



Navarre Montessori Academy
Staff Handbook

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“The mission of Navarre Montessori Academy is to change the world one child at a time.”

WELCOME TO NAVARRE MONTESSORI ACADEMY

We would like to formally welcome you to Navarre Montessori Academy, where the children learn by doing. Together, we can make this year a rich and happy learning experience for everyone. The mission of Navarre Montessori Academy is to change the world one child at a time. NMA provides children with an organic and bilingual education that views children as people and not a number based on a standardized test. We believe in our school and ask you to support us in our quest to provide the best educational opportunities for all of our children as they prepare themselves to be productive citizens in our global community. We are here to assist each child in reaching their potential. We ask for your support and cooperation. We hope to have this handbook readily available will prove the resource needed to answer any questions you may have concerning our preschool and its activities.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The policies stated in this Handbook are intended as guidelines only and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the head of the school. All staff members are responsible for upholding the policies and procedures stated herein and in the Parent Handbook and/or other procedural documents. Those guidelines should be read carefully, and questions should be asked to the Head of school for clarification.

STATEMENT TO STAFF

This document discusses our beliefs about, expectations, and intentions with all staff members. Our fundamental premise is that we have selected a staff of talented, competent, responsible adults and that you, in turn, have chosen NMA as the place you want to be. These individual decisions were based on our shared vision of what education and the NMA community might be. We would like to share the vision, which is based on valuing and practicing cross-cultural understanding, holistic teaching/learning, and family/community involvement. We believe that learning is an active process of self-construction, which occurs as we (children, parents, teachers/staff, and friends) go about our everyday routines in the company of other people. There are two critical notions embedded

in this view of learning.

First, all learning constructs (emotional, social, ethical, aesthetic, creative, wellness, intellectual, and “school success”) are intertwined; they simply cannot be separated. These schools and homes are social learning environments— just being in the company of others affects and changes each of the participants.

Second, we each (children and adults) bring our unique personal history to this community. We, as staff, need to listen to — in the deepest sense— children’s and parents’ personal stories (perspectives), and also to each other’s stories, if we want our curriculum and everyday classroom experiences to be meaningful. If we do not base our curriculum and practices on these stories, we end up creating “busy work” environments. They look good but are not effective if true learning is to take place. Ongoing, two-way communication between parents and staff is the only way to ensure meaningful home and school environments. If we only focus on our classrooms and ignore children’s home lives (their home stories), we are only doing half our job. We come together as staff not only with our vision and personal stories but also with expectations of and responsibilities to each other. We will promote the highest quality, professional, consistent and respectful preschool environment. We will support each person’s personal and professional endeavors to the best of our ability. In turn, we expect each of you to be 100% accountable for your performance and to work collaboratively with all other members of our community. We expect you to stay informed of school matters by attending staff meetings, Parent Education events, and other school functions and by reading staff updates/emails and the preschool newsletter.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY OUTLINE

Navarre Montessori Academy values welcoming and celebrating a diverse population.

NMA treats all employees and applicants for employment without unlawful discrimination as to race, creed, color, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation in all employment decisions.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY OUTLINE

Sexual harassment in employment violates the provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any employee who is aware of any instance of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to the Director. All complaints will be investigated promptly, impartially, and discreetly and, upon completion of the investigation, the appropriate parties will be notified immediately of the findings. Navarre Montessori Academy will not tolerate any

forms of discrimination and harassment by anyone. Any employee who harasses another will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. No words, acts or symbols of racial or gender discrimination will be allowed. Proven harassment because of an individual's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Navarre Montessori recognizes an employee's desire to display mementos pertaining to their family or other personal items. While NMA cannot take responsibility for the safekeeping of these items, it welcomes its employees to personalize their work areas for added comfort or pleasantness. However, several guidelines must be observed. They are as follows:

- Nothing can be displayed that (in the opinion of management) is derogatory to any person or system of beliefs.
- Objects (in the opinion of management) that are inappropriate or hinder work and educational efforts will not be allowed and must be removed upon request.
- Safety comes first – No object can interfere with school safety, as viewed by the company management.
- Excessive personal belongings that clutter the work or classroom area (in the opinion of management) will not be allowed and must be removed upon request.

An inventory of all personal items brought to the classroom or work areas in the school is conducted at least once a year. Inventory sheets are kept in the director's office in a designated file. Staff must update their personal inventory sheets whenever they bring items to the classroom or to their work areas that need to be recognized as personal property. If an employee chooses to leave employment or is dismissed from Navarre Montessori Academy, he/she will only be allowed to take the items listed on their personal inventory sheets until proper documentation is provided to determine ownership.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

To ensure that all individuals who join Navarre Montessori Academy are well qualified and to maintain a safe and productive work environment, it is our policy to conduct pre-employment background checks on all candidates that accept an offer of employment. Background checks may include verification of any information on the applicant's resume or application form. All offers of

employment are contingent on receipt of an acceptable background check once reviewed by Navarre Montessori Academy. All background checks are conducted in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as all federal and state anti-discrimination and privacy laws. All background checks are kept confidential and only viewed by Navarre Montessori Academy representatives involved in the hiring process.

Should a background check lead Navarre Montessori Academy to deny employment, a copy of the report will be provided to the applicant, and the applicant will be given the opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the background check results. Background checks may include a criminal record check, although a criminal conviction does not automatically bar an applicant from employment. Navarre Montessori Academy also reserves the right to conduct background checks on current employees to determine suitability for promotion.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Navarre Montessori Academy makes every effort to keep its staff as fully employed as possible and at a good rate of pay. When an employee is on the job, this means that 100% of their effort is required. If an employee chooses to work outside of their job and the outside work competes with what is expected of them as an employee, or the potential of a conflict of interest is perceived, opportunities for promotion and advancement with NMA may be limited.

If management feels that outside employment prohibits an employee from fulfilling their obligations to the company or possesses a potential conflict of interest, they will be asked to resign or to leave their outside employment.

Employees are not permitted to conduct outside employment activities on company time, such as during prep hours, summer employment, faculty meetings, or during the course of the normal work day. All management and supervisory personnel are expected to enforce this policy and, by example, refrain from conflicting outside employment.

Teachers may not solicit families of currently enrolled children for employment of any nature within a period of one year following the employee's termination date. This includes solicitation to provide child care services in personal residences or other licensed facilities, which would involve the removal of any child enrolled at Navarre Montessori Academy.

CELL PHONE, CLASSROOM PHONE & COMPUTER USE POLICY

Personal cell phone use is strictly prohibited during the instructional day. While the employee is charged with supervising the children, the staff should refrain from using any form of technology for personal use that is not directly related to classroom instruction.

STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

The staff is required to be at the school at the accorded time. All the staff is responsible for their children from the accorded time until dismissal. We must have a minimum of one adult with first aid packs and radios at each recess. This will be the sole responsibility of the assigned classroom. During our hours of instructional operation, staff should NEVER leave there any child unattended.

REIMBURSEMENTS

Reimbursements must be approved prior to purchase by the Director. All staff must first acquire purchase approval and then turn in their receipts and the proper reimbursement paperwork. Reimbursements will be submitted every other Friday, included in the paycheck. All documentation must be submitted by 3 p.m. the Tuesday before submission.

PAYROLL

NMA follows a by-monthly payroll for all hourly employees, with pay dates specified in the pay schedule of each school year. In the event these days fall on a holiday or weekend day, payroll will be done on the business day before. All payroll will be processed through Direct Deposit unless otherwise arranged. Pay stubs are available online only.

