



community **Montessori**  
EDUCATION FROM WITHIN

# Family Handbook

## School Year 2011-12

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New Albany, IN 47150  
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## 1. Our History

Community Montessori was founded by Barbara and Glenn Fondren with a passion to establish more school choice and opportunities in our community. The school developed a Board of Directors and gained a 501(c) 3 non-profit status in November 1997. Community Montessori had its first day of school operation in August 1998 at capacity with 56 children. The school began at Summit Square in New Albany and added additional space in 1999 to meet its first mission, to add an age level every year through high school. The school moved to Floyds Knobs in 2000 and then to its permanent home on St. Joseph Road in 2006. Community Montessori met its second mission, of allowing children to attend without a financial barrier, by becoming a Charter School in the summer of 2002.

Our final goal, to add one age level every year, through eighteen years old, was realized in 2010-11 with the graduation of our first class of learners.

The school is led by a Board of community leaders and a Director.

## 2. Our Philosophy

### a. Mission Statement

Respecting children. Engaging families. Encouraging thoughts. Embracing the community. Community Montessori gives children an environment that respects all people and ideas. We also give families a vehicle to learn cooperatively, have fun, and promote peace with their children. As a school family we continue to expand our minds and use this knowledge to make an impact on our community.

### b. Community Montessori Goals

Community Montessori believes in holistic education which goes beyond teaching, and helps students expand their minds with a focus on cooperation, peace and respect. We believe that giving students a safe, consistent, and enriched learning environment will nurture their need to be independent learners. We believe they should be given time to practice and repeat new skills in a non-competitive and self-correcting atmosphere. We believe in assisting them in developing self-respect and self-monitoring behavior instead of a child only showing good choices when an adult is watching. We believe that all of our students should be given the opportunity to continue learning through the Montessori method and philosophy and support this by offering educational programs from age three through graduation. (See School Belief Statements Attachment A1/A2 and Graduation Requirements Attachment E, for further examples.)

## 3. Admissions

### a. Charter School (ages 5+, includes “Kindergarten”)

1. Any child that resides in the state of Indiana that is five (5) years old by August 1<sup>st</sup> of the attendance year may apply to Community Montessori.
2. Children turning five (5) years old after August 1<sup>st</sup> will only be considered as applicants if there are spaces available and after successfully completing an evaluation process with a Community Montessori staff member.
3. Parents should complete the application form and return it by the first Friday in February of the attendance year.
4. Children enrolling in the Charter Program must have completed application forms, attended an observation session, and completed the Family Communication Form and Parent Partner Commitment Form (there are two Commitment Forms for the Teen’s Program).
5. Applicants whose applications are received after the first Friday in February will be enrolled if spaces are available, or will be added to the waiting list after the lottery has taken place.
6. It is understood that children enrolled in the Charter School will be able to re-enroll the next year without re-applying. However, “Kindergarteners” moving to “first grade” may be subject to lottery.
7. No child will be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, family status or disability.

## **b. Lottery Process**

Any child who currently attends Community Montessori will not be subject to the lottery, with the possible exception of “Kindergarteners” entering “1<sup>st</sup> grade”. It is possible that more of our half day ‘Kindergarteners’ might apply than there are spaces available for ‘1<sup>st</sup> grade’. Therefore, a lottery among those children might be necessary, with children *not* currently attending Community Montessori added as spaces become available.

If there are more children applying for a particular age level than there are spaces available, a lottery will take place to fill those spaces. The lottery, when applicable, will be conducted by March 15<sup>th</sup> (unless otherwise stated) at Community Montessori or another designated location, and is overseen by an independent accountant.

If a child already attends Community Montessori, or is chosen in the lottery, and he/she has a sibling or siblings who have completed the application process, those siblings will be given preference for admission.

NOTE: Children who currently attend the Early Education Program that meet the entry requirements for Kindergarten the following fall **MUST COMPLETE THE FULL CHARTER APPLICATION PROCESS BY THE FEBRUARY DEADLINE**. Enrollment in Early Education **DOES NOT** automatically enroll you in Kindergarten.

## **c. Early Education (3 & 4 year olds)**

1. All children for the Early Education Program should be three (3) years of age with an independent bathroom routine established.
2. All applications are dated upon receipt and spaces are filled on a first-come basis. (Preference will be given to full day enrollment over PM only enrollment prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>)
3. New families must set up a time to attend an observation to discuss the school’s philosophy before the enrollment process begins.
4. It is understood that children enrolled in the Early Education program will be able to re-enroll the next year if the Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) have met their responsibilities in the Parent Commitment Form, to foster the best learning environment for their child;
5. No child will be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, family status or disability.

## **d. Adjustment of “Grade” Level**

Teachers and parents are able to recommend a “grade” level adjustment for a child/teen based on social, emotional and/or academic needs for an upcoming school year. These decisions are made typically by February of the current year for the following school year. Families can direct this request to their child’s teacher or advisor. Once a recommendation has been made there will be a meeting to discuss the rationale based on social, emotional, academic growth/support. Many times other staff members participate in this conversation dependent upon the circumstances of the individual learner. Based on the outcome of this meeting, the Director will finalize the decision with the teacher/advisor. A form is placed in the learner’s record to document the decision.

For teens in the 15-18 year old program, families/Advisors wishing to retain a teen in his/her “junior” year should communicate that information in the spring of the “junior” year. Families/Advisors who would like a teen to graduate early should communicate that information in the spring of the “sophomore” year. A meeting will also be scheduled and a form will be placed in the teen’s record.

## 4. Health and Safety

We respect that health and safety are important parts of all children/teens learning. We maintain that all learners' health information is confidential and will be shared only with parent/guardian permission, and only with necessary staff on an as needed basis. Information shared on the health form may be used when needed to form a plan of care to support your child/teen during their school day.

**a. Tobacco Free Campus** – 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 Campus.

### **b. School Commitment**

1. There will be First Aid and CPR certified staff in the building at all times. We strive to have staff members at all age levels who are First Aid and CPR certified.
2. Children will be under adult supervision at all times.
3. Fire drills will be conducted during alternating months throughout the school year.
4. Windstorm/earthquake drills will be conducted at least twice a year.
5. Evidence of any type of abuse or neglect will not be tolerated and will be reported to local authorities.
6. The school will provide vision and hearing screenings as required by state law.

### **c. Family Commitment**

1. All health records on the child/teen will be updated before the child enters school or returns to school in the fall of the year. This includes a current immunization record or having on file a waiver stating a parental objection based on religious grounds or a medical exemption from a healthcare provider for each vaccine not given.
2. If there is a physician's verification of a communicable disease, the school is to be informed so that other parents can be notified on the School Health Form at the entrance of the school.
3. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, they should not attend school and/or may be sent home from school:
  - a. Diarrhea, vomiting or stomach cramping;
  - b. Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound;
  - c. Difficult or rapid breathing;
  - d. Yellowish skin or eyes;
  - e. Conjunctivitis (pink eye);
  - f. Temperature of 100 degrees or higher;
  - g. Any skin rash or patch, (ex. Poison Ivy or Poison Oak) must be treated before returning to school and the exposed area must be covered by clothing or a bandage.
  - h. Stiff neck;
  - i. Head Lice;
  - j. Any other abnormal symptoms that would adversely affect their ability to concentrate/participate in the day's activities.

A child with any of the above symptoms should not return until they are clear of symptoms for **at least 24 hours without the use of fever/pain reducing medications, unless under the communication of a physician.** Children sent home with head lice must be viewed at the office before returning to class. We do not have a "no nit" policy and each case will be looked at individually.

### **d. Administration of Medication**

It is recognized that at times it may be necessary for learners to take either prescription or non-prescription medication during the school day. Medication will be administered once during the school day, at midday, unless there are written orders from a health care professional stating that the medication needs to be

administered more often. Medication requiring a one time of day dose should be given outside of school hours. Families are welcome to come in and administer any additional medication their child/teen may need. We are not able to administer eye medication. Should your child need eye medication during the school day, families are welcome to come in to administer it or it may be self-administered.

#### Prescription Medication

1. A "Permission to Administer" form, completed and signed by the parent/legal guardian, must be brought or faxed to the school before any medication is given. These forms are available in the Cupola.
2. All prescription medication must include a written order from a licensed healthcare professional with prescriptive rights. This can be the pharmacy label on the medication.
3. Medication must be in the original container labeled with the name of the learner, date, directions for administration and the prescriber's name.
4. Staff will administer medication as stated on the label directions, or as per written, signed and dated instructions from the doctor/prescriber.
5. No prescription will be administered after its expiration date.
6. Any change in medication (such as time or amount given) will require a new order by the prescribing healthcare professional and a new "Permission to Administer" form must be completed and signed by the parent/legal guardian.
7. Determination of a learner's ability to self possess and administer medication will be determined on an individual basis, and will require a Health Plan Meeting.

#### Non-Prescription Medication

1. A "Permission to Administer" form, completed and signed by the parent/legal guardian, must be brought or faxed to the school before any medication is administered.
2. Non-prescription medication must be in its original container that includes administration directions, learner's name and date, and should only be given at school if absolutely necessary.
3. Tylenol or Ibuprofen will be available for learners age twelve (12) and older. Permission to administer may be given to the staff by either written or verbal consent of the parent/legal guardian.

#### General Medication Procedures

1. All medication must be taken in the presence of at least one school employee and documented by staff in the Medication Log in the first aid area.
2. All medication will be kept and administered in the first aid area. Any exceptions will be determined on an individual basis.
3. Medication not retrieved by the parent/legal guardian, will be disposed on the last student day of the current school year.
4. The "Permission to Administer" form is valid for one school year.
5. All camping/going out trips medication administration should follow the guidelines above.

