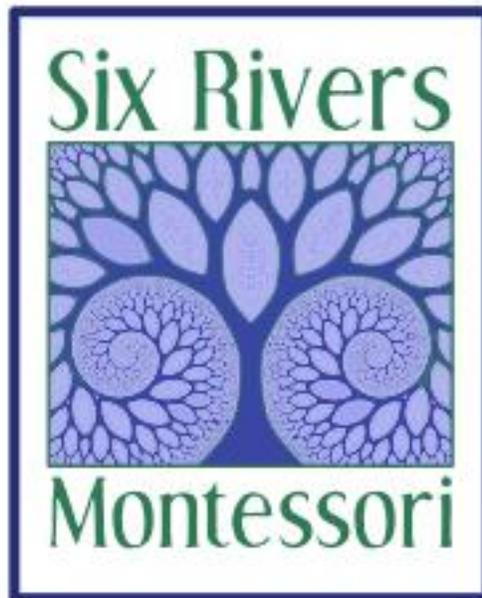


Six Rivers Montessori

Parent Handbook

2021-2022



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Dear Families,

Welcome to Six Rivers Montessori School. As you read over this handbook, you'll find useful information about the policies and procedures of our school. If you received our handbook last year, please note that it is updated annually, so please take a few minutes to reread. **Revisions are in blue.** If you have questions not addressed, please do not hesitate to contact our school staff. As an evolving and growing school, you'll find that information will be updated to meet the needs of our students and staff as necessary. We welcome your input and look forward to another wonderful year.

Warm Regards,
Michele, Teresa, and Ev

Six Rivers Montessori School Mission Statement

Our mission is to nurture students' character, compassion, respect, and curiosity; to cultivate their means to learn, to invent, and participate fully and joyfully in life independently and collaboratively; to establish and sustain a quality Montessori holistic elementary and middle school program that encourages students to develop a deep sense of interdependence and responsibility as caring, global citizens, and stewards of the earth.

Five Pillars

1. The cultivation within our students of a passion for excellence in everything they do in the classroom, on the farm, and outside of school.
2. The development of a strongly held set of universal values, which include self-respect, respect for others, honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, compassion, kindness, peacefulness, warmth, and a love of community.
3. The development of a global perspective and sense of international understanding.
4. A lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others.
5. The active participation of everyone in our school community to fulfill our vision, follow through on our mission, and strengthen our pillars.

Office Hours and Communications

All school related business should go through the [Office Administrator, Ev Drakoulis](#):

Six Rivers Montessori
1222 Hallen Dr.
Arcata, CA 95521

Phone: 707-822-7767*
Email: office@sixriversmontessori.org
Website: www.sixriversmontessori.org

Office hours for the 2020 – 2021 school year:

Monday-Thursday: [8:00am-12:00pm and 1:30pm-4:00pm](#)

Friday: 8:00am-1:00pm

The Office will be closed on all school holidays.

*** Emergency calls, late pick-ups, late drop-offs, and absences should be routed through the main office at 707-822-7767. If there is no answer please call Ev's cell phone at -----or email office@sixriversmontessori.org**

Teachers and Communications

Our teachers value frequent, timely, open communication. We love to talk about your children!

Teacher Contact Information:

Teresa Walker

Position: Lower Elementary Teacher
Email: t_walker@sixriversmontessori.org
Phone: -----(cell-text)

Michele Gilbert

Position: Upper Elementary Teacher
Email: upperel@sixriversmontessori.org
Phone: -----(cell-text)

Communication from School

If you have a change of address, email, or phone number, please call or email the office to let us know. It is vital that we have current contact information, especially phone numbers, to be able to reach you if your child is ill.

In situations where parents are separated or divorced, please advise the school of additional addresses for mailing purposes so that everyone is fully informed about school functions, parent-teacher conferences, etc. Please provide shared custody agreements and schedules so we know which parent is responsible on any given day.

If you wish for any part of the contact information you provide to the school to not be listed in the School Directory, please let the office know.