STAFF ATTENDANCE

Navarre Montessori Academy relies on steady and dependable employee attendance from teachers and staff to operate the school in an uninterrupted fashion. Successful classroom instruction and overall student discipline in the school rely on having each classroom staffed with a professional teacher. Because of this fact, absenteeism and/or the failure to report one's absence in a timely manner is disruptive to all school operations. If one person is absent or fails to call in to report his/her absence promptly, this may cause others to work overtime to cover the vacant classroom for the day. In this case, absenteeism negatively impacts the school's success, resulting in a loss of educational

opportunities for students. Therefore your attendance is of vital importance, not only in relation to your co-workers but also with respect to the overall school. Providing high-quality education depends on your commitment and attendance.

Attendance is a ***crucial part of the consistency and well-being of the school and, more specifically, the child.***

- All staff should be on time and work according to their contract/schedule. The Director will address tardiness on an individual basis.
- Attendance is required at all school-wide functions, including but not limited to Open House, Parent Orientation, and the annual activities.
- Staff children can stay around during staff meetings.
- Punctual and regular attendance is an essential responsibility of each employee at Navarre Montessori Academy. Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, on time, and prepared to start working. Employees also are expected to remain at work for their *entire work schedule*. Late arrival, early departure, or other absences from scheduled hours are disruptive and must be avoided.

"Absence" is defined as the failure of an employee to report for work when he or she is scheduled to work. The two types of absences are defined below:

- *Excused absence* occurs when all the following conditions are met:
 - The employee provides to the Director sufficient notice at least **48 hours** in advance of the absence.
 - Alerting the Director of an absence through a co-worker, leaving a voicemail on the school phone, sending a personal text message, sending an e-mail, or entering your absence into the calendar system is not considered to be an adequate or appropriate means of notice. Failure to call in by 7:00 p.m. the day before that you are going to be absent will result in disciplinary action.
 - The absence request is approved in advance by the Director.
- *Unexcused absence* occurs when any of the above conditions are not met. If it is necessary for an employee to be absent or late for work because of an illness or an emergency, the employee must notify Director or Director Assistant no later than twelve hours *before* the employee's scheduled starting time on that same day. If the employee is unable to call, he or she must have someone make the call.
- An unexcused absence counts as one occurrence for the purposes of discipline under this policy continues to be a problem after counseling, it will result in disciplinary action, up to and *including termination*.

- No later than the day following the absence, you must give a hard copy of your medical excuse.
- All employees should be concerned with the care and safe use of school equipment and facilities. Good school keeping is expected from everyone.
- A clean work environment everywhere in the school is essential for smooth and productive operations.
- If you fail to call in for 1 consecutive days, your employment may be terminated unless you have a compelling reason for failing to call.
- An employee who is absent, late excessively, or fails to notify the Director directly, will require disciplinary action. If tardiness, attendance, or proper notification

CLASSROOMS

- Teachers in the classroom are responsible for keeping their classroom area neat and clean at all times. Teachers are encouraged to maintain a classroom environment conducive to the learning process. Classrooms should be clutter-free.
- Classroom materials and bookcase cleaning are the responsibility of the classroom staff and must be done on a regular basis. Shelves need to be dusted on at least a monthly basis. Personal items must be kept at a minimum and not add to unnecessary clutter in the classroom area.

BATHROOMS, KITCHEN AND OTHER

- Bathroom cleanliness and supplies should be checked throughout the day. Please report plumbing problems to the Director immediately.
- Kitchen chores such as washing your own dishes and coffee cups are the employee's individual responsibility. Staff and teachers should not expect colleagues or the janitorial service to clean cups, utensils, or other materials used in the classroom or individual food preparation.
- Student nap mats must be cleaned with soapy water, rinsed, and sprayed with a sanitizing bleach solution ***every Friday***.
- Nap materials (***Rollie Pollie***) are sent home every Friday for laundering.
- Janitorial services are provided Wednesdays and Fridays. However, children in your classrooms should be encouraged to keep their classroom space tidy and clean.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Do not initiate or accept social media “friend” requests from current or former students. Also, employees are prohibited from “friending” parents of current or prospective students due to the inherent conflicts of interest that may arise.
- Staff are encouraged to “like” Navarre Montessori Academy on Facebook and engage in other social media activities that benefit the public persona of Navarre Montessori Academy. Positive comments, blogs, and posts are encouraged.
- Pictures of students and parents should not be uploaded unless express written permission is given by the parties to the school. Staff will always respect the privacy of its students, parents, and employees when posting to external social media sites.
- Employees may not post financial, confidential, sensitive or proprietary information about the NMA, NMA parents, NMA children, NMA employees, or NMA applicants.
- Employees may not post obscenities, slurs, or personal attacks that can damage the reputation of the Navarre Montessori Academy, NMA parents, NMA employees, or NMA applicants. Employees should write in the first person and make it clear that he/she is speaking for him/herself and not on behalf of representing the views, policies, or practices of Navarre Montessori Academy or its affiliates.
- If the employee publishes content to a website or social media outside of NMA and it has something to do with work or people associated with NMA, a disclaimer such as this should be used: “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views, policies, or practices of Navarre Montessori Academy or its affiliates.”
- Staff will always respect the privacy of NMA students, NMA parents, and NMA employees when posting to external social media sites.
- Employees should identify themselves with their name and position at Navarre Montessori Academy when discussing NMA or NMA-related matters.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The following general principles apply to every employee and may form the basis for the standards contained in this part. Where a situation is not covered by the standards set forth in this part, employees shall apply the principles set forth in this section in determining whether their conduct is proper.

1. Employees shall not hold financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of their job.
2. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions using non-public information or allow the improper use of such information to further any private interest.
3. Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.
4. Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind Navarre Montessori Academy.
5. Employees shall not use NMA premises for private gain.
6. Employees shall protect and conserve NMA property and shall not use it for other than authorized activities.
7. Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions that create the appearance of violating the ethical standards set forth in this part. Whether particular circumstances create an appearance that the law or these standards have been violated shall be determined by the Director.

STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

(Adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida)

1. Our school values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.
2. Our primary concern is the student and the development of the student's potential. Employees will, therefore, strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
3. Concern for the student requires that our instructional personnel:
 - a. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
 - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
 - c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
 - d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
 - e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
 - f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.

- g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
 - h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
 - i. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
4. Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the community, employees of our school must display the highest degree of ethical conduct. This commitment requires that our employees:
- a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
 - b. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
 - c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
 - d. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and, further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
 - e. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

Training Requirement All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.

REPORTING MISCONDUCT BY INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATORS

All instructional personnel, educational support employees, and school administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel, educational support employees, and school administrators that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry,

sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors. Reports of employee misconduct should be made to the school director at 850.710.3879. Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to the school owner, Kiani Richardson, at 850.710.3879.

Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida-certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services. Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in and on our Web site at <https://www.montessorinararre.com/contact-us>

Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect

All employees and agents have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Call 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

Signs of Physical Abuse

The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries; broken bones; or burns. A child experiencing physical abuse may seem withdrawn or depressed, seem afraid to go home or may run away, shy away from physical contact, be aggressive, or wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

The child may have torn, stained or bloody underwear, trouble walking or sitting, pain or itching in genital area, or a sexually transmitted disease. A child experiencing sexual abuse may have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively, fear a particular person, seem withdrawn or depressed, gain or lose weight suddenly, shy away from physical contact, or run away from home.

Signs of Neglect

The child may have unattended medical needs, little or no supervision at home, poor hygiene, or appear underweight. A child experiencing neglect may be frequently tired or hungry, steal food, or appear overly needy for adult attention.

Patterns of Abuse

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

Liability Protections

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by law, or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department or any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action. (F.S. 39.203)

An employer who discloses information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee upon request of the prospective employer or of the former or current employee is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed by the former or current employer was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the former or current employee protected under F.S. Chapter 760. (F.S. 768.095)

AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

- Your employment with NMA is on an “at-will” basis. This means your employment may be terminated at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. Likewise, we respect your right to leave at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause. We further recognize that schools operate in 10-month cycles and that it creates difficulties if either the teacher or the school adjusts employment circumstances during the school year.
- Nothing in the staff handbook or any other NMA school document should be understood as creating guaranteed or continued employment, a right to termination only “for cause,” or any other guarantee of continued benefits or employment. Only the Directress has the authority to make promises or negotiate with regard to guaranteed or continued employment, and any such promises are only effective if placed in writing and signed by both parties.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

All staff should notify the Director immediately of any changes in address, phone number, or any pertinent life changes.