#### **e. Meningococcal Immunization Notification**

Current Indiana law (IC-20-30-5-18) requires that each year parents/legal guardians be informed about Meningococcal disease and the vaccine.

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection. "Symptoms of Meningococcal disease often resemble the flu and can include a fever, headache, nausea, and a stiff neck making the disease difficult to diagnosis. The bacteria that cause Meningococcal disease are transmitted through air droplets and by direct contact with an infected person. There is an immunization available (Menactra) as of 2010-11 school year, one dose is required for learners in "grades 6-12". Indiana Administrative Code 410-IAC 1-1-1 requires all learners entering "grades 6-12" to have a record of this immunization or exemption from this immunization. Please talk to your child/teen's Health Care Provider about Meningococcal disease and immunization.

Being a Public Charter School we report immunization data yearly to the Indiana State Department of Health through the CHILDREN AND HOOSIERS IMMUNIZATIONS REGISTRY PROGRAM (CHIRP). This

information may include names, immunization data, and other information such as date of birth or other identifying information as applicable. More information may be attained at The Indiana State Department of Health at [isdh.in.gov](http://isdh.in.gov); or The Department of Education at [doe.state.in.gov](http://doe.state.in.gov), or is available from the Curved Desk.

## 5. Home/School Connection

### a. Reporting Absences

Children enrolled in the Charter program, *without exception*, must have absences called or emailed in by 8:00 am daily. If a child will be late or absent, families should report this by calling 812-948-1000 and pressing 1 from the main menu or by emailing your learners teachers. Please give your name, your child's name, your child's studio or teacher name, and reason for the absence or tardy.

#### Late Arrivals/Admit One Slips

In order to hold families and children/teens accountable for their attendance, all learners arriving past their program start time must stop in the Cupola to receive an Admit One slip. For consistency in each class, learners should arrive on time every day. Again, if your learner will be late or absent, please notify your child's teacher or the Curved Desk by 8:00 am.

#### Absence Waiver for 5+ year olds (Kindergarten and up)

We understand and respect that there are times as a family that you would like to remove your child(ren) for a particular family trip or event. Community Montessori feels that learning happens everywhere and all the time. If you would like to home school your child during this time and waive their absence, the following procedure must be met.

- Copy the **Absence Waiver (Attachment B)** or obtain a copy from the Cupola information area or the school website
- Work with the studio teachers to plan an age appropriate project to fulfill the waiver.
- Within 2 weeks of the absence, the Absence Waiver should be returned to a studio teacher and the project/presentation/report must be completed.
- The Absence Waiver will need approval from a studio teacher.
- If approved, the absence will then be removed from the student's attendance record.

### b. Visiting the Building or Studio

We encourage family members to visit the school and their child/teen's studio often. All families are expected to spend at least 10 minutes a week in the studio (observation windows are available for the Early Education Program). Please remember, when you visit the building for longer than just a drop off or pick up, you should check in at the Curved Desk and receive a visitor tag. You should also sign in and receive a visitor's label if you will be volunteering or acting as a Studio Assistant (substitute).

**Keyless Entry:** *We want families to feel welcome to visit anytime throughout the day, while also protecting the safety of the children/teens in our care. We have implemented a keyless entry system at the Early Education and Teen Entrances for families to use. Families will be able to enter with the code only during school hours (Monday-Friday, 7:30 am to 5:30 pm). The code will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and changed annually, or more frequently if deemed necessary. We ask that you hold this code in confidence, and notify the office if you have any concerns regarding it. Please note, if you will be spending more than a minute or two in the building please visit the Curved Desk for a visitor tag.*

### c. Communicating with the School

All telephone calls will be answered by staff or the school's answering system. Unless an urgent matter, calls to speak to teachers during the school day will be directed to voicemail. Voicemail boxes and e-mail will be checked frequently, and messages responded to promptly whenever necessary. All voicemail messages are

received by staff in their email, which is checked consistently throughout the day. The school phone number is 812-948-1000 and school e-mail addresses and extensions can be found on the Staff Contact page that will be sent at the beginning of the year. This contact list is also available on the school website. Staff messages can also be delivered to the Curved Desk.

Studio questions should be directed to teachers/advisors to support ongoing communication. Any questions/comments/concerns pertaining to school procedures or policy should be directed to either the Assistant Director/Family Liaison, or the Director. Any questions still unresolved will then be directed to the Director. If this process does not resolve the situation and you would like to communicate to the Board of Directors you can file a Request for Presentation (Attachment F). The Board of Directors meets throughout the school year with times and dates posted at the entrance of the school.

**d. School-Wide Information and Communication Boards**

**Our primary means of communicating with families is by e-mail.** Updates from classroom teachers, the school newsletter and other information are all sent home via e-mail, so please ensure that you check your e-mail regularly and update us of any changes in your e-mail address. Families who do not have e-mail or internet access should contact the Cupola staff for assistance in setting up an e-mail address. Families are welcome to check their e-mail at the Curved Desk or on a computer in their child’s studio. There is also an information area located in the Cupola which houses pertinent school wide information as well as community-wide information that might be of interest to families.

Studio **communication** areas will be designated in each individual studio. Any pertinent studio information will be posted there after it has been emailed home.

**All elementary and teens program learners are directly responsible for their own belongings and in transporting any information home to their families. Please ask your child how this happens in their studio.**

**e. Snow Day/Emergency Dismissal Information**

During inclement weather, the easiest way for families to find information is to visit our website, [www.shiningminds.com](http://www.shiningminds.com). You can call the school and enter press \* from the main menu for pre-recorded closing information, or tune to local TV stations. Because Community Montessori has longer class days that are spent on learning, there should not be a need to make up any snow days. Any exceptions will be communicated in the spring. **Please note: We DO NOT follow New Albany-Floyd County’s schedule. Our closing/delay information will be listed under Community Montessori.**

	Teens (grades 7-12)	Elementary (grades 1-6)	Early Education (Ages 3-KG)	Extended Learning
Closed Schedule	Closed	Closed	Closed	1 hour delay (8:30 am)
Delayed Schedule	1 hour delay (9:20 am)	1 hour delay (9:40 am)	1 hour delay AM begins 10:00 PM Begins 2:00	Regular schedule (7:30 am)

**Extended Learning Program Snow Day Guidelines:**

Extended Learning is available on Snow Days to any child/teen that is regularly enrolled in the Extended Learning Program. Extended Learning fees are not prorated for these days.

In the case of an emergency dismissal, we will use the media and e-mail to contact families. A staff member will always remain with all learners until everyone has been picked up.

## **f. Family Involvement**

Ten (10) hours of Family Involvement are expected of our families as part of their commitment to their child's education (**See Parent Partner Commitment Forms Attachments C1 and C2**). This commitment can be met in a variety of ways, from committee participation to mentoring on going out trips, to cutting out studio materials from home. Community Montessori and the Parent Involvement Partnership work together to provide a variety of involvement opportunities for families. Any questions regarding Family Involvement can be directed to the PIP Council.

Total involvement hours are tracked by the school and we encourage all families to log their involvement time! Families can log their hours in two ways: either by signing in at the logbook, currently located in the Cupola, or by entering their hours through the Parent Involvement Partnership website.

## **g. School Newsletter – The Community Times**

Every other month our school electronic newsletter is distributed via e-mail. The newsletter provides families with school-related information, articles on topics of interest, want ads, etc. Family members are encouraged to submit stories, ads, product reviews or any suggestions or ideas to the Editor. Remember, families are welcome to check their e-mail from a school computer, and we would be happy to assist you in obtaining an e-mail address.

## **h. Parent Involvement Partnership (PIP)**

### Mission Statement:

*We believe that family involvement is the best foundation for school and personal success. We support the continued growth of each member of our school community through opportunities of involvement at the school and with its activities.*

The PIP is different from traditional Parent Associations in that our main goal is to provide a home/school connection for our families through social and educational opportunities. All families are automatic members of the PIP – there are no membership fees. The PIP supports its mission by communicating opportunities to families throughout the year. These opportunities are in four major areas: Studio Support, Event Planning, Staff Appreciation and Family Fundraising.

Families are encouraged to attend PIP Educational workshops which take place the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm, at the school. Different educational topics are discussed each month utilizing both staff and outside speakers. Many workshops are also available for purchase on DVD for \$5.

PIP information is communicated through the information board at the entrance of the school, by e-mail, through the monthly newsletter. You may contact members of the PIP Council for any questions or ideas you might have at [pip@shiningminds.com](mailto:pip@shiningminds.com).

## **i. Fundraising and Expansion Development**

Our school is very careful about the fundraising programs we initiate. We want to only do a few fundraisers a year so that our communication with our families is based mostly on the child and is not overshadowed by fundraising ventures. Instead of traditional school fundraisers overwhelming our families, our goal is to include our families in helping our school grow. We want our families to know that we appreciate all of their support.

We currently use several different methods, through expansion development and PIP, to raise funds for the studios and facilities. A portion of all PIP organized fundraising is given back to PIP for Family activities and PIP Grants. PIP Grants are available to studios and areas throughout our Dream School to support our learners in many ways. These grants are used to supplement studio learning materials, such as books and Montessori materials, or for going out trips.

Following are the programs we currently participate in through PIP:

- Market Day
- Cash Back Programs: Kroger Cards, Target Cards, Meijer Community Rewards, Amazon.com,
- Label Redemption: Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Labels for Education (collection container located in the Parent Room.)
- Recycling: aluminum can tabs, cell phones and ink cartridges.
- Winter Gifting Program – Many of our teachers have communicated that they would rather receive new materials for their classrooms than holiday gifts. A Winter Gift display is posted in November and purchases are made in December or January.