Parent Mailboxes

SRM will not be using the parent mailboxes in the entryway this year. If we have communications for you we will give it to your family in the morning during drop-off.

The Weekly Newsletter

The school publishes a newsletter for parents every week during the school year containing information about Montessori education, upcoming school events as well as announcements regarding members of the Six Rivers Montessori School community. The newsletter is emailed in digital format to each family, generally on Fridays. Please take a few minutes each week to read this important communication from school and be sure to scroll to the end as there may be important reminders there. It is our main way of communicating information to families.

Website: www.sixriversmontessori.org

Our website includes this Parent Handbook and other useful resources.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Formal, individual conferences between teacher and parents occur twice a year (see School Calendar). One conference per student is scheduled. Two-household families should coordinate an agreed-upon date to sign up for. Teachers or parents may request additional meetings when necessary. Call teachers for informal conference times. Because the teachers work with the children without a formal break, they are unavailable to answer phone calls or speak to you in person during the school day. [This year the Upper Elementary and Lower Elementary will have one forum for each class.](#) This will provide a valuable opportunity for staff and parents to talk, problem solve, and build the community of the classroom. [Forums will be either via Zoom or in-person depending on Covid updates.](#) More information will be available soon about how the forums will work this year.

Changes in Home Situation

Please inform your child's teacher by note or personal conversation if there is a change in the home situation: death, divorce, relocation, a new baby, death/illness of pet, extended visits by friends or relatives, a new baby-sitter or care-giver, a change in carpool or in the child's daily routine, or any fears, bad dreams, or fantasies. A change at home will often be reflected simultaneously or subsequently in behavior at school. Communication from parents will enable the teachers to help guide the child.

Health Policies

Health Forms

Prior to the first day of class, the office must have your child's completed emergency form as well as their immunization records. They will be unable to attend school until these are received.

State law SB277 requires all students to be up-to-date on immunizations.

Prescription Medicine

Please send the dosage needed for one day only, in the original container from the pharmacy with the child's name on it, and a dated note from the parent listing the times and amounts to be given that day. Prescription labels are not a substitute for the note. A child may not carry medication; a parent or other adult must personally hand it to the teacher or assistant so that the medicine can be properly stored out of reach.

Non-Prescription Medicine

In general, we strongly discourage the sending of over-the-counter medicines. Medicine, including children's Tylenol and cough drops, may not be given to a child by a staff member, except when it absolutely must be taken during school hours, and the parent has given the staff member written instructions. The note must include the amount, time, duration, and under what circumstances the medication is to be administered. Send only the dosage needed for that day in the original container.

Medication on Camping Trips

On overnight trips prescription and non-prescription medicines are treated exactly as they are in the classroom. Please follow the policies above when preparing medications for children on camping trips.

Illness Policy

State licensing mandates that a child with any of the following symptoms be isolated and the parent(s) notified and asked to remove the child from the school as soon as possible.

- Fever of 100.4° F
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool per day)
- Vomiting
- Nausea

- Cough
- Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes
- Skin or eye lesions or rashes that are severe, weeping, or pus-filled
- Stiff neck and headache with one or more of the symptoms listed above
- Difficult breathing or wheezing
- Complaints of severe pain

If your child is not feeling well in the morning, please observe them closely before sending them to school and risking the health of other children. Children must be free from symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school, you will be called immediately.

If your child is diagnosed with any communicable disease (chicken pox, whooping cough, fifth disease, pink eye, Covid-19, etc.) or head lice, please report this at once to the office. As a courtesy to the community we ask that your child stay at home until possibility of infecting other students has passed.

Emergency Plans

Staff will work with students to have plans in place for potential emergency situations including but not limited to earthquakes and fires. Drills will be conducted twice annually.

Our biggest emergency hazards at SRM are fire and earthquakes. Twice a year we will practice emergency drills so students are prepared. Once a year, or as needed, we will have earthquake education for new and incoming students concerning our local earthquake hazard and how to prepare at school and home. What follows is the SRM Evacuation Plan to be implemented in case of an emergency.

FIRE: Evacuate the building immediately.