PROCEDURES FOR CALLING IN SICK

- Contact the Director or Director Assistant by phone or text through Brighwheel *no later* than 7:00 pm, a day before your absence. In case of a teacher's absence, the teacher should find his/her own substitute on the substitute list.

CHILDREN'S ILLNESS, ACCIDENTS, AND INJURY

We do not have a school nurse on staff. Therefore, when a child is ill or involved in an injury, you must comply with the following procedures:

- If a child is involved in an accident or is injured, notify the Director immediately via mobile. If the child is able to walk, escort the child inside and apply first aid.
- If the child can not move, do not move the child! You may cause greater injury.
- ***The teacher who saw the accident must complete an “Accident Report”*** on the Brighwheel app. It is preferred that it be filled out at the time of the injury.
- If injury warrants immediate medical attention, the Director will notify the parent/guardian to determine whether to call an ambulance, take the child directly to the hospital, or leave the child at the school. In the event we cannot locate a parent guardian, the Director Assistant will make that decision.
- Notification of parents must be immediate by the Director Assistant. It must be in such a way that no undue apprehension is caused by the parents. Do not allow the child to contact their parents regarding illness or injury until the Director or Director Assistant has notified the parents.

BEHAVIOR/INCIDENT REFERRALS

- If a problem occurs that requires notification of parents, the staff must fill out a Incident report through Brighwheel and notify to the Director or Assistant Director on the day of the incident. It is very important that they be filled out correctly and timely.
- Be very specific about the incident that caused the referral. For example: if the child is being referred for fighting, do not write “was in a fight” under the incident section. Write exactly what happened.
- All referrals need to be notify to the Director by the end of the school day.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

While every situation cannot be anticipated, the following regulations specify impermissible conduct that may result in disciplinary action including immediate discharge. In all instances, the School will determine the appropriate discipline to be imposed. Commission of any of the following or similar acts is considered serious and provides grounds for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

Without limiting the School’s right to discharge an employee at any time, with or without cause, the following acts of misconduct are provided as non-exclusive examples of unacceptable activity:

- Misusing, defacing, destroying, stealing, or wrongfully possessing property of the School or School employees, parents, students, or visitors.
- Gambling on School property.
- Gossiping or sharing personal details of your life to staff and parents.
- Possessing, using, distributing or being under the influence of illegal drugs or strong prescriptions at any time while conducting School business or while on School property, or possessing, consuming or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages while conducting School business.
- Supplying false or misleading information when applying for employment, or at any time during your employment.
- Altering, destroying, willfully misplacing, discarding or falsifying School records.
- Failing to maintain any privileged or confidential School information, including but not limited to, documents, reports, records, files, correspondence, and communications.
- Publicizing your relationship with the School to further any outside business, political, or philanthropic pursuit without the express written approval of the Heads of School.
- Engaging in any unethical conduct, including soliciting or accepting gratuity, favor, gift, or entertainment for anyone who reasonably believes they may benefit from your connection to the School.
- Uttering, publishing, or distributing false, vicious, or malicious statements, concerning the School or any of its employees or students.
- Being tardy excessively, being absent from work without proper permission, or misusing leave days.
- Engaging in disrupting or discourteous behavior adversely affecting employees, parent, students, or visitors.
- Smoking or otherwise using tobacco on School property.
- Making or receiving excessive personal telephone calls.
- Sleeping on the job, loitering or wasting time while on the job
- Refusing or failing to perform assigned work, or committing any act of insubordination.
- Violating any policies or procedures contained in this Staff Handbook.
- Engaging in any behavior that threatens the health, safety, or emotional or physical well-being of a student.
- Inappropriate use of the internet.

NMA reserves the right to evaluate and determine if an employee has used the internet inappropriately. Please see details under Personal Phone Calls, Cell Phones, and Texting.

LOCKDOWN

All children and staff should be inside with doors shut, windows covered, and lights off. No check-in or check-out of students is allowed during the lockdown.

TORNADO WARNING

The shelter place is in the restroom or cubby area.

CHILDREN RECORDS

It is important that we have current information for every child. If you receive a change of address, phone number, or email, please notify the Director. You must not give any child information, i.e. telephone numbers, addresses, names, etc. to anyone.

Progress reports are to be printed and filed chronologically in the cumulative child file a minimum of 2 times per school year within 3 (three) days of parent-teacher conferences.

VISITORS

All visitors will be required to schedule a tour before entering the school. Visitors also need to show their driver's license before entering the premises.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

All use or possession of any alcoholic or illegal substance on the premises or at a Navarre Montessori Academy event or reporting to work while under the influence of intoxicants or drugs will not be tolerated. Use or possession is grounds for immediate dismissal. Any observed use or possession is to be reported directly and immediately to the Directress. Failure to do so can be cause for immediate termination.

REPORT MISCONDUCT

All employees and agents of a public school district, charter school or private school have an obligation and legal responsibility to report

misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Obscene language, Drug and alcohol use, Disparaging comments, Prejudice or bigotry, Sexual innuendo, Cheating Testing violations, Physical aggression, Accept or offer favors. Failure to report misconduct may result in penalties up to termination of employment and revocation of an educator's certificate.

Report to the school director Kiani Richardson 8507103879

NON-SMOKING/TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

- We believe in the right of all people to breathe clean air. To help protect the health of our learners, families, staff and our global community, we are a Tobacco Free Center. Smoking is **not** permitted on the premises or at NMA events.
- Staff should take great care in assuring that if they go off premises to smoke, they do not smell like smoke upon their return.

CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

There is a lot of work that goes into keeping our environment and grounds a pleasing environment. We ask for your help with the following:

- Turn off all lights when exiting a room.
- Turn off all water faucets, where applicable, and flush all toilets.
- Check all windows to make sure they are locked.
- Open flame candles are not permitted to burn in the building.
- Only approved picture hangers are to be used to hang materials on the walls.
- If something breaks and needs repair please contact ASAP the Director.
- Check the floor for trash and pick it up.

EXPECTATIONS OF A MONTESSORI PROFESSIONAL

All Staff Members are expected to:

- Demonstrate a true love and respect for children and their individual learning differences;
- Demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to Navarre Montessori Academy's mission and vision and delivery of instruction;
- Demonstrate the characteristics of honesty, integrity and sense of humor;
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively deal with confidentiality issues;
- Communicate directly and effectively with all staff members without adhering to gossip or speaking ill of others at any time;

- Show compassion and empathy with parents/families at all times without adhering to gossip or speaking ill of others at any time;
- Be constantly aware of the appropriateness of the conversations that we have with co-workers, learners, and other adults;
- Show evidence of ongoing professional growth;
- Model positive attitudes and courtesy for all children and adults;
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate and collaborate with colleagues, parents and the community;
- Be flexible and open-minded to new ideas and processes;
- Possess a strong aptitude for or willingness to grow in regard to technology and its applications;
- Meet or exceed all other expectations in this Employee Handbook

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

Living up to the mission of NMA entails that we work in trusting, open and consistent relationships. So it is reasonable to insist on a high degree of mutual professional and personal respect and a high level of mutual support. In a community of mutual respect and support, we are able to converse freely among ourselves; the result is that our individual growth is accelerated.