All funds raised through our Expansion Development program go directly to our Dream School. The following are the programs we currently participate in:

- Maria's Way Stepping Stone: Create a lasting memory for your family or business by purchasing a stepping stone, available in three different sizes.
- Help us Grow Program: Through one time or monthly donations you can help our Dream School continue to grow. Instead of your family eating out once a month, donate \$40 a month directly to the school. Consider the cost of a year's tuition at a private school as a donation.
- Help spread the word: Do you know of a business or organization that would like to become a corporate sponsor to help our Dream School continue to grow?

**Celebration for Education**, an annual adult only evening where our families can enjoy a night out, is a partnership between the Parent Involvement Partnership and Expansion Development. PIP hosts the event to bring families together outside of the school walls, however all the fundraising from the silent auction and raffle are used to support our Dream School through Expansion Development.

## **j. Confidentiality**

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  - Other schools to which a student is transferring;

Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;  
Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;  
Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;  
Accrediting organizations;  
To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;  
Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and  
State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

#### **k. Child/Teen Insurance**

Unless proven negligent, Community Montessori and Community Montessori personnel assume no financial responsibility for medical expenses, treatment or damages resulting from injuries sustained by learners while participating in any School sponsored educational program or activity on or off School grounds.

## **6. General Program Information**

### **a. Overall Goals and Expectations**

Our children and teens learn how to learn. They learn to focus their attention on an interest, and in doing so make a commitment to learning about something. Through this active engagement they discover the joy in learning. We touch their imaginations and kindle in them a sense of the limitless possibilities in their world. We recognize the importance of each learner's early experiences in the formation of an emotionally healthy, responsible adult. We see our role as nurturing the immense potential in each of them, and supporting them in the task of inner development.

We believe that learning is not neat and linear - it is a messy process. We expose learners to a range of intellectual, physical and social activities, and we give them long blocks of uninterrupted time to work with activities. In this way they take responsibility for their own learning. They learn to ask questions and to seek explanations and then to ask more clarifying questions. They learn to make decisions, to challenge themselves, and to think at higher levels.

We believe that intellectual growth is intertwined with social and emotional development. Intellectual growth flourishes in a non-judgmental community where freedom for the individual is balanced with the needs of the group. In our studios, learners can choose to work independently or with classmates. As they develop more and more competencies, they quite naturally take on increased responsibility in the activities of the studio.

We encourage learner's independence through many avenues throughout the course of the day. Just as we guide and coach a student to put away their "work" we do the same with other tasks throughout the day. Children/teens are encouraged and expected to take care of their belongings and be an active participant in their own education. We encourage our families to not "sweat the small stuff" and challenge you to practice the same philosophy at home.

## **b. Learning Environments**

Community Montessori is in operation Monday through Friday. The school community consists of parents, children, teens, teachers, and other persons involved in the development of each learner. It is our goal to actively seek open communication about and consistency for your child at school, at home and at all locations responsible for the learner. We consider our school to be a YEAR ROUND/HOME-SCHOOL educational program and therefore we expect learning to be taking place seamlessly at home, school, etc... all the time.

Studio (classroom) practices include mixed-age groupings, a focus on global education, valuing teacher observations and the careful design of the environment and materials. We feel that these practices empower all participants (children, parents, and teachers) as collaborators, teachers and learners. A typical studio will consist of 25-40 learners, age appropriately, with up to two teachers. In our learning environments, children and teens initiate, do, talk and collaborate. The day is theirs; the room is theirs—with its floor-rugs, tables, attractive materials and accessible storage shelves.

Mixed-aged groupings enable children to learn from one another, gain autonomy, and develop positive self-esteem. We try to have an ethnic, social and economic mix in our studios that prepares children to accept, respect and understand themselves in our diverse society. We create communities in which everyone learns, works, plays, shares and celebrates together.

Studio activities are carefully designed to focus the development and integration of specific skills and concepts. We know that engagement with hands-on, real-world tasks supports the growth of problem-solving strategies, innovation, collaboration, reflection, and a positive disposition toward "figuring things out" — qualities needed throughout life.

The studios contain a full range of Montessori materials and other instructional materials necessary to meet the needs of the learner. These materials assist children in attaining educational and personal goals. Individual strengths and interests will steer the curriculum with a strong emphasis on life long learning skills.

## **c. Exceptional Learners**

We respect all children and their learning. We believe that all learners are gifted and they all have areas of goals. If a child has an area of exceptionality that adversely affects their education, as a public charter school, we must provide additional services to that child to help them access the curriculum. Community Montessori follows all state and federal special education laws. Our goal with all learning is to assure children/teens receive additional support when necessary with their dignity and respect intact. We have a variety of services available to support individual needs through contracting with agencies and individuals in the community and creating support plans here at school. Some of those licensed services are: a Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, and School Psychologist. Licensed Special Education Staff work with Developmental Specialists (support staff) to create/support all learners.

Community Montessori believes in integrating additional services when possible to help support the educational, social and/or emotional needs of each child and only pulling a child/teen out of his/her environment if necessary. If you feel your child may be in the need of additional services, please begin a dialogue with your child's teacher(s) first. We will do the same if we feel additional information is necessary. We will then begin a school intervention process, consult with our licensed special education teacher in that area and begin the referral process if necessary. Our school intervention process helps the staff brainstorm and implement interventions and track those interventions to help learners with specific needs. The purpose is to resolve any concerns the child/teen is having before a referral is made for a part or full individual evaluation.

The intervention process is usually implemented for at least month to see if minor studio support/consistency can support the individual concern. If there is not marked improvement after interventions have been implemented by the studio teachers, the Developmental Specialists may begin the more formal process of evaluation. Depending on the need of a child/teen, a psychologist may administer additional assessments. These assessments help the Case Conference Committee (CCC) consisting of parents, studio teachers, Developmental

Specialists and the school Director to make a decision about providing additional support through special education and implementing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is a written plan that addresses specific areas of exceptionality and what accommodations will be made to assist the child/teen in those areas.

#### **d. Snack**

**\*\*Staff must be notified in writing if your child is allergic to any food.\*\***

Learners are asked to provide snack for their studio about twice a year.

*For the Early Education Studios:* Fresh fruits and vegetables should be sliced and prepared unless you have communicated otherwise with the studio teachers. Your child should help prepare this snack and will be able to serve themselves with another friend in the class. The snack provided should feed about 30 children a day. Water is provided for all children; please do not bring juice or other drinks.

*Elementary and Teens:* Learners are given more responsibility in the preparation and clean-up procedures and we encourage families to give their child a budget from which they can purchase their snack for the week. We also encourage children to practice cooking and try out various recipes that meet the guidelines for appropriate snack. Snack should consist only of fruits, vegetables, eggs or hard cheeses. The snack provided should feed 30-40 children and should be prepared and maintained by the children. Water is provided; please do not bring juice or other drinks.

#### **e. Transportation**

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parent. Each year at enrollment, the school will offer a sign-up sheet for parents interested in carpooling. This will be emailed in July to every family in the introduction packet. Families may then contact one another to make carpooling arrangements. A copy of this list will be on file at the Curved Desk should you become interested in carpooling at a later date.

**\*\*Please see individual Program sections for drop off/ pick up procedures for each age level.**

## **7. Early Education Program**

The Early Education Program includes children ages 3-6.

There are four programs available:

AM – from 9:00 am to 11:45 am

PM – from 1:00 pm to 3:45 pm

Extension (or Full Day Kindergarten) – from 11:45 am– 3:45 pm

Early Education Double Session– from 9:00 am to 3:45 pm

2 and 3 day a week programs: Learners enrolled in these programs would follow the drop off/pick up times below for AM and PM, however on their respective days. The 2-day program meets Tuesday/Thursday and the 3-day program meets Monday/Wednesday/Friday. Depending on enrollment, these learners may be in a separate studio or be placed in an existing studio.

NEW 11-12 – This is the first year we are offering a Full Day Kindergarten program. This program is the same as our Extension program, however the fee has been reduced as part of the funding now comes from the Full Day Kindergarten grant offered by the Department of Education. This is a 5-day program only.

#### **a. Drop Off/Pick Up**

Car line forms at the Early Education entrance during drop off/pick up times. Staff members will assist young children in and out of vehicles. Families arriving after the program start time should walk their child into his/her studio. **Please only let children cross at the cross walks for safety and consistency. We encourage all families to turn off your vehicle's motor while waiting to reduce pollution and potentially harmful inhalants.**

Drop off and pick up times are as follows for Early Education:

	AM	PM	Extension/ Double Session
Drop Off	8:50 am	12:55 pm	8:50 am
Pick Up	11:45 am	3:45 pm	3:45 pm

Consistency in attendance is key to a learner's school success. Families are responsible for ensuring learners make it to school on time each day. A timely arrival makes the home-to-school transition much easier, and avoids disrupting both your child and his/her studio with a late arrival.

Children should only be picked up after their scheduled pick up time if they are enrolled in the Extended Learning Program. Please park in designated spaces when picking up or dropping off your child.

\*\*We encourage families of young children to show confidence with their children during drop-off times and give loving yet short good-byes. Families can work with staff members on drop-off routines to ease your child into this process. Children who walk into the school rather than being carried and who take care of their own belongings show a greater ease in the transition process. Parents are always welcomed to pull around and park to come inside and view their child in his/her studio through the observation window.

### **b. Lunch**

Early Education children in full day programs (Double Session or Extension) need to bring a lunch to school daily. Lunch is between 11:50 am-12:25 pm. Family members are encouraged and welcome to volunteer during lunch.

Children do have access to microwaves for warming lunches, although, we ask that you limit the number of days each week that you send a heat-able lunch with your child. Also, please make sure the meal is being **re-heated**, not cooked from frozen. This helps ensure enough time for all children to both warm and eat their lunch.

We strive to be as environmentally friendly as possible. To help cut down on waste, we ask that learners bring their own reusable utensils, cloth napkin and food packaged in reusable/resealable containers. This also assists parents who wish to see what their child has eaten for lunch, as uneaten portions can be returned home.

