

BLOOMINGTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL
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Policy Handbook

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Bloomington Montessori School - Policy Philosophy

Authority: The Board of Directors (henceforth referred to as the Board) of Bloomington Montessori School (BMS) is the body responsible for determining, implementing, and enforcing the rules of the school by which the school functions. These rules include the by-laws and the Policies.

Force: Policies rank second in order with the provisions of the by-laws and are inversely proportional in detail to them. As such, they can be modified by Board's action at any time, although wisdom (not to mention the lessons of history) counsels caution in direct proportion to the importance of any policy and the effects of its implementation.

Precedents: Past practices, even long-standing ones, are not policies until so designated by the Board's action. They are instead responses to then - existing conditions that may or may not be the best when considered more abstractly. Those practices that provide good solutions to troubling or recurring problems should obviously become policies, but the mere fact of a precedent's existence does not in itself require that the subsequent Board follow its example. Such past practices may also, in specific instances, require action that provides adjustments of traditions from earlier practices to later policies, or compensations for such adjustments of transitions, but these actions likewise do not constitute policies unless specifically confirmed by the Board.

Purpose: Policies aim to provide all categories of members of the BMS community clear and appropriately detailed guidance about matters integral to the mission and activities of the school.

Timeliness: Insofar as possible, policies ought to be formulated and implemented before they are needed. Although the force of events may force immediate, **ad hoc**, and therefore sometimes premature or unwise actions, such actions are not to be construed as policies unless so designated by the Board.

Explicitness: If policies are to be useful, they should be as explicit as practicable, although we must recognize that a practical flexibility is a counterbalancing demand.

Openness and Procedure: A democratically constituted entity such as BMS can function effectively only if all its members are confident that the policies of the school provide ready access for all matters of governance. While certain matters (such as student discipline, evaluation of teachers, etc.) obviously require the exercise of judgment and varying degree of confidentiality, no more should be cloaked with secrecy

than necessary. Likewise, unless a specific situation demands a response that precludes following BMS policies and procedures as specified, actions should not be taken that violate policies or by-pass normal channels of action. In such a case that demands such a violation or by-passing, the Board must be informed of deviations from normal actions and procedures and must accept, confirm, or reject the actions taken in its place.

Disinterestedness: While extenuating or mitigating circumstances may suggest that deviations from approved policies are wise in particular circumstances, in general policies should be carried out regardless of the individuals affected. Complementary policies should be followed even if they operate vacuously or their results are completely foreseeable, for it is in the predictability of the operations of policies that their strengths lie.

ARTICLE I - GENERAL INFORMATION

Section 1: Mission Statement

The mission of Bloomington Montessori School is to guide students from self-discovery to global citizenship through Montessori education.

Section 2: Vision Statement

The vision of Bloomington Montessori School is to become a center for peace and education within our community.

Section 3: Values Statement at Bloomington Montessori School we value...

- A love of learning
- Nurturing peaceful, self-reliant, empowered citizens
- Respect for ourselves, each other, and the Earth
- Open and honest communication
- Working hard and working together as a welcoming community
- Equality and all the ways in which humans are diverse

Section 4: Code of Ethics of the American Montessori Society

AMS requires all member schools and affiliated teacher education programs to comply with the AMS Code of Ethics. AMS relies on self-compliance with this Code.

In pledging to accept the Code of Ethics, heads of schools and program directors agree

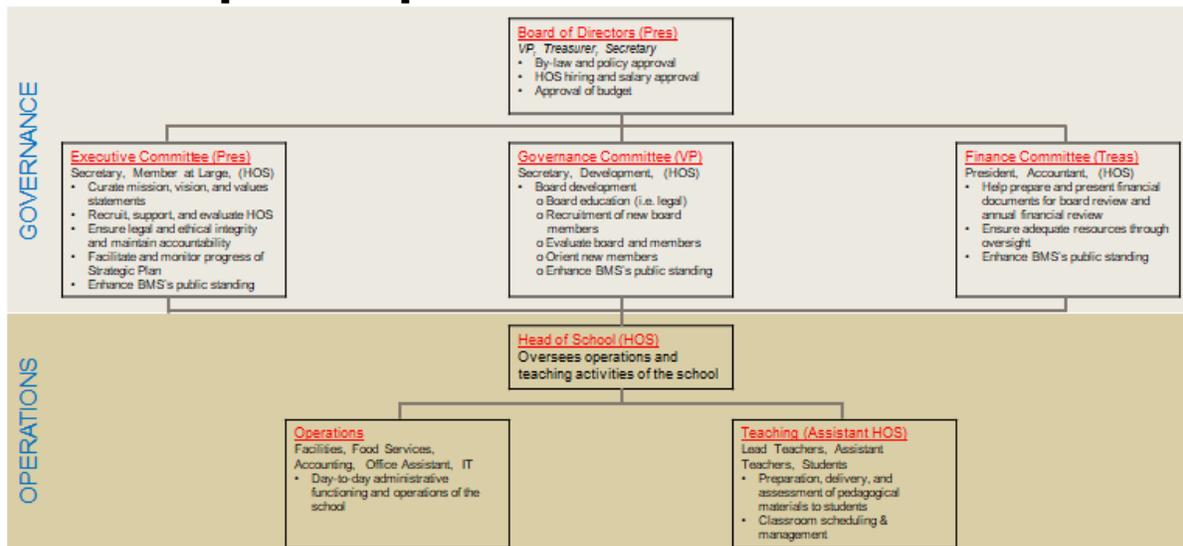
that the educators in their institutions will strive to conduct themselves professionally and personally in ways that reflect their respect for one another and for the children they serve; and that they will do whatever is within their talents and capacity to protect the right of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop his or her full potential. For the complete Code of Ethics, please see <https://amshq.org/Educators/Membership/School-Membership/Member-Code-of-Ethics>.

Section 5: Policy Adoption

It is BMS policy that policy statements are adopted only after consideration at a minimum of two regular Board meetings. Under normal conditions, no policy will be adopted in its first reading, although any Board has the right to adopt a policy if, in its best judgment, immediate adoption is desirable. More than two readings may be required for some policies, at the Board’s discretion, especially if the resolution is heavily modified during a previous consideration.

Section 6: All-School Organizational Chart

Concept of Operations



ARTICLE II – LEGAL MATTERS

Section 1: Policy on Confidentiality

Students

BMS will adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Policy Act (FERPA) regarding the handling of all student records.

Staff and Board Members may not discuss student personal information, including written/oral reports or observations of student behavior or academics, family information, etc., with anyone other than the child's parent(s) and/or other staff directly involved.

Staff

Employees at BMS are expected to treat their peers with the same respect and confidentiality extended to families and students. As a result, they are expected to address any concerns they have with colleagues through direct conversation. All staff records and documents are kept confidential.