NMA and the Director value staff actively participating in discussions of decisions affecting them. We value diversity in perspectives leading to a deeper understanding of organizational reality and an enriched knowledge base for decision-making. We value staff members resolving conflict in a healthy way that leads to stronger solutions for complex issues. We value staff members reflecting on their own and others' thinking in order to achieve better organizational decisions. We value all staff acknowledging mistakes and learning from them. A genuine community requires respect for individual rights. This means, among other things, a high degree of attention to confidentiality. We should share information about one another and our learners/parents on a judiciously defined need-to-know basis. If one needs to know something in order to carry out school responsibilities, one should know it; otherwise, one should not.

We believe that each of us is an educational leader and that each of us is equally responsible for creating the NMA community. To this end, we must be flexible and help out when needed. To continue to improve consistency in all areas of the school, staff may be asked to problem-solve in other environments and mentor new staff members.

We understand that many of us have additional jobs/hobbies/ services offered outside of NMA.

PROHIBITED

It is **prohibited to:**

- Send out emails, or other forms of communication, to families soliciting for your event/product. In the instance of a close, personal relationship with families at the school — of course, those communications are appropriate to those families.
- Any social networking regarding children, and or staff, including photographs of **children is strictly prohibited.**

STAFF DRESS CODE POLICY

Maria Montessori Academy (the “School”) is concerned with the inner development of the child’s mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. Therefore, we seek to limit undue focus on external appearances. Betiwyn Holcombe, a Montessori expert, best expresses the School’s dress code focus, “A child who wants to shine needs to focus on shining from their mind not from what he or she puts on their body.”

All attire should be neat and appropriate for the day’s activities and the season. Our daily dress should bear in mind that we are professionals in the community and models for the children. The school’s primary objective is to have employees project a professional image. Proper grooming and attire have a positive impact on the school’s image. Positions that involve frequent, direct public service contact: i.e. those where meeting the public is an inherent function of the position, and where such contact would normally occur daily, are subject to the following appearance standards. In an effort to create and maintain an image of professionalism for our parents and other visitors, tattoos should be kept covered during school hours and when there is a likelihood that parents/visitors will be present.

Items that may be perfect for working in the yard, going on a picnic, or playing sports isn’t appropriate for the school, nor is clothing that is too revealing. Regardless of the item, it is essential to avoid wearing anything to school that is excessively worn, frayed, or wrinkled. Take your day’s schedule into account when you are dressing. If you have a meeting scheduled with parents, or if you are advised that others in the school will have visitors with whom you will come in contact, you will want to dress in business attire. And, of course, business attire is always acceptable if that is your preference.

OVERVIEW OF ACCEPTANCE WEAR

Listed below is a general overview of acceptable wear as well as a listing of some of the more common items that are not appropriate for the office/school. These items should help set the general parameters for proper school wear and allow you to make intelligent judgments about items that are not specifically addressed. A good rule of thumb is that if you are not sure if something is acceptable, choose something else or inquire first.

SCHOOL YEAR

- **School Shirt:** School shirts with logos. One will be provided. Undershirts, like turtle neck, should be only black and white only.
- Black Long Pants

SUMMER PROGRAM

- **School Shirt:** School shirts with logos will be provided and must be turned in if finishing employment.
- Shorts no shorter than two fingers up the knee.

CASUAL; Last Friday of Each Month

- Slacks—Slacks in a variety of materials are acceptable, provided they are clean and wrinkle-free. Avoid cargo pants that have multiple pockets and ties. Inappropriate items include jeans, sweatpants, wind suits, short shorts, bib overalls, leggings, spandex or other form-fitting pants.
- Shirts—Casual shirts/golf shirts, both with or without collars, sweaters, and turtlenecks, are acceptable. Inappropriate items include tank tops, sweatshirts, shirts with large lettering, logos or slogans, halter tops, and t-shirts unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket, or jumper.
- Dresses and Skirts—Casual dresses and skirts, and split skirts at or below the knee are acceptable. Dress and skirt length should be no shorter than four inches above the knee. Mini-skirts and spaghetti-strap dresses should not be worn to school.
- Footwear—Loafers, boots, flats, dress sandals, open-toed shoes, clogs and leather deck shoes are acceptable. Stockings are acceptable if it's appropriate for the rest of the outfit. Teachers can change into slippers like the children.
- Check yourself - With the prior approval of the administration, jeans and athletic shoes are acceptable on certain days, such as clean-up days, field

trips, park days, and etc. If an item of clothing is deemed to be inappropriate for the school, the employee may be sent home to change clothes and will be given a verbal warning for the offense, and progressive disciplinary action will be taken for further dress code violations. Any questions regarding NMA Dress Code should be directed to the Director.

- No hats are allowed inside. As a role model for children, professional attire is at all times important; certain types of clothing, such as bandeaus, revealing shirts, transparent clothing, very thigh-fitting clothing, short shorts, and short skirts are examples of inappropriate clothing for a school environment.

These are not allowed. T-shirts with illustrations and/or wording inappropriate for our aged children to view are also not permitted.

Take into consideration

- **Be simple:** Avoid clothing that is visually disruptive. Think about patterns and colors the way you'd choose colors and artwork for the walls of your classroom: neutral tones that can blend into the background when the children are at work.
- **Avoid excessive jewelry and nail decor:** Children should be attentive to your hands while you're presenting the materials. Don't interrupt that attention with distracting baubles or brightly colored nails. If you regularly wear jewelry that has a special meaning to you, by all means, continue to. You should still be who you are and value what you value. But save the style choices for when you're out of the classroom. Your hands and wrists should be especially easy to look past as you draw the children's attention to the materials. Extra-long nails are not permitted. Wear comfortable soft-soled shoes. Montessori can be rough on your back and body.
- **Wear shoes that offer you proper support** with a light foot-fall. If you prefer a more stylish shoe, wear them to school, but take a moment when you enter the classroom to mindfully remove them and replace them with classroom shoes. Is less disruptive to the children's work. You can always put them back on when you're preparing for a faculty meeting, parent conference, or leaving for the day. ***For the safety of staff, flip-flops are not allowed. Inside shoes are required.***
- **Wear clothes that befit a professional.** Let's hope together for the day when all teachers are respected for their professional expertise, but in the meantime, don't feed into the perception that we're babysitters. You don't have to wear a suit and tie to the classroom, but you shouldn't wear yoga pants either. The simple, tasteful dress reminds parents and community members that you are a professionally prepared teacher.

- **Dress to move:** You'll find yourself in all sorts of curious positions as a Montessori teacher. Dress for modest movement through the classroom. Check your necklines to make sure they don't fall open if you bend over. If you wear skirts, check the length to make sure you can kneel comfortably in them and that they're long enough to keep you covered if you're in a chair and the children are seated on the floor. Ensure they don't require tugging, pulling, or readjusting through the day. **Remember: the children are watching your movements,** and even as you move through the classroom, you should be able to do so quietly and without distraction. The most interesting thing about a lesson on a floor mat shouldn't be watching a teacher try to get up from it! Avoid clothing that is visually disruptive. Think about patterns and colors the way you'd choose colors and artwork for your classroom walls: neutral tones that can blend into the background when the children are at work.

In her book, *The Absorbent Mind*, Maria Montessori wrote:

The teacher also must be attractive, pleasing to appearance, tidy and clean, calm and dignified. These are ideals that each can realize in his/her own way. The teacher's appearance is the first step to gaining the child's confidence and respect. The teacher should study his/her own movement to make them as gentle and graceful as possible.

GOALS WITH CHILDREN

All staff model attitudes and behavior throughout the learning environment and must therefore be meticulous about appearance, conduct and language. If we want the children to sit a certain way at class meetings/line time, then we should sit that same way. We are also being role models at lunch and should use the same practices we expect from the children. We should follow the same lunch guidelines for children when we are in their presence. We should use low voices when speaking and whisper when talking about any behavioral issues.

