Parent/Student Handbook

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WWW.DOWNTOWNMONTESSORI.COM

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Welcome to Downtown Montessori Academy!

Choosing a school for your child is one of the most important responsibilities you have as a parent. We are pleased that you have chosen our school. We view your child's presence in our school as a privilege, opportunity, and a trust. We are confident that your child's time here will be rewarding for you both.

Who We Are

Downtown Montessori Academy (DMA) is a public charter school serving students from Milwaukee County and adjacent counties. DMA is a City of Milwaukee charter school, and is one of the City's oldest charter schools, established in 1998. A voluntary Board of Directors governs the school. The purpose of the organization is entirely educational, operating in full compliance with all laws and regulations governing charter schools.

DMA was founded by parents in 1976, first as a childcare center and then as a preschool. It continued to grow, until the move to Bay View in 2006, which provided DMA the space it needed to fulfill its goal of expanding Montessori education to 8th grade.

DMA's Mission

Our mission at Downtown Montessori Academy is to create a Montessori environment where your child's early experiences with learning will help him or her to become a self-confident, competent, cooperative adult. The competence the child attains is directly related to their engagement in the meaningful work of the Montessori classroom. We seek to provide a family-centered environment that enriches and nurtures the growth of the family and the child.

We value good communication between parents, teachers, and administration. If you have any questions or concerns about the school, please feel free to set up a time to discuss them with your child's teacher.

DMA's Philosophy

We believe that children learn best when they are at ease and comfortable. The key is to see the hidden nature of the child at given stages of development and to design an environment that will fulfill the child's innate potential.

The educational approach is for children to trust in their own ability, to think and to solve problems independently. The goal is to lead students to think for themselves and become actively engaged in the learning process. Like the rest of us, children learn through trial, error and discovery. The students learn not to be afraid of making mistakes. They learn to try and try again without fear of embarrassment. As we allow students to develop a meaningful degree of independence and self-discipline, we also set a pattern for a lifetime of good work habits and a sense of responsibility. Our Montessori students are taught pride in their work.

Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy

We believe it is important for children to get to know children from backgrounds other than their own. DMA has a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse student body. We encourage applications from all parents who believe their child can benefit from the programs of Downtown Montessori.

Downtown Montessori Academy is committed to providing the best education possible for every child, and welcomes all students. It is our policy that no person will be denied admission to the school; excluded from the benefits of student services; not allowed to participate in curricular, extracurricular, recreational, or other activities; or in any other way discriminated against because of the person's ancestry, race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.

Downtown Montessori Academy does not discriminate in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or other programs.

What is Montessori?

Montessori education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on a child's developmental needs for freedom within limits, and a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities. Begun in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori, Montessori education was introduced into the United States in 1912, with one of the early schools established by Alexander Graham Bell in his own home. Montessori education has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in recent years reflecting growing recognition of the validity of its approach.

About Charter Schools in Wisconsin

Public charter schools are required to meet all state and federal education standards. In addition, they are judged on how well they meet student achievement goals established by their charter contracts. A quality public charter school must meet rigorous academic, fiscal and managerial standards.

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian schools created through a businesslike contract or "charter" between the operators and the sponsoring school board or other chartering authority. The Wisconsin charter school law gives charter schools freedom from most state rules and regulations in exchange for greater accountability for results. The charter defines the missions and methods of the charter school; the chartering authority holds the school accountable to its charter. The charter school motto is "Autonomy for Accountability,"

Wisconsin established charter schools to foster an environment of creativity. They can exist as living laboratories that influence the larger public school system and introduce an element of competition within that system. Charter schools are created with the best elements of regular public schools in mind. Their leaders may experiment with different instructional theories, site-based management techniques, and other innovations. They

learn, sometimes by trial and error, what works best for their student population. Regular schools can observe and learn from what happens in the charter school and make similar improvements. Through this process, the entire public school system is continually challenged to improve itself.

Wisconsin also wants each charter school to meet the special needs and interests of its community, parents, and students. This is what makes each charter school unique. While many goals for educating and preparing children are similar, each charter school fulfills a specific local need in education. Some charter schools offer a choice to parents and students in the area of curriculum, teaching methodology, and classroom structure. Others work to keep that small population of at-risk students from falling through the cracks, offering counseling, personal attention, and support. In districts with charter schools, the community, school boards, and parents have identified their public education needs and have established charters that meet them.

Downtown Montessori Academy is chartered by the City of Milwaukee, and is accountable to both the City and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Board of Directors and Governance

The Downtown Montessori Academy Board of Directors provides strategic leadership in support of the school's mission, philosophy and goals. The Board makes long-term decisions, provides financial management and communicates regularly with the Executive Director and Head of School to ensure that the school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of its charter, and that the school is a viable organization.

As the Head of School and Executive Director manage the day-to-day activities, the Board's mission is to preserve and protect the financial health and well-being of the school, as well as working with the school's administration to determine annual goals and objectives. The Board develops the long-term strategic plan that sets the annual agenda for the board and determines the annual goals and objectives for the Executive Director and Head of School.

Accountability

The City of Milwaukee holds its charter schools accountable for what they do. In order to renew our charter every five years, DMA has to show success answering the following three questions:

1. Are we academically successful?
2. Are we a viable, stable organization?
3. Are we following the terms of our charter?

To ensure that charter schools can answer "yes" to these questions, the City has certain requirements that must be met:

Accountability Plan

All charter schools have to develop and submit a five year accountability plan to the City. The plan includes goals that address academic success, organizational viability and the promises made in the charter.

Annual Report
Every August, charter schools are required to file an Annual Report with the City. In the report, DMA describes the progress it has made toward the goals listed in the Accountability Plan.

Assessment Data
As public schools, charter schools are required to participate in the state's standardized testing and to track the results over time as one way of determining academic success.

Financial Accountability
Since public charter schools are funded with public dollars, they are required by law to be held accountable for how taxpayer dollars are spent through regular audits and ongoing reviews from their authorizing entities.

The School Environment

The Montessori Children's House

The Montessori Primary Program is open to students from age 3 through 6. Children age 5 (on or before September 1) may attend full-day Montessori sessions that run from 8:45am to 3:30pm. Children ages 3 and 4 may attend our half-day Montessori program that runs from 8:45am to 11:45am, we also offer childcare before and after these hours for a fee.

Our Children's House provides a prepared environment to meet the developmental needs of the child. Children work individually and collaboratively with sensorial materials that engage their curiosity. The children are free to explore and observe at their own pace. The intent of the environment is to develop the child's love of learning. The variety of sensorial experiences enables the world around them. The classroom engages the child with numbers and language, writing and reading, the tools of reasoning and communication, and the basis of self-directed learning.

The Elementary Program

The Upper Elementary Program follows a 3- year curriculum cycle in all non-math areas of study. In depth research plays a dominant role. At the Elementary level, we continue to provide multi-age grouping within an environment that encourages cooperative learning and self-discipline. This is an explosive period of social and intellectual growth.

The elementary program is based on the "great stories" and explores everything from the microscopic to the cosmic, allowing the child to discover the interrelatedness of all things. The program builds on the foundations of the Primary program. The child continues to learn through discovery, experimentation, and exploration at an individualized pace.

An interdisciplinary approach to learning is also emphasized as is respect for self and community. Materials and group activities develop individual and collaborative skills in the areas of biology, mathematics, language, history, geography, music, and the visual arts. This environment fosters the child's natural curiosity. The child learns ways of inquiring, investigating and resolving questions. The sense of responsibility to self and to the community, begun in the Children's House, is further developed in the Elementary level.

The Adolescent Program

The individual commitment to contribute to society is fully expressed in the service learning and community involvement featured in the Adolescent Program. These 2 years of middle school reflect a new level of academic challenge and a major component for the level is preparation for high school. Study skills, time management and setting high work and social standards are all vital components to the Adolescent Program.

Hours and Days of Operation

The school is open Monday through Friday throughout the year, from 8:40am to 3:30pm. There is also before- and after-school care available. For all children, before-school care is available from 7:00am until 8:40am. For K3's and K4's, after-school care is available from 11:45am until 6:00pm. For K5 through Adolescent, care is available from 3:30pm until 6:00pm. During breaks, children who are enrolled in childcare are required to be at school by 9:00am. At 9:00am we begin to send staff home who are not needed based on the number of children.