EARTHQUAKE: Get under a table or other solid object. Cover neck, face, and head. Face away from windows. Stay under cover until shaking stops.

****The Hallen Site is outside the Tsunami Evacuation Zone. We will stay at the school in the case of tsunami warnings****

- Teachers call for evacuation. Take quickest route out of classroom.
- Assembly point is middle of parking lot.
- Students line up and attendance is taken.

- If any student is missing, teachers conduct search if conditions permit. 7
- In the case of a major fire or earthquake, parents should arrive to pick up their son/daughter. A staff member will remain on site and accommodate every student until they are picked up by a parent or authorized adult.
- In case of major fire or earthquake, do not try to contact the school. School staff will first contact families of any injured or missing children. Secondly, staff will use Phonevite to call with pertinent information for all families.

Six Rivers Montessori has an emergency storage container located in the play yard with first aid and comfort items. Each child has a personal emergency kit in this box as well.

Six Rivers Montessori also has an Unwanted Visitors Plan to respond to situations where uninvited and/or suspicious individuals may enter our campus.

If you would like more detailed information on the contents of the emergency storage container or the Unwanted Visitors Plan, please contact the Office Administrator.

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due by the fifth of each school month. As a school community, Six Rivers Montessori is committed to providing a place for students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

The goal of our tuition policy is to operate on a balanced budget while doing the job right, and meeting the fundamental beliefs and values embodied in the school blueprint. We aim to be considerate of the local cost of living for both our parents and our staff (Blueprint, 4.2 & 4.3). There will be a Tuition Meeting in the spring to discuss the budget. One parent from each family is required to attend in order to better understand the budget and to learn of the tuition cost for the coming year. Please review Tuition/Enrollment Policy handout for details.

Food and Nutrition

Breakfast

The children's work at school is directly affected by the nutritional quality of their meals. Please provide your child with a nutritious breakfast each morning.

Snacks and Lunches

All students bring their lunches (with a snack included) from home. Nutritious foods (whole grains, vegetables, fruits, cheese, and meat) and water are to be brought in reusable containers. Children have a designated snack time during the day but may have an additional snack as needed. Snacks should be clearly marked as separate from lunches.

Lunch is a social experience and an opportunity to refine manners. It is a time to enjoy pleasant conversation and good food.

Although we bring our lunches, we do not eat out of our lunch bags. Lunch is set up pleasantly with placemats, plates, and cloth napkins. (This year will be different – students will be eating out of their lunch bags/boxes. If you like, please provide a cloth napkin for your child that they will bring home daily). The children enjoy learning to prepare for, serve, and clear away after a meal. The children are helped to peel and pour for themselves. They also learn to offer help to one another and to request, accept, and decline help as needed.

Each child is encouraged to eat only as much as his/her hunger requires, although generous time is provided. Lunch is 12:00 – 12:30 Monday-Thursday, before playtime. When a child is finished eating, s/he/they wraps uneaten food and returns it to her/his bag or box. Cores, pits, and peelings are put in the compost bucket.

We send home all leftover food so that you and your child can determine from it the amount appropriate for the following day. This will fluctuate as your child grows. We have observed that many children need more food in the springtime.

Please notify the office of any food allergies the school should be aware of.

Holiday and Birthday Refreshments

Birthdays and the following holidays may be marked by a small celebration. On these special occasions, your child may bring a special treat to share. Please contact your child's teacher before your child's birthday arrives to discuss how the birthday can be celebrated.

1. Halloween / Day of the Dead
2. Thanksgiving
3. Christmas / Hanukkah / Winter Solstice
4. Valentine's Day
5. Chinese New Year
6. Passover / Easter / Spring Equinox
7. End-of-Year Party

If your child may not eat any sugar, please let the classroom teacher know.

Materials in the Elementary Classroom

The classroom environment contains pocket-sized items such as money, rocks, shells, and imported educational materials. Because of the self-correcting nature of the materials, any material that is missing a part is removed from the classroom until that part is found or replaced. This is a practical and not a punitive action. On some occasion, if your child's pockets should contain such an item, please return it promptly. It can otherwise take six or more weeks to replace an item, and some items are irreplaceable.

