

**THE  
MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
A Public Charter School



**STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK  
&  
STUDENT BEHAVIOR POLICIES**

**NOTICE**

**THIS HANDBOOK STATES GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL POLICY AS WELL AS STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. IT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS. THE TMEMS GOVERNANCE COUNSEL MAY, AT ITS SOLE DISCRETION, MODIFY THE PROVISIONS OF THIS HANDBOOK AT ANY TIME.**

Adapted July 05  
Revised January 06  
Revised August 08  
Revised July 09  
Revised August 10  
Revised August 11  
Revised August 12  
Revised September 13  
Revised August 14  
Revised November 15  
Revised August 16  
Revised August 17  
Revised August 19  
Revised August 20  
Revised November 21  
Revised August 2022

# The Montessori Elementary & Middle School

## Mission & Vision Statement

### **Mission Statement**

we believe that learning is best achieved within a positive social atmosphere that supports each individual's unique development. The Montessori Elementary & Middle School (TMEMS) offers an accelerated program by providing a strong Montessori academic curriculum combined with a unique fine arts program including Suzuki Method, General Music, and Visual Arts. The mission of TMEMS is to encourage students grades K-8 to become responsible citizens who have the ability and desire to fulfill lifelong educational and social goals.

### **Vision Statement**

To see children pass from one stage of independence and learning to yet a higher stage by means of special activities found within the Montessori and Suzuki Methods of education. These time-proven "Methods" were designed to fulfill the needs of children and the needs of the adults they are to become.

### **THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

TMEMS follows the Montessori method and philosophy of education. This method is child centered, and an individualized way of assisting children to develop their individual abilities and potentials. This method was possibly the first that was founded on the concept of educating the "whole child." The method provides social, emotional, and physical, as well as cognitive development. Montessori children are often described as self-directed, courteous, and joyful with a love for learning.

We employ state certified teachers trained in the Montessori method. Our professional staff is dedicated to providing a warm, loving, academically enriched environment that fosters the development and growth of happy well-adjusted children.

### **Dr. Maria Montessori-**

The Montessori method is a result of the experience and discoveries of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Upon graduation as the first woman medical doctor in Italy, Dr. Montessori became interested in the education and training of special needs children.

Dr. Montessori's career began with a group of disadvantaged children in 1907 when she opened her famous Casa dei Bambini. Through her observations of and work with the children, she discovered their remarkable, almost effortless ability to absorb knowledge from their surroundings. Children teach themselves! This simple and profound truth inspired Dr. Montessori's lifelong pursuit of educational reform, curriculum development, methodology, psychology, teaching and teacher training, all based on her dedication to further the self-creating process of the child.

Dr. Montessori designed materials and techniques that allowed her children to work in areas previously considered beyond their capacity. Dr. Montessori's great triumph came when these children took state examinations along with other children, and her children excelled in the exam results.

Today, after almost 75 years of international application, the Montessori method thrives in the United States with more than 3,000 schools established since 1957.

## **SCHOOL ACCREDITATION**

The Montessori Elementary & Middle School is accredited as a public Charter school by the New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC).

## **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

In our school, we emphasize the child's growth and development as a total person. This implies a constant awareness that each child is developing physically, emotionally and socially, as well as intellectually. This awareness allows children to take the lead in the learning process based on the unique needs of each child's particular stage of development.

Montessori teachers are trained to recognize and respond to these stages of development. This implies the structuring of both curriculum content and classroom environment so as to enhance the child's discovery of the world. The curriculum is sequenced to expose children to all subject areas, firing imagination and providing skills to enable children to pursue all interest areas.

The curriculum is designed to respond to the child's mental appetite, providing freedom to choose and emphasize creativity, imagination and active involvement in learning. For this to occur, children must acquire the necessary basic skills, as these are the tools essential to continued development. Teachers function as a facilitator and consultant who stimulate the child's interests and curiosity within a prepared environment.

The classroom is structured to stimulate the child's enthusiasm for new ideas and new skills, and to provide them with the opportunity to use these new skills and to apply their new ideas. The Montessori material is the key: It is the child who opens the door. The materials do not give all the answers, but awaken interest and give the possibility of finding solutions.