The school and childcare center close for major holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

School Day at a Glance

7:00-8:40	Before School Program, if your child is enrolled in Child Care.
8:40	Students enter school
8:45-11:45	School Day Begins: Morning Work Cycle
11:45	Children's House Morning Dismissal
11:30-1:30	Lunch/Recess
12:30-2:15	Literacy
12:30-3:20	Afternoon Montessori Work Period
3:30	Dismissal. All students report to designated area.
3:30-6:00	After School Program for those students enrolled.

Safety Cadets
Safety Cadets are stationed in the parking lot during morning drop-off and afterschool pick-up. During mid-day pickup they will be at both the Homer Street and Graham Street doors to assist teachers. All students in grades 5 – 8 are invited to be a part of the Downtown Montessori Academy Safety Patrol.

For security and safety purposes all persons entering the school after 8:45 must use the Graham Street entrance.

Drop Off / Pick Up (Children's House) (Students who are not in the Before-School Program)

Part of the Montessori Philosophy is to help lead the child to independence. The ability to care for yourself, i.e., dress and undress and hang your things up is an important part to the beginning of the child's day. Therefore, we ask that students enter school with their class and not their parents.

Children's House Parents should drive into the lot and stay in line, please pull forward as far as possible. Parents are asked to remain in their cars during drop-off and pick-up unless they are helping buckle/unbuckle their child. It is best if your child is seated and exits on the passenger side so that students crossing in front of other cars in line is avoided. Students will be met by Safety Cadets and the classroom assistants at 8:35am and should line up with their class. They will be allowed to enter the

building at 8:40am. Any elementary siblings dropped off on the playground may walk around the building to meet their class. Walking parents, you may walk your child to the designated area by their teacher. Please do not enter the playground area as this confuses students trying to line up.

To exit, parents are asked to follow the arrows onto Howell Avenue. Please note, we are enforcing a **right-turn only** onto Howell Avenue during pick-up and drop-off. During pick-up we will follow the same policy, remain in line in your car and your child will be brought to you.

Half Day Pick Up/ Children's House

1. **Kim & Javon:** Children will be dismissed from the door on Homer Street.
2. **Sasa:** Children will be dismissed from the door on Graham Street.

Siblings and off-site daycare children will be dismissed on Graham.

Drop Off / Pick Up (Elementary)

(Students who are not in the Before School Program)
Elementary parents are asked to remain in their cars during drop-off and pick-up. All Loading Zones will be reserved strictly for "pull-up and drop-off/pick-up," no parking. After your child exits your vehicle they are asked to get in line and wait for their teacher to open the building doors. During dismissal, students will only be dismissed to cars that are parked. If you are idling in the middle of the street your child will not be dismissed to you. Double parking creates a dangerous environment for other motorists as well as any pedestrians on foot.

Drop Off / Pick Up (Adolescents)

Our Adolescent program is located at 2523 South Graham Street. Drop off and pick up of all adolescent students is at the front entrance of this building on Graham Street.

Additional Drop Off / Pick Up Notes

Drop-off and Pick-up is not an appropriate time to speak with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher would be very happy to set up a time to speak with you. Please call the school office to set up an appointment or e-mail your child's teacher directly. If you need to enter the school for any reason during pick-up, you may park in the church parking lot for up to 15 minutes. Parking in front of school and leaving your car unattended during school hours may result in a parking ticket, the City of Milwaukee Parking checkers frequent the area.

All children who are not picked up on time will be brought inside to wait on the benches in front of the office. Parents will be billed $10.00 for each half hour or any portion of it.

Make sure your child knows how he/she is getting home before the start of the school day. Reminder calls for your child are disruptive to the learning of others and **we will not call a student out of class to take a phone call.** If an emergency occasionally happens, we will do our best to help.

Family Pets
We ask that you not bring the family pet to school during drop off or pick up time if you are walking. DMA has students who are allergic to some pets. In addition, with so many children outside the pets can become a distraction. If you do walk to school with your dog, they must stay off the playground and away from the building where students are lining up.

School Closings
Downtown Montessori Academy utilizes a telephone broadcast system that will enable personnel to notify all households and individuals by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate important announcements or reminders. This service is provided by SwiftReach a company specializing in effective communications.

When used, the service will call all phone numbers in our selected contact lists and will deliver a recorded message from an administrator. The service will deliver the message to both live answer and answering machines. No answers (phones ringing over 40 sec.) and busy tones will be automatically retried twice in fifteen-minute intervals after the initial call.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

1) All information and contact numbers are strictly secure and confidential and are only used for the purposes described herein.

<u>Here is some specific information you should know:</u>

Caller ID:	The Caller ID will display [414-744-6005], which is the main number for Downtown Montessori Academy.
Live Answers:	There is a short pause at the beginning of the message, usually a few seconds. Answer your phone as you normally would; “hello” and hold for the message to begin. Multiple “hellos” will delay the message. Inform all family members who may answer your phone of this process.
Answering Machines:	The system will detect that your machine has answered and will play the recording to your machine. The phone will ring for up to 40 seconds. Make sure that your machine answers after four rings or you may miss the message.
Message Repeat:	At the end of the message you will be prompted to ‘press any key’ to hear the message again. This is very helpful when someone other than the intended recipient initially answers, allowing the recipient to then ‘repeat’ the message in its entirety.

If you have any questions, please contact Liz Becerra at lbecerra@downtownmontessori.com

Please make every effort to provide Downtown Montessori Academy with current and accurate phone information any time there is a change to ensure that you do not miss important information.

Early Release of Students

If it is necessary to pick up your child during school hours, **you must come to the office first to sign him/her out and we will call your child to the office.** Interruptions to classroom instruction are detrimental to the learning environment. Please let the office know ahead of time so they are able to locate your student for sign out. Please do your best to schedule doctor and dentist appointments after school hours in order to avoid disruption of the educational setting

Attendance and Absences

Excused Absences Defined — It is your responsibility as a parent/guardian to notify the school as soon as possible when your child will be absent. The following are valid reasons for your child to miss school and are considered excusable absences. All other absences are regarded as unexcused.

1. Personal Illness
2. Funerals
3. Medical/dental appointments
4. Required legal appearances
5. Designated religious holidays
6. Family emergencies where the student is needed to ensure family well-being
7. Educational or district-sponsored activities approved by the Head of School

As a parent/guardian, you also have the right to excuse your child from school for any reason for up to 10 days per year. If your child will miss more than 3 days consecutively you must complete a pre-arranged absence form (found on the MyDMA portal) and submit to the Head of School one week prior. Students may complete class work missed during excused and unexcused absences without being penalized for their absence.

A student who is attending a school-sponsored activity or who is attending WCATY off site shall not be considered absent for attendance reporting purposes. The school will require communication from parents or guardian within 24 hours to verify the reason for a student absence. The school may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from medical sources.

The school will then notify the parents or guardian if the absence will be considered unexcused pursuant to school policy.

Any absence not specifically covered by another section, such as family vacations, school visits, or other extended absence, must complete a pre-arranged absence form in order to be excused. This form must be submitted at least one week prior to the scheduled absence. In order for the absence to be excused, the student must meet one or more of the following conditions: 1) is in good academic standing 2) has no unexcused absences, or 3) has four or fewer excused absences in a semester or seven or fewer in a school year.

Truancy

Your child is considered truant when:

• He/she is absent for all or part of the school day and you, as the parent/guardian, have not contacted the school with a legal excuse as noted under Excused Absences.

• He/she attends school irregularly but often enough that he/she is not in violation of the state laws that require children to attend school.

A child is considered habitually truant if he/she misses a total of five full or partial days without a valid excuse during a school semester. The school has the authority to reject excuses that do not appear to be substantiated.

Parent Notification of Absence

Parents must contact the school if your child is going to be absent. If your child is not in school and you have not contacted the school, you will receive a text message to any mobile number we have on file for you.