Section 2: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse

Indiana law requires that any person who has reason to believe that a child is a victim shall report any instances of suspected child abuse or neglect. If one suspects child abuse or neglect, one should call (800) 800-5556.

Section 3: Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment

BMS strictly prohibits sexual harassment against any employee, volunteer or student. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which includes verbal, physical or electronic (online) conduct that creates a hostile, intimidating or abusive work or school environment for the victim. Sexual harassment is a violation of state and federal laws against discrimination.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, jokes of a sexual nature, graffiti, disseminating sexually suggestive pictures and/or giving the victim a choice between ceding to sexual demands or suffering an adverse action. The school's prohibition against sexual harassment extends to all actions of harassment by any faculty member, vendor, volunteer, contractor, student, parent, community member or any other person who directly or indirectly comes in contact with the school.

Reporting Sexual Harassment.

1. If anyone believes that he/she is the victim of sexual harassment or has reason to believe that somebody else is the victim of sexual harassment, he/she should immediately report it to the Head of School.
2. That person or his/her designee will conduct an immediate and thorough investigation.
3. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible, however, it is important to recognize that those with pertinent information will be interviewed as part of the investigation, including the accused.
4. The results of the investigation will be reported to the Head of School, who will take swift and appropriate action against any person who is found to have violated this policy, up to and including dismissal or removal from the school.
5. The school strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, brings forth a complaint or otherwise cooperates in the investigation as a witness.
6. When the investigation ends, a determination will be made, and the results will be communicated to the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, and, as appropriate, to all others directly concerned.

Section 4: Consensual Relations Policy

A BMS employee with supervisory responsibilities shall not seek a romantic/intimate relationship with any subordinate BMS employee if there is a direct or indirect reporting relationship. If the Head of School becomes intimately involved with a board member, the board member should remove him/herself from the board. All other employees who enter into romantic/intimate relationships should be aware that there is potential for several conditions: sexual harassment claims, uncomfortable working relationships, morale problems among other employees, the appearance of impropriety and difficulties associated with relationships that end poorly. If it is discovered that the romantic/intimate relationship is detrimental to the school in any way or negatively affects the employees' ability to perform their jobs, employees should be aware of the potential for immediate termination.

Section 5: BMS Policy on Controlled Substances and Other Drugs

1. In keeping with the general goal of providing a healthful educational environment, it is BMS policy to comply fully with all federal and state laws governing controlled substances and other drugs, and any applicable regulations of the State of Indiana.
2. Information received concerning such current laws and regulations will be retained on file in the office of the Head of School.

3. The use of tobacco and alcohol is not permitted on BMS school grounds during normal school hours.

Section 6: Whistle Blower Policy

If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of BMS violates the law, the employee should file a written complaint with the President of the Board of Directors. It is BMS's intent to adhere to all applicable laws and regulations. The support of all employees is necessary to achieving compliance with various laws and regulations. Accordingly, if an employee brings allegedly unlawful activity to BMS's attention and provides BMS a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct any such activity, he or she is protected from retaliation. The protection is only available to employees that comply with this requirement. BMS will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of BMS's, or of another individual or entity with whom BMS has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, or a clear mandate of public policy. BMS will not retaliate against employees who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of BMS that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law.

ARTICLE III – ENROLLMENT

Prohibition Against Discrimination

BMS is committed to maintaining an environment that is free of any type of discrimination and where students, staff and everyone associated with the school is treated with dignity and respect.

The school's strict prohibition against discrimination includes, but is not limited to discrimination based upon a person's race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual preference or orientation, genetic information, atypical heredity, cellular or blood trait of any individual, family status, or because of the liability for service in the Armed forces or because of the refusal to submit to a genetic test or make available the results of a genetic test to an employer or based upon any other characteristic or status protected by State or Federal Law.

This anti-discrimination policy applies to, but is not limited to all educational opportunities, classroom practices, employment practices, compensation, training,

hiring, advancement, promotion, discipline, discharge and the selection vendors, contractors and consultants who do business with the school.

Reporting Discrimination

If anyone believes that he or she is the victim of discrimination or has reason to believe that somebody else is the victim of discrimination, he/she should immediately report it to the Head of School.

That person or his/her designee will conduct an immediate and thorough investigation.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible, however, it is important to recognize that those with pertinent information will be interviewed as part of the investigation, including the accused.

The results of the investigation will be reported to the Head of School who will take swift and appropriate action against any person who is found to have violated this policy, up to and including dismissal or removal from the school.

The school strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, brings forth a complaint or otherwise cooperates in the investigation as a witness.

When the investigation ends, a determination will be made, and the results will be communicated to the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, and, as appropriate, to all others directly concerned.

Disability Nondiscrimination Policy

a. Bloomington Montessori School does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disability, including against applicants or members of their families, students or members of their families.

b. Applicants and students with disabilities and members of their families have an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations provided by Bloomington Montessori School.

c. Bloomington Montessori School may not deny admission to or disenroll a child on the basis of the child's disability, or because Bloomington Montessori School regards the child as having a disability.

d. Bloomington Montessori School will make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures when the modifications are necessary to afford goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities.

e. Requests for reasonable modifications beyond the scope of daily classroom accommodations may be directed to Bloomington Montessori School's Head of School,

either formally (as in writing) or informally (as in orally) and will be addressed in collaboration with the Assistant Head of School within three (3) business days.

f. Bloomington Montessori School will not make decisions about admission, continued enrollment or re-enrollment, or about needs for reasonable modifications, based on assumptions, myths or stereotypes about people with disabilities. Before making any enrollment decision where disability or behaviors associated with a disability is considered as part of the decision-making process, Bloomington Montessori School administrators will engage in an interactive process that includes consultation with or consideration of information provided by the following individuals: the child's parents or guardians, current teacher(s), anticipated teacher(s), and any persons providing support, therapy or other services to the child, to determine whether reasonable modifications to Bloomington Montessori School policies, practices and procedures could allow the child to attend Bloomington Montessori School;

g. If Bloomington Montessori School denies admission, continued enrollment or enrollment to a child with a disability, Bloomington Montessori School shall set forth in writing its reasons for the denial, including the names and titles of all persons consulted, any modifications proposed or considered, and the reasons, if any, why Bloomington Montessori School decided reasonable modifications were not available or would not allow the child to attend Bloomington Montessori School.

h. Bloomington Montessori School will not retaliate against or coerce in any way any person trying to exercise the rights of any person under this Agreement.

Section 1: POLICY

BMS strongly believes in the benefit of a nine-year Montessori program for development of the vital Learner Outcomes toward which we strive. These outcomes are discussed in our Parent Handbook. The Enrollment Policy establishes a structure to provide this education to as many children as possible.