## **SCHOOL OBJECTIVES**

The learning materials in a Montessori school have been designed to provide a wide variety of learning experiences geared to the developmental needs of children. The activities involve handling and manipulating materials. This work has proven intensely fascinating and absorbing for children. When engaged in well-structured tasks, the students experience a deep inner satisfaction, which leaves them with an overall positive attitude toward learning and school. Our objectives include:

- Assisting parents in the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of their child.
- Helping the child develop a positive attitude toward school.
- Fostering in the child curiosity, imagination, and creative intelligence.
- Helping each child develop self-confidence as an independent learner.
- Helping the child develop socially.
- Fostering inner security and a sense of order in the child.
- Assisting each child in building a habit of concentration.
- Developing habits of initiative and persistence.

### **The Elementary Program-**

The elementary school child occupies what Maria Montessori called the "second plane of development." Children at this stage are in a period of rapid intellectual growth as they develop the ability for rational thinking. Children want to know the how and why of things. Through exploration and experimentation, they discover the quantities and facts of the world. Self education is the mode through which the elementary children learn most effectively. The teacher's role is to provide and support children in this all important endeavor.

Dr. Montessori developed what she called the "cosmic curriculum" for this educational level. In the cosmic curriculum, children discover the history of the world and of the human race, and in this process, begin to define their own place in the life of human kind and of nature. Sequentially, all things are naturally related to the creation of the universe and our earth. We encourage children to begin asking questions. Children pursue and research historical, scientific, artistic, and cultural interests. Information is gleaned from a rich variety of literature, experiments, art projects, tapes, films and community field trips.

During the elementary years, children explore the academic world in increasing depth through the related disciplines of mathematics, reading, penmanship, creative writing, research methods, art, music, science, botany, zoology, anatomy, history,

geography, social/cultural studies, drama, and physical education; all is taught as parts and contributions to the whole. Multi-age classrooms and a spirit of cooperation rather than competition, allow children to grow emotionally and intellectually at their own pace.

The Montessori elementary programs offer individualized instruction and evaluation. Students are grouped in a multi-age setting, ages 4-6, 6-9, 9-11, or our middle School 6,7, & 8 grades, to allow for cognitive development without competition. Teachers evaluate the students' work in an on-going basis and meet three times annually, for a progress report with the parents. Parent-teacher conferences detail the progress of the student in each subject area, as well as noting social and emotional growth. Each spring, students take a yearly, standardized achievement test.

#### **Early Indicators for Success-**

Maria Montessori devoted her life to developing an educational method comprised of sound child development practices and developmentally appropriate activities. The Montessori Elementary & Middle School is modeled upon this dual system and we build our school policies from this base. We emphasize the importance of balance among the intellectual, social-emotional and physical needs of the child.

The mixed age grouping, which is a cornerstone of the Montessori method, allows ample time for the teachers to address the development of the complete child within each developmental stage. These stages are referred to as the 4-6 (Pre-k - Kindergarten), 6-9 (first – third grade), 9-11 (fourth and fifth grade), and middle school (sixth – eighth grade) levels at TMEMS. It is important to realize that there is an overlap within these levels, and that each level may be beneficial for a child for three or even four years.

#### **Specific Indicators for Success-**

##### **4-6 Pre K- Kindergarten Level**

1. The kindergarten child must be no younger than five years old on or before September 1 of the school year.  
(This is a state statute for Public Schools and no exceptions are granted.)
2. The child must be capable of attending to a given task for a specific time period. (Time varies with task).
3. The child must demonstrate self-motivation and self control.
4. The child's maturity and emotional development are appropriate for 4-6 classrooms..

##### **6-9 Lower Elementary Level (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> years):**

1. The child must be no younger than six years old on or before September 1 of the school year.  
(This is a state statute for Public Schools and no exceptions are granted.)
2. The child must be capable of attending to a given task for a specific time period. (Time varies with task).
3. The child must demonstrate self-motivation and self control.
4. The child's maturity and emotional development are appropriate for first grade or above.

##### **9-11 Upper Elementary Level (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> years):**

1. The child must be no younger than nine years old.
2. The child must be capable of attending to a given task for a specific time period. (Time varies with task).
3. The child must demonstrate self-motivation and self-control.
4. The child's maturity and emotional development are appropriate for fourth grade or above.

##### **Middle School Level (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> years):**

1. The child must be no younger than twelve years old.
2. The child must be capable of attending to a given task for a specific time period. (Time varies with task).
3. The child must demonstrate self-motivation and self control.
4. The child's maturity and emotional development are appropriate for sixth grade and above.