*“One Small Dessert”*: As a school community we have a strong belief in and commitment to health and wellness education. In support of this belief, we ask that a healthy and well-balanced lunch be packed by you or your child. Sodas and excessive desserts or candy will be sent home if packed for lunch. If a dessert is packed, please limit it to one small piece.

*“Fast Food”* – Although we understand that family planning time is sometimes hectic, we ask that families do not bring in “fast food” wrapped products when a lunch has been forgotten or not available. The Curved Desk can provide bags to support re-wrapping food items if necessary. Please notify studio teachers if you will be removing your child during the lunch time to eat off campus.

### **c. Going Out Trips**

The Early Education Program may schedule Going Out trips throughout the year. A consent form was completed by families at enrollment and further information will be communicated through email when trips are planned. Bus transportation will be provided for trips that are not within walking distance.

We welcome adults to join us on these learning adventures. Unfortunately, siblings are not able to attend school trips. Children are expected to leave and return on the bus unless in rare circumstances that have been approved by the Family Liaison. We have certain expectations of volunteers on Going Out trips to ensure a

safe and fun atmosphere for all learners. Staff will review these guidelines with volunteers prior to leaving on any trips.

#### **d. Studio Celebrations**

Community Montessori works hard to respect a wide array of philosophies on celebrations. We talk in class about many different kinds of celebrations without giving priority to one over the other. We start most conversations on celebrations with “Some people believe...”, and try to encourage many different views. We do not have studio Christmas, Halloween, or Easter celebrations but may have more general celebrations like harvest, winter, or spring. We welcome families to share their special celebrations (or lack of) with the studio/school to increase all children’s perspectives.

In the Early Education program, we enjoy celebrating your child’s birthday by reading a short summary that you prepare of your child’s years leading up to their birthday. If you wish to bring a special snack, please notify one of your child’s teachers and bring enough snacks for each child in the studio. This can be a simple cookie or other snack. **Please no cakes, cupcakes, or icing.**

Some families may choose to present a gift to the studio in honor of their child’s birthday. If you would like to do that, the teachers can make suggestions of a book or material, or you can choose from one of the Montessori catalogs located in the Parent Room.

#### Celebrations Outside of School

Invitations to birthdays and other celebrations outside school hours should be mailed instead of distributed at school. Addresses for your child’s studio are available through the Studio Roster area of our website, [www.shiningminds.com](http://www.shiningminds.com). This area is password protected, and the password will be sent out via e-mail and changed periodically. You can contact the school to receive the password if you have lost or forgotten it.

#### **e. Belongings**

All learners should wear clothing appropriate for the various materials and activities. All learners should remember, when choosing the day’s attire, that they may be required to sit or do work on the floor and dress appropriately. Because we encourage independence, pants or shorts with elastic waistbands are best when having to use the restroom. Parents should send in a spare set of clothes in a zip-lock bag (including socks and underwear) to keep in their studios.

Children’s shoes should also be appropriate for all activities. Children are welcome to wear slippers during their inside work time and are given a place in the room to store them when they are not using them. Slippers should be functional and non-distracting (no lights or characters, please). We encourage that all clothing items are marked with your child’s name.

No items for barter or bribe should be brought to school. Items of interest, which relate to school work (books, music, fossils, etc.) may be brought to share with the class if discussed with a teacher first. Any item brought in by your child that becomes a distraction should be left at home.

Please help your child keep their materials neat and orderly. Children are given a mailbox for their belongings, bags and backpacks should be left at home.

Each studio has a lost and found and there is a school-wide lost and found located in the Parent Room. Please check the lost and found areas frequently to claim any lost items. **Items will be displayed at the monthly PIP Workshop and any unclaimed items will be donated to charity following the workshop.**

## 8. Elementary Program

The Elementary Program generally includes learners ages 6 through 12 (“1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade”). The program meets from 8:40am-3:10pm with drop-off beginning at 8:30am.

Consistency in attendance is key to a learner’s school success. Families are responsible for ensuring learners make it to school on time each day. A timely arrival makes the home-to-school transition much easier, and avoids disrupting both your child and his/her studio with a late arrival. Learners arriving later than 8:40 am must stop at the Curved Desk to receive an Admit One before proceeding to their studio.

### a. Drop off/Pick up

Car lines are available to these age groups at the Main Entrance during drop-off and pick-up times. Learners entering the building prior to their drop off time should be supervised by an adult until their start time, unless they are enrolled in Extended Learning. At drop off, please do not send your child into the building until elementary level staff members are present outside, indicating we are ready to receive them inside. At pick up, staff members will assist learners in finding and getting to the appropriate vehicle. **Please only let children cross at the cross walks for safety and consistency. We encourage all families to turn off your vehicle’s motor while waiting to reduce pollution and potentially harmful inhalants.**

As part of your family commitment, all families are expected to spend 10 minutes with their child in their studio each week to further understand their current work and projects. This can be done before, during or after class time.

### b. Lunch

All children should bring a healthy and well-balanced lunch each day. **We expect all children to plan their meals and pack their own lunches with the support of their family.**

Children do have access to microwaves for warming lunches, although we ask that you limit the number of days each week that your child brings a heat-able lunch. Also, please make sure the meal is being **re-heated**, not cooked from frozen. This helps ensure enough time for all children to both warm and eat their lunch.

**We strive to be as environmentally friendly as possible. To cut down on waste, we ask that learners bring their own reusable eating utensils, cloth napkin, and food packaged in reusable/resealable containers.**

*“One Small Dessert”:* As a school community we have a strong belief in and commitment to health and wellness education. In support of this belief, we ask that a healthy and well-balanced lunch be packed by you or your child. Sodas and excessive desserts or candy will be sent home if packed for lunch. If a dessert is packed, please limit it to one small piece.

*“Fast Food”* – Although we understand that family planning time is sometimes hectic, we ask that families do not bring in “fast food” wrapped products when a lunch has been forgotten or not available. The Curved Desk can provide bags to support re-wrapping food items if necessary. Please notify studio teachers if you will be removing your child during the lunch time to eat off campus.

### c. Going Out Trips

This age level frequently goes out into the community as part of the overall curriculum and to engage in real learning adventures. A consent form was completed by families at enrollment and further information will be communicated through email when trips are planned. Bus transportation will be provided for trips that are not within walking distance.

We welcome adults to join us on these learning adventures. Unfortunately, siblings are not able to attend school trips. We have certain expectations of volunteers on Going Out trips to ensure a safe and fun atmosphere for all learners. Staff will review these guidelines with volunteers prior to leaving on any trips.

We encourage all learners to attend going out trips and camping trips. All learners should leave and return on the bus unless prior approval is granted by the Family Liaison. We assume that all learners will work out an Absent Waiver with the teachers/families if they do not attend a trip. If an exception is granted where a learner visits another studio during this time, teachers and families should work out this arrangement at least a week prior to the trip.

#### **d. Studio Celebrations**

Community Montessori works hard to respect a wide array of philosophies on celebrations. We talk in class about many different kinds of celebrations without giving priority to one over the other. We start most conversations on celebrations by saying “Some people believe...”, and try to encourage many different views. We do not have studio Christmas, Halloween, or Easter celebrations but may do more general celebrations like harvest, winter, or spring. We welcome families to share their special celebrations (or the lack of) with the studio/school to increase all our perspectives.

Learners wishing to celebrate their birthday are asked to prepare their own account of their life, as developmentally appropriate. Some ideas may be: a Power Point presentation, labeled poster, family tree, etc. Celebrations should be scheduled with their teacher(s), and presentation formats approved at that time. If you wish to bring a special snack, please notify one of your child’s teachers and bring enough snacks for each child in the studio. This can be a simple cookie or other snack. **Please no cakes, cupcakes, or icing.**

#### Celebrations Outside of School

Party invitations to birthdays and other celebrations outside school hours should be mailed instead of being distributed at school. Addresses for your studio are available through the Class Roster area of our website, [www.shiningminds.com](http://www.shiningminds.com). This area is password protected, and the password will be sent out at the beginning of the school year and changed periodically. You can contact the school to receive the password if you have lost or forgotten it.

#### **e. Belongings**

Learners will be given a “work bag” in which any belongings can be transported to and from school. We encourage learners to re-use their work bags over the years, but to get a new one when needed. Notebooks, pencils, and other supplies are provided. Please leave any other items at home.

Children’s shoes should also be appropriate for all activities. Children are welcome to wear slippers during their inside work time and are given a place in the room to store them when they are not using them. Slippers should be functional and non-distracting (no lights or characters, please). We encourage that you support your child in marking all clothing items with his/her name. We donate numerous pieces of clothing/lunch bags/etc. from the lost-and-found to charity each month.

No items for barter or bribe should be brought to school. Items of interest, which relate to school work (books, music, fossils, etc.) may be brought to share with the class if discussed with a teacher first. Any item brought in by your child that becomes a distraction should be left at home. Cell phones should be turned off and be left in the workbag while at school.

Each studio has a lost and found and there is a school-wide lost and found at the main entrance. Please check the lost and found areas frequently to claim any lost items. **Items will be displayed at the monthly PIP Workshop and any unclaimed items will be donated to charity following the workshop.**

## 9. Teens Program

The Teens Program generally includes learners ages 12 through 18 (“7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade”). As we continue to grow, we sometimes have to group age levels differently. The program meets from 8:20am-2:50pm with drop-off beginning at 8:10am.

Consistency in attendance is key to a learner’s school success. Families are responsible for ensuring learners make it to school on time each day. A timely arrival makes the home-to-school transition much easier, and avoids disrupting both your child and his/her studio with a late arrival. Learners arriving later than 8:20 must stop at the Curved Desk to receive an Admit One before proceeding to their studio.