The purpose of the Enrollment Policy is to set forth the BMS enrollment philosophy as well as to explain to current and prospective families our application and enrollment methodology.

I. Enrollment Philosophy

A. Inclusivity, The Bloomington Montessori Association, Inc. (BMA), which operates the Bloomington Montessori School (BMS), offers equal opportunity to all through the Enrollment Policy, which does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, or religion.

B. *Collaborative Community*, To ensure the continued vitality of the BMS community, applicant families agree to work with the school and staff to foster values central to Montessori philosophy. Parents are required to read and sign all enrollment forms, including the Parent/Guardian Agreement, as a condition of enrollment.

A family's commitment to fostering these values and supporting the teacher(s) in their endeavors is a primary consideration for enrollment.

C. *Classroom Balance* The ideal Montessori classroom consists of approximately equal numbers of children at each level, with a balance of genders both within the classroom and within grade levels.

D. *Student: Teacher Ratios* There will be a standard student: teacher ratio of 10:1 at the Early Childhood level, 11:1 at the Lower Elementary level, and 12:1 at the Upper Elementary level.

Lead Teacher(s) may approve up to, but not exceed, student-teacher ratio of 11:1 at the Early Childhood level, 12:1 at the Lower Elementary, and 13:1 at the Upper Elementary level. The Board and Lead Teacher must approve any further increase in a classroom's student-teacher ratio.

II. Application

We accept applications year-round, and application date is an important factor in determining enrollment priority (see Method of Prioritizing Admissions, below). Children are eligible at their date of birth for application. Students wishing to enroll at BMS for the first time must submit an application form and application fee. Parents will be contacted to schedule a tour if they have not previously toured the school.

Student classroom assignment is based upon the student's development and upon chronological age as of the beginning of the school year under consideration. Applicants for the first year of the Early Childhood program must have turned three by August 1st of their desired enrollment year. When appropriate based on classroom enrollment and composition in the Early Childhood program, BMS may consider enrolling a student who turns three during the school year and who meets required criteria of the Early Childhood Readiness Checklist. This constitutes an Early Start year for that student, and the following year will be the student's Youngest Group year.

Applicants for the first year of the Elementary program must have turned six by August 1st of their desired enrollment year.

III. First-Time Enrollment into Early Childhood, Lower Elementary, or Upper Elementary Programs

Annual enrollment usually occurs in January through March for the following school year, according to the following process.

- A. Enrollment administrator determines school openings based on the Enrollment Philosophy (gender, age, level; Section 1-I).

- B. Enrollment administrator follows the Method of Prioritizing Admissions to organize the applicant pool (Section 1-V).
 - 1. Deferral: Outside students who are invited to begin the enrollment process but who defer (choose not to accept enrollment at BMS yet wish to remain in the wait pool for future admission) lose their initial date of application. Their date of deferral becomes their new date of application.

- C. Applicants may be required to submit additional materials (school records, medical records, IEP/ISP, etc.) to ensure BMS can meet the needs of the student and classroom. Prior to admission, each incoming Early Childhood student must submit a completed Early Childhood Readiness Checklist.

- D. Enrollment administrator facilitates a student visit.

- E. Lead Teacher determines student recommendation status, and parents are notified. Enrollment invitations will be accompanied by an enrollment packet.

- F. If enrollment is offered, parents submit completed enrollment documents and fees. Enrollment offers expire in ten (10) business days.

Mid-year enrollments will be considered at the time of application, with Lead Teacher approval and as determined by the needs of BMS and its classrooms.

IV. Enrollment Renewal

For current students who will remain in the same classroom the following year, parents must update their children's enrollment paperwork in January and pay a deposit for the following year.

Early Childhood students wishing to transfer to a different Early Childhood classroom are considered to be In-House Transfers. Parents must complete an In-House Transfer form on or before January enrollment renewal deadline. These students will be prioritized over outside applicants.

Full-Day Kindergarten: In the event that kindergarten spots remain open in the Hickory classroom after enrollment of half-day kindergartners, half-day kindergarten families may choose to seek Lead Teacher approval to expand to a full-day program. Approval will be contingent on the child's developmental readiness for a full-day program. If more families seek full-day kindergarten than there are spots available, this option will be offered to families in accordance with the Method of Prioritizing Admission (1-V).

Enrollment into Lower Elementary or Upper Elementary: Parents with children transitioning from kindergarten to first grade or from third grade to fourth grade must follow the enrollment process for First-Time Enrollment (Section 1-III). While every effort is made to accept all current students into their new classrooms, the number of openings varies and enrollment in new classrooms is not guaranteed.

Deadlines for re-enrollment are very important. Once the deadlines have passed, current students who have submitted the required re-enrollment forms are placed in classrooms and any open spots are offered to outside applicants. Current families who have not submitted re-enrollment forms by given deadlines will lose their priority enrollment status (Section 1-V-D), and classroom enrollment will proceed. Current students with late re-enrollment forms will be prioritized above Outside Applicants (Section 1-V-E) who have not yet received an offer.

V. Method of Prioritizing Admissions

In the event that the number of new applicants to a classroom exceeds the number of classroom openings, BMS uses the following criteria, in the order listed below, to establish the sequence in which students will be offered enrollment. The Enrollment Philosophy (1-I), particularly Classroom Balance and Student: Teacher Ratios, guides the admissions process, as does our belief in a nine-year BMS program and the value

of long-term families. If gender balance could cause a current student not to be re-enrolled, the Lead Teachers and Enrollment administrator(s) will meet to make a final decision. Students who are not offered enrollment during this process will be placed in our wait pool. Families are called as openings become available, using the Enrollment Philosophy (1-I) and the following prioritizing criteria to determine the order of invitations. Students who are not offered enrollment will remain in the wait pool for future admission, unless they notify BMS that they would like to be removed.

A. First priority: Children of BMS teachers and staff contracted for the enrollment year in question are placed in the appropriate classroom.

B. Second priority: Current students returning to the same classroom are given next priority.

C. Third priority: In-House Transfers. See Section 1-IV: Enrollment Renewal.

D. Fourth priority: Current students moving into a new classroom at 1st and 4th grade are placed in the following priority order. Enrollment in this new classroom is not guaranteed. See Section 1-IV: Enrollment Renewal for further details.

1. Initial Enrollment Date--Students are sorted by gender then by initial enrollment date (first day as a student at BMS), with those who enrolled earlier receiving higher priority. If a student withdraws and returns to re-enroll at BMS, the re-enrollment date will be used. Students who share an enrollment date are then sorted as follows.

a) Family Length of Attendance at BMS--This is a sum calculated by adding together the number of years the student, siblings, parents, and grandparents have attended BMS. Students with equivalent priority in this regard will be offered admissions based on earliest application date.