GOALS WITH PARENTS

Parents are their children's first and primary teachers. The main way we establish a collaborative relationship with parents is through authentic communication. Parents are welcome to observe in the classroom once normalization is achieved. We should meet with parents and discuss volunteer procedures in individual classrooms to build a community of parents active in the learning environment. NMA has events to welcome parents as partners in their child's educational life and we as staff work to support this practice. Either parents or

the staff may request a conference at any time. It is imperative that we as staff not risk compromising our standards by seeking or accepting gifts or favors. Each staff member has a strong obligation to the school and to the standards of the profession.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We emphasize the extraordinary degree of care that employees must take in maintaining the confidentiality of all school matters, including information about children, families, and employees. Our obligation to maintain confidentiality requires that information not be released to anyone other than the individual, the child's parent/guardian, or the transferring center without the express written consent of the individual or the parent/guardian if the individual is a minor. Exceptional care must be taken to protect confidential information; failure to abide by this procedure may lead to termination. This requires that private information not be discussed with parents and that confidential information, including staff memos, correspondence, and child records, be safeguarded.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES AND GOALS OF STAFF

1. Your first responsibility is for the health and safety of all the children. Always be alert to any safety hazard and avoid even the appearance of a safety hazard or poor supervision of children or inattentiveness to their safety. Report any safety hazards immediately to the directress. Your next responsibility is for the development of each child's potential that help with the challenge of meeting their career goals and personal fulfillment needs.
2. You are expected to be non-judgmental towards people with different lifestyles, families who are from different ethnic groups and cultures, who have different goals and expectations for their children and themselves, and who may be dealing with the problems of changing lifestyles and family patterns in different ways. Families are subject to different stresses and have varying capacities for tolerating stress and organizing their life. We need to remember that parents may be under stresses and pressures we know nothing about. We can help them by being tolerant of their ways of coping and their occasional irritability or forgetfulness while continuing to remember that they do love their child.
3. We all have a serious responsibility toward the school, its reputation, and its success educationally and financially. If we, as a community, should fail, or even become less effective, we would be letting down the children and parents who depend on us. Beyond all this we have a responsibility to society as a whole by helping children become caring people with high standards and

goals, people who are happy, successful, wise and competent. You are in a unique position to help create a more compassionate democracy. By creating powerful learning environments you can dedicate yourself to providing the most effective education ever for all in your care. Each of us at NMA plays a key role in the education and future of our community and global society.

4. Staff is expected to be at work and in their areas, preparing, maintaining, and/or implementing new materials at their contract start time and the agreed time for assistants, and leave no earlier than their contract end time except by approval of the Directress. We are paid professionals and contract times are MINIMAL work times required of all staff. We should expect that on many occasions it will be necessary to meet on preschool matters outside of normal work hours, especially at level and staff meetings.

It is expected that staff will provide a Montessori educational program and that they will cooperate fully with the Directress in matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and all other class matters. Each staff member should seek an understanding of all materials in their class and diligently read Maria Montessori's beliefs and words to better understand the pedagogy. Any questions about the philosophy or the beliefs of the school should be asked explicitly to the Directress. Professional evaluation of faculty continues throughout the year for ongoing development through goal setting, staff, self-evaluation, and ongoing dialogue. Ongoing evaluation leads to specific performance objectives and actions and is meant to encourage reflection and lead to continual improvements.

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IN THE COMPANY OF CHILDREN

There is to be no gum chewing during work hours, or on walks. Teachers may eat during children's lunch times, after children have been served, or at designated snack times for the children, and must always model proper eating habits. Food or drinks consumed in the presence of children must be appropriate choices—no canned soft drinks, candy, sweets, or foods we do not allow children to bring in lunches.

Voices are to be kept low and adult conversation needs to be at a minimum during classroom time. Teachers are to speak respectfully to children, parents, and other staff. In the event that staff uses inappropriate/unprofessional language, a verbal warning will be issued by the Director. If a second warning is needed, it will be in the form of a written warning, which the staff must sign. This warning will be placed in the file.

BEHAVIORAL GUIDES FOR TEACHING

Here are some techniques and principles, which can be depended on at first as guidance to school action. These can be applied in an increasingly individual way with added experience. The success of some of these techniques depends in part on the relationship built up with the children. Time is required to build and understand relationships, but during the process, these "rules" will give clues to appropriate behavior. In time, with experience and increasing insight, each one of us will make our own generalizations and add new interpretations.

GUIDES IN SPEECH

1. State suggestions or directions in a positive form.

A positive suggestion is one that tells a **child what to do** instead of pointing out what not to do. If a child has already done what s/he should not do or is about to demonstrate inappropriate behavior, s/he needs help in getting another idea of action. We give the child help when we direct his/her attention to what we want the child to do.

For example, "Keep your hands out at your sides" will help the child who is in danger of losing balance better than "Look out!" or "Stop jiggling!" Here we tell the child what to do, not point out what they are doing wrong.

A question is not a statement. We may say, "Don't you want to sit down?" when we mean that we want the child to sit with others, but we are uncertain of our words or not sure we will succeed. What we should say is, "Please sit with the others now. It's time for a story," confident that the child will want to be included.

A positive direction is less likely to rouse resistance than a negative one. It makes help seem constructive rather than limiting and interfering. If the child is doing the action to annoy us, we emphasize the positive and thereby reduce the attention and importance of the negative aspect of the child's behavior.

Sometimes misbehavior is only negative because it is inappropriate to the time and place. For example, running is not wrong, but outside is where running should happen, not inside. By simply phrasing the redirection positively, we withhold judgment of right and wrong when it is not necessary to draw attention to it.

Examples:

- ◆ "Ride your bike around the bench" instead of "Don't bump into the bench."
- ◆ "Throw your ball over here" instead of "Don't hit the window."
- ◆ "Carry the heavy blocks carefully to the floor" instead of "Don't drop them on Billy."
- ◆ "Take little bites to swallow them better" instead of, "Don't put so much in your mouth."
- ◆ "We sit on chairs to be comfortable" instead of "Get off the table."

2. Give the child a choice when you intend to leave the situation up to him/her.

Choices are legitimate. With increasing maturity one makes an increasing number of decisions. We accept that being able to make an appropriate choice develops maturity. There are decisions that a child is not ready to make because of his/her limited capacities and experience. We must be careful to avoid offering a choice when we are not really ready ourselves to let the child decide the question. We offer choices when, no matter which choice the child chooses, we are content with that choice. When we do not really intend to let the child decide, do not put the request out in a choice form. Questions are often hidden demands for compliance. Be careful that you offer legitimate choices. A child is **not free to decide to hurt someone or something.** S/he can decide, however, what or where to play or work..

3. Use your voice as a teaching tool.

We have known individuals who think that the louder they speak, the greater their chances are of controlling behavior. It may be necessary to speak firmly or seriously, but it is never necessary to raise one's voice unless there is imminent danger. The most effective speech is simple, direct, and slow.

It is better to move nearer to the children and teachers to whom you are speaking. **It is never okay to shout across the room.**

Speech conveys emotion as well as ideas. Children are sensitive to tonal quality, the tightness in a voice, the facial appeal. They understand fear and anger, annoyance or friendliness more from how you say something than from what you actually say.

The teacher sets a pattern for others in his/her speech. If the teacher uses a harsh voice, children will later imitate the teacher's voice tones.

Think carefully and use words that will best achieve the desired response from the children. If you are angry, calm yourself first and then use clear, quiet words.

4. Avoid trying to change behavior by methods that may lead to loss of self-respect, such as shaming or labeling behavior with a judgment.

It takes time to learn constructive ways of guiding behavior. The first step is to eliminate the destructive patterns in use. We must discard gestures, expressions, tones of voice, as well as words that convey the impression that the child should feel ashamed of him/herself. It is hard to change one's behavior unless one feels respect for oneself. The young child is especially dependent on feeling that others respect him/her.