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

**Four to Six Year Old or Curriculum** - Designed around the interests of the young elementary child, the 4-6, program offers a consistent, dependable routine with large blocks of uninterrupted work time. The 4-6 classroom schedule encourages the child's spontaneous activity and fosters development of the creative process, integrated personality and a strong sense of self. The curriculum includes materials and encourages activities that promote practical life activities, sensory-motor experiences, literacy, language arts, numeracy, creative arts, science and geography. Each activity or exercise in the 4-6, curriculum is structured to provide purpose, procedure, closure and opportunity for success.

**Six to Nine Year Old Curriculum** - Designed around the broad interests of the elementary child, the six to nine year old program offers an enriched and exciting integrated curriculum that is sequential and cumulative. Language and math are core subjects that are integrated throughout the entire program, and all subject areas are presented in complement to each other.

Great lessons involving the Time Line of Life, geography, zoology and botany are presented as to stir the imagination as they unveil the concept of order in the universe. The program goals are to develop within the child a sense of self worth, respect for others, and a quest for knowledge.

**Nine to Eleven Year Old Curriculum** - Building on the six to nine year old curriculum and philosophy, the nine to eleven year old class extends academic and social concepts to higher levels of abstraction and sophistication. Children enjoy working with square root, beginning algebraic concepts, and plane and solid geometry. Word functions, sentence diagramming, and clause and phrase analysis are just part of the integrated whole language approach. Great books and novel reading make language and reading skills fascinating. Early humans and great civilizations are a continuation of Time Line studies. Beginning chemistry is explored in relation to the origin of the universe. Drama, music, and performance opportunities enrich the curriculum in the nine to twelve year old classroom.

**Middle School Curriculum** – The year is divided into four units, each of these focusing on a different theme. Science and Humanities classes focus on these themes, using guided questions to encourage student involvement and to create an integrated curriculum. The driving questions behind the adolescent plane of development is-How does this help me understand the world and my place in it? In addition to the main subject areas, other classes include: Latin/Greek Roots, Geography, Life Skills, Technology, Art, Music Theory, Orchestra, and Physical Education.

**Recommended Readings**- Algeline Lillard's *The Science behind the Genius*, Michael and D'Neil Duffy's *Children of the Universe*, David Elkind's, *Miseducation: Preschooler at Risk*, and *The Hurried Child*. These books are recommended in A.M.S. Montessori teacher training programs.

#### **Major Points of the Montessori Method-**

- ★It is based on observations of the true nature of the child.
- ★Its application is universal. The results can be successfully achieved in any country, and with any racial, social, cultural, or economic group.
- ★It reveals the small child as a lover of work.
- ★In his/her work, the child shows spontaneous discipline. This discipline originates within him/her and is not imposed from without. This discipline is real, as contrasted with structured discipline of rewards and punishments prevalent under other methods.
- ★It provides suitable activities based on vital urges of the child at each stage of development. Each stage is successfully mastered before the next is attained.
- ★It offers the child a maximum of spontaneity in choice of physical and mental activity. Nevertheless, the child reaches the same or higher levels of scholastic attainment as under other methods.
- ★Each child works at his/her own pace. The quick are not held back, nor are the slow pressured. There is much opportunity for group work and the child spontaneously offers help with work they have mastered to those children who have not.
- ★It enables the teacher to guide each child individually in each subject according to his/her own individual requirements.
- ★It allows the child to grow in biological independence by respecting his/her needs and removing undue influence of the adult. It allows the child a large measure of liberty based on respect for the right of others. This liberty is not permissive license, but forms of the basis of self discipline.
- ★It does away with competition as a major motivation for learning. The child competes with himself/herself. It presents endless opportunities for mutual work and help, which are joyfully given and received.
- ★
- ★The Montessori Method develops the whole personality of the child, not merely his/her intellectual faculties, but also his/her power, deliberation, initiative and independent choice, with their emotional complements. By living as a member of a real social community, the child is trained in those fundamental social qualities that form the basis of good citizenship.

#### **ATTENDANCE AND RELATED EXPECTATIONS**

##### **Daily Schedule-**

8:30 am to 2:30 pm., Monday through Friday. Please note that starting times are:

Mid School 8:40 to 2:30

Pre-k and K 8:45 to 2:15

6 to 9 Level 8:45 to 2:15

9 to 11 Level 8:45 to 2:15

School office hours are from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. Please feel free to call regarding any topic, question, or concern you may have that is not included in this handbook. However, teachers will NOT be called to the telephone before or during class time. Messages will be given to the teacher. Emergency calls will be handled immediately by office staff.