(1) Application Date--This is the date that the family submitted an application for this student to attend BMS.

E. Fifth priority: Outside Applicants. Once all current students have been enrolled, students from outside the school are considered. Outside applicants are prioritized for admission using the following criteria, in this

order:

1. Family Length of Attendance at BMS (See Section 1-V-D).
2. Students who have attended another AMS or AMI-affiliated Montessori school, prioritized by length of Montessori experience.
3. Application Date. This is the date that the family submitted an application for this student to attend BMS.

Section 2: Attendance Policy

A student's success at school is dependent upon regular and consistent attendance. At BMS, we embrace the concept of educating the whole child and in particular, the idea that special times away with parents provide a unique time of bonding and learning that is essential to a child's development and well-being. We understand that field trips can enrich a child's education which is why we include them in our curriculum. This document should provide you with clarification about our school policies regarding attendance, absenteeism, and tardiness.

According to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Attendance Guidelines (October 7, 2014) and the Indiana Code (IC) 20-20-8-8 which was recently amended, habitual truancy was defined to include students absent ten (10) days or more from school within a school year without being excused or without being absent under a parental request filed with the school. Chronic absenteeism was defined as a student absent from school for ten percent (10 percent) or more of a school year for any reason.

Unlike public schools, private schools are able to set their own policies in regard to how many reasonable days a student may miss during the academic year. BMS certainly takes individual situations into account, such as health issues, travel, etc., but in general, we agree with the current IDOE recommended ten (10) allowed days absent and ten percent (10 percent – 17 days) during an academic year when it comes to defining habitual and chronic situations. When a child is frequently out sick or arrives late consistently, a negative impact on the child's ability to stay current with lesson concepts and targeted areas of study occurs and results in impeded academic progress.

BMS expects that as much as possible, trips will be planned to occur within the scheduled holiday dates, teacher work and professional days as listed on the school calendar. If you schedule a trip or a day-off other than during the posted breaks, a written note from the parent or guardian stating the reason of the absence should be submitted to the office. If your child is out sick, please call (812-336-2800) and notify the office the morning of the day the child is out. Parents need to understand that the school and Lead Teachers cannot be held accountable for the quality of your child's educational experience when the child has excessive tardiness or absenteeism. If your

child does exceed the acceptable amount of absenteeism, you will receive a formal letter stating this fact and that we have a concern in this area.

Tardiness is defined as arriving to the classroom later than:

- 8:30am for morning half-day or elementary classrooms
- 9:15am for all-day classrooms
- 12:30pm for the afternoon half-day classroom

Any unexcused tardies have a negative impact on your child's learning experience. Please arrive on time and plan to need time for parking.

Section 3: Temporary Withdrawal from the Elementary School

For reasons of obvious fiscal soundness, members who wish to temporarily withdraw their child from the Elementary school due to temporary relocation (e.g., sabbatical) for a period of time up to but not greater than one year in length, have two options.

- Members may guarantee payment of 95% of the tuition(1*) on a monthly basis for each month of the school year for which the child is not in attendance in return for a guaranteed place for their child for an agreed upon return date, or
- Members may elect to forego this option for a guaranteed space in the elementary classroom but may pay the pre-enrollment tuition deposit and have their child be categorized as a Returning Student for the Admission process for the following school year. In the event that a space is available for that grade level upon the withdrawn student's return, this second option would mean that the child would be at or near the top of that grade level's waiting list per the Enrollment Policy(2*). These options can be exercised for both students who are currently enrolled or who have been offered and have accepted a place in the Elementary school for the coming year and have paid their pre- enrollment tuition deposit for the Elementary school. In fairness to others on the waiting list, however, those members intending to withdraw their child for a period of time to exceed one school year shall not be given the first option of guaranteeing a space by tuition payment, but the second option may be exercised. Exception: In the event that a one year temporary student from another Montessori Elementary or Preschool applies for enrollment to the same Elementary classroom as the student for whom option #1 has been contracted, the temporary student may be offered the temporary position for part or all of the same months that the space is being held for the withdrawn student, and the parents of the latter will have the tuition payments waived for those months.

(1*) 5% deduction for curriculum supplies not used by absent child(ren). (2*) The pre-enrollment tuition deposit would be refunded if no opening is offered to the child within 12 months upon the student's return.

Section 4: Parental Involvement and Participation

The Bloomington Montessori School is committed to the ideals of parental involvement and participation. Participation is not only rewarding for parents, it serves as an example for children of community service to emulate. Research shows that parent involvement at school is related to better academic outcomes. In addition to the tuition, each family shall be required to contribute ten (10) hours of work to the school. In lieu of the 10-hour work requirement, a non-work payment of \$350.00 (\$35.00 per hour) may be made.

Section 5: Student Academic Records

Student academic records will be kept by the Lead Teacher whose class (s)he is attending. When a student moves from one class to another, the student's records will be passed to the next Lead Teacher. When a student leaves BMS, his/her student academic records will be retained in the second-floor storage area for eight years following his/her departure.

Section 5: Abandonment of Place

The BMS policy of "Suitability for Continuation in BMS" recognizes "extensive absence" as an aspect of behavior which seriously adversely affects a child's education progress. If a child is absent for ten consecutive days without explanation from a parent or guardian, the child will be on probation. At this time the parent will be sent a receipt letter informing them that the child must be in attendance within ten (10) days of the mailing date of the letter. This requirement may be waived if a medical or other suitable reason for the child's nonattendance is provided. If there is no appropriate response at the end of this ten-day period, the child's position in the class may be considered abandoned and BMS will be free to fill that position with another child, selected in accordance with the relevant BMS enrollment policies. In such cases, there will be no refund of tuition or deposits.

Section 6: Medical Withdrawal

In the event that a child is withdrawn from BMS for medical reasons and a refund of prepaid tuition fees or tuition deposit is requested, a statement must be provided by the child's physician confirming the medical conditions that require the withdrawal.

Section 7: Student Suitability for Continuation

Self-discipline is at the core of the Montessori education philosophy. Children who are unable to practice self-discipline are unlikely to thrive in the Montessori environment and therefore are unlikely to be encouraged to continue their education in BMS. In the Montessori system, the academic suitability of each child is assessed on a continuing basis; behavioral suitability is of equal concern. Some aspects of behavior more within the parents' domain include tardiness, or un-excused or extensive absence from school. Other aspects more in the child's domain (although certainly of direct concern to the parents) include deliberate disruption of school activities, disrespect, and other unacceptable aspects of behavior such as swearing, fighting, or willful destruction of school materials or other property.