### a. Drop off/Pick Up

Families are encouraged to come into the building frequently with their teen to establish ongoing dialogue and understanding. Teens can be dropped off at the Main Entrance in a car-line, or they can walk into the Teen Entrance with their family (located at the North end of the building). For those teens driving to school, a designated parking area is located in the rear of the building behind the Fitness Rooms. If, and when, this parking area becomes full, a lottery will determine parking privileges. **Please only let teens cross at the cross walks for safety and consistency. We encourage all families to turn off your vehicle’s motor while waiting to reduce pollution and potentially harmful inhalants.**

### b. Lunch

Teens are expected to prepare and pack their lunch daily. We encourage families to set appropriate parameters for health and wellness. To cut down on waste, we ask that learners bring their own eating utensils, cloth napkin, and package food in re-sealable containers.

Teens have access to microwaves for warming lunches, although we ask that they limit the number of days each week that they bring a heat-able lunch. We also ask they make sure the meal is being **re-heated**, not cooked from frozen.

*“One Small Dessert”:* As a school community we have a strong belief in and commitment to health and wellness education. In support of this belief, we ask that a healthy and well-balanced lunch be packed by you or your child. Sodas and excessive desserts or candy will be sent home if packed for lunch. If a dessert is packed, please limit it to one small piece.

*“Fast Food”* – Although we understand that family planning time is sometimes hectic, we ask that families do not bring in “fast food” wrapped products when a lunch has been forgotten or not available. The Curved Desk can provide bags to support re-wrapping food items if necessary. Please notify studio teachers if you will be removing your child during the lunch time to eat off campus.

### c. Going Out Trips

The Teens Program will schedule Going Out trips and/or camping trips throughout the year. A consent form was completed by families at enrollment and further information will be communicated through email when trips are planned. Bus transportation will be provided for trips that are not within walking distance.

We welcome adults to join us on these learning adventures. Unfortunately, siblings are not able to attend school trips. We have certain expectations of volunteers on Going Out trips to ensure a safe and fun atmosphere for all learners. Staff will review these guidelines with volunteers prior to leaving on any trips.

We expect all learners to attend all going out/camping trips. All learners should leave and return on the bus unless prior approval is granted by the Family Liaison. We assume that all learners will work out an Absent Waiver with the teachers/families if they do not attend a trip. If an exception is granted where a learner visits another studio during this time, teachers and families should work out this arrangement at least a week prior to the trip.

#### **d. Snack**

Teens are expected to provide a healthy snack for their studio for a minimum of one week during the school year. We encourage teens to budget money for snack and prepare it in the morning before school. Snack should be limited to fruits, vegetables, hard cheeses, eggs, and crackers.

#### **e. Work @ Home**

As stated in the Teen Program Commitment (Attachment C3), learners in the Teens Program are expected to engage in at least five to seven hours of work@home weekly. On the work@home dialogue sheet, teens should indicate not only what they did for work@home, but also, and more importantly, what they learned from those activities. The dialogue sheet should be turned in either physically or electronically by the end of the week.

#### **f. Dress Conduct**

Learners enrolled in the Teen's Programs have the right to dress casually and comfortably, so long as it is not in a manner that poses safety concerns or is distracting to the learning process. Teens are also expected to wear sensible, comfortable footwear that is appropriate for the day's activities. If a teen does not follow this policy, he or she will be supplied with proper clothing or asked to call home for a change of clothes. CM staff reserves the right to use their best judgment regarding what types of dress qualify as inappropriate or distracting.

#### **f. Belongings**

Teens are encouraged to bring items related to their educational goals and interests. Any questionable items should be reviewed with their Teen Advisor. Teens are welcome to bring cell phones, but should only use them on school grounds with the permission of an adult. Ipods/mp3 players can also be brought to the campus but can only be used in the carpeted area within the studio. Neither should be used in other parts of the building or during drop-off/pick-up unless discussed with an adult. Learners in Level II of the Teen's Program, will be eligible to find a partner for their Technology Endowment (Attachment F).

#### **g. Cell Phone/Music Device Etiquette in the Teen's Program/Environment**

If a teen chooses to bring any of these tools into school, we expect families to thoroughly discuss this responsibility with their child. It is not a right for a teen to bring or use these devices, it is a huge responsibility!

- Our goal with teens is to support self-regulated, integrated use of cell phones/music devices.
- We support using cell phones for learning – ex. calculator, mp3 usage, website research, calendar, voice notes, etc.
- We support the use of music devices to facilitate concentration, as needed.
- If a teen chooses to bring these tools to Community Montessori, they also agree that an adult can look at what they are doing (including texting) and/or what they are listening to at any time.
- Talking on the cell phone should only happen with permission from their Advisor and within the studio boundaries during school time.
- Listening to music devices is only appropriate within the studio boundaries. (This includes before/after school in the building and in car line.)
- We are assuming music device tunes have been approved by individual teen's family. Sharing of music and or headphones is only acceptable within the 15-18 year old studios. Streaming educational content should be reviewed with your Advisor.
- Texting on the cell phone should be limited to the studio boundaries and can be self-regulated under the following conditions:
  1. Teen is showing balance;
  2. Teen is consistently completing assignments/weekly goals and is completing rigorous work daily;
  3. Teen can consistently sustain independent work without distraction.

- Any time cell phone/music device use impedes learning or concentration (flow) of self or others, the use of either device or ability to bring to school can be removed for a short period of time or indefinitely. Cell phones/music devices that are removed from teens can be retrieved with parental support at the end of the day. (Teens are welcome to maintain their battery if they wish.)

#### **h. Courses for College Credit**

We do participate with College professors to provide a variety of courses to teens for “dual credit”, or both high school and college credit. These courses may differ annually, do require a fee be paid to register, and are currently conducted at Community Montessori by a “professor-on-loan” from Ivy Tech. Teens pay for all textbook/supply fees for these courses. There are required assessment scores to be eligible to enroll in specific courses. If a teen does not qualify for a course, they may be eligible to audit the course for a lesser fee. More information will be sent home with your teen regarding registration during the school year.

#### **i. Prosser**

Community Montessori DOES NOT participate in a school partnership with Prosser School of Technology. Teens wanting to enroll, independent of Community Montessori and pay all fees, will be decided on a case by case basis.

### **10. Extended Learning Program (EL)**

Extended Learning is available each school day between 7:30 am and 5:30 pm, except as noted in the Family Calendar, and is usually supported by current teaching staff. We currently offer three options for extended learning these are:

AM EL (7:30 am until program begins)

PM EL (program’s end until 5:30 pm)

Before/After School EL (for children attending full day programs only)

Any family picking up their child(ren) after 5:30 pm will be expected to pay an additional \$5.00 for each 15 minute interval directly to the staff member supporting your child, upon arrival.

Snow Day Extended Learning is available for all children who participate in the Extended Learning Program. Extended Learning fees are not prorated for Snow Days.

Children who are absent from Extended Learning due to the birth of a new sibling may pay ½ of their monthly bill for up to two months. Please make these arrangements with the office prior to the absence. Unfortunately, there is no prorating when children miss school due to illness or personal vacation.

Extended Learning is a program (not a day care) designed for the children that attend Community Montessori and is an extension of the regular Montessori program. The program follows the Montessori principles and integrates similar themes throughout the school year. It provides children with an enriched, fun, safe, and caring environment including and beyond regular school hours.

### **11. Enrichment Programs**

Enrichment programs are offered ongoing throughout the year. Some examples of classes are: sign language, chess, drama, Spanish, creative movement, piano, volleyball, basketball, dodge ball, etc. Currently violin and guitar lessons are offered in small group and individual lessons. Enrollment forms for these programs are sent home via email during the year.

We strive to make these programs consistent with the philosophy and methods of Community Montessori. Families interested in teaching or assisting in a course should inquire at the office with the Family Liaison.

## 12. Summer Enrichment Programs

Information will be distributed in the spring about annual offerings.

## 13. Attendance and Conduct

### Attendance

Ongoing communication with families and staff is pertinent to the success of each child/teen. Excessive absences effect overall learning and instruction as well as attendance accountability to the Indiana Department of Education. We take school attendance very seriously, and expect every family to adhere to the following:

- All learners are expected to be on time every day according to their programs start time.
  - After 10 late arrivals a conference will be scheduled with the family and a plan will be put in place to ensure consistent attendance.
- All learners are expected to attend on a regular basis with communication to staff for any absences.
  - Parent or guardians should leave a message at the Curved Desk by 8:00 am if the child is unable to attend school that day at 948-1000 ext. 1104 or email the teachers in their child's studio.
- If a child misses more than 2 days, a written note/email to the teacher explaining the absence is expected. (See Sect. 5 – Home/School Connection for information about the Absence Waiver, Attachment B.)
- Excused Absences consist of a call/email from the parent/guardian or a physician's statement.
- After 10 Excused Absences, a physician's statement will be required for the remainder of the school year unless another plan is in place.
- Unexcused Absences result when neither notification from the family nor a physician's statement are received, or an Absence Waiver is not presented.
- When a teen has accumulated 10 Unexcused Absences he/she is considered habitually truant. The school retains the right to prevent the learner from obtaining a drivers permit or driver's license, or to have their driver's license revoked or denied.
- When a child/teen has accumulated 10 Unexcused Absences or 20 Excused Absences, a conference will be scheduled with the family and a plan will be put in place to ensure consistent attendance. If after a plan is implemented attendance does not improve, at least one of the following actions will be taken:
  1. A referral will be submitted to Juvenile Probation;
  2. A referral will be submitted to the Department of Children's Services;
  3. A request for expulsion will be filed.

Because Community Montessori believes that learning happens all the time and everywhere, we recognize planned Absent Waivers for out of the building learning.