Please keep toys and money at home. If there is a unique item you believe would be of interest to your child's class, send the teacher a note asking if and when it may be brought to school.

Elementary Dress Standards

Clothing worn to school must promote safety, comfort, and concentration. Active outside play, various art projects, and gardening opportunities may damage or stain clothes, so clothing of special value should not be worn to school. Shoes should be comfortable and appropriate for active play.

Behavior Agreement

Working with Children's Social-Emotional Development at School

Six Rivers Montessori School seeks to uphold the best practices in Montessori education, child psychology, contemporary conflict-resolution studies, and education for peace. Our work with children's conflict has always been and will continue to be tailored to the specifics of the situation – hence our historical reluctance to relegate it to the status of a “policy” issue – but it proceeds from the following core principles.

- We aim for the Montessori classroom to be a safe place, both physically and emotionally, for children to explore the limits of their current capacities and knowledge and stretch to new abilities, while refining their social and emotional skills.
- Children's behavior proceeds from positive, universal human needs. The role of the adults in a child's life is to help the child find healthy, age-appropriate, pro-social ways to meet those needs.
- The child's physical, intellectual, social and emotional development proceed together, and solutions to delays, obstacles or complications in any area often involve giving extra support in all or several areas. No single area is more important than the others.
- The Montessori materials for social-emotional development include lessons in grace and courtesy; classroom customs and procedures which illuminate how to balance individual and community needs; and collaborative work in groups of mixed gender and age. The social frictions that naturally arise in this very rich environment of interaction are “teaching moments” for the teacher to observe and respond with particular support to all involved. Guidance given for values, character, and social-emotional development is woven throughout the curriculum. It is given not in the abstract but in the context of the children's real-life relationships.
- In any situation involving inter-personal conflict, all parties hold part of the solution;

focusing on only one party or the other is counterproductive and often harmful to the full development of all parties.

As in all aspects of Montessori education, adults at school and at home are committed to helping children take as much ownership for their social-emotional learning as they are willing and able, observing carefully before intervening, and intervening in ways that empower the children to be more self-reliant in future situations.

If a situation arises in which parent notification is deemed necessary, the teacher or staff member will contact you within 24 hours and will describe what was observed or reported, and how they worked with or will work with the children to bring about positive change. Teachers will confer with you on how to support the children at home and throughout subsequent school days.

If a pattern of aggressive behavior develops, children, parents, and staff will work together until the negative pattern has been replaced with a neutral or positive pattern, and the children have the tools needed to maintain the positive pattern on their own. **It should be stressed that aggressive behavior patterns don't always shift quickly and may require patience on the part of all involved.**

If the school concludes that the children and their families need more support than the school can give, the school may require that the family engage outside professionals to work with the child in the area(s) of development that need support. Such professionals could include family counselors, children's counselors, occupational therapists, parenting educators, or academic tutors.

If the family is not willing or able for any reason to engage the needed professionals, it may be necessary that the family withdraw the child from the school. The school will do its best to ensure that all communications from the school in relation to children's conflicts are respectful, professional, and offered in the spirit of working together. The school will expect the same from parents.

Attendance at the Elementary Level

For the children to self-develop and self-educate, they must be present. Be sure your child only misses school when absolutely necessary. At the elementary level, children work collaboratively. They form different work and study groups that change for various projects. Great waves of activity rise up, overtake the children, and then recede.

The teacher at the elementary level gives presentations to the children in groups. If a child is absent or late, they will miss the presentation and be unable to participate with their group. They may feel out of sorts and at odds with the community. Later, when they receive the presentation they missed, the wave of activity for that work may have passed. Now they may have to work alone, unsupported by their best work partners. The teacher, the community, and the child will be called upon to make a great effort to overcome the difficulty.

When a child is absent the group is incomplete, and the role played by the absent child leaves a gap. If a child is absent often, the other children may feel they cannot count on that person. They may be inclined to select as work partners other children upon whom they can count to be present.