Behavior can be undesirable or unacceptable or inappropriate. Do not add to the child's burden by passing judgment. Labeling behavior with a judgmental term such as "naughty" or "bad" or "selfish" or "babyish" fails to take the situation and the reasons for such behavior into account, and also is irrelevant in helping to change the behavior into more positive action. Labels will only encourage continued and possibly worse behavior. They do not build self-respect.

A child will be helped if we accept him/her, as they are, that they are indeed doing the best of which they are capable. Try to make it possible for the child to find some success, rather than reproofing him/her for not living up to our standards every moment.

Sometimes voicing the emotion a child appears to be experiencing is enough for the child to relax and try again with renewed effort: "I see that you are angry because the puzzle piece doesn't seem to fit. How about if you take a deep breath and try again slowly like this...." Now is not the time for a lecture about safety—now is the time to reduce frustration and acknowledge feelings.

5. Avoid motivating a child by making comparisons between one child and another or by encouraging competition.

Comparing one child to another is not the way to influence behavior. We may get results in changed behavior, but these changes may not all be improvements. Some of these results may even lead to the child's feeling of inadequacy.

Competitive schemes for getting children to dress more quickly or to eat more of something may have some effects that are not what we want. Children who are encouraged to be competitive are very likely to quarrel more with one another. In any competition someone always loses, and s/he's likely to feel hurt and resentful. Even the winner may be afraid of failing next time, or s/he may feel an unjustified superiority if the contest was an unusual one. Competition does not build positive social feelings.

Competition not only handicaps smooth social relationships but also creates problems within the child himself. We live in a highly competitive society, it is true, but the young child is not ready to enter into much competition until his concept of himself as an adequate person has developed enough so that he can stand the strains and the inevitable failures that are part of competition.

Children should not feel that their only chances for getting attention and approval depend on being "first" or "beating" someone or being the "best." They should feel sure of acceptance whether they succeed or fail.

6. Redirection is most effective when consistent with the child's motives or interests.

If the child is throwing a ball dangerously near a window, for example, we can suggest a safer place to throw it. If s/he's throwing something dangerous because s/he's angry, we can suggest an acceptable way of draining off angry feelings—like throwing against a backstop or using a punching bag or pounding at the workbench. In the first case, his interest is in throwing and in the second case it is in expressing his anger. Our suggestions for acting differently will take into account the different meaning in his behavior. We will always try to suggest something that meets the needs he is expressing in his behavior.

Effective redirection faces the situation and does not avoid or divert. The aide who sees a child going outdoors on a cold day without his coat does not give him help when she stops him by saying, "Stay inside and listen to the story now." She is avoiding the question of the need for a coat. She helps him by saying, "You'll need a coat on before you go outside." On the other hand, in another situation, suggesting a substitute activity may help the child, as in the case of two children wanting the same piece of equipment. The teacher helps when she says, "It's Bill's turn now. You might take another work off the shelf while you're waiting for

your turn." Redirection should help the child face his problem by showing him how it can be met, not by diverting him.

7. Effectiveness of a suggestion may depend largely on its timing.

The timing of a suggestion may be as important as the suggestion itself. Through experience and insight one can increase one's skill in giving a suggestion at the moment when it will do the most good. When a suggestion fails to bring the desired response, it may be due to the "timing."

Advice given too soon deprives the child of a chance to try to work things out for himself. It deprives him of the satisfaction of solving his own problem. It may very well be resented. A suggestion made too late may have lost any chance of being successful. The child may be too discouraged or too irritated to be able to act on it.

Help at the right moment may mean a supporting hand before the child loses his balance. It may mean arbitration before two boys come to blows over a wagon, or the suggestion of a new activity before the group grows tired and disorganized. Effective guidance depends on knowing how to prevent trouble.

GUIDES IN ACTION

1. Give the child the minimum of help in order that s/he may have the maximum chance to grow in independence.

There are all kinds of ways to help a child help himself if we take time to think about them, such as letting him help to turn the doorknob with us, so that he will get the feel of how to handle a doorknob and will be able to do it alone someday; or such as putting on his boots while he sits beside us, instead of picking him up and holding him on our laps, a position which will make it hard for him ever to do the job himself someday. Too many times, the child has to climb down from the adult's lap when he might have started in a more advantageous position in the first place on his trip to independence.

Giving the minimum of help may mean showing a child how to get a block or box to climb on when he wants to reach something rather than reaching it for him. It may mean giving him time enough to work out a problem rather than stepping in

and solving it for him. Children like to solve problems, and it is hard to estimate how much their self-confidence is increased by independent solving of problems. To go out and gather a child into one's arms to bring him in for lunch may be an effective way of seeing that he gets there, but it deprives him of the chance to take any responsibility in getting himself inside. It is important to give a child the minimum of help in order to allow him to grow by himself as much as possible.

In leaving the child free to satisfy his strong growth impulse to be independent, we support his feeling of confidence in himself. "I can do this all by myself," or, "Look what I can do," s/he says. Confidence in self is based on a foundation of trust in others and a feeling of being valued by others. When a child asks for help, we listen to his request and answer it in a way that will make him less afraid of being helpless and dependent on us. This in no way interferes with our efforts to avoid giving unwanted help, with our efforts to leave the child free to act independently, and with our efforts to help the child find ways to move away from his dependency on us. We will give only the help that the child feels s/he needs.

2. Make your suggestions effective by reinforcing them when necessary.

Sometimes it is necessary to add several techniques together in order to be effective. A verbal suggestion, even though given positively, may not be enough in itself. "It's time to come to the table for lunch," may need to be reinforced by another suggestion such as, "I'll help you put the blocks away," if the child is reluctant to leave his work, and then reinforced by actual help in cleaning up. A glance at the right moment, moving nearer a child, a verbal suggestion, actual physical help are all techniques, and one must judge when they are to be used. Give only the minimum help necessary, but give as much help as may be necessary.

One teacher says quietly, "It's time to go inside now" and moves toward the house. The child moves with her. Another teacher says, "It's time to go inside" and stands as though waiting to see what the child will do. She stays where she is, so the adult's behavior does not reinforce her words. Her behavior suggests something different.

When several children are playing together, some will accept suggestions more readily than others for different reasons. Success with one child will reinforce one's chances of success with others. It is wise to consider which child to approach first when one wishes to influence a group.

One of the most common faults of parents and teachers is using too many words and giving two or three directions when one would have been sufficient. Anxiety and insecurity often take the form of a child's "deafness" to too many words. It is important to have confidence in the child's ability to hear and respond to one suggestion, given only once. It is better to add different techniques together until one is successful rather than to depend solely on words.

3. Forestalling is the most effective way of handling problems; learn to foresee and prevent.

Success in forestalling problems comes with experience. It takes time to learn what to expect in certain types of situations with particular children or combinations of children.

Learning to prevent problems is important because the child who approaches others by doing something annoying may actually not have the verbal skills yet to successfully join a group of children. A child has an opportunity to learn acceptable ways of approaching others if/when the teacher, observing a child having difficulty joining a group, says to the child, "If you'd like to play with these children, you might ask Michael if he needs another block," or some other suitable suggestion.

A teacher may also sometimes need to move into a situation to give more support or to interpret for the group what the children's intentions might be, or even to help the child accept her/his failure and find another place where he/she might have a better chance of success. If a teacher allows a child to consistently fail, the child will lose the opportunity to learn a way to interact constructively in social situations.

4. When limits are necessary, they should be clearly defined and consistent.

There are limits beyond which a child cannot be allowed to go. The important thing is to be sure that the limits set are necessary and that they are clearly defined. If a child is to understand what the limits are, these limits must be clearly and simply defined for her/him. When we, as educators, are sure that a limit is necessary and that the child understands it, we can maintain it with confidence.

The adult must be the one who is responsible for limiting children so that they do not come to harm, or destroy property. Children will feel more secure with adults who take on this responsibility.