Student Services

Bloomington Montessori is a school that thrives on its ability to fulfill the vision of Maria Montessori through individualization to meet the needs of each child whenever possible. This can include a large team of support and a wide variety of accommodations. The Student Services administrator can help you understand and navigate this process.

Student Services typically fall into the following categories:

- Academic Accommodations
- Behavioral Accommodations
- Physical Accommodations

For all student service areas, there are three tiers, denoting the extent of intervention needed.

Tier 1 Supports

Tier 1 supports successfully meet the needs of approximately 80%+ of students. They are grounded in standard Montessori methods, both academically and behaviorally.

Example supports include:

- A prepared environment
- Small-group and individual lessons
- Regular observation
- Hands-on materials
- Frequent movement
- Grace and courtesy
- Student choice
- Low student: teacher ratios

Tier 2 Supports

Tier 2 supports are needed by approximately 15% of students. These supports begin when a specific academic or behavioral concern has been identified by a Parent or Teacher. Tier 2 supports targeting the identified concern(s) through classroom accommodations and involves an intervention strategy to support growth.

Tier 2 supports are specifically designed to address the concern, but may include:

- Special seating
- Charts or work plans designed to structure a specific support
- Increased observation
- A change to the child's schedule and/or expectations
- Special tools or materials compatible with a Montessori environment
- Additional parent/teacher meetings with documentation including timelines and action steps

Need for Tier 2 support is not cause for alarm. Needs for these types of interventions fall within typical child development. During Tier 2 support, the teacher and/or student need the support of parent(s)/guardian(s). The teacher will communicate interventions and their effectiveness to parent(s)/guardian(s) as needed. If current interventions have not resolved the concern, the teacher or parent may request a team meeting to discuss further accommodations and teachers may ask that support accommodations be made at home.

Tier 3 Supports

Tier 3 support is needed by <5% of our children. If a Student Services administrator and the teacher and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) believe that all appropriate accommodations are in place and the concern remains, the recommendation will be that support from outside services (administration, Special Education, etc.) is needed, and to move to a Tier 3 support process. An administrator will work with the teacher to begin the Tier 3 process and communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s). Tier 3 interventions include:

- A specific individualized plan, agreed upon and signed by the teacher, administrator, and parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - This should include information such as recent observations, interventions, related documentation, and goals for follow-up observation/reflection/assessment, as well as an agreed upon timeline
- Scheduled intensive observation of the child with increased documentation
- Additional team meetings with documentation including timelines and action steps

- Referrals for professional services, such as for Special Education services eligibility evaluations through the public-school system
- In extreme circumstances, such as chronic or severe behavioral concerns, this could include suspension or expulsion from school.

If a parent has an accommodation request and/or feels that the classroom teacher has not met their child's needs, this also becomes a Tier 3 Support and the parent should request support from the Head of School.

ARTICLE IV - FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATION

Section 1: Refund of Enrollment Deposit

In the event a child shall withdraw from BMS on the recommendations of the child's Lead Teacher or while on probation, or be expelled from school, then on request the enrollment deposit made for the child shall be refunded. Further, the parents shall have no obligation to pay tuition after the month during which the child leaves the school.

Section 2: Late Pickup Fees

Because the children are ready to leave when their school day ends and that the staff expect to be able to move on to other activities, official class-ending times are established for each class and room. Currently those times are 11:30am for the morning half-day preschool classroom, 3:30pm for the afternoon half-day preschool and elementary classrooms, and 5:30pm for the all-day preschool classroom. To encourage parents to recognize the importance of these times and to provide compensation for the staff who are required to extend their working hours to care for children who are not collected on time, a late fee will be assessed for each family whose child or children are left in the care of school personnel beyond the official end of the child's class. That fee is \$1.00 per minute for the first five minutes, and \$5.00 for every five-minute period thereafter. Each family may have a single grace period of up to five minutes before fines are assessed. At the time of the infraction, the adult who is late picking up the child will be informed that the fee will be assessed and the child's family will be billed at the end of the month for any fees so assessed.

Section 3: Temporary Parent Release of Authority

At the beginning of each year, parents will be required to sign a release form authorizing others whom they may designate to assume responsibility for their children in the case of emergencies or other contingencies which prevent parents from having the normal

supervision and control over their children. These designees might include relatives, friends, other BMS parents, or others who could be expected to exercise reasonable and prudent judgment in extraordinary circumstances such as illness, accident, severe weather conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances. In case the parents or their specific designees are unavailable, BMS staff in authority will be authorized to act to secure the well-being and comfort of the children involved, exercising reasonable judgment and caution. This policy could be applied, for example, if the child were still at the school after the end of the school day. In such cases, the teacher in authority will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents; including leaving a message posted on the school door if the school is closed. If the child must be transported from the school to another appropriate location such as a teacher's home (if the school is closed), the school's usual transportation practices shall be followed, including the use of seatbelts or equivalent safety devices in personal vehicles. Finally, parents are responsible for keeping their release from current, so that the teachers will have accurate information about their designee and how they should be able to be reached in emergencies.

Section 4: Head of School Check Signing Authority

The Head of School has the authority to sign checks on behalf of the School. And furthermore, the Head of School is authorized to make purchases and enter into maintenance contracts on an as-needed basis for not more than \$2000; purchases and contracts above \$2000 require Board approval.

Section 5: Fundraising Policies

Bloomington Montessori School (BMS) receives charitable contributions and in-kind support from solicitation of private individuals, corporations, associations, and foundations.

The Board and Head of School oversee all fundraising policies and activities. Fundraising activity is conducted in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal requirements, and in support of the school's mission, vision, values, and strategic goals. All fundraising activities are reviewed and vetted for alignment with the mission and for cost effectiveness.

Bloomington Montessori School's fundraising activities are guided by the following policies.

General Guidelines

- BMS seeks gift commitments that are consistent with its mission and with organization and program goals. Donations generally will be accepted from individuals, partnerships, corporations, organizations, government agencies or other entities without limitations unless acceptance of gifts from a specific source is inconsistent with BMS's mission, vision, and values. BMS will not accept any support that implies or requires endorsement of products.
- Recognition of major support will be developed in cooperation with the corporate donors and will be consistent with the level of support and BMS's mission and purpose. BMS will seek to develop recognition opportunities that are appropriate and meaningful for both the support companies and BMS. Acknowledgement for corporate support will be limited to the companies' names, logos, or slogans that are an established part of the supporters' identities, trade names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Multi-year pledges for gifts are encouraged but for no more than three to five years. Donors should complete and sign a gift pledge agreement form, provided by BMS at the time of the pledge, detailing the purpose of the gift, payment schedule and donor recognition methods. A selection of naming or giving opportunities will be made available to a donor when interested.
- When gifts with restrictions are made, those restrictions will be honored and detailed in the donor's gift or pledge commitment letter. Restricted funds are used exclusively as indicated by the donor and accounted for in a restricted fund. BMS will obtain explicit consent from the donor(s) before altering the conditions or any funding agreements and/or financial transaction.