A child who is perceived in this manner may feel disengaged and out of step with their community. Their learning and development can be affected. For this reason, we ask that you avoid absences when at all possible. Whenever possible schedule all dentist and doctor appointments for after school or Fridays.

Please contact the Office Administrator if your child will be late to school, needs to leave early, or is absent.

Chronic Absence* Policy-The following are the steps the staff will take regarding absences that exceed 5 in a term (three terms in a year). In an effort to help each student succeed, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the classroom, the staff will use the following steps to encourage all students to attend school unless they are ill.

1. Step 1: Educate Parents through conversations and/or phone calls regarding our attendance policies found in the parent handbook.
2. Step 2: If a student has had 5 absences staff will meet to discuss the next action to take. This could include a call home, a letter home, or a request for parents to meet with staff.
3. Step 3: If a student surpasses 5 absences in a term, there will be a meeting with staff to discuss any underlying issues that the student is facing. We also may need to discuss the need to refer the family for outside services. At this point the family must be made aware of the possibility of removal from the school for excessive absences.
4. Step 4: Removal from school for excessive absences will happen if staff has made multiple efforts to discuss the problem with parents, and students are still missing too much school.
5. Lastly, we recognize that absences happen for many reasons and staff will take each student on a case by case basis regarding absences, taking into consideration extended illnesses, bereavement, and other extenuating circumstances.

**Chronic absence is defined by California as missing 10% of the school year for any reason. So, for our school, that would be about 14 days of absences.*

Arrival and Departure

Teachers receive children in the classroom between 8:15am-8:30am.

The school day ends at 3:00 pm, Monday-Thursday; Fridays end at 12:00pm. Avoid early pick-ups please. If any person other than a parent or designated driver is to pick up a child, you must inform the Office Administrator in advance. The notice may apply to a day, week, year, etc. Special after-school plans should be made at home and not during the school day

or departure.

Arrival Procedure

The period of time between 8:15am-8:30am is planned for arrival. The children attend to their morning responsibilities such as greeting their teacher, checking the calendar, writing the date in their work journal and tending to classroom chores. They encounter their friends and exchange greetings and updates on their interests and doings. Some children are invited to lessons upon arrival, announcements are made, or a class lesson may begin early. Then they settle into their work.

When a few children arrive late (after 8:45am), the whole process is thrown off. The arrival, greeting and responsibility period is extended past the point of being a pleasant lead-in to the day. It becomes so long that it fragments the children's attention and creates irritability in them. They need to settle into their work and not be interrupted and distracted by the late arrivals. The children work in groups of two, three or more. They wait for the arrival of their work partners in the morning, because the work depends on collaboration and companionship.

The few children who arrive late are out of harmony with the others. They see their partners settled into work with others and forget to put away their things; they forget to tend to their morning responsibilities; their greetings and chit chat are an interruption to the concentration of others, and they see that the work groups have formed without them. They may spend the rest of the day trying to catch up and fit in.

Pick-up Procedure

Please respect our 3:00 pick-up time, Monday-Thursday, and 12:00pm on Fridays. A staff member will always stay with a child whose pick-up has not arrived on time, but realize this may come at a great inconvenience to them or cause them to miss or be late for other engagements in their lives.

If a situation arises and you become aware that you will be late, please contact the office.

Electronics Policy

The Six Rivers Montessori staff and Board have implemented an electronics policy to help preserve a positive, safe, and productive school culture. We believe that Personal Electronic Devices (PED) can disrupt the learning environment, distract students from the primary purpose of education, and affect the social health of our students. Accordingly, it is SRM's policy to *forbid the use of PED by students on the SRM campus at all times*. This includes the classrooms, play yard, garden, school office, and parking lot. PED are also prohibited during school "going-outs," fieldtrips, and other school-sponsored special events, including transit to/from such activities. The prohibited devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, handheld gaming devices, MP3 players, tablets, and laptop computers. The school will provide computers in the classroom as needed for educational purposes.