If your child has had five unexcused absences in a semester or 10 excused absences, you will be notified in writing by the school social worker. Parents may be notified simultaneously by electronic communication. The notice will ask you to meet with the head of school and teacher within five days. (A five-day extension for the meeting date is allowed). If you fail to meet with school officials within 10 days of notification, the school may take steps to impose penalties on you for failing to correct the truancy problem. These penalties include enforcement of state statutes and municipal codes.

Tardiness

We take tardiness very seriously, being tardy is disruptive in nature and in addition to affecting the tardy child's learning; they also have a detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning. A student who is 10 minutes late everyday will miss 30 hours of instruction during the year. Students who are late feel uncomfortable, just like adults do when we walk into a situation that has already started. It interrupts the flow of their workday and makes them unbalanced as they rush to start their day. This can carry over to the rest of their school day.

Please make every effort to get your child to school on time. The school day is from 8:40 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Students are considered tardy between 8:50 – 10:00 a.m. After 8:50 a.m. students are to report to the office for a late pass.

Teacher Initiated Tardy Process

Teacher Intervention

1. 1st Tardy - Teacher reviews the class tardy policy and expectations with student.
2. 2nd Tardy - Teacher reviews the class tardy policy and expectations with student. Teacher notifies parent.
3. 3rd Tardy - Teachers will conference with the parents, if deemed an issue to determine the cause. This is an opportunity to work with the parents to create a relationship and find solutions to get students to school on time. Notify parents via telephone or email.

Head of School Intervention

1. 4th Tardy - If tardies continue after teacher conference and parent notification, teacher will refer the student to the Head of School and School Social Worker. Head of School will meet with student and parents to determine what further support is needed.

Attendance Guidelines

1. Arrival: Bell rings at 8:40 a.m.
2. Tardy Bell: 8:50 a.m.
3. Arriving between 9:00 a.m.– 10:00 a.m. considered tardy.
4. Arriving after 10:00 a.m considered A.M. absent.
5. Students leaving after 11:40 considered P.M. absent.

Leaving School Early

It is important for children to be in school all day, every day. If you need to pick your child up early from school, please send a signed note to tell the teacher what time you will pick up your child. When you come to pick up your child early, you must stop in the office and sign your child out.

Responsibilities

Attendance is the responsibility of the student, the parents, and the school. The importance of regular, daily attendance as a basis for academic achievement cannot be overemphasized. Absences have a negative effect on instructional continuity, regardless of attempts to make up the work. DMA believes duplication of the classroom experience can never be accomplished with after-school assignments. The school cannot teach students who are not present. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation are vital to this purpose.

Student Responsibilities for School Attendance

1. To attend school for all days of the established school calendar.
2. To appear in class on time, prepared for academic learning.
3. To contact teachers on the day the student returns from any absence to arrange to complete all makeup work assigned and to establish when this makeup work is due.
4. To complete work as assigned by the teacher when a pre-authorized absence is requested and approved.

Parent responsibilities

1. To maintain communication with their children regarding attendance.
2. To recognize that any absence, regardless of cause, has a possible detrimental influence on student achievement.
3. To contact the school in a timely fashion based on the school's reporting procedures regarding absences, and in the case of extended home confinement, request makeup assignments.
4. To monitor the makeup work of the student who has missed class.
5. To attend and participate in school attendance conferences when requested.
6. To recognize that student attendance at school is a collaborative effort between the home and school.

Teacher Responsibilities for School Attendance

1. To take attendance daily and maintain accurate attendance records
2. To notify Head of School and parents in a timely fashion of attendance concerns.
3. To provide makeup work to any student who has excused or unexcused absences, provided the student or parent/guardian requests the makeup work within one day of the student's return to that class.

Administrative Responsibilities for School Attendance

1. To supervise the school attendance policy and procedures.
2. To develop and implement procedures to determine whether or not the student's parents or guardian had knowledge of a student's absence.
3. To provide parents with information about the school's attendance procedures, including extended and/or pre-arranged absences, as well as information about their child's attendance record when requested.

4. To develop and implement procedures to communicate to appropriate school staff concerning student absences, excused and unexcused.
5. To inform parents and students of school attendance regulations.
6. At a minimum, attendance shall be recorded twice during each scheduled school day.

Makeup Work for Excused Absences

It is essential that students absent from school make up work missed.

It is the responsibility of the student and parent or guardian to initiate requests for and pick up makeup work on the day he or she returns to class from an excused absence. Makeup work should reflect class assignments missed during the absence, and a reasonable amount of time should be allowed for work completion. Time allowed to make up work is twice the number of classes or days missed (two days allowed for makeup work for each day of absence); however, an extension of this time limit may be approved by the school administration. Students who complete makeup work within the required timeline will receive full academic credit earned for the makeup work.

Excused Tardy

The following shall be considered an excused tardy:
1. A student who is late as the result of appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only, which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
2. A student who is attending any school sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the school administration.
3. A student who is excused by a parent or guardian for observance of religious holidays.
4. Weather conditions that cause slower driving.
5. Transportation issues.

Unexcused Tardy

An unexcused tardy is defined as a tardy that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions.

Parent/ Student/Teacher Agreement

We know that students learn best when everyone works together to encourage learning. This pledge is a promise to work together as a team. Together we can do it!

PARENTS/GUARDIANS	STUDENT	TEACHER
I want my child to achieve, therefore, I will do my best to: -Help my child attend school regularly, on time, and come appropriately dressed. -Ensure that my child eats a healthy breakfast. -Provide necessary school supplies. -Review work completed in school. -Talk with my child every day about his or her school activities, and homework assignments. -Encourage my child to set and reach goals. -Support school rules. -Communicate with teachers and attend conferences. -Ensure that my child follows the school's dress code policy	It is important that I do my best to: -Attend school regularly, on time, and appropriately dressed. -Come to class prepared with supplies needed. -Be responsible for my actions. -Complete class and homework assignments. -Ask questions when I do not understand something. -Listen and follow directions. -Raise my hand to speak. -Speak politely and cooperate with others -Keep my hands and feet to myself. -Respect my parents, school staff, and other students. -Discuss with my parents what I am learning.	It is important that all students achieve, therefore, I will do my best to: -Create a safe and positive learning environment to promote academic knowledge and build self-esteem in my classroom. -Encourage good citizenship by showing that I care about the respect all students and appreciate individual differences. -Communicate and work with families to support student's learning.

Visitor Policy

Visitors in the building or school grounds, **including parents,** must enter at the Graham Street entrance and check in through the school office. Before ringing our doorbell, we ask that your remove your sunglasses, hat, hood or any other item that may prevent us from identifying you on our security cameras. Student visitors from other schools or siblings of current students are not allowed in classrooms because of the dual problems of space and class disruption; this includes the lunch hour. Any adult found in the school without the appropriate visitor check in will be escorted back to the office.

All persons, including parents, entering the building at any time for any reason must report to the office for a visitor pass.

Classroom Observation Policy

1. All observation sessions will be planned in advance so as to not create conflict with the teacher and student schedule. Therefore, arrangements must be made at least 48 hours prior to the time of the classroom visit or observation. Observations will be limited to one time per month for no more than 20 minutes per visit in order to avoid distraction or disruption to the teacher's schedule and classroom atmosphere. Observations can be scheduled following the first six weeks of school or at the discretion of the Head of School.
2. Please arrange a mutually agreed upon date and time with the Head of School and teacher for the requested classroom observation. A classroom observation agreement must be completed.
3. Formal observation does not include times when parents are invited to a classroom for a special event or presentation or serve as a volunteer with a teacher.
4. The Head of School reserves the right to decline any request for classroom observation if it is determined that such an observation would cause undue disruption in the educational process.
5. For security reasons, all visitors are required to sign in at the school office, to receive a visitor's badge, and indicate the name of the teacher or destination before proceeding to contact any other person in the building or on the school grounds. All visitors are asked to sign out when leaving the building.
6. To protect the learning environment, the parent/guardian or outside provider will be the only visitor in the classroom during the observation. Any observer, other than the parent/guardian, must be approved by the Head of School and have written consent from the parent/guardian describing the reason for the visit/observation. Out of respect for the teaching environment, parents/guardians shall not bring younger siblings or children while observing in the classroom or to utilize any electronic equipment such as cell phones while in the classroom. Observers should not disrupt the learning environment by engaging students or the teacher in conversation. A follow-up meeting may be scheduled as needed to answer questions or concerns. Recordings of the observation shall not be permitted.
7. During the observation, the Head of School, Executive Director or his/her designee may be present in the observed setting in order to accommodate follow-up discussion or clarify questions that may arise.