### **Mandatory School Attendance-**

The Federal Education Act requires that states, school districts, and schools be held accountable for ensuring that all students meet high academic standards. On time, daily attendance is a critical component of this educational process. New Mexico law dictates that:

- Students between the ages of five (5) and eighteen (18) years of age are mandated to attend public school, private school or a state institution.
- TMEMS reports habitual truants to the Children’s Court Liaison office and to the State of New Mexico.

### **Attendance Policy-**

1. TMEMS students are allowed no more than **5** unexcused absences per semester and no more than **10** unexcused absences per school year.
2. The parent/guardian must notify the school of each day the student will be absent with appropriate explanation for said absence.
3. Absences may be excused for the following reasons with appropriate notification or verification

Doctor’s appointment	Death in the family	Religious commitment
Illness	Family emergency	Diagnostic Testing
	School visit/interview	
4. In the event TMEMS has not received notification of absence by a parent/guardian for three (3) consecutive days, the school will make a good faith effort to contact the parent/guardian.
5. Excessive excused absences may result in further inquiry from the Executive Director and request for additional documentation.
  - Student with 5 unexcused absences will receive a attendance notification from the School.
  - Students with 10 or more absences will receive an attendance notification from the School and be referred to the proper authorities for future action.
6. Family vacations are considered unexcused absences, and it is expected that parents will schedule vacations during periods of time when school is not in session.
7. Students who are signed out before the end of the instructional day must have written documentation of the reason (as defined under excused absences) or are subject to the same consequences as tardy.

TMEMS’ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR DESIGNEE HAS THE DISCRETION TO MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE FACED WITH SERIOUS INJURY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS.

### **Make Up Work-**

Students are entitled to make up work for ALL absences – excused and unexcused. However, parents and students have the following responsibilities:

- The student must take responsibility for requesting make-up assignments.
- Teachers may need 24 hours from the time of the request to compile assignments.
- The student will have the opportunity to complete the work in a period of time equal to the number of days absent, unless other arrangements have been mutually agreed upon by the student and the teacher.

### **Excessive Absences-**

- If a student’s attendance rate drops below 90% in any grading period, the student and his/her guardian
- Will be referred to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) for intervention.
- A student with excessive absences may be referred to appropriate Children’s Court authorities.
- School-related absences are not included when evaluating excessive absences.
- State law requires a school to dis-enroll a student after ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence.

### **Tardy-**

Parents are encouraged to have their children at school at least five minutes prior to the beginning of classes in order to put their things away, and be ready for class. If the child is late, the parent must escort the child to the office to sign in. The student will then be accompanied or sent to class by school personnel.

- School begins at 8:40am for Mid School and 8:45am for K-5seventh and eighth . Students who are tardy for class will receive consequences as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director or Designee. Parents are encouraged to remember that curriculum studies start promptly at 8:40am or 8:45am for students., 8:30 for
- Any student with excessive tardiness may be referred to appropriate CYFD authorities.
- Students who are signed out of school before the end of the instructional day must have written documentation of reason (see excused absences), or be subject to the same consequences as tardy.

- TMEMS recognizes there are occasional traffic circumstances that force tardiness on its population. In those unfortunate circumstances, the Executive Director or Designee may choose to waive the tardy policy.

#### **Student Drop off/Pick-up-**

- Parents must not leave their children on TMEMS premises any more than thirty (30) minutes prior to or
- (30) Minutes after the school day without participation in the before or Aftercare Services.
- School grounds are not supervised except during the school day.
- If extenuating circumstances prevent a family from picking up a student on time, the school must be notified within this same thirty (30) minute period.
- If students are dropped off early or not picked up promptly according to the 30 minute window, they will join the Before or Aftercare program and the parent/guardian will be accountable for all applicable service charges.
- If a student is not picked up according to the Aftercare schedule, and the school has no parental directions, the student may be considered abandoned. Any abandoned student will be referred to the appropriate authorities including but not limited to APD, or CYFD.

**\* When you anticipate that there will be a change to a student’s pick-up time or transportation plans, please notify the child’s teacher and the administration office in advance.**

#### **Cancellation of School-**

If it is necessary to cancel school unexpectedly for any reason during school hours, parents will be notified by the school staff. Please note scheduled school holidays as soon as possible. Working parents should be prepared for cancellations, as well as school holidays. Please check our website for up-to-date information.