While students are not prohibited from possessing Personal Electronic Devices, the devices must be stored out-of-sight and in an “off” position *on the SRM campus at all times*. PED that are visible and/or in the “on” position shall be confiscated, held in the school office, and released to the child’s parent or guardian, or their adult designee, at the end of the school day. This includes Smart Watches and Fitbits

This policy does not apply to the sanctioned use of PED by teachers and staff for specific educational purposes.

Students and parents may contact each other as needed through the SRM school phone at 822-7767, and in some instances by contacting SRM staff directly on their phones.

Field Trip Procedures

The following procedures will be highlighted by staff members before and during field trips. Still, we recommend you read through them before going on your first field trip with the school. They will give you a sense of the standards expected and the style of experience we want our children to have on these trips.

FOR DRIVERS

Drivers may be asked to gather in the classroom before going to the cars; check with the Office Administrator. The teacher explains the procedures to the children and to drivers together, so that the tone is set for everyone, thereby avoiding confusion. The teacher may also send an email or Phonevite message the night before to explain any procedures.

IN TRANSIT

Children must be seat-belted at all times. Lively conversational tones are normal. Please discourage loud, boisterous behavior by engaging children in conversation, telling them a story or having books available. Loud, rousing music ill-prepares the children for the event or for their return to the classroom. Soft, soothing music or story tapes are fine. Snacks are not permissible, with a few exceptions such as the Bird-A-Thon. The teacher will have presented etiquette appropriate to the event in advance. Before arriving at the destination, the driver is encouraged to ask the children for a review. “What special manners or customs do we need to remember for an expert art exhibit?”

UPON ARRIVAL

After parking the car, but before unloading, unbelting or opening any doors, the adult establishes which doors will be used (curb side only) and where the children will stand to wait while the adult locks up, pays the parking attendant, or puts coins in the meter.

The children walk two-by-two beside and behind the adult and never pass each other or the adult. When approaching a parking lot or street, the two children in front stop beside the adult two feet

back from the curb and wait to hear when it is safe to cross. The other children stay close behind.

THE DESTINATION

Certain field trips require more supervision than others. Sometimes it will be necessary for the children to stay with the adult driver for the entire outing, other times the class will come together as a unit. Talk to your teacher about what kind of help is needed. Help focus the children in the group by directing their attention to the speaker. Ask the teacher to assist you if your own child is having a difficult time.

When parents accompany children on a field trip where a speaker, guide or docent takes questions from the children, only the children ask the questions. The teacher or assistant might ask certain questions on behalf of the children in such a way that the speaker answers to the children. If adults ask their own questions on the adult level the speaker tends to answer to the adults at length and above the children's heads. The children tend to lose interest and become restless. For the children's sake, your indulgence is greatly appreciated.

Guidelines for Parent Chaperones of "Going Out"

"When a child goes out, it is the world itself that offers itself to him. Let us take the child out to show him real things instead of making objects which represent ideas and closing them in cupboards."

Maria Montessori

"Going out" is an essential element in the Montessori elementary program and is very different from a traditional field trip. The children "go out" in small groups as an extension of their research and to gain experiences in the world outside the classroom. The children develop independence, resourcefulness, and self-confidence through functioning capably in the larger world without adult assistance. Because of this difference from a traditional field trip, the procedures for "going out" differ from field trip procedures.

The role of the adult is an active one because remaining focused and observant while refraining from participating or interfering is so demanding. The adult intervenes on three occasions only:

- to ensure the children's safety by preventing inappropriate adult interaction
- to interrupt unsafe or inappropriate behavior and return the children to school if needed
- to observe, record, and transmit the experience to the guide

Before Leaving

The children should be prepared to:

- carry all that they need in a backpack by themselves
- handle all money transactions

- conduct all communications for the group
 - know what behavior is expected of them before leaving the classroom
 - direct the driver to the destination through a map or written instructions
-
- stop, look, and listen before crossing at parking lots, driveways, and streets
 - stay within sight of the adult at all times

In Transit

The same procedures regarding safety and behavior as with field trips is expected.