Parent Communication Procedures

If parents have concerns about their child, they should first contact their child's teacher. Teachers not only work with your children in the classroom, they also serve as your primary school contact. If concerns are addressed to the Head of School or other administrative staff first, the teacher may understandably feel bypassed and insulted. It also wastes time, as these concerns will only be brought back to the teacher. If your concern has not been addressed through contact with the teacher, you may bring your concern to the Head of School. You may set up an appointment to speak with the Head of School through the office at **414-744-6005**.

Drop-off or pick-up times are not appropriate times to discuss concerns, questions, or issues with your child's teacher. During those times the teacher is busy monitoring and observing the children in her class, and such interruptions can be distracting and disruptive. Your child's teacher would be pleased to set up an appointment with you to discuss any concerns you may have. You may leave a message for the teacher through the office at **414-744-6005** or email your child's teacher directly. See Appendix 4, Staff Directory.

Communicating with Staff

When a family has questions or concerns it is important that they be addressed as soon as possible. It is important that parents follow protocol with regard to staff communication to ensure that all students and families get their needs properly addressed.

The front office is always available to assist you in directing your question or concerns.

1. General questions related to drop off, pick up, and other scheduling issues should be directed to the front office at 414-744-6005.

2. Questions regarding before and after school childcare should be directed to Jessica Rodriguez, Director of Childcare, at 414-744-6005.

3. Questions related to learning and the classroom should be addressed to your child's teacher. Only after discussion with your child's teacher, if the teacher is unable to address the concern, should the matter be brought to the Head of School. Each teacher has a school designated email address. This is the easiest way to contact them to set up an appointment.

Email Guidelines for Parents

Email has increased teacher workload and led to a reply/response expectation that may not be realistic. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when using email with teachers:

The classroom environment does not allow teachers to check their email regularly. Additionally, teachers may be unavailable for a variety of reasons such as, helping students individually, illness, attendance at workshops and conferences, meetings or lesson preparation.

For these reasons, please remember if you choose to send an e-mail message to a member of our professional staff, you may not get an immediate reply. In fact you may not receive an e-mail reply at all, since the staff members will determine how best to reply to you: by e-mail, phone, or to schedule a personal conference.

RESPONSE TIME: Generally, e-mails will be responded to within 48 hours unless received over a holiday, school closure, or weekend.

When using e-mail:

1. Please send only non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use e-mail to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus. A teacher may not have time to read your message in a timely fashion. Instead please call the office to be sure your message is received and clearly understood.
2. Your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioral issues are best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a personal conference with your child's teacher. An e-mail message on these matters is not appropriate.
3. Please remember that e-mail is not necessarily confidential. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone or personal contact.
4. Please identify yourself in the subject line of your e-mail message and, if appropriate, the name of your child.
5. For all medical or health concerns, please contact the office by phone.
6. Please keep all contacts professional. Jokes, chain letters, or commercial solicitations are inappropriate and reduce valuable teaching time.

Staff will not respond to threats, disparaging or personal remarks, or to any e-mail correspondence that could be construed as harassment.

E-MAILS ARE LEGAL DOCUMENTS

E-mails are considered legal documents. They are part of the discovery process under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP). There are potential penalties if e-mails that are requested as evidence have been deleted. Therefore, in general, e-mails to and from parents and students are saved.

PUPIL PRIVACY

When corresponding via e-mail to staff members, pupil privacy must be maintained. Staff will not reveal anything confidential in an e-mail.

PUPIL RECORDS

Whenever you create an e-mail message that includes information about your child and send it to a staff member, you also are creating a pupil record.

E-MAILS ARE NOT PRIVATE

E-mails are not private and can be read by others at any time. In addition, e-mail messages may be requested by the public under the Open Public Records Act.

Downtown Montessori Academy maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal staff communication. Downtown Montessori reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to School business or to the School's educational mission.

Communication Between Home and School

Effective communication supports the Montessori triangle of child, school and parent. DMA has put several methods in place to ensure ongoing communication.

Folders
Each child will be issued a folder where notices, school forms and schoolwork will be sent back and forth between the school and home. Please check this folder daily. If the folder is lost you will be responsible for the replacement cost.

Email
As a certified Green and Healthy School, DMA tries to provide as much communication through email as possible, to prevent unnecessary paper usage. Please provide your email address(es) to the school office using the Parent Communication form with your contact information, and note your email communication preferences.

School Calendar
The school calendar is available on the DMA web site at http://www.downtownmontessori.com/my-dma. It is periodically updated, so please review it frequently. There are also copies of the school calendar available in the office.

DMA Web Site
The most current and up-to-date information and notices will be available on the DMA web site, at http://www.downtownmontessori.com/my-dma.

DMA Facebook page
Visit our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/DowntownMontessoriAcademy

DMA Instagram Page
Visit our Instagram page at https://www.instagram.com/downtownmontessori

Parent Education
Throughout the year, DMA will offer Parent Education sessions on varying topics. All parents are encouraged to attend. Dates and times are provided in the School Calendar.

Conferences
There will be conferences twice yearly. Parents are responsible for signing up for these conferences. You are encouraged to set up conferences with your child's teacher at any time you feel the need.

Nutrition, Snacks and Meals

Simple, nutritious snacks are provided by parents in the Children's House classrooms according to the class calendar. Elementary students may bring a nutritious snack in their lunch box. This is not a meal; your child should eat a healthy breakfast before arriving at school. If you child arrives early in the morning you may bring a snack for them. Parents of children who stay for childcare may want to provide extra snacks or sandwiches etc. that the child may choose for late afternoons.

Parents provide a bag lunch for the midday meal, while we provide milk. If your child is required to have special drinks, you are welcome to leave it in our refrigerator, labeled. Please routinely check to see if your child has enough. Please note, we only allow 100% juice.

Please provide a lunch that is well balanced, giving the child simple choices in the basic food groups. A thermos can be used to keep foods warm, if needed. It is a long day and even longer for a hungry child. Choose foods you know your child will eat. Please skip the sweets as part of meal. We also do not allow "Lunchables". Despite their simplicity the children throw most of them away and are then very hungry later. The meal should include fruits, vegetables, protein, and carbohydrates; some examples include:

Lunch 1	**Lunch 2**	**Lunch 3**
Spaghetti	Sunflower butter and jelly	Baked beans
Bread sticks	sandwich	Cheese sandwich
Carrot sticks	Vegetables and dip	Green salad & dressing
Canned peaches	Yogurt	Grapes
	Fish Crackers	

If a parent is dropping off a student's lunch after the school day has begun, please leave the lunch in the office. We will call your child down before lunchtime to pick it up.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

As a certified Green and Healthy School, DMA hopes to help develop students who are stewards of the earth and cognizant of the impact we, as humans, have on the planet. In this regard, we encourage families to minimize waste by packing lunches in reusable containers and using cloth napkins.

We as a school will continue to pursue options to reduce our impact on the environment as well.

Birthdays and Celebrations

The Montessori approach to celebrations, including birthdays, is educational, calm and low-key. Birthdays are important events, and each classroom teacher has his or her own celebratory procedure about birthdays. Please see your child's teacher for the classroom policy on birthdays and other celebrations. If the classroom celebrates a holiday, a note will be sent home with parents.

At DMA, we recognize that caring for the whole child includes attention to good nutrition and healthy eating habits. As part of our ongoing commitment as a Wisconsin Green and Healthy School we have a policy regarding birthday treats.