5. Use the most strategic positions for supervising.

Sometimes one will observe an inexperienced teacher with her/his back to most of the children as she/he watches one child. On the other hand, the experienced teacher, even when working with one child, will be in a position to observe at a glance what the other children are doing.

In order for safety requirements to be met, teachers must be alert in order to insure that all areas are supervised and not just one area. In a school where there may be a number of adults on the floor to properly supervise, it is important that teachers avoid gathering in groups, such as near the entrance or around the sandbox. Grouping does not effectively zone or supervise an area where the children are under your supervision.

Where one stands or sits is important in forestalling or preventing difficulties. A teacher standing between two groups engaged in different activities can make sure that one group does not interfere with the other and can forestall trouble.

"Remote control" is ineffective control in a Montessori class. Stepping between two children who are growing irritated with each other may prevent an attack, but it cannot be done if one is on the other side of the room. A teacher's suggestion is more likely to be acceptable if her/his presence reinforces it. Trouble is seldom avoided by a suggestion given from a distance.

Choose the position for standing or sitting that will best serve your purposes, and check the spots that are strategically good for supervision. List places where close supervision is needed for safety, such as at the workbench.

6. The health and safety of the children is the primary concern.

The effective teacher must be constantly alert to the things that affect health, such as seeing that drinking cups are not used in common, that materials that have been in a child's mouth are washed, that the window is closed if there is a draft, that clothing is adjusted to changes in temperature or activity.

The valued educator must also be alert to things that concern the safety of children. Being alert to safety means observing and removing sources of danger,

giving close supervision to children who are playing together on high places, or to children who are using such potentially dangerous things as hammers, saws, and shovels. The point is familiar but clear-cut and important. Never relax your watchfulness.

Phase In/Adjustment Periods:

Entering school is a change for both children and adults. We ask families to be flexible for the first few weeks. Often, the first few days are shorter and with the presence of a parent or caring adult to whom the child is attached. Children will be phased in to the class slowly and securely. Each child is different, so each phase-in time will be different. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation during this time.

ALL STAFF MEMBERS MUST:

1. Smile and be friendly to all staff, children and visitors.
2. Recognize that offensive language is never appropriate and set an example to your co-workers and the children in your care by speaking appropriately.
3. Be in their area except for brief breaks when necessary and appropriate.
4. Be aware of the safety of all children in and out of your care at all times.
5. Recognize that safety and cleanliness is important at all times. Notify us immediately of anything needing repair. We also want to encourage the children to keep our environment beautiful.
 - a.) School-wide — pick up papers on the floor or around rooms, properly clean up spills on carpets and floors, maintain outside areas (look from a family's eyes when they enter the building, and help our children to form good cleanliness practices).
 - b.) Classroom — Eliminate all clutter, keep all shelves dusted and neatly organized, and keep all storage areas organized and accessible. Although empowerment and ownership are important for children in classroom maintenance, modeling and collaboration is paramount in maintaining the overall beauty of the classroom.
 - i.) Morning — Prepare all materials, put down chairs, prepare all shelves, make adjustments in lesson plans, put together new materials, etc. Greet all children as they enter with a smile and conversation!
 - ii.) Lunch — Check/maintain work rugs, clean and sanitize snack area, check/maintain tile and carpet, check/maintain all shelves.
 - iii.) End of day — Clean/sanitize all work and snack areas, put up all chairs, re-roll rugs (launder at least once per month, use the ones provided or have a parent help with this), recount and check for completed activities, sharpen pencils, check supplies, check/maintain folder storage, lunch box, and slipper

area, clean up any additional activities: outside, commons. Any areas needing additional attention should be communicated to the Director.

Employment Policies Application for Employment NMA employs credentialed Montessori Teachers, guides/assistants, and a variety of support staff.

Lead Teachers are professional teachers who enter into Teacher Agreements with the School for a specified period of time, for example, the academic year. Teacher assistants and support staff are hourly employees who work 10 months a year, unless otherwise agreed between NMA relies on you to provide accurate information during your application for employment throughout all stages of the hiring process and the term of your employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications or material omissions in any information or data may result in NMA excluding you from further consideration for employment or even termination of your employment.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

These procedures are not all-inclusive. All staff members are expected to read and thoroughly understand the Parent's Handbook and ask any questions necessary for clarification. The procedures and policies contained in the Family Handbook are to be followed thoroughly by all staff members. The following are some general guidelines, and procedures in their entirety can be found in the NMA Parent's Handbook.

CLASS ACTIVITIES

Field Trip — Permission slips will be sent home whenever your child's teacher contemplates such a trip. Permission from parents is needed for participation in field trips. These slips must be signed by the parent and turned in to NMA. If the slip is not signed and returned, the child will not go on the field trip. There will be additional field trip forms that are required for field trips. These will be made available prior to the field trip. There are also opportunities for parents to provide transportation for field trips. For safety purposes, all children must wear the school shirt with logo and dress code approved bottoms on all field trips.

Class Celebrations — Staff members should communicate class celebrations thoroughly to families and give families opportunities to share their specific family beliefs and celebrations to increase children's perspectives. Staff members should also communicate to families how to celebrate summer birthdays.

Sometimes this is set up as a half birthday or scheduled to be celebrated at the end of the year.

Staff members should always monitor the snack area and maintain the cleanliness and safety of the children. This area should be closed if the food or drink has become contaminated.

CHILD CONDUCT

For consistency with the child's conduct, each staff member will do the following:

- Communicate ground rules clearly and respond consistently.
- Notify the Director of any behavioral issues and provide a copy of all Behavior/ Incident forms with a summary of pertinent conversations with the parent.
- Communicate with families about positive and negative child conduct privately.
- Follow procedures, as stated in this, unless another method has been discussed and approved with the Directress, and follow due process guidelines. Fill out the proper form in a timely manner.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY

For consistency with children's Health and Wellness issues, each person should do the following:

- Be aware of all children's health conditions and take their temperature when necessary.
- If a child is running a fever or has another symptom that can be communicable, they will be isolated until a parent can be reached to pick them up.
- Evidence of any type of abuse or neglect must not be tolerated and must be reported to the directress who will report to the local authorities.

STAFF OFF-CAMPUS TRIP COMMITMENTS

- Fill out the Field Trip Planning form at least 2 weeks before the scheduled trip.
- Log the trip in the school calendar at least 2 weeks before the scheduled trip.
- Having knowledge of the location, the director should have previewed the trip.
- When at all possible, children should be put in groups with a child leader and an adult leader to support the overall learning process.
- Children should be asked to wear their preschool shirts unless it is a trip when another dress code is more appropriate.
- All areas of the trip should be well planned and organized — ex. If children are bringing their lunch — napkins/utensils should be brought and a way for them to wash their hands.

- At least one staff member should have a cell phone to communicate with the preschool and to families if the need arises during the day. The cell phone number should be given to all volunteers if the groups are going to be separated.
- Staff should communicate the overall trip with families at least 10 days in advance with the cost.
- Staff should remind families at least 2 days in advance about time, location, dress code, lunch procedures, and any other pertinent information.
- At least one staff member should greet all visitors and make sure they are introduced to the children.
- Staff should model to families that this is their time with children, not with other adults — and use questioning skills and ongoing conversation to support learning.
- Pack a First Aid Kit for every field trip.
- Staff members should notify all volunteers of the time/place of the mandatory meeting prior to the start of the trip. If volunteers meet you at the location, they should be informed that they need to go over the procedures as soon as they arrive.
- Siblings older than 3 years are not able to attend field trips. Discuss this matter with the Directress.
- Any support for children with exceptional needs should be discussed with the teacher of record at least 10 days prior to the planned trip.

CRITERIA OF EXCEPTIONAL STAFF MEMBER

Being an exceptional staff member and teacher is an ongoing journey. The following components provide an overview of the road to becoming an exceptional staff member!