Solicitations

- Solicitations of charitable contributions and in-kind support from private individuals, corporations, associations, and foundations are made for the sole purpose of supporting BMS programming and operations. Solicitations may be made in person/verbally or in writing and must accurately reflect the intended use of the funds. Donors and potential donors have the right to request to be excluded from future solicitation.
- BMS follows all state and federal regulations with respect to solicitation disclosures and direct-mail disclaimers, including providing information about our nonprofit status, tax-exempt status and the contact information for the state office at which our current registration information and publicly-available documents are available. A copy of our current annual report is made available on our website or by contacting our offices.
- BMS's board and staff reserve the right to refuse any donation, including donations of cash or other real property, services, noncash gifts or any other forms of support if such support is not in keeping with the above principles or other reason that BMS

deems appropriate.

Donor Information and Confidentiality

- BMS is committed to respecting the privacy of donors and makes every effort to maintain the accuracy and confidentiality of all donor information. Donor information is stored in BMS' donor management database and in files accessible with a key. Access to that database is password-protected and is limited to essential fundraising and filing staff. File keys are kept with BMS fundraising staff. Donor information is kept strictly confidential; BMS does not disclose privileged or confidential information to unauthorized parties, or use said information for purposes outside of those aligned with the BMS mission. BMS assures donors that their names and addresses will not be shared with any third party unless permission has been granted or unless required by applicable law or to comply with a court order or properly issued subpoena.
- BMS uses donors' information to understand their interest in our mission and update them on our plans and activities. The types of donor information that BMS collects and maintains are as follows.
 - Contact information, including names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, names and contact information of beneficiaries and family members
 - Giving information
 - Information on events attended, publications received and special requests for program information
 - Information provided by donor in the form of comments and suggestions
- BMS honors all requests from donors who wish to remain anonymous and/or wish for the details of their gift to remain confidential. Donors have the right to request removal of their name and contact information from our Agency database.

Stewardship

- BMS will maintain control, consistent with any donor restrictions acceptable to BMS, of all funds provided by corporations, organizations or individuals.
- BMS will take care to ensure proper stewardship of all donation sources, including timely reports on the use and management of donations. When gifts with restrictions are made, those restrictions will be honored and detailed in the donor's gift or pledge commitment letter or grant agreement.

Contractors and Consultants

- All Written agreements with outside fundraising contractors or consultants are reviewed, approved, and executed by BMS's Head of School.

ARTICLE V – MEDIA PRESENCE

Section 1: Introduction

BMS recognizes the importance of maintaining an up-to-date electronic presence as an integral part of our connectedness, growth and success. At the same time, BMS is sensitive to the issues surrounding confidentiality, security, and students' work and likenesses. BMS is committed to using our online presence to build community, enhance communication and promote the best interests of the school and our students; this article lays out our online presence policies to that end.

Section 2: Definition of Terms

- The **BMS Website** is located at <http://bloomingtonmontessori.org> and serves as an electronic space in which BMS can share and exchange information about its program with all internet users, who may or may not be BMS families and alumni.
- **Social Media** are online tools including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, which allow BMS to share and exchange information about the programs in virtual communities and networks. This article refers only to Social Media accounts open in the name of BMS.
- **Marketing** includes paper brochures, fliers, banners, or advertisements used to inform the public about our school.

Section 3: Content

- Content Management
 - The Head of School may delegate editorial responsibilities to others but shall be responsible for maintaining a single voice representing BMS, as well as accuracy and timeliness of content.
 - Classroom-specific content shall be maintained by Lead Teachers under the supervision of the Head of School, who retains the right to edit teacher content that misrepresents BMS.
- Photographs, audio, and visual materials
 - Video and/or still imagery of any children on the BMS website or social media shall never be accompanied by names, unless such information is password protected or explicit permission is given by parents.
 - By default, BMS employees, members of the BOD, and students' guardians *agree* to the use of their or their child's likeness for online purposes

described in this article.

- Each year, enrollment and employment agreements shall include an opportunity to opt out of this default agreement. Upper Elementary students shall also have an opportunity to opt out of this default agreement. BMS will not publish video or still imagery that includes adults or children who opt out on the official form provided, or children whose guardians opt them out. Opting out applies to the entire school year in which the form is completed.
- Confidentiality
 - Under no circumstances may confidential information, as defined in the policy on Confidentiality of Student Information*, be shared on the BMS website or via social media.
- Politics and Business
 - The BMS website and BMS social media accounts will not be used to solicit or promote any sort of political agenda. While event or program sponsorships may be acknowledged or recognized, BMS shall not advertise for any business on its website or via its social media.

Section 4: *Non* BMS Websites and Social Media Accounts

Under no circumstance may BMS employees or members of the BOD post confidential information, as defined in the policy on Confidentiality of Student Information*, video or still imagery of BMS students on their private/personal websites and/or social media accounts

ARTICLE VI – FACILITIES

Section 1: Fire/Tornado Drills

BMS will have one tornado and one man-made drill per semester as well as fire drills monthly (allowing two substitutions per semester). We generally have two tornado drills each semester. The Head of School will schedule these drills and notify the teachers ahead of time. Drill records will be certified by the Head of School and kept on file.

For procedures related to drills and evacuations, please see the Emergency Operations Action Plan.

Section 2: Winter Weather Policy

The Bloomington Montessori Association, Inc. (BMA) will follow the Monroe

County Community School Corporation's (MCCSC) decision regarding school delays and school closings under the following conditions:

- MCCSC is delaying or closing because their scouts have determined the roads to be icy and hazardous on the morning of, or, in some cases, in the evening before school.

BMA will make our own decision regarding delays and closings under the following conditions:

- MCCSC opts to delay or close for extreme cold conditions.
- MCCSC is delaying or closing for the second consecutive day.
- Other conditions that may arise in which MCCSC delays or closes.

The decision will be made by the Head of School. All BMA parents and staff will be notified of ANY school closing or delay through email no later than 6:30am. Additional notifications will be placed on the school's answering machine and on the WFIU/WTIU website.

In the event of a delay, all classroom doors will open at 10:00am. There will be morning half- day preschool from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. BMA parents will be notified of the decision no later than by 6:30 a.m. by email, radio, and our BMA answering machine.

Always make safe decisions to come or not to come to school based on road conditions in your neighborhood. *(Adopted May 2014)*

ARTICLE VII - STAFF

Section 1: Procedures for Ad Hoc Request for Extended Unpaid Leave

BMS staff members who wish to request extended unpaid leave beyond that provided for by BMS leave policies must submit a request to the Head of School. The Head of School will inform the BMS Board of the leave request. If the leave request is denied, and a staff member wishes to pursue the request, a written statement must be submitted to the Board.