When considering a treat, we ask that you avoid foods containing the following items:
1. Artificial flavors/colors
2. Artificial Sugars
3. Preservatives
4. Trans-Fat
5. Nuts of any kind

Examples of Healthy Treats include:
1. Apple Sauce
2. Fruit Kebabs
3. Yogurt with Fresh Fruit
4. Hummus/Pita Chips
5. Vegetables/ Dip
6. Home Baked goods with healthy alternative ingredients (involve your child in the process)

This is a great opportunity to teach the children that birthdays and other celebrations do not have to involve food. All parents are welcome to arrange in advance with your child's teacher to come in on the day of your child's birthday celebration and share a story or another kind of experience with the children.

Deliveries to Students

No deliveries for students for celebratory or special occasions will be accepted at DMA. This includes flowers, balloons, cookie bouquets, singing telegrams, etc. Wrapped packages will not be accepted for delivery to students.

Personal Property

Children are not allowed to bring toys to school. The children work with the materials provided in their classrooms and toys are for play at home. A stuffed animal or soft toy may be brought for K3 and K4 nap only.

Older child care students who are signed up for breaks are allowed to bring personal property (portable electronics, handheld gaming systems) from home on days when school is not in session. The school is not responsible for any toys your child chooses to bring from home.

Bicycles
Students are permitted to ride bicycles to school. Students who ride bicycles must assume all responsibilities and risks involved. We strongly recommend and encourage that students wear helmets if riding their bikes to school. Bicycles must be parked and locked in the cycle rack. **Bicycles are not allowed in the building.** Students are to walk their bicycles while on campus and in the parking lot. Minibikes, motorbikes, skateboards, roller skates/blades or any other shoes with wheels are not allowed at school.

Naps

Children in K3 and K4 who are enrolled in afternoon childcare will nap.

Naps will be provided in a quiet area, which is physically separated from activity that would disrupt a napping or resting child. A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 1/2 hour will not be required to remain on a mat. They will remain in the nap area with a quiet activity.

Physical Activity

Children are expected to participate in some form of physical activity every day. Please make sure your child has gym shoes every day. Gym shoes may be left here at school in a bag on their hook. As with all personal items, please put your child's name or initials on them.

Field Trips

Field trips will be planned throughout the year. Parents are required to sign a permission slip for each occasion or a single consent for a series of regular supervised excursions. Your child's teacher will supply these permission slips. We cannot allow your child to attend a field trip without your signed permission slip. Any parent signed up to be a chaperone must have a background check on file with us. Background check forms are distributed only at the beginning of the year and must be returned to school.
The dress code is strictly enforced on all field trips unless specifically stated otherwise. We are a Tobacco Free School Zone and that extends to field trips. Parents that are chaperoning on a field trip are not permitted to smoke at any time during the outing.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

For safety reasons, we ask that parents not use their cell phone on school grounds, especially in the parking lot or playground area. Please silence all cell phones upon entering school grounds. Students are asked to leave cell phones in the office and pick them up at the end of the school day. Any teacher has the right to confiscate a student's phone if it is out. A parent must then come into school to retrieve it from the office.

Weather
Be sure to dress your child appropriately for the weather. During winter, we go outside every day, temperature/weather permitting. Your child needs boots, mittens, a hat, and snow pants. We will go out all year unless there are extreme weather conditions that require indoor active play. If your child is not well enough to go outside, they should not be at school. A doctor's note is required for children who need to stay inside due to asthma.

Change of Clothes (Children's House)
Please provide one complete change of clothing (shirt, pants, underclothes, and socks) suitable to the season for each child, to be kept at the school in case of spills or other accidents. These should be placed in a container with your child's name on it. When your child brings home wet or soiled clothing please replace the spare clothing the next day. If your child has accidents, please have more than one complete set of clothing at school. Younger children who are having accidents will need many changes. **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING!** Make sure your child has clothing that allows them to dress and undress themselves. Buckles, belts, extra buttons and tight clothing make using the bathroom a difficult process for your child.

We do not allow children to wear pull-ups at any time. A child who is in the Montessori class must be fully trained and able to dress and undress him or herself.

DMA as a Green School

Downtown Montessori became a state certified Green School in May 2007. We believe; as Maria Montessori said "The land is where our roots are. The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the Earth."

Each classroom recycles both plastic and paper products and we are limiting sending home paper copies whenever possible. Our intent is to send out the majority of information and notices by way of email. In addition, we encourage parents to plan their child's lunches with the Green School theme in mind.

Student Retention

As a multi-graded program, the school prefers not to retain students, but rather to meet the individual needs of the child within their peer environment. When it is necessary to consider the retention of a student for an additional year at a certain grade level, the school evaluates each child socially, academically, and emotionally. The team considers the impact of retention in all of these areas. The decision is made in collaboration with the parents, teachers, and administration. Students are included when appropriate.

Health Policy and Illnesses

We have a strong obligation to maintain a safe and healthful environment for all children, staff and visitors. Our health and safety policies are continually reviewed to ensure every effort has been made to eliminate potential hazards and improve the quality of care. We rely on parents to be our partners in this effort. We cannot care for children who are ill, and suggest that parents have a contingency plan for care in the event illness prevents a child from attending school. Please familiarize yourself with the guidelines provided and direct any questions you may have to your classroom teacher or the Head of School. Your strict adherence to our policy is necessary to ensure a more healthful environment for your child and all who visit Downtown Montessori.

If your child becomes ill during the course of the day, you will be notified as soon as possible. If in our opinion, your child is not well enough to participate, you will be asked to pick the child up as soon as you are able.

Following are reasons why we would ask your child not to attend school:

1. If your child has a fever or shows other symptoms of illness. **Your child must be free of fever without the aid of medication for at least 24 hours prior to attending or returning to DMA**.
2. If your child has serious diarrhea.
3. If your child vomits.
4. If your child has cold symptoms or symptoms of another illness which prevent participation in the program. For example, if your child is taking medication which causes drowsiness, or is extremely irritable as a result of illness.
5. If your child has a contagious condition, such as impetigo, a doctor's note is required stating that he or she has undergone full treatment, is no longer contagious and may return to school.
6. If your child has conjunctivitis (pink eye) he or she must be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to DMA. Children may not return to school if there is active discharge from the eye. When the child does return, a doctor's note is required stating that he or she is no longer contagious.
7. If your child contracts Strep Throat he or she must be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours prior to attending school

Medical & Immunization

Children are required to have a physical examination every 2 years. A signed copy of the appropriate physician's report should be provided to the school each time. We encourage you to also have a routine eye exam for your child. The State recommends a full eye exam before entering kindergarten.

Immunizations must be kept up to date. Children should receive immunizations to prevent measles by their first and fifth birthdays. Failure to have your child immunized will require exclusion from school until completed unless the required waiver is signed.

Wisconsin requires that parents and guardians of all public and private school students in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 to give their school written evidence of immunization against certain diseases. Mumps, measles and rubella are some of those diseases. Your child is protected when he or she has both of the required MMR vaccinations.

The law requires students receive a minimum number of immunizations prior to entering school. The law is meant to prevent illnesses such as mumps, pertussis (whooping cough and other vaccine-preventable disease from returning and harming our children. To obtain proper immunizations, call your doctor, health center or the Milwaukee Health Department at 414-286-8034. When your child is immunized, provide the records to Downtown Montessori.

Prescription and non-prescription medicines

Under state regulations, to administer prescription or non-prescription medication, the medicine must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, name of drug, dosage, directions for administering, date, and physician's name. Non-prescription medicine must be labeled with the child's name, dosages, and directions for administering. All medicine must be given to the front office and will be kept in a locked file cabinet.

In accordance with new state regulations, all medication, prescription and non-prescription must be accompanied by a doctor's note with appropriate dosage or we cannot administer it to the student.

Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy

Dr. Maria Montessori integrated a code of conduct into her curriculum, emphasizing grace, courtesy and respect for yourself and others. At DMA, our approach is to lead children toward self-discipline. The Montessori Method addresses the need to change towards positive behavior through lesson planning or teaching whenever possible. However, in the event discipline is necessary, the following is the method of child discipline used by Downtown Montessori Academy.

We feel it is important to provide a prepared, consistent environment for the children. Adult reactions to the child are tested daily. When actions of a child demand correction, it is most important that all adults involved with the child deal with the problem in the same way.