Absence Waivers are a form completed with your learner's teacher or advisor outlining work that will be done to make-up the time the learner was absent. The waiver should be planned two weeks prior to the absence and returned within two weeks of the planned project.. The teacher/advisor will then sign off on the planned waiver and the absence will be removed from your child's record. The work involved must be adequate to cover the length of the absence, as determined by your child's teacher/advisor. If Absent Waivers are not planned in advance with the teacher/advisor, absences will be waived at his/her discretion. Absence Waiver forms are available in the Cupola and on the schools website.

### Conduct

Our goal is to help each learner attain the independence and self-confidence needed to become self-disciplined. In so doing, we provide a community with structure and order that aids them in the development of self-discipline. Behavior is based on cooperation, logical and natural consequences, fairness, consistency, and the belief that we all have the ability to look at ourselves honestly, change and grow. Our common goal is the creation of a supportive educational environment where an enthusiasm for learning is fostered. There are certain rights, responsibilities, and consequences that contribute to that environment.

## **Philosophy and Understanding for a Partnership with Families**

Community Montessori takes a progressive educational approach for a safe and peaceful learning environment. Starting at the earliest ages and whenever a learner first enters the school, we provide the skills necessary not only to learn basic safety rules but to interact with classmates, teachers, families, and the larger school community in positive and constructive ways. The intention of this education is to foster the development of inner discipline in the child.

Inner discipline consists of four components:

1. A distinct knowledge of safety rules;
2. A clear awareness of responsibility;
3. A respectful attitude towards the members of the studio community and the larger global learning environment;
4. An understanding and preparedness of the proper way of acting under different circumstances in different places.

Teachers at all age levels provide lessons in suitable studio, school, and community behaviors through direct instruction, drama, and reminders. Teachers support children/teens in solving difficulties among themselves and clear guidelines, based on three major propositions, are communicated in each room: Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for Environment. Staff at Community Montessori model appropriate behavior to further provide examples of how people act in social settings. Older children also model proper behaviors for the younger children, providing even more examples of appropriate behaviors.

Because of the open and respectful nature of this approach, learners understand that mutual respect, care and consideration for others and an empathetic interest in the environment are important in school and all other places. Any issues that arise are handled individually (or by group) with that person first. Out of respect for each child/teen, these conversations are done privately, and it is not unusual for one learner to be unaware of the consequences of another. We don't use parents or family as a threat, but rather as a partner in this growth process. We strongly encourage families to support this method and support their child in his/her total growth, not just in being "good for the teacher". We care very much about your child and want this partnership to be useful, with continuous dialogue. On minor incidents, it is not uncommon for staff members to request that a learner talk to his/her family about a decision or action so that they can brainstorm other ways to handle a situation, or for a parent to explain to their child how they handled those situations as a child. (Children love to hear our stories and struggles and it makes them feel like they are not alone in this growth process.)

In some cases, learners may be issued a Disciplinary Action Form. This form is a formal notice of the consequences applied as the result of a behavior or incident. Families are always notified by the schools when the Disciplinary Action Form is utilized. A copy of this form can be obtained at the Curved Desk and any questions regarding this form or the use of this form should be directed to the Director or Family Liaison.

The staff of Community Montessori has the responsibility to:

1. Develop reasonable studio ground rules consistent with the mission and beliefs of Community Montessori.
2. Post ground rules in each studio and keep them on file in the office; make rules clear to all learners.
3. Explain through group meetings, drama, and dialogue what the standards for behavior are for both the studio and school.
4. Maintain appropriate behavior in the studio and school through redirection and dialogue with the learner and their family.
5. Report and record school discipline situations to the Family Liaison and family using the communication form, as deemed necessary.

"Making good choices, even when others are not watching" is an important standard at Community Montessori. We strongly suggest that families keep an open dialogue with their child about "making choices" which directly

influences moral development. Our learners don't get "in trouble" and we don't recognize a "bad day" as an excuse for inappropriate behavior. However, we are very empathetic to their issues and concerns and validate them whenever appropriate. We remind and encourage all learners that "only you make your choices" and we initiate problem solving whenever possible. Inner discipline is a continuum and we desire to be strong partners in this process.

When situations do arise, each incident is assessed individually. We recognize all children/teens are different and have different needs. We encourage all learners to "use their words" when a situation arises. A child/teen can use firm language to redirect an unwanted behavior, walk away or get help. Retaliation is not an option and the adult supporting the situation will not be concerned with "who started it". Instead we will support each child/teen in peaceful conflict resolution and taking responsibility for his/her own actions.

On occasion there are some children/teens that need more formal direction. Therefore, Community Montessori will provide consequences based on the Indiana State Code "**20-33-8-16/19/21/22.**" (A complete copy is available in the office for further information.) Some belief statements are as follows:

1. Community Montessori will take actions deemed necessary for an orderly and effective educational system.
2. Appropriate Conduct is defined as Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for Environment.
3. All learners using computers on our wireless campus agree to abide by the Internet Acceptable Use Policy (**Attachment D**).
4. Children showing disrespect above (misconduct or substantive disobedience) may be suspended immediately and expelled after further dialogue and/or improvement process has failed.
5. Any time misconduct results in physical injury to another person, immediate suspension could occur.
6. Children or families can request a hearing from the Disciplinary Committee on issues of suspension and expulsion which includes the Director or Assistant Director, one developmental specialist, and one additional staff members from the age level of the child/teen, in which further action may be continued or ceased. The Disciplinary Committee will be assigned and schedule a meeting within two weeks of the request.
7. Disciplinary Action applies to a learner enrolled at Community Montessori that is:
  - a) On school grounds before, after or during school hours;
  - b) Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
  - c) Traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.
8. Other disciplinary action may occur if an **unlawful** (ex. illegal drugs) activity occurs on or off school grounds.
9. A learner that brings a firearm, deadly weapon, or destructive device to school or on school property or is in possession of any of the above on school property may be expelled for a period of at least one (1) calendar year.
10. A learner may be expelled from school if the student is not a legal resident of Indiana.
11. The following will be afforded to a learner prior to suspension unless misconduct requires immediate removal, in which case the following will take place upon the students return:
  - a) A written or verbal statement of the misconduct of the learner;
  - b) If the learner denies the charges, a summary of the evidence of the charge;
  - c) An opportunity for the student to explain the misconduct.
12. An expulsion may take place only after the student and the student's parent are given notice of their right to appear at an expulsion meeting.
13. Teenage learners who have received two or more suspensions may be subject to having their driver's license or driver's permit revoked or denied.

**(If you have any questions about Indiana State Code 20-33-8-16/19/21/22, please contact the School Director.)**



## Elementary Belief Statements (3-12 yrs)

- ◆ *We believe that education should be an active process of gaining and adapting new information involving many learners.*
- ◆ *We believe that we should support all children in developing strong moral values that reflect empathy, respect, honesty, compassion, integrity, and trust – while keeping personal dignity intact.*
- ◆ *We believe that enthusiasm and curiosity should be cultured in each child's learning.*
- ◆ *We believe that the curriculum should reflect life long learning by expanding the traditional subjects and make all learning relative.*
- ◆ *We believe that children learn best in a safe, nurturing, respectful environment that promotes independence and a positive sense of self-esteem.*
- ◆ *We believe that children should have the freedom to develop goals that encourage internal motivation and nurture inner harmony.*
- ◆ *We believe learning is a natural process that develops spontaneously in the learner.*
- ◆ *We believe that the teachers in the environment are really "child" development specialists that guide the learner through the learning process by keeping extensive records and through keen observations.*
- ◆ *We believe children should be encouraged to teach, collaborate, and assist each other in their journey to attain and effectively use new or existing information.*
- ◆ *We believe children should use self-teaching, self-corrective material to set their own learning pace to internalize information.*
- ◆ *We believe children should be free to use repetition to gain mastery of new materials or information and be encouraged to use critical thinking skills to come up with their own answers.*
- ◆ *We believe children should have the freedom to be themselves and develop individual and group identities within the community.*
- ◆ *We believe that the school community shares the love of each child and that we respect and encourage each child to develop his/her own uniqueness and individuality.*
- ◆ *We believe that we all have a direct responsibility to our self, our family, our school, our community, our nation, and our world and we instill this responsibility as a continuing part of the curriculum.*
- ◆ *We believe that learning should take place in a non-competitive environment where learning is driven internally to better ourselves.*



## Teen Belief Statements (12-18 yrs)

*We believe:*

- ◆ *Education should be an active process of gaining and adapting new information involving many learners.*
- ◆ *We should support all teens in developing strong moral values that reflect empathy, respect, honesty, compassion, integrity, and trust – while keeping personal dignity in tact.*
- ◆ *The curriculum should reflect life long learning by expanding the traditional subjects and making all learning relative.*
- ◆ *Teens learn best in a safe, nurturing, respectful environment that promotes independence and a positive sense of self-esteem.*
- ◆ *Teens should have the freedom to develop personal goals that encourage internal motivation and nurture inner harmony.*
- ◆ *Learning is a natural process that develops spontaneously in the learner.*
- ◆ *Teens should be encouraged to teach, collaborate with, and assist each other in their journey to attain and effectively use new and existing information.*
- ◆ *Teens should have the freedom to be themselves and develop individual and group identities within the community.*
- ◆ *Teens should be encouraged to question and look at situations from multiple viewpoints.*
- ◆ *The school community shares the love of each learner and that we respect and encourage each teen to develop his/her own uniqueness and individuality.*
- ◆ *Ownership, Empowerment, Accountability, and Respect are the four main components of the overall program.*
- ◆ *Listening, without judging, is crucial to the trust partnership with each teen.*
- ◆ *We all have a direct responsibility to our self, our family, our school, our community, our nation, and our world to question the foundation of our beliefs and we instill this responsibility as a continuing part of the curriculum.*
- ◆ *Learning should take place in a non-competitive environment where learning is driven internally to better ourselves and each other.*
- ◆ *Learning is not about what is taught by the adult, but how a learner takes new information, connects it to existing information, and changes a perception or expands an idea or concept.*
- ◆ *Teens are directly responsible for their own actions and adults are expected to hold them accountable to their actions while maintaining dignity and respect.*
- ◆ *Understanding the developmental needs of teens is crucial to their overall support and learning.*



# Absence Waiver

**PARENTS:** *The Absence Waiver should be used for any absences in which you or your family conducted a home school project/activity that you feel supported this day of absence. This should be returned with any documentation to your child's teachers.*

Child/Teen's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date(s) of absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Home school activity/project/lessons: \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain why you feel your child should be waived for this absence period: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) responsible for home school project: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher approval of project/presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of presentation/documentation returned: \_\_\_\_\_

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

OFFICE USE ONLY: Adjusted in SDS: \_\_\_\_\_



# Parent Partner Commitment Form

## Early Education (3-6) and Elementary (6-12)

We, the family community of Community Montessori, will be consistent with this commitment form to heighten the experience of our child(ren). The intent of this form is to help us all organize and take advantage of our commitment to the communication and education of our school family.

