or benefit from the education program, including athletics and extracurricular activities.
- E. The alleged harassment/violence may not be directed at a particular person, but may instead consist of harassing conduct (e.g. physical, verbal, graphic, or written) that creates a hostile environment for students based upon actual or perceived protected class that interferes with or limits the student's ability to participate in, enjoy, or benefit from the academic and nonacademic programs, including athletics and extracurricular activities.

#### IV. DESCRIPTION OF HARASSMENT BASED UPON A PERSON'S PERCEIVED OR ACTUAL PROTECTED CLASS

- A. Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based upon actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age.
  - (1) Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as nonverbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating.
  - (2) It is unwelcome if the student or employee did not request or invite it and considered the conduct to be undesirable or offensive.
  - (3) The conduct is considered harassment if it creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.
- B. Sexual harassment based upon sex/gender and/or sexual orientation
  - (1) Sexual conduct that is unwelcome.
    - a. It is unwelcome if the student or employee did not request or invite it and considered the conduct undesirable or offensive.
    - b. A student's submission or failure to complain does not mean that the conduct was welcome – look at circumstances.

- C. Sexual violence: Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof which involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 609.341, includes the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas.
- (1) Sexual violence includes rape, sexual assault, and dating violence. This includes coerced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts. The physical act is considered nonconsensual if a person is incapable of giving consent due to alcohol or drug use or due to an intellectual or other disability.
  - (2) Sexual violence includes touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another student's or employee's intimate parts of the clothing covering the intimate parts.
  - (3) Sexual violence includes coercing or forcing or attempting to coerce or force a student or employee to touch anyone's intimate parts.
  - (4) A police report does not relieve the school of its responsibilities under Title IX.
- D. Assault: Assault, as defined in state statute is:
- (1) an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death; or
  - (2) the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another.
- E. Racial, color, creed or national origin harassment/violence
- (1) Intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student, based on perceived or actual race, color, creed or national origin, that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.
  - (2) Racial violence: Racial violence is a physical act of aggression or force, or the threat thereof, which is directed toward a student or employee based upon their perceived or actual race, color, creed, or national origin.
- F. Religious harassment/violence
- (1) Intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on perceived or actual religious beliefs that create a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.
  - (2) Religious violence is the threat of or an actual physical act of aggression or force which is directed toward a student or employee based upon their perceived or actual religion.
- G. Disability harassment
- (1) Intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on disability that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the school district's programs.

- (2) Disability harassment also may deny a student with a disability a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Harassment of a student based on disability may decrease the student's ability to benefit from his or her education and amount to a denial of FAPE.

## V. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. The adoption and implementation of a proper reporting system can help the school district comply with the Minnesota Human Rights Act by allowing the school district to promptly address allegations of harassment and violence.
- B. Pursuant to Title IX, each school district must designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the regulations, including Title IX complaint investigation (Title IX Coordinator). 34 C.F.R., section 106.8(a). Each school district must also publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of sex discrimination complaints, including complaints of sexual harassment. In addition, under Section 504 and Title II, school districts are also required to have grievance procedures to address disability harassment.
- C. Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.03 requires that school districts have reporting procedures for sexual, religious, and racial harassment and/or violence complaints.
  - (1) For purposes of meeting the state reporting requirements, the following reporting procedure will be made available for students and staff who wish to report an incident or incidents that may involve harassment or violence based upon actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age.
  - (2) Designated school district person to receive oral or written complaints/reports of actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age.
- D. Human Rights Officer Designation
  - (1) The school board hereby designates the School Director and/or the Operations Coordinator as the school district human rights officer(s) to receive reports or complaints of harassment or violence based upon actual or perceived sex/gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, disability, receipt of public assistance, or marital status and age. If the complaint involves one of the designated human rights officers, the complaint will be filed directly with the superintendent.
  - (2) In the event the superintendent is the designated human rights officer, the complaint should be filed directly with the school board.
- E. The school district will conspicuously post the name of the human rights officer(s), superintendent, and school board: including mailing addresses and telephone numbers.
  - (1) The Human Rights Officer is Annette Vemuri  
Mailing address: 500 Maple Street Monticello MN 55362

Telephone number: 763-271-7926

Email address: director@swanrivermontessori.org

(2) The superintendent is Annette Vemuri

Mailing address: 500 Maple Street Monticello MN 55362

Telephone number: 763-271-7926

Email address: director@swanrivermontessori.org

(3) The school board contact information is: Jana Evink, Board President

Mailing address: 500 Maple Street Monticello MN 55362

Telephone number: 763-271-7926

Email address: janae@swanrivermontessori.org

F. These reporting procedures are not intended to prevent a person from reporting harassment or violence incident(s) to another school official.