The Montessori Method encourages children to make choices and develop responsibility for their own actions. Discipline is used to help the child, not to punish. The method of corrective discipline endorsed by Downtown Montessori Academy has grown out of the Montessori approach. When a child is involved in actions that are contrary to established rules, the object is to redirect the child to other activities.

All staff and parents should serve as role models for the children, other staff, and other parents. Each child should be dealt with positively, avoiding showing anger.

A quiet time will be used only if redirection of the child does not work. The child will choose when they are ready to rejoin the group.

When, in the judgment of the Teacher and Head of School, a child's behavior is disruptive, disrespectful, cruel, or unsafe to the child or others, it cannot and will not be tolerated.

In order to effectively address behavior difficulties all interventions will be formulated based on the following:

1. Respect for the child.
2. Knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child, as well as the needs of the group.
3. The understanding that appropriate behavior must be taught and modeled.

The goal of each intervention is to assist the child in developing self-control and discipline. We understand, as the child gets older there will be specific consequences.

When other interventions have not worked, the following steps will be taken:

First: The teacher reviews the school rules with the child and warns of possible consequences.

Second: The teacher communicates the problem with the child's parents.
The teacher applies appropriate consequences.
The teacher sends home a written report and a copy to the office.

Third: Same three steps as above.
Teacher requests a conference with the Head of School and child.

Fourth: Teacher sends the child to the office with a written report. Head of School will contact parents and apply appropriate consequences.

Possible consequences:

1. Fighting will lead to in-school suspension. Repetition will lead to out-of-school suspension.
2. Unruly conduct in the classroom may lead to isolation from the group.
3. Playground problems may lead to temporary suspension from these activities.
4. Unruly behavior on field trips may lead to suspension from the next field trip (child may not attend school on that day)

If at any time a child becomes physical with the teacher they will be removed from the classroom and sent to the office. The parent will be notified to pick the child up immediately and will return to school after a conference with the parents, teacher, student and principal.

**We will follow the DPI guidelines when and if we must restrain a child.*

Chronic behavior problems:
For unusual problems we suspect are beyond the child's control, we refer the problem to Support Services for evaluation and help. Suspension and expulsion of students are considered a last choice and subject to Board review.

If we know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, we are required by the State of Wisconsin to immediately contact the Children's Protective Services or local law enforcement agency and we will contact them immediately.

Academic Integrity

It is Downtown Montessori's practice to facilitate honesty and integrity among the student body. Students must work to be successful in the classroom. Each student's success is based upon his or her own merit. To this end, academic misconduct of any kind is unacceptable.

Academic misconduct can include, but is not limited to:

1. Giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on exams or in the preparing of reports or other assignments.
2. Knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work
3. Unauthorized changing of grades
4. Unauthorized use of school approvals or forging of signatures
5. Plagiarizing of another's work
6. Otherwise acting dishonestly in the classroom.

Incidences of academic misconduct will be addressed within the DMA Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.

Bullying Policy

Downtown Montessori Academy provides a peaceful, enriching and safe environment for all students to grow and learn within. We incorporate peace curriculum into all classrooms and emphasize respect for each other and the environment we share together each day. Our staff models respect, grace and courtesy, mutual respect and appropriate conflict resolution skills.

Anti-Bullying/Peace Policy
Children at Downtown Montessori Academy are educated in peace throughout each 3 year cycle. We focus on core values and using respectful communication skills to solve conflicts. We closely monitor the behavior of students and staff to ensure that bullying is not allowed to occur and we take swift action to deal with any incidents. Our expectation is that Parents will become part of this process to work with teacher and child to support their growth and skills.

Definition
Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involve**s** an imbalance of power**.** The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status.

Bullying behavior can be:
1. Physical (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft, threatening behavior)
2. Verbal (e.g. threatening or intimidating language, teasing or name-calling, racist remarks)
3. Indirect (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the internet – also known as cyber bullying)

Prohibition
Bullying behavior is prohibited in all schools, buildings, property and educational environments, including any property or vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district. This includes public transportation regularly used by students to go to and from school. Educational environments include, but are not limited to, every activity under school supervision.

Procedure for Reporting/Retaliation
All school staff members and school officials who observe or become aware of acts of bullying are required to report these acts to the Head of School in writing.

Any other person, including a student who is either a victim of the bullying or is aware of the bullying or any other concerned individual is encouraged to report the conduct to their teacher or the Head of School.

Reports of bullying may be made verbally or in writing and may be made confidentially. All such reports, whether verbal or in writing, will be taken seriously and a clear account of the incident is to be documented. The recipient of the report will make a written record

of the report, including all pertinent details.

The staff member receiving a report of bullying shall immediately investigate the report. The teacher and the Head of School have the responsibility to receive the information and conduct the investigation.

There shall be no retaliation against individuals making such reports. Individuals engaging in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action.

Procedure for Investigating Reports of Bullying
The person receiving bullying report shall, within one school day; interview the person(s) who are the victim(s) of the bullying and collect whatever other information is necessary to determine the facts and the seriousness of the report.
Parents and/or guardians of each pupil involved in the bullying will be notified prior to the conclusion of the investigation. The district shall maintain the confidentiality of the report and any related pupil records to the extent required by law.

Sanctions and Supports
If it is determined that students participated in bullying behavior or retaliated against anyone due to the reporting of bullying behavior, the school district administration and school board may take disciplinary action, including: suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials for possible legal action as appropriate. Staff will provide support for the identified victim(s).

Bullying Prevention and Management
Downtown Montessori Academy encourages students to show respect for differences in others, including but not limited to race, gender, and religion while fostering a school environment free from all forms of bullying and intimidation.

In partnership with families the school's focus, based on Montessori pedagogy, is on preventative measures for such behaviors, by teaching children how to:

1. Be caring and courteous
2. Cooperate with others
3. Deal with negative feelings (anger, jealousy, etc.)
4. Stand up for themselves without being aggressive
5. Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person

Commitment of Downtown Montessori Academy

Non-violent communication

1. Encourage teachers to embody peaceful programs against bullying and violence in their classroom curriculum in order to develop a positive educational approach to minimize such behavior.
2. Record incidents of bullying or violence in a consistent way, using the MSY Incident Report form, that allows for monitoring of such behavior.
3. Discuss appropriate standards of behavior and school rules with all students.
4. Involve the other agencies as necessary.

Student support

1. Improving the self-esteem of victims through activities that build self-confidence, self-

awareness, and the ability to stand up for themselves. The school employs counseling when appropriate.

2. Developing programs to assist bullies to work cooperatively with others rather than in a confrontational way.
3. Taking bullying and violence seriously and thoroughly investigating.

If it is determined that a child continues to bully after participating in the behavior interventions put in place by the teacher and administration the team will meet to decide on the next level of disciplinary action required.

Disclosure and Public Reporting

The policy will be distributed annually to all students enrolled in the school district, their parents and/or guardians and employees. The school district will also provide a copy of the policy to any person who requests it.

Records will be maintained on the number and types of reports made, and sanctions imposed for incidents found to be in violation of the bullying policy.

An annual summary report shall be prepared and presented to the school board, which includes trends in bullying behavior and recommendations on how to further reduce bullying behavior. The annual report will be available to the public.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Downtown Montessori Academy (“DMA”) wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcomed sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff, or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent to any school staff member, to any member of the school administration, or to the Title IX Coordinator, Amy Goodenough.

"Sexual harassment" is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

A. submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of access to educational opportunities or program;

B. submission or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's education;

C. that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's education, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either gender against a person of the same or opposite gender.

Prohibited acts that constitute sexual harassment may take a variety of forms. Examples of the kinds of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

A. unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse;

B. unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;

C. unwelcome, sexually motivated or inappropriate patting, pinching, or physical contact, other than necessary restraint of students by teachers, administrators, or other school personnel to avoid physical harm to persons or property;

D. unwelcome sexual behavior or words including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's educational status;

E. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's educational status;

F. unwelcome behavior or words directed at an individual because of gender;

Examples are:

1. repeatedly asking a person for dates or sexual behavior after the person has indicated no interest;

2. rating a person's sexuality or attractiveness;

3. staring or leering at various parts of another person's body;

4. spreading rumors about a person's sexuality;

5. letters, notes, telephones calls, or materials of a sexual nature;

6. displaying pictures, calendars, cartoons, or other materials with sexual content.