- We will read and abide by all guidelines and policies of the Community Montessori Family Handbook.
- We will communicate with the staff any pertinent information pertaining to our child or family.
- We will be consistent with our child's attendance and notify the office of any absences by 8:00 am
- When our child must be absent, outside of illness, we will utilize the Absence Waiver by "home-schooling" during absences.
- We will bring snack as scheduled throughout the year and bring only fresh fruits and vegetables (early education) or fruits, vegetables, eggs and cheese (elementary) based on the Handbook guidelines. We will involve our child in this activity from helping cutting the vegetables to giving them a budget to plan, prepare, and oversee the whole week.
- We will support our child in bringing a "nutritious" lunch daily. (Children at least 6 years and up should be preparing/packing their own lunch) We will also support the "one small dessert" policy and talk to our child about "healthy" foods.
- We will observe our child during "class time" to further our understanding of the educational program of Community Montessori. Families should spend at least 10 minutes a week either observing at the observation windows(3-6), having your child give you a tour before or after school, or engaging in the studio after attending/viewing the workshop.
- We will attend at least two PIP (Parent Involvement Partnership) Workshops to further our growth as a parent family. (Most PIP Workshops are video taped and can be purchased for those who cannot attend.)
- We will attend at least one of the "Work Nights" offered throughout the school year.
- We will make arrangements to attend all Parent Partner Conferences throughout the year and be a collaborative participant.
- We will respect the staff at Community Montessori. Any classroom questions, concerns, or comments should be directed to the classroom teacher(s). Any school related questions, concerns, or comments should be communicated directly to Glenn Fondren, Family Liaison or Barbara Burke Fondren, Director of Community Montessori. Special conferences can be scheduled with the teacher(s) and Director both in attendance.
- We adhere to a Gossip Free campus and believe modeling this to our children is of the highest importance!
- We will assist the school and studios by committing at least 10 hours of our time and/or talent to the Parent Involvement Partnership throughout the year. (A complete list of ideas is given at enrollment).
- We will read to, read with, or listen to our child read daily based on the interests and learning style of our child.
- We will work toward a non-corrective interaction with our child and try to utilize natural and logical consequences in discipline to be more consistent with the Community Montessori Philosophy.
- We will use the ideas and guidance of the studio teachers to support and facilitate work-at-home activities with our child. (All learners 6 years and up should engage in work-at-home activities daily and turn in these activities weekly with their studio.)

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 Parent/Guardian

Date

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 Parent/Guardian

Date

6/24/2011

Our school endeavors to be more than the ordinary, to provide all of its learners with a valuable and life-long education that extends far beyond the confines of the school walls, with the belief that learning occurs all the time and everywhere. We believe education can be both theoretical and practical, and that it does encompass moral, emotional, and social learning in addition to standard academics. We endeavor to establish relationships between adults and teens based on mutual respect and understanding. Following the Montessori philosophy, we set forth several goals:

- **Learning.** We define learning as a life-long process and expect genuine commitment to each learning construct: intellectual, ethical, emotional, social, aesthetic, creative, wellness, and “school success.”
- **Community.** We strive to build a strong school community, but also to prepare learners to be valuable citizens in the larger sense of the civic and political society beyond the school walls.
- **Best Work.** We appreciate the effort it takes to be successful in both school and life, and we expect learners to do their best work, even under difficult circumstances.
- **Respect.** Human beings have different lifestyles, opinions, and beliefs, and we endeavor to understand and respect these differences rather than passing judgment based on our own personal belief system.

*As family members of teens who are overwhelmed by so many possibilities, you have a long, tedious, yet rewarding, road ahead. In committing to the below promises, you also commit to helping your teen in reaching his/her full potential. As you take your journey through the adolescent years of your child, we ask that you commit to the following promises:*

- 1. We will remain open-minded.** Our teen will at times return home with ideas that may challenge the values or concepts that are encouraged by the family. By being involved, we strive to remain open-minded and encourage big life questions as well as consider those questions from our teen’s perspective. Our teen will challenge values or aspects of home life that have never been challenged before and may bring to his/her family ideas that may never have occurred before; we will allow our teen to bring these issues to the family for discussion in a respectful way. If we are concerned or have questions, we will go directly to his/her studio teacher and not adhere to gossip or hearsay.
- 2. We will encourage problem-solving.** Teens experience a variety of life situations as they grow. We will encourage our teen to try to solve those situations for him or herself. This is especially important with the Technology Endowment and securing an Internship location. During this stage of growth in an adolescent’s life, teens also tend to share their perception of situations at school; we will encourage our teen to direct any questions or concerns directly to his or her studio teacher before intervening on his or her behalf.
- 3. We will encourage consistent attendance and wellness.** Attendance and timeliness is crucial for each teen in fulfilling his/her learning objectives for the year and in being successful at school. We will assure that our teen is on time daily and we will communicate any necessary absence due to illness by 8:00am each morning. Absence Waivers will be discussed and approved by Advisors prior to any absences. We will also assure that **our teen** prepares and packs a healthy lunch daily and budgets/plans the snack for his/her studio (consisting of only fruits, vegetables, cheese, or eggs). Both of these activities should be completed independently.
- 4. We will set examples.** Many times through the year our teen will be asked to include family for work@home or to complete other activities. We will strive to help our teen complete those activities and encourage further discussion of school situations at home. As a family member, we will remain supportive of our teen and his/her commitment to learning (ie. attendance on camping trips, supporting internships, and securing the technology endowment). We will assure work @ home sheets are turned in weekly and work is completed consistently at home. We will support knowing our teen’s goals and projects by reviewing these sheets at home or school every week for a minimum of **20 minutes**. By committing **10+ hours** of time or talent to the school and teachers we will show an example of leadership, consistency and caring to our teen.
- 5. We will participate in goal setting.** Teens are expected to set reasonable goals for both personal and intellectual growth. As his/her family, we will help to achieve these goals in any way that we can. We will support continual growth by reviewing these goals with our teen on a frequent basis. We will work toward a non-corrective interaction with our teen and try to utilize natural and logical consequences in discipline to be more consistent with the Community Montessori philosophy.
- 6. We will attend our teen’s important events.** Teen level workshops designed for parents and teens should be attended annually as well as other valuable PIP workshops throughout the year. We will attend all **four** Parent Partner Conferences to collaborate and design plans and goals to assure our teen stays on track for graduation.
- 7. We will respect prepared work.** At this level of learning it is essential to nourish creativity and confidence. Therefore, we will respectfully refrain from changing (corrections and/or criticisms) any work presented to us by our teen. By allowing creative freedom, we foster confidence within each teen seeing how truly powerful their work is. Teens commit to doing their best work; if they have in fact done their best work, their growth will become apparent.
- 8. We will honor Community Montessori’s regular parent commitments.** We will read and abide by all guidelines and policies of Community Montessori. We will communicate to the staff any pertinent information pertaining to the teen or family.

*By affixing my signature, I attest that I understand and agree to the aforementioned promises of this contract. We will strive to be a role model of responsibility and caring about learning so our teen can reach his/her full potential of a successful adult.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Our school endeavors to be more than ordinary, to provide all of its learners with a valuable and life-long education that extends far beyond the confines of the school walls, with the belief that learning occurs all the time and everywhere. We believe education can be both theoretical and practical, and that it does encompass moral, emotional, and social learning in addition to standard academics. We endeavor to establish relationships between adults and teens based on mutual respect and understanding. Following the Montessori philosophy, we set forth several goals:

- **Learning.** We define learning as a life-long process and expect genuine commitment to each learning construct: intellectual, ethical, emotional, social, aesthetic, creative, wellness, and “school success.”
- **Community.** We strive to build a strong school community, but also to prepare learners to be valuable citizens in the larger sense of the civic and political society beyond the school walls.
- **Best Work.** We appreciate the effort it takes to be successful in both school and life, and we expect learners to do their best work, even under difficult circumstances.
- **Respect.** Human beings have different lifestyles, opinions, and beliefs, and we strive to understand and respect these differences rather than passing judgment based on our own personal belief system.