(1) The school official must immediately notify the principal, who is then responsible to submit the oral or written complaint/report to the human rights officer without screening or investigating the credibility of the report. If the school principal is not available on the date of the report, then the school official must forward the oral or written report/complaint directly to the human rights officer.

(2) If the report was given verbally, the principal will personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the human rights officer.

a. If the school principal fails to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint (written or verbal) to the human rights officer within 24 hours, the principal will be subject to disciplinary action.

(3) If the complaint involves the building principal, the complaint will be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the school official or reporting party or complainant.

G. The human rights officer may request, but not insist, upon a written complaint. The school district encourages the reporting party to complete the complaint form for written complaints. It is available from the principal of each building or the school district office. Alternative means of filing a complaint, such as through a personal interview or by tape recording, will be made available upon request for qualified persons with a disability.

H. The complaint (verbal or written) should be reported to a school official immediately, or within 30 calendar days whenever possible, of the alleged violation. The school district will accept reports of alleged incidents that are older than 30 calendar days; however, delays between the date of the alleged incident and the reporting date may make investigations more difficult.

## VI. INVESTIGATION

A. The human rights officer, upon receipt of a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment toward an employee or student, will promptly undertake an investigation if deemed appropriate. The Title IX coordinator may conduct the investigation complaints of sexual harassment, the 504 coordinator for complaints of disability harassment, or the human rights officer for other types of alleged harassment and violence covered by this policy. The Title IX coordinator/504 coordinator or human rights officer

may designate a neutral third party to conduct the investigation. The investigation will be completed within 30 calendar days from receipt of the complaint, unless impracticable.

- B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.
- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the school district will consider the facts and the surrounding circumstances, such as the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
- D. The school district may take immediate steps to protect the parties involved in the complaint process, pending completion of an investigation of alleged unlawful discrimination or harassment of an employee or student.
  - (1) Upon completion of the investigation, the school district or neutral third party designated investigator will make a written report to the human rights officer. If the complaint involves the human rights officer, the report must be filed directly with the superintendent. If the complaint involves the superintendent, the report must be filed directly with the school board. The report will include the facts, a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated and whether a violation of this policy has occurred, as well as a description of any proposed resolution which may include alternate dispute resolution.
  - (2) Upon completion of the investigation, the human rights officer will inform the complainant/reporter of his or her right to review the written report at the school building where the complainant/reporter is employed or enrolled, in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.
  - (3) If the complainant/reporter is a student, the human rights officer will inform the parent/guardian of his or her right to review the written report at the school building where the student reporter is enrolled, in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.
  - (4) The school district must comply with federal and state law pertaining to retention of records.

## VII. APPEAL

If the grievance has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant/reporter, s/he may appeal to the human rights officer within ten (10) school days of receipt of the findings of the school district investigation. The school district investigator will conduct a review of the appeal and, within ten (10) school days of receipt of the appeal, will affirm, reverse, or modify the findings of the report. The decision of the school district investigator is final, and action will occur as addressed in VIII below.

## VIII. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- A. Upon conclusion of the investigation and receipt of the findings, the school district will take appropriate and effective action. If the investigator determined that a violation of this policy has occurred, such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer,

remediation, termination or discharge. Actions may also include alternative dispute resolution, including restorative justice programs, school or district wide training, counseling, and class transfer. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, state and federal law, and school district policies.

- B. The result of the school district's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the school district in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

#### IX. REPRISAL

- A. The school district will take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged unlawful harassment toward an employee or student or any person who testifies, assists, participates in an investigation or hearing related to alleged unlawful harassment covered by this policy. Reprisal also includes retaliation against a student or district employee who associates with a person or group or persons who are disabled or who are of different race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation or harassment. Reprisal is also prohibited based upon a request for a religious or disability accommodation.