G. inappropriate boundary invasions by a DMA employee or other adult member of the DMA community into a student's personal space and personal life.

Boundary invasions may be appropriate or inappropriate. Appropriate boundary invasions make medical or educational sense. For example, a teacher or aide assisting a kindergartner after a toileting accident can be appropriate. However other behaviors might be going too far, are inappropriate and may be signs of sexual grooming.

Inappropriate boundary invasions may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. hugging, kissing, or other physical contacts with a student;

2. telling sexual jokes to students;

3. engaging in talk containing sexual innuendo or banter with students;

4. talking about sexual topics that are not related to the curriculum;

5. showing pornography to a student;

6. taking an undue interest in a student (i.e. having a "special friend" or a "special relationship");

7. initiating or extending contact with students beyond the school day for personal purposes;

8. using e-mail, text messaging or websites to discuss personal topics or interests with students;

9. giving students rides in the staff member's personal vehicle or taking students on personal outings without administrative approval;

10. invading a student's privacy (e.g. walking in on the student in the bathroom, locker-room, asking about bra sizes or previous sexual experiences);

11. going to a student's home for non-educational purposes;

12. inviting students to the staff member's home without proper chaperones (i.e. another staff member or parent of a student);

13. giving gifts or money to a student for no legitimate educational purpose;

14. accepting gifts or money from a student for no legitimate educational purpose;

15. being overly "touchy" with students;

16. favoring certain students by inviting them to come to the classroom at non-class times;

17. getting a student out of class to visit with the staff member;

18. providing advice to or counseling a student regarding a personal problem (i.e. problems related to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health, and/or family relationships, etc.), unless properly licensed and authorized to do so;

19. talking to a student about problems that would normally be discussed with adults (i.e. marital issues);

20. being alone with a student behind closed doors without a legitimate educational purpose;

21. telling a student "secrets" and having "secrets" with a student;

22. other similar activities or behavior.

Inappropriate boundary invasions are prohibited and must be reported promptly to the Principal or Head of School.

H. remarks speculating about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history; and

I. verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping that does not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Not all behavior with sexual connotations constitutes unlawful sexual harassment. Sex-based or gender-based conduct must be sufficiently severe, pervasive, and persistent such that it adversely affects, limits, or denies an individual's education, or such that it creates a hostile or abusive educational environment, or such that it is intended to, or has the effect of, denying or limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or activities.

Child Care Program

Downtown Montessori Academy offers affordable before and after school care on a space limited basis.

Downtown Montessori has contracted with Smart Tuition to manage collection of all Child Care fees charged to parents. The payment schedule with Smart Tuition is set up on a 10, 9 or 2 month basis. Smart Tuition also charges an annual fee that will be taken out of the first payment. The second child in a family is entitled to a 20% discount for childcare. (Discount applies to least expensive schedule)

Rate Schedule
This schedule is revised annually at the start of a new school year. Please contact the office for a current schedule.

Registration Fee
There is a non-refundable $50 registration fee for all families who enroll in the Before and After School Program.

Child Care with Breaks
Students who have signed up for Child Care with Breaks may attend school on days-off so long as they follow the days and hours of their regular childcare schedule. Students attending on non-school days must arrive by 9:00AM so we can be sure we have the appropriate number of staff available.

Sign in/out
All parents of children enrolled in childcare must sign the child in and out of childcare daily. Afterschool children will be signed in by a staff member.

Removal from Child Care
The following is a listing of reasons for removal of a child from the Downtown Montessori Academy Before and After School Program:

1. The child has reached the maximum age served by the school.
2. The parent is thirty days overdue on payment of fees.
3. The parents continually disregard the school's rules regarding late pick-up or show disrespect to staff.
4. The child continues fighting with, bullying or threatening other students or staff even after required steps for correction of the behavior have been taken.

After School- Child Care Late Fees
Parents must arrive by 6:00pm to pick up their child. If for any reason a student cannot be picked up by 6:00pm, a late fee of $10.00 for every 5 minutes or portion thereof will be incurred. Parents must call the center to explain any delays, but the fee will remain. If a parent has not called the center by 6:00pm nor had the child picked up by 6:30pm, we reserve the right to call the police. Any parent who has been late three times will be removed from childcare. We are not able to meet the needs of your family if you are consistently late. There are no exceptions to this policy. Under no circumstances will the center release a child to an unauthorized or incapacitated person.

Refund Policy

Our program budget is based on receiving full tuition from all children enrolled. Therefore, there are no refunds due to illness, school closures, vacations, closures due to inclement weather or power outages, holidays or staff illness. We do not refund any prepaid tuition.

Parental Involvement

Downtown Montessori depends on the energy and the spirit of its parents. Current research and our experience at Downtown Montessori show there is a direct relationship between the degree of parental involvement in a school and the level of benefit that children receive through that school. Please see Appendix 3: Parent Rights and Responsibilities.

The active involvement of parents plays a vital role at Downtown Montessori Academy. Our parents bring talents, ideas and enthusiasm that enrich the educational experience. Parents have accompanied children on field trips, read stories and shared their experiences, built shelves, assembled playground equipment, organized publicity and the purchase of sweatshirts, prepared snacks, and donated equipment, to name a few. We expect all parents to spend at least four hours per year on such service activities. Parents are also encouraged to visit their child's class at least once a year.

Want to be involved? Look for sign-up sheets throughout the year and watch for e-mails and notes for specific activities. The common denominator in the success of our school is your participation as a Downtown Montessori parent!

PARENT ENGAGEMENT NETWORK (PEN)

The Downtown Montessori Academy PEN is an all-volunteer led parent group dedicated to supplementing and enriching the education of students by providing opportunities for parent involvement. All parents of enrolled children are members.

REASONS TO BE INVOLVED:

1. Opportunity to connect with other parents through active participation
2. Opportunity to develop and implement activities for children aligned with school-wide and classroom curriculum
3. Opportunity to exchange ideas in an organized forum
4. Opportunity to support the teachers and administrators
5. Opportunity to earn volunteer hours
6. Opportunity to fundraise for school

CO-LEADERSHIP OF PEN:

1. Provide essential leadership regarding the parent network activities in order to facilitate effective and positive communication among all parents
2. Facilitate effective and positive communication with all parents regarding PEN activities
3. Ensure effective and efficient communication between PEN and the Head of School
4. Provide, at a minimum, communication with the parents on a monthly basis
5. Ensure that committee chairpersons stay focused on the specific area

Admission and Enrollment Policies

Application Process

To enroll your child at Downtown Montessori Academy:

1. Pre-enrollment visit: Before a child enters the school, we encourage the parent to attend a Parent Group Tour to learn about our program, our philosophy, the Montessori method and school policies and procedures.
2. Enrollment Application: This may be completed at the conclusion of the Parent Group Tour. Or submitted through our website.

Once your child has been accepted:

1. A non-refundable registration fee of $50 is required only for those applying for the before and after school program. Additionally, all children who are toddlers to three years old and paying tuition are required to pay this fee.
2. Documentation required **once your child has been accepted:**
    1. Current immunization records
    2. Birth certificate
    3. Emergency information card
    4. Proof of Residence
3. Authorizations and additional parent forms include:
    1. Parent Communication Form
    2. Photo Release
    3. Internet Use Contract (Elementary Students Only)

Downtown Montessori Academy admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin.

Children from ages 3 through the eighth grade are eligible for the Montessori program. 3 and 4-year-olds are accepted for admission on a first-come, first-serve basis. Children five and older should have prior Montessori experience.

Children who reach age 5 by September 1st of a given academic year, can be enrolled in our full-day kindergarten program with tuition covered by public funds. This also follows for children in the elementary and adolescent program. Our policy is that September 1st is the date we use for grade placement. We will NOT allow children to advance ahead of this, this includes all transfer students.

Downtown Montessori Academy
Student Dress Code

TOPS should be solid BLACK, WHITE or any shade of BLUE only

No Logo or Writing larger than 1" square, no hats indoors

FIELD TRIPS

STUDENTS SHOULD BE IN DRESS CODE ON ALL FIELD TRIPS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED BY THEIR TEACHER. THE EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE IS THE URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER, WHERE JEANS CAN BE WORN WITH A DMA TOP.