Each Community Montessori teen learner accepts more and more responsibility as he or she grows and matures. We cannot achieve our lofty goals without a solid and genuine commitment from each learner, and so, before beginning the school year, he or she makes these important promises:

- 1. The promise to build community.** Teens agree not to form exclusive social groups. We strive to build a collaborative learning community in which everyone has something special to offer the group as a whole. This means that each teen must feel safe and welcome when communicating with any individual in the studio or with the entire group at large. Each teen promises to build an inclusive and open school community.
- 2. The promise to abide by the principle of respect - self, others, and the environment.** Teens will agree to show respect for self in attitude, language, and personal appearance. We make a commitment to value, respect and understand one another as individuals. Learners at Community Montessori promise to resist the urge to pass judgment on others, and, on the contrary, promise to strive to act in such a way that demonstrates a genuine respect for the unique personal qualities and beliefs of others. Teens work diligently to bring any concerns/problems directly to the person they need to speak to without participating in gossip or hearsay. Teens are expected to treat all aspects of the environment with care, grace and courtesy. Teens will leave all materials and shared spaces beautiful and well prepared.
- 3. The promise to allot at least five to seven hours during the week for the completion of meaningful work at home.** Each Community Montessori learner is expected to work hard at meeting (and possibly exceeding) educational challenges, which requires serious work inside and outside of school. Teens will turn in weekly progress of their work-at-home activities.
- 4. The promise to participate in unique learning opportunities offered at Community Montessori with a positive and enthusiastic attitude.** Learners at Community Montessori understand that overnight trips and The Heroic Journey program are examples of requirements unique to this school that serve to fulfill Maria Montessori’s vision of learning beyond the classroom. Community Montessori learners are expected to participate in preparation activities as well as actual events, which may extend beyond the regular school day into evenings and/or weekends.
- 5. The promise to be on time and support wellness.** Teens are expected to be on time daily and ready for the day’s activities. That includes making your own lunches and caring for your own health needs. Teens should budget, plan, and prepare snack foods 1-2 times throughout the year that will consist of only fruits, vegetables, eggs, cheese, and crackers.

By affixing my signature, I attest that I understand and agree to the aforementioned promises of this contract.

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 Teen Signature

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 Date

**\*\* Community Montessori employs the use of SonicWall to filter out unacceptable sites for our computer users.**

## A. Acceptable Use Policies

1. The internet is a global information system that is logically linked together by a globally unique address space based on the Internet Protocol (IP) or its subsequent extensions.

There is no limit to the information that can be obtained via the internet, and we feel it is especially helpful to learners for various research and information gathering purposes. At Community Montessori we encourage our children/teens to find information 'online' for many different projects, not only helping them learn a particular subject, but enhancing their knowledge of the different ways to find information when necessary.

In today's world the Internet is a central point of communication and information in both business and home life. We feel our learners are gaining important real-life skills by utilizing this technology.

2. Community Montessori understands that there is much questionable and/or inappropriate content available on the internet, and strive to make it a 'safe' place for our children/teens. We make use of both internet browser parental controls, and the observations of staff members to ensure that the internet is used in a positive way. The internet is only accessed under staff supervision. Please note that although we use methods of supervision when children are online, these methods are not foolproof, nor are there any foolproof methods for blocking inappropriate material.
3. Should a child/teen be discovered accessing inappropriate information on the internet, their privileges shall be suspended for a period not to exceed one school year.
4. Community Montessori prohibits the use of its internet accounts for the following reasons:
  - a. access, upload, download or distribution of pornographic or sexually explicit material;
  - b. the transmission of abusive or sexually explicit language;
  - c. the violation of any local, state or federal laws;
  - d. the vandalism, damage or disability of the property of another person;
  - e. the accessing of another persons files without the permission of that person, unless such files are in a designated 'shared' folder;
  - f. the use of copyrighted material without prior approval.

Parents should note that it is possible for students to purchase goods and services via the Internet, and that these could result in unwanted financial obligations to the family. Should the school's internet account be used for unauthorized financial transactions, the school shall not be held liable for payment of such transactions.

5. Community Montessori is a wireless access campus. Parents are welcome to discuss other options with their child's teacher if they do not wish their child to have access to the internet.
6. Community Montessori believes it is the responsibility of the staff, student and family, working together, to guide the use of the internet by the learner for educational purposes, and lay the foundation for responsible use of the internet by the child/teen.
7. Community Montessori will provide a copy of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy upon request.

## B. Internet Use Guidelines for Students and Staff

1. Should any student or staff member receive unsolicited contact from an individual online, that person should immediately contact the adult in the classroom or notify the school's administrator.
2. Students and staff should also safeguard their personal information, not giving out information such as their name, address, phone number or other information to anyone online. If a student encounters a site or a solicitation that asks for this information, they should, again, immediately contact the adult in their studio or the school's administrator.
3. Staff members are able to use the school's account for personal use, and the school trusts the judgment of staff members to use the internet responsibly. All guidelines outlined above for students also apply to staff members.
4. Staff is expected to review this document with their learners, as age appropriate, and ask them to commit to these guidelines. This helps children/teen take ownership in their own responsible use of the internet.



# Teen's Program Graduation Requirements

## Integrated Portfolio Requirements

As part of our “Big Question” and “Who Am I” curriculum, Level II teens (generally 15-18 year olds) will work to make all learning meaningful and relevant. These teens will complete all requirements of the following three areas and give a culminating presentation at their required “Senior Thesis” to show their growth, rigor, and competency to “Graduate” from Community Montessori. These projects are encouraged to be integrated with Diploma requirements.

**Community Integration** – Through Philanthropy and Governmental Exploration, teens will attain a deeper understanding of their community and their requirements as a citizen of their city, state, nation, and world.

**Career Investigations** – Through Internships (beginning at age 16) and Entrepreneurial activities, teens will build career concepts and further explore who they want to be as an adult.

**Personal Intensives** – Through a Capstone project and a Second Language Inclusive or Wellness Initiative, teens will build knowledge and increase tolerance by developing projects that promote depth in learning.

## Core 40 Diploma Requirements

Honors Diploma options are also available

Level II teens will develop Course goals at the beginning of each academic year to support Core 40 requirements and college admission requirements. Courses will be completed by approved academic plans that could include: Distant Learning, Cumulative Independent Projects, Seminars, ICLASSES online learning, College Courses, and Internship learning plans. Advisors (Studio specific teachers) in collaboration with Mentor Teachers (Alternate Studio teachers with specific licensure), will work with each teen on their Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). State assessments are also required per IDOE requirements.

English/Language Arts—8 credits: Must include literature, composition and speech.

Math—6 credits: Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry

Science—6 credits: Biology 1, Chemistry 1 or Physics 1 or Integrated Chemistry-Physics, 1 additional science course

Social Studies—6 credits: US History, US Government, Economics, World History/Civilization or Geography/History of the World

Directed Electives—5 credits: Language, Fine Arts, Career/Technical

Physical Education—2 credits

Health and Wellness—1 credit

Electives—6 credits

# Community Integration

**Philanthropy**— Give teens a broader concept of “giving back” to their community in a planned and purposeful way. Teens will work with their own families and their advisor to support positive interactions between teens and parents. This also supports our belief in real-world applications and the understanding that we are responsible members of our community.

- Teens will implement an Advisor approved project.
- Teens will verify that the project will support a segment of the Community.
- Teens will work with their family and advisor to plan and implement this project.

**Governmental Exploration**— Through in-depth exploration of a particular governmental topic, teens will gain knowledge of their role in our local, state, or federal government.

- Teens will choose a topic to explore the workings of a governmental unit and how this relates to them.
- Teens will study, engage, and participate in this topic for a period of not less than six months.
- Teens will complete a culminating project to complete this undertaking. (Ex. 3-5 series seminar, blog, etc.)

# Career Investigations

**Internships**— This learning opportunity will support teens (16 years old and up) in gaining insight in career and interest oriented fields. Teens will gain responsibilities in time management, work ethic, cooperation, and introspective career study. This real-world application will support purposeful learning and experiences.

- Teens will brainstorm with their family and create a list of potential internship sites.
- Teens will research and interview with potential internship sites based on parent/Advisor conversations and/or parameters.
- Teens will secure internship locations and attend each Friday as specified by their Advisor for the semester.
- Teens will present their Learning Agreement to their Advisor for review and approval within two weeks of internship start date.
- Teens will complete at least 4 approved internship programs.

**Entrepreneurial activity** — This component will support teens in developing skills which apply to purposeful, realistic, and relevant components of running a business. By defining a need and developing and implementing a business plan, teens will develop an overall understanding of entrepreneurial activities.

- Teens will identify the type of entrepreneurial activity they will join or design (individual, partner, or group).
- Teens will develop a comprehensive Business Plan.
- Teens will carry out all reasonable portions of the Business Plan.

# Personal Intensives

**Capstone**— This offers the teen an opportunity to investigate an area of interest or design a project to encapsulate their growth. This allows teens to share growth and learning during their final year to their family, peers, Advisor, or community.

- Teens will design a project with the approval of their Advisor.
- Teens will demonstrate knowledge or growth to a specified audience.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

**Second Language Inclusive** – Teens will study a second language beyond the credit curriculum and create a comprehensive, Advisor approved, project or activity to further investigate the culture or language study.

- Teens will complete Level I and II for the language chosen for “high school credit.”
- Teens will utilize community resources of the native language.

**Wellness Initiative** – Teens will design a wellness initiative to further enhance life-long fitness, nutrition, or health.

- Teens will choose a topic of interest within the above framework to further track or research.
- Teens will lead lessons, seminars, or create learning tools from their Advisor approved project.

03.08.2011

## Request for Presentation to the Board of Directors



It is the procedure of the Board of Directors to set in advance the agenda for each meeting. Any approved items will be added to the agenda if received within three weeks of the next Board Meeting (see attached meeting schedule). If you wish to have an item added to the agenda or wish to address the Board, please complete the following and return your request to the address below. The Board President will notify you if this item is appropriate for an agenda item or further direct your request.

Community Montessori  
Attn: Board President  
4102 St. Joseph Road  
New Albany, IN 47150

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

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to the School: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM** - *Please check the appropriate box and detail your item below. You may use an additional sheet of paper if necessary.*

- I would like to personally present to the Board.
- I have already met with the Director regarding this item.

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

Brief Summary of Meeting:

**PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM DETAIL:**