- They have true love and respect for children, and they are humble enough to admit their mistakes and apologize when necessary.
- They are consistent with the Employee Handbook Guidelines.
- They maintain a beautiful, clean, and functional workspace for children.
- They collaborate with family volunteers to support them in working with other learners, ensuring that all NMA filters are in place and supported.
- They prioritize empowerment and ownership when working with children and are constantly supporting these initiatives in daily routines and practices.
- They have an insatiable work ethic that blends knowledge, teamwork, creativity, and intuition for constant improvement in supporting learning.

- They know themselves well and are able to reconcile stress and frustration in a healthy manner.
- They are honest with themselves and others and are open to new ideas and suggestions.
- They recognize their limitations, set professional development goals, and work candidly with other staff members to improve in these areas.
- They have outstanding “with-it-ness” skills and consistently know where learners are and what they are working on, both inside and outside the workspace.
- They take great care in organizing/orchestrating a respectful, peaceful environment in which children work in diverse groups with multiple partners.
- They understand the use, function, and objectives of all of the materials in the workspace and seek out new ways to use those materials to connect learning to children.
- They are independently reading and internalizing the beliefs and philosophy of Maria Montessori.
- They enthusiastically get to know each learner and take pride in knowing how to support him/her in connecting to new information by blending strengths and interests in this process. This includes knowing the child outside of the preschool day.
- They are constantly learning by reading and conceptualizing educational best practices, and they share this information with other co-workers.
- They are active participants in all staff meetings and use their voices with other staff members to support NMA in “walking the walk.”
- They follow through with all staff responsibilities in a timely fashion.
- They meet with their co-teacher weekly to discuss planning, areas of improvement and overall learning.
- They recognize the importance of being consistent in their actions and being intentional in their wording with children to support self-discipline and self-regulation.
- Always put on exam gloves when treating or assisting a child with a blood related injury, vomiting or bowel and bladder control issue. All contaminated clothing should be placed in a plastic bag to be sent home.
- Clean all bodily fluids properly and as instructed following OSHA guidelines, by using proper attire, cleaning, and disposal procedures for blood-borne pathogens.
- Any communication to a staff member about a communicable disease should be directed to the Directress for appropriate communication.
- Communicate any incidents, complaints, and charges to the Directress.

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION

A staff person who resigns from his/her position must give written notice of thirty days (30), so as to protect the safety of the children and to ensure a smooth transition. It is proper protocol to inform the Directress prior to 30 days if a move or alternative employment is anticipated.

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Malfeasance

Definition Malfeasance connotes a serious behavior problem. It has broad interpretations but would indicate a major problem, such as theft, acts in the community of a totally unprofessional nature, unprofessional unethical behavior, drunkenness, a criminal offense, assault on a child at the school or any member of the staff or any persons on the school premises, and so forth. Misappropriation of funds or willful damage to the school's property also warrants dismissal. Misconduct more minor in degree could warrant dismissal.

Conditions No dismissal notice shall be required, and the employee shall forfeit all privileges.

Medical Leave

You may be granted a medical leave of absence without pay.

Incompetence

Definition

Incompetence shall be measured in terms of but not limited to such factors as:

- Inadequacy of the employee's personality for sound relationships with the students, parents, staff, Director, administration, or volunteers to the school.
- Lack of growth and progress on the job.
- Little skill in the performance of duties.

- Negligence in terms of assignments given but not completed by the employee, such as writing newsletter articles, self-evaluations, student progress reports, and evaluations.
- No understanding or acceptance of the philosophy and purpose of the school.
- Poor professional community relationships.
- Use of cell phones for personal reasons while responsible for children.
- Absenteeism and lack of punctuality.
- Disloyalty to Owner, Director, faculty and staff, parents, student, or school policy.
- These factors shall be weighed in relation to the extent that each applies to the job in question.

Employee will be terminated at the first **unexcused** absence.

Attendance

- The employee will be terminated at the first **unexcused** absence.
 - The employee will be terminated if s/he fails to provide sufficient notice.
 - The employee will be terminated if has two or more absences in a two-week period.
 - The employee will be terminated if s/he fails to provide sufficient notice.
 - The employee will be terminated if has two or more absences in a two-week period.
- **Conditions** When a staff member's work appears to be unsatisfactory, the staff member shall receive an evaluation of his/her performance in a conference or in written form, followed by a reasonable opportunity for improvement. The period for improvement shall be specified and shall not exceed one month for professional employees and two weeks for office and hourly employees.

CONFIDENTIALITY

What is confidentiality?

Confidentiality means protecting all personally identifiable data, information, and records collected, used, or kept by the school district about a student. Confidentiality requirements also apply to any event, conversation, or record that you might see or overhear someone discussing.

What is personally identifiable data or information?

Personally identifiable information includes:

- Child or family names and address
- Child's social security or student number.

- Descriptions that would make it easy to identify a child and
- Anything else that would make it easy to identify a child.

What is a school record?

A school record, which is sometimes called an “educational record” or a “permanent record,” is anything that NMA collects, uses, or keeps about a child. This includes grades, health information, attendance reports, work papers, school photos, test results, etc. Data or information may be handwritten, drawn, sent or typed. It may also be a photograph, on audio or video tape, or on a computer disk.

What you SEE....and/or HEAR....in a school, classroom, hallway, bathroom, or at any site or activity the school participates in, should be considered confidential and only discussed or repeated to your supervisor, teacher, or Director. Even if you know a parent of one of the students you work with, do not discuss those activities with that parent.

Gossiping is NOT permitted.

Confidential information should only be discussed with the supervisor, teacher, or Director. If you overhear a conversation between students, staff, or administrators; do not repeat them to others. There are times when conversations, not intended for anyone other than those involved in the conversation, could be overheard. If you are concerned about what you have overheard, talk to the supervisor, teacher, or principal. If you ever find yourself in a situation of overhearing conversations that do not concern you, get up and walk away, shut a door that should have been closed, or make a noise to make your presence known. Do not put or allow yourself to be put in controversial situations. Volunteers should not take the liberty to read documents or browse through folders left in the office, on any desk, or in any filing cabinets.

Volunteers are NOT allowed to view any student records including student profile reports, test score results, report cards, attendance reports, or any document intended to be included in that student's records. Only students' parents are allowed to see their records until the student reaches the age of 18. Unless you are the parent of the student and have authorization for the documents the situation refers to, **volunteers should never** pick-up and remove any document or papers thrown away or anything that looks like garbage unless you have permission from the teacher or administrator.

(Example: Students may wad up and throw down papers they don't want someone else to see such as: worksheets with bad grades, detention slips, misconduct reports, homework assignments, notes, etc.) ***Under no circumstance*** shall these be taken from the school and shown to anyone. If you find any document on the school grounds that you feel needs attention, please give that document to a Director or teacher.

When assisting teachers and other staff with students, any conversation, any paper handled, and all student's work, cannot be discussed with anyone other than that teacher, supervisor, or principal of that school. Sometimes events happen such as accidents, fights, or other disruptions at a school and it is very important to let the staff handle any of these situations. Do not discuss these events with anyone other than the teacher or principal. What you say or do reflects upon your supervisor and school administration. If you repeat any part of any conversation or information about something you have seen, it could be misinterpreted by others. ***Again, what you see or hear must stay confidential.***

I, _____, have read the Staff Handbook and agree to abide by its policies and procedures without exception. I, _____, agree to keep all information that I learn about school, students and staff confidential. I further understand that I may learn personal information about a student and/or his or her family that is private. I understand that it is my duty and responsibility to preserve and protect this privacy and confidentiality. I understand that this duty will extend after I am no longer working with Navarre Montessori Academy. I also understand that information relating to persons who work for NMA is also privileged and must keep confidential. Both state and federal laws protect the confidentiality of students. By placing my signature below, I hereby indicate that I understand and agree to maintain the privacy of the student(s)' school-related and personal information.

Staff member's signature: _____

Staff member's title: _____

Date: _____