FOOTWEAR

BECAUSE WE SPEND A LOT OF TIME OUTDOORS, WE ENCOURAGE ATHLETIC OR RUBBER SOLED SHOES. SANDALS MUST HAVE AN ANKLE STRAP (FLIP FLOPS AND SLIDES ARE NOT ALLOWED).
TO PROTECT OUR FLOORS, PLEASE HAVE AN EXTRA PAIR OF "INDOOR SHOES" TO BE WORN INSIDE.

BOTTOMS should be

TAN/BEIGE, BLUE or BLACK (No Blue Jeans)

Prohibited on Dress Code Optional Days: *Clothing or accessories that have language or images that are violent; depict drugs, alcohol or other illegal items and activities; that include hate speech, profanity or pornography; any content that is racist, lewd, vulgar or obscene.*

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.

DMA Spirit Wear can be worn as part of our dress code.

Appendix 1
Questions and Answers about Downtown Montessori Academy

What is Downtown Montessori Academy?
It is a City of Milwaukee charter school and "family" of certified Montessori teachers, early childhood teachers, classroom assistants and students and is a facilitator of quality education. It is committed to the Montessori approach to education while incorporating the insights of other education research.

What is Montessori?
Montessori education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on a child's developmental needs for freedom within limits, and a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which to develop intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities. Begun in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori, Montessori education was introduced into the United States in 1912, with one of the early schools established by Alexander Graham Bell in his own home. Montessori education has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in recent years reflecting growing recognition of the validity of its approach.

Are children free to do what they choose in class?
Children are free to move about the classroom at will, to talk to others, to work with any equipment whose purpose they understand, and to ask the teacher to introduce new materials to them. They are not free to disturb other children at work or to abuse the equipment that is so important to their development

What is the teacher's role?
The Montessori teacher/directress works with children individually and in groups, introducing materials and giving guidance where needed. One of the primary tasks of the teacher is careful observation of children in order to determine their needs and to gain the knowledge they need in preparing the environment to aid their growth.
Their method of teaching is indirect in that they neither impose upon the children as in direct teaching, nor abandon them as is non-directive approaches. They are constantly alert to the direction in which the children have indicated they wish to go, and they actively seek ways to help the children accomplish their goals. The role of the teacher is to help the children teach themselves through the use of the Montessori materials and attention to the learning environment.

What is the role of parents at Downtown Montessori?
Downtown Montessori parents have traditionally taken a proactive role in the school. If you wish to discuss your child's progress, we encourage you to call the school and leave a message for your child's teacher. You may also leave a note for your child's teacher in the office or contact her by email.

What is the focus at Downtown Montessori?
Downtown Montessori prepares for the future. A school experience that includes social, cultural and intellectual development is provided in our Montessori environment. Downtown Montessori Academy offers an urban, multi-cultural experience. Reading materials and activities draw from a variety of cultural traditions. Montessori students are particularly self-motivated in learning new skills and we hope they will apply these skills to learning about themselves and being comfortable with others.

Appendix 2
Parent Rights and Responsibilities

Downtown Montessori Academy recognizes that you as a parent or guardian are our most important partner in your child's education. Your involvement is essential to your child's educational success. We urge you to understand and exercise your rights and responsibilities:

As a parent or guardian, you are responsible for:

1. Communicating to your child that you and DMA expect high academic achievement and that you believe in his or her ability to achieve academically.
2. Seeing that your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. You must provide explanations for absences and tardiness in writing, via email or any other method of personal contact of which a record is kept by the school.
3. Informing the school when you change address, telephone number, email or emergency contact information.
4. Ensuring that your child has all health immunizations as required by law.
5. Attending parent conferences and participating in the parent organizations at the school.
6. Providing a home environment that allows your child to study and helps him or her with academic performance and behavior in school.
7. Knowing the Code of Conduct and Discipline Guidelines as stated in this handbook. Discuss discipline with your child and encourage compliance.
8. Conducting yourself in a respectful manner at school and school events.

Support Your Child's Efforts

Studies have shown that the involvement of parents is the most important factor in a child's school success.

1. Become involved in your children's school work. Ask about it daily.
2. Provide a quiet place at home where your child can study.
3. Teach your child to resolve conflicts peacefully. This will be reinforced in school.
4. Be a good example to your child. They do watch what you do.

Appendix 3
Internet Usage Policy

DMA supports the use of computer technology to enhance the educational process of all students. It also recognizes that with this educational opportunity comes personal responsibility.

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges and possible school discipline in accordance with this student handbook. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Netiquette

1. Be polite. Do not be abusive in any message to others. Harassing, insulting and attacking others is strictly prohibited.
2. Use appropriate language. Do not use profanity, obscene comments, sexually explicit material, expressions of bigotry, racism or hate. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
3. Do not reveal the personal addresses or telephone numbers of others.
4. Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network or other users.

Security

1. Under no circumstance should you give anyone your password.
2. Do not use the password of others
3. Do not reveal your personal address or telephone number.
4. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Internet.
5. Students have the right to appeal restrictions or access privileges.

Rules and Code of Ethics

6. The student should act honorably and in a manner consistent with ordinary ethical obligations.
7. The student will not use the computer resources for non-academic activities.
8. The student will not make unauthorized copies of software in accordance with copyright laws.
9. The student should respect the rights and privacy of other authorized users.
10. The student represents his or her school and should so in ways that are positive.
11. The student will not trespass into others' work folders or files.
12. The student will only use the computer with an adult in the room.
13. The student understands that his or her parents will pay for anything broken or stolen by the student.

A form titled ELEMETARY/ADOLESCENT STUDENT COMPUTER USE CONTRACT will be sent home to Elementary and Adolescent students at the beginning of the year for parent and student signatures. Students are not permitted to use the internet until this form is signed and returned to school.

Appendix 4
Staff Directory

ADMINISTRATIVE

Virginia Flynn
Head of School ..... vflynn@downtownmontessori.com

Amy Goodenough
Principal……agoodenough@downtownmontessori.com

Ian Spanic
Executive Director ……..ispanic@downtownmontessori.com

Jessica Rodriguez
Admissions/Childcare..... jrodriguez@downtownmontessori.com

Liz Becerra
Administrative Manager.....lbecerra@downtownmontessori.com

TEACHERS

Kim Fowler
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Javon Shepard
Children's House Teacher Room 3……..……..……...jshepard@downtownmontessori.com

Sasa Sokolovic
Children's House Teacher Room 5..... ssokolovic@downtownmontessori.com

Kelsey McCarron
Claire Riordan criordan@downtownmontessori.com
Lower Elementary Teacher Room 6……..…….. kmccarron@downtownmontessori.com

Hanna Fowler
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Sara Vondrachek
Lower Elementary Teacher Room 8..... svondrachek@downtownmontessori.com

McNeal Stepien
Lower Elementary Teacher Room 9.....mstepien@downtownmontessori.com

Ashley Petry
Upper Elementary Teacher Room 11 ……..……. apetry@downtownmontessori.com

Tina Lawrence
Adolescent Teacher ……..……..adolescents@downtownmontessori.com

Kendall Cook
Adolescent Teacher……..……adolescents@downtownmontessori.com

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Beverly Luckenbill
Special Education Director……..……bluckenbill@downtownmontessori.com

Kate Teipel
Speech & Language
…….kteipel@downtownmontessori.com

SPECIALS

Jenny Urbanek
Art Teacher……..……..……..……..jurbanek@downtownmontessori.com

Will Branch
Music……..……wbranch@downtownmontessori.com

Jenny Wilson
Phy Ed. and Mindfulness……jwilson@downtownmontessori.com

SUPPORT STAFF

Kathy Masch
School Social Worker……..……..……kmasch@downtownmontessori.com

Barbara Neville
School Psychologist……....bneville@downtownmontessori.com

Dr. Sue Terry
Literacy……..sterry@downtownmontessori.com

Barb Rankin
Reading Specialist..……..……..……brankin@downtownmontessori.com