Upon Arrival

After parking the car but before unloading, unbelted, or opening any doors, the adult listens while the children establish which doors will be used for unloading (curb side only) and where the children will stand to wait while the adult locks up. The children should be prepared to pay the parking attendant or put coins in the meter.

Approaching a parking lot or street, the children stand two feet back from the curb and wait until it is safe to cross. All children should remain close together. The adult stays behind the children, watching that all their behavior is safe and appropriate, that the environment is safe, and that any adult interaction with them is safe and appropriate.

At the Destination

The role of the chaperone at this point is one of active observation and alert self-restraint. The chaperone must remain focused on the children, their safety, and appropriate behavior. It is important to stay ten paces behind the children to help them rely upon their own resources on the trip.

The children should be prepared to pay entrance fees and find their own way using maps, directions, and guidebooks. They should be the ones who seek out the contact person, if there is one, and introduce themselves. They point out the driver who is standing ten paces away and explain that they will be there only for safety and transportation. The driver nods and looks away in order to reinforce the children's independence.

Any time the children have questions during the "Going Out," they find adults other than the parent driver to answer them. If the children forget and ask the parent driver a question, they turn the other way as a reminder. The chaperone avoids making eye contact with the adults at the "going out" site. If at any time the contact person or other adult tries to direct his comments toward the chaperone, the children reply that they speak for themselves, the driver doesn't speak. We want to give the children the support they need to conduct the outings entirely through their own efforts.

Unsafe or inappropriate behavior is absolutely not acceptable. The adult can simply state that "we are returning to school now." Guidance is given on campus by the teacher, who helps the

chaperone and children discuss how to have a successful trip next time.

General Rules for Riding in Cars on School Trips

- Each passenger will board from the curbside of the vehicle only.
- Each passenger will take a seat and buckle up.
- While the vehicle is in motion, the children will remain seated and belted.
- Conversation will be held in soft voices and only with one's seatmate.
- No electronic games will be played.
- No snack/food is to be eaten.
- Movements will be soft and gentle.
- All objects (lunch boxes, books, etc.) and hands will be kept away from windows.

Understanding Montessori

Self-Direction in the Prepared Environment

The Montessori method is based on Dr. Montessori's observations about how children learn, and her conclusions about the child's stages of development. She believed that every child possesses an inner force that drives her/him to grow and learn and that can be observed in her/his self-directed activities. In a Montessori prepared environment children's natural inquisitiveness is respected. It is our purpose to observe children's natural interests and activities and provide an environment in which they can develop and learn.

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that self-motivation is the most valid impulse for learning. Within the carefully structured order of the Montessori classroom, children are free to choose their own projects throughout the day. Following their own inner direction, they discover their own pattern of learning and find satisfaction in work. The child plays the active role in self-development through engagement with the prepared environment.

The children are encouraged to work out their own social problems and reach their own moral conclusions. Responsibility toward the group and the other children individually is emphasized. When the children are encouraged to develop understanding, compassion, and respect, they are able to cultivate their own self-discipline.

Important Points to Remember about Six Rivers Montessori

- Six Rivers Montessori is not structured by traditional grade levels, but by human development levels. The decision to move a student to the next level is made jointly by the student, parents, and staff.
- Each student works at a pace and level uniquely suited to that student's capabilities and potential—not in comparison to others. Each student, with parents and staff, sets individualized learning goals and objectives.
- Curiosity and enthusiasm are the inner motivations for each student's exploration of the universe. Grades, competitions, rewards, and punishments will not be used to manipulate motivation at school.
- The student's primary environment is the home. For the optimum development of our children, home and school must jointly offer children environments with many opportunities for developing physical abilities, social skills, intellectual curiosity, emotional awareness and spiritual connection.

Going Out

A carefully and meticulously designed core element, supervised by the guide and parents, of excursions into the larger world initiated, planned, organized, and carried out by the students themselves. It has the direct purpose of extending knowledge, information, or experience in relation to classroom studies. This establishes and invigorates the children's responsibility for their own safety and helps ensure their ability to think clearly and make sound choices in taking care of themselves.