#### X. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- A. If there is a conflict of interest with respect to any party affected by this policy, appropriate accommodations will be made, such as, but not limited to, appointing or contracting with a neutral third party investigator to conduct the investigation, or recusal from the process by the person for whom a conflict or potential conflict of interest exists.

#### XI. HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE AS ABUSE

- A. Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556 may be applicable.
- B. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the school district from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence, or abuse.

#### XII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

- A. This policy must be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students and staff members.
- B. This policy must be given to each school district employee and independent contractor at the time of entering into the person's employment contract.
- C. This policy must be included in each school's student handbook on school policies.

- D. The school district has developed the following process for discussing the school's harassment and violence policy with students and school district employees: [Insert process to be followed at each school building].
- E. The school board will review this policy annually for compliance with state and federal law.
- F. The school district will post this policy on its website and ensure that it is easily accessible to view and download. If the school district does not have a website, the school district has made the policy accessible for parents and community members by [insert how it is made accessible].

XIII. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

- A. These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the agencies below, filing a report with a law enforcement agency, or initiating action in state or federal court. For claims of unlawful discrimination/harassment:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
Freeman Building  
625 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
toll free: 800.657.3704  
tty: 651.296.1283  
fax: 651.296.9042  
<http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us>

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil rights, Region V  
500 W. Madison Street- Suite 1475  
Chicago IL 60661  
Tel: 312.730.1560  
TDD: 312.730.1609



## **Employment Discrimination/Harassment**

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

330 South 2nd Ave., Room 430

Minneapolis, MN 55401

(612) 335-4040

1-800-669-4000

Fax: (612) 335-4044

TTY: (612) 335-4045

[www.eeoc.gov/minneapolis/index.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/minneapolis/index.html)

## **Legal References and Resources**

MDE's Model Policy Web page ([www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us) > Welcome to MDE > Policies > Model School and District Policies ) provides links to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights Web page for examples of harassment/discrimination, and to the federal Dear Colleague letters for specific examples of harassment and violence based upon a person's actual or perceived race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, public assistance, or marital status or age.

Minn. Stat. § 121A.03, Subd. 2 (Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy)

Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)

Minn. Stat. § 609.224 (Assault in the Fifth Degree)

Minn. Stat. § 626.556 *et seq.* (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)

42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.* (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act) (Title VI)

20 U.S.C. § 1681, *et. seq.* Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX)

29 U.S.C. §794 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)

42 U.S.C. § 12131 *et. seq.* Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II)

## **Resources for Definitions and Examples of Discrimination or Harassment**

### *Federal Resources*

Department of Justice: Dear Colleague Letter: Enrollment practices addressing actual or perceived citizenship (2011) (US Department of Justice)

Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

Dear Colleague Letter dated April 4, 2011: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence (2011)

Dear Colleague Letter: Bullying and Harassment (2010)

Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Harassment Issues (2006)

Dear Colleague Letter: Religious Discrimination (2004)

Dear Colleague Letter: First Amendment (2003)

Dear Colleague Letter: Prohibited Disability Harassment (2000)

The OCR Dear Colleague Letters can be viewed on the U.S. Department of Education website:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/publications.html>.

Sexual Harassment: It's Not academic (Revised 2008)

Sexual Harassment Guidance (revised 2001)

Racial Incidents and harassment against Students (1994)

*State Resource:*

MDH website for more information about the Minnesota Human Rights Act:  
<http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us/>.

*Technical Assistance and Training*

U.S. Department of Education, Office of School Support and Technology Programs, Equity Assistance Centers Program (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/index.html>). As set forth on the website, Centers work with schools in the areas of harassment, bullying, and prejudice reduction. Centers also develop materials, strategies, and professional development activities to assist schools and communities in preventing and countering harassment based on ethnicity or gender. More recently, they provide resources and training in the areas of hate crimes, racial prejudice, and bullying.

Minnesota is in Region V, Programs for Educational Opportunity, University of Michigan,  
Programs for Educational Opportunity (PEO)  
1005 School of Education  
Ann Arbor, MI, 48109  
Tel: 734.763.9910  
Fax: 734.763.2137

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, established by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, <http://pbis.org>