In considering ad hoc requests for unpaid extended leave, the Head of School will take into account the following criteria: The duration of the leave requested, the purpose of

the leave, the availability of suitable replacement staff, the potential impact on instruction and on other staff members, the length of prior service of the staff member, and any prior grants to the staff member of ad hoc leave requests.

In responding to ad hoc requests, the Head of School will attempt to accommodate legitimate professional and personal needs of staff members, but will balance these with the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the instructional program and avoiding unduly increased stress on other staff members.

The Head of School will attempt to treat all staff members in an equitable fashion, but will consider individual requests on the basis of their own merit. Because the circumstances bearing on leave requests may vary widely and involve complex issues of judgment, decisions concerning individual ad hoc requests cannot establish precedents.

Section 2: Unpaid Family Leave

BMS recognizes that pressing family obligations may conflict with staff members' commitment to fulfill their professional obligations. This policy specifies the conditions under which staff members may request up to six weeks of unpaid family leave, or of a combination of paid personal, sick, or emergency leave and unpaid family leave, during which time their staff appointment may not be terminated. This policy supplements the BMS policy on Paid Staff Leave.

- **Eligibility:** BMS permanent full-time or part-time staff members who have completed at least one year of employment at the school are eligible to apply for family leave.
- **Purpose:** Family leave may be requested in cases of the birth or adoption of a child, or to provide care in cases of extended illness or death of a child or partner. In the case of the birth or adoption of a child by a BMS staff member or partner, the estimated birth due date or scheduled adoption date should fall within the period of leave as requested.
- **Combining Paid and Unpaid Leave:** Granting all leave is at the discretion of the Head of School. (1) In cases of birth or adoption, staff members may apply any number of their available paid leave days to cover a portion of their family leave.(2) In cases of the illness or death of a child or partner, staff members may apply any available number of their paid personal, emergency, or sick leave days.
- **Unusual Circumstances:** Normally family leave should not be requested for purposes or time periods other than those specified above. In cases that involve extraordinary needs, Staff may submit a request to the Head of School to grant a

request for family leave. The Head of School may submit a request for family leave to the Board in these circumstances.

Section 3: Paid Staff Leave

General Considerations: The Board recognizes that requests for leave time cannot always be predicted (especially for emergency and sometimes personal leave.) However, normal courtesy to one's colleagues and students requires as timely notice as possible. Personal leave is normally not allowed for the purposes of extending a vacation period, or during those peak periods of the school year when the demands on the staff as a whole are such that the discretionary absence of a staff member would seriously hinder the proper running of some component of the school.

The normal channels of communication will be used in matters of requesting leave: Lead Teachers will arrange with their staff for substitutes, and assistant teachers will arrange leave with their respective Lead Teacher. Non-academic staff will arrange leave with the Head of School. The Head of School should be informed of academic staff leave arrangements but is not required to approve or disapprove leaves for academic staff. In the case of disputes about leave policies and their implementation, final action or adjudication remains with the Board.

Professional Leave: Two full days of leave are granted to academic staff members per year, non-cumulative, for observing the education activities of other Montessori schools (or their equivalents), for attending professional conferences, or for comparable activities promising to enhance the professional capabilities of the staff.

Personal Leave: Full-time employees are granted three days of personal leave per year, non-cumulative, for any purpose. This leave is intended to be used for personal business of a discretionary nature. Staff members are not expected to justify or explain their reasons for requesting this leave. However, the concerns discussed under the section titled General Considerations apply to the scheduling of personal leave.

A BMS employee may take no more than two (2) consecutive school days of personal leave without prior approval of the direct supervisor and/or Head of School.

No personal leave may be taken during the first and last weeks of the school year unless consent is given as set out above.

Sick/Emergency Leave: Full-time employees are granted ten days of emergency

leave per year, cumulative to a maximum total of twenty days carried over from prior years (for a possible maximum of thirty days in a given year), for leave of a generally unplanned, unpredictable, or emergency nature. The most common reason for emergency leave is sickness of or injury to a staff member or someone in the staff member's household, someone in the immediate family, or a close friend. This leave may also be taken for other pressing matters, such as a funeral or other situation in which the staff member is unable to exercise control of the timing of the leave.

If an employee takes more than three consecutive emergency leave days, he or she must provide his or her supervisor with a physician's statement verifying the need for such leave. If an employee has accumulated emergency leave at the time of the employee's termination, whether or not the termination is voluntary, the employee shall not be compensated for the accumulated emergency leave.

Section 4: Teacher Training -- Loan Forgiveness:

Loan

BMS agrees to loan the full cost of training expenses (approx. \$8800) for an eligible teacher to become Montessori certified at a MACTE or AMS training center.

Loan Forgiveness

Eligible employees will be allowed to pay back their loan with five years of eligible time worked in accordance with the following:

- Eligible employee must satisfactorily complete the academic portion of the training.
- Employee must meet all requirements of the organization for ongoing employment.
- Loan will be forgiven at a rate of 1/5 the total amount over 5 years of working in an "Acting-Lead or Lead Teacher" capacity.

Loan forgiveness timing will begin according to the type of program:

Self-directed:

A self-directed internship allows the teacher to act in the "Lead Teacher" role at the start of their internship. As such, loan forgiveness will begin at the start of the internship year. Self-directed internships typically last for two years.

Supervised:

The teacher will be qualified to act in a "Lead Teacher" capacity at the end of their internship. As such, loan forgiveness will begin after the successful completion of their internship year when they are able to act in a "Lead Teacher" capacity. Supervised internships typically last for one year.

Loan Repayment:

If the teacher chooses to leave BMS or if employment is terminated before the term of this agreement is up, the teacher is responsible for the balance of the loan, which must be repaid immediately or upon such terms as mutually agreed upon between teacher and BMS. If the teacher fails to complete the course in the time allotted, this loan comes due unless a new agreement is negotiated.

Section 5: Equal Opportunity

We are an equal opportunity employer and do not discriminate against applicants or employees on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. Bloomington Montessori (BMS) complies with applicable state and local laws governing non-discrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

BMS expressly prohibits any form of employee harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status. Improper interference with the ability of BMS's employees to perform their expected job duties is absolutely not tolerated.

Section 6: Nepotism

For the purpose of this policy, "Immediate Family Members" include an employee's:

- Spouse/domestic partner;
- Children by blood, adoption or marriage;
- Siblings;
- Parents;
- Corresponding in-law, "step" relation or any member of the employee's household.

In order to avoid conflicts of interest, or the appearance of the same, employees shall not be assigned to a position that would require that employee to be in a (vertical supervisory relationship) with an immediate Family Member.