Cosmic Education

The integrated study of the history of the universe, the coming of life, the evolution of plants and animals, the coming of humans, the development of civilizations throughout which geography, history, zoology, botany, and earth sciences are woven. From Cosmic Education, mathematics, language, and the arts are pulled, emphasizing love and service as unifying principles and giving the children a sense of the meaning and purpose of their own and every other creature's life on earth.

Spontaneous Activity in Education

Maria Montessori's term for the process by which the child strives to unfold his or her own highest and best intellectual, emotional, moral, and social development through concentrated work, freely chosen from activities which have been presented to the child by the guide or more experienced children. It is the fruit of independence and collaboration within a self-managing classroom in which freedom is balanced with responsibility. It is the key to the love of learning, high motivation, taking on of ambitious projects, high self-esteem, and social and intellectual confidence that characterizes children in authentic Montessori communities.

Work Journals

A notebook in which children record how they spend their school day and in which they record the lessons they have received and the activities from which they can choose.

Homework and Assessment

Homework

Montessori Homework differs from traditional academic homework based on worksheets, textbooks, and assignments. Montessori homework continues in the home the same respect for the child's ability to take responsibility for self-education in a prepared environment, and it requires substantial preparation of the family and social life, considerable parental self-discipline, and much time and interaction between parent and child. *Be careful not to overschedule your child's time. Leave plenty of time for free play and daydreaming.*

Household chores are a reality for all families. As part of the family, your child will have responsibilities and/or chores that support the family. Possible chores might be to set the table, help with dinner, feed the pets, tidy, dust, etc. In addition to the household tasks, your child would benefit from incorporating some of the following tasks into her/his schedule.

1. Read for one-half hour each evening

2. Have parents read stories and poetry out loud each evening
3. Keep a journal or diary
4. Write letters to friends and relatives
5. Write stories, poems and reports
6. Memorize math facts and spelling
7. Keep personal alphabetized book of new vocabulary and spelling words
8. Practice lists of phonogram and puzzle words (as sent home by teacher)
9. Visit the public library regularly to check out books on various subjects
10. At least one-half hour of physical activity daily

Your child, you, and your child's teacher can contemplate together how best to approach and prioritize homework tasks.

Assessment

Your child, as part of a Montessori classroom community, will not receive "grades," nor will they receive standardized tests from the state of California. A portfolio and detailed report on your child's successes and challenges will be sent home twice a year – once in the fall and again in the spring, plus an end of the year summary report. In addition, you will meet with your child's teacher twice yearly to discuss their progress. Teachers are aware of the progress of each child, and where they may need additional support. If you have concerns about your child's academic progress, please contact your child's teacher.

Visiting the Classroom

Parents and other family members are often curious about their student's classroom and we want to provide an opportunity for parents to visit while honoring all the students during their work time. Traditionally parent visits occurred during the school day but that can be distracting to students and teachers, particularly during the morning greeting period. Visits are planned with the Office Administrator and a parent may choose an after-school time to come in and visit, and "follow your child", allowing them to show you what they are interested in.

Ways to Contribute/How to Get Involved

Six Rivers Montessori School relies on significant parental involvement. Your support, in whatever ways are possible for you and your family, help to maintain and nurture our school community. We are incredibly grateful for the help families give – it is what provides our students with the opportunity to experience the richness of a Montessori education. There are so many ways to contribute – helping in the classroom, providing transportation, committee membership, playground supervision, and more.

Keep an eye out for emails with requests for help in the classroom, providing transportation for field trips and going outs, and for other volunteer needs. [Volunteers will have their temperature checked upon entering campus and will be asked Covid 19 health screening questions.](#)

Please always feel encouraged to offer any special skills you may have, or offer solutions or ideas to enhance our school.

School Status, and Future Plans

As we consistently strive to serve the individual student in their path of learning and growing, we extend that notion to our school and environment as a whole. Therefore, we are constantly looking back at where we have come from and planning and visioning for our future.