In a situation that results in a violation of this policy, the employees involved will work with the Head of School to propose a solution to the Board of Directors, making every attempt to transfer one of the employees internally. The Board of Directors will have final authority to approve or deny the proposal.

Exceptions may be granted by the Head of School and Board of Directors for extenuating circumstances and for Immediate Family Members to work in short term programs (lunch, summer camp, etc.) for a period of not more than one year.

If an immediate Family Member of one of the sitting Directors on the Board should become an employee of BMS, the Board of Director must step down from the Board.

Section 7: Conflict Resolution

Efforts to resolve conflict respectfully and directly with the person most involved are generally preferred and more effective. However, if direct mediation fails, please use the following guidelines to seek further mediation:

- For conflicts with non-lead teaching staff, seek the Lead Teacher of the classroom.
- For conflicts with Lead Teachers or operational/administrative staff, seek the Head of School.
- For conflicts with the Head of School or a Board Member, seek the Board President.
- For conflicts with the Board President, please submit a statement to the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VIII - HEALTH AND SAFETY

Section 1: Medical Forms

Before the first day of school, a child's completed Health Summary Form and Immunization Record must be received. Further, a child's immunizations must be current. If these requirements are not met, the parents will be notified and they will have until the morning of the first day of school to bring the child's immunizations up to date (if that is required) and return the necessary forms. If the child's records or immunizations are not in compliance by the first day of school, the child will thereafter be refused permission to attend school until such time as this requirement is met. In accordance with the BMS policy titled "Abandonment of Place," after ten days, the child's place may be considered vacated and the child withdrawn from school.

Section 2: Administration of Medication to Children

BMS policy on the administration of medication, whether an over-the-counter substance or substances dispensed only by pharmacists or physicians, is largely constrained by state law. Preschool children must have both a physicians' written order and a parent's written authorization before any medication can be given. Furthermore, the medication must be provided in the original container, with the child's name on it. Elementary children may be given medication in accordance with either a parent's specific written authorization for a particular instance or standing permission for recurring or chronic medical problems. In all cases, the Lead Teacher shall maintain a daily log of what medication was administered to each child.

Section 3: Illness

A child who appears ill upon arrival will not be admitted to school. Should a child become ill while at school, parents will be contacted to make arrangements for the immediate pick up (within 30 minutes) of the child. BMS will attempt to contact the parents first and then will attempt to contact the people listed on the Enrollment Agreement (intake form).

If a child has an illness that is contagious or which interferes with his or her ability to function at school, the child should stay home until the symptoms have disappeared for 24 hours. Symptoms include behavior changes, fever of 100 degrees or more, vomiting, rash or diarrhea. Again, if any combination of these symptoms is in evidence, the child should be kept home for at least 24 hours after the symptoms have cleared.

A slight cold, runny nose or persistent cough is usually not reason enough for a child to miss school. While nasal discharge indicates a possible infection within, the discharge itself is not always contagious to those around the child.

Any child who is too ill to participate in indoor *and* outdoor activities should be kept home from school. If a child is well enough to come to school, he/she will be considered well enough to go outside.

Parents should call the school each day their child is ill, so that we can track attendance as well as any patterns of illness within the classrooms.

Section 4: Impaired or Intoxicated Caregiver

If an intoxicated or impaired person arrives to pick up a child from school, the Lead

teacher or Head of School will suggest that another person be called to transport the child. If the intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing the child from the school, a staff member will immediately report the incident to the local police.

Section 5: Anti-Bullying Policy

BMS Anti-Bullying Policy

Bloomington Montessori is founded on principles of education, love of learning, peace, respecting oneself and one's peers and fostering a love for community. As a part of our mission, we do not allow bullying and take it very seriously. Bullying creates a climate of fear and hostility, disrupts the educational process, inhibits the ability to learn, drastically affects student participation in their learning environment, and is ultimately harmful to both the aggressor(s) and the victim(s).

The first step in addressing bullying is learning and understanding what bullying is and what form it may take in various situations. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a *real or perceived power imbalance*. The behavior is *repeated*, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. (StopBullying.gov)

We additionally are in a world in which we must also address cyber bullying. Cyber bullying may be a single incident that is damaging to one or more students. Although cyber bullying may originate off BMS premises, it can still have a significant and widespread impact on the classroom.

In addition to understanding what bullying is, teachers, staff and students need to learn how to identify bullying. As noted above in the definition, bullying can take several forms and the following are examples of the four (4) most general types:

1) Verbal Bullying:

- Teasing
- Name-Calling
- Insulting
- Gossip

Threatening to cause harm

2) Social Bullying, sometimes referred to as Relational or Emotional Bullying:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone in public
- Embarrassing someone in public
- Retrieving someone from one group in order to join another

group

3) Physical Bullying:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Pulling hair or clothing
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude faces or hand gestures

4) Cyber Bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Sending mean text messages or emails
Posting negative comments on social networking sites
Uploading embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles on social networking sites

Bloomington Montessori takes a proactive stance in regards to bullying. BMS understands that in its role of educating young children, it is in a position to provide them with tools for handling anger, frustration and impulsiveness. Oftentimes frustration can result in bullying and it is BMS' hope that it can provide a learning environment without fear, intimidation and bullying.

Should an incident of bullying become identified or reported to BMS teachers, staff, parents or Head of School, care must be taken in aiding both the bullied student and the student who is bullied. BMS will make sure both students are supported. Refer to the *Staff and Administrative Procedures for Bullying at BMS* for specific steps taken when dealing with bullying behavior.

Section 6: Allergy Policy

Food Allergy Policy

Food allergy is a growing public health issue that affects almost every school across the United States. At BMS, we strive to be maximally inclusive and flexible; to include growing, cooking and eating food together as part of our Montessori curriculum; and to teach all children, with and without allergies, independence and life skills; however, when food allergies are life threatening for a relatively large and growing contingent of our children, as peanut and nut allergies can be, the BMS Board has determined that such a risk cannot be taken.

The BMS Board, with input from staff and parents, has determined that in order to minimize the risk of exposure and to keep all of our students safe, BMS will be a nut free campus. The only exception to this will be trees on the school grounds.

Section 7: Dress Code

Preschool: The Lead Teachers of the preschool classrooms may notify parents of dress restrictions for their respective classrooms.

Elementary: BMS has a dress code in order to support a peaceful, learning-centered environment. Thus, clothing that is typically worn at the beach or for loungewear is not appropriate at school, nor is clothing promoting violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual innuendo, profanity, obscenity, or gangs. Beyond this, clothing should be comfortable and suited to the season, and should cover areas of the body commonly known as “private”, including the midriff. Undergarments may not be exposed, nor worn as outerwear.