#### **Inclement Weather Policy-**

TMEMS adheres to APS decisions in regards to “Closed” or “Delays”. “School Closed” means no school, no childcare. “Two hour Delay” means classes start 2 hours later than normal. **School Delay = No Before Care available. Early Dismissal = No After Care available.** Please tune in to the following media outlets to get the most up to date information:

KOB FM: 93.3

KOB AM: 7.70

KOB TV: Channel 4

#### **ACHIEVEMENT**

Students are expected to achieve academically. They are expected to:

- Strive to fulfill their academic potential – which includes successful completion of the Suzuki Program.
- Actively participate in the educational process.
- Actively participate in community activities.

#### **MUSIC POLICY**

TMEMS has a strong arts component in the curriculum that includes the mandatory General Music /Suzuki String Program . The Suzuki method necessitates and is based upon the parent’s participation in their child’s learning process. *TMEMS Parents are required to attend a minimum of eight Parent Instrument Classes.* This ensures that you will be able to help your child practice at home. It is also a great way to understand the correlation between the Montessori Method and Suzuki Education Philosophy. The classes are offered at no cost to the parent.

#### **CITIZENSHIP**

Students are expected to be good citizens. Students are expected to:

- Model and promote Montessori curriculum character models.
- Respect authority, property, and the rights of others.
- Avoid confrontation and any activity that has the potential to cause a verbal or physical conflict.
- Maintain standards of integrity and responsibility.
- Maintain a safe school environment.
- Report any/all information related to campus safety, problems (fights, weapons, or drugs on campus).

#### **HOMEWORK**

Parents should help students establish a positive, quiet atmosphere, where their child can read, write at a table and finish their assignments. Students who are not completing class work are expected to complete their assignments as homework. Part of the required curriculum at TMEMS is that each child participates in the Suzuki music program. If a student keeps current with their daily work assignments, homework usually only entails practice in reading, music and support for spelling, math facts, etc. Middle School students have nightly homework .

#### **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

New Mexico State Law requires that all children be properly immunized. Please continue to provide the school with updated

health information. The following forms, with specific information about each child **must be on file in the school office** - Health Form, Immunization Record. Students will not be allowed to attend school unless they are fully immunized or exempted.

### **MEDICINE IN SCHOOL**

Please notify the office (and teacher) if medicine needs to be administered to your child. Complete a medication release form available from the office, and include it with the medicine. All medicine administered by the school must be sent in the **original**, labeled container. NEVER send medication with the child to keep in their lunch box, school drawer, or cubby. There is a serious danger that the child or another child might take the medicine or an overdose.

**Sick children should not come to school. Students with a fever of 100 degrees or higher cannot come to school. Recovering students on medication need to fill out a medication release form.**

**Contagious Illnesses-** When you have verification of the fact that your child has a communicable disease, please call the school immediately so that we can inform other parents. Because school children are easily susceptible to communicable diseases, the school reserves the right to make judgment concerning the child's ability to participate in daily school activities. Please do not send your child to school when he/she is ill. *We send sick children home!*

**Symptoms-** The following is a list of symptoms to guide you in deciding whether your child should be sent to school. Please do not send your child to school on days when any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever
- Rash
- Cough
- Discharge of discolored or profuse amounts of mucous from the nose
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Sore throat
- Headache, body aches, general flu symptoms

If the children show any of the above symptoms, they are separated from the other children and allowed to rest. Parents are contacted to appraise the situation and determine what action is to be taken. If parents cannot be reached, then emergency numbers are called.

### **EMERGENCY RELEASE**

Each child is required to have an emergency release authorization form signed by the responsible parent. In case of an accident at school, a parent is called immediately after first aid is given. If a parent cannot be reached, the school will call a doctor or another appropriate measure will be taken, as detailed on the emergency release form.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is the responsibility of the parents/guardian. During the school day, children will not be released to an unauthorized person i.e. not listed on the Emergency Release form. TMEMS strongly recommends parent try to develop car pools to reduce drop off /pickup congestion and fuel costs. Contact TMEMS for carpool information and ideas.

### **PARENT PARKING**

Parents must follow the designated procedure for student drop-off and pick-up. Parent parking is available in the South parking lot near the main entrance. Pick-up procedures are available from the administrative office and on our website, [www.tmesnm.com](http://www.tmesnm.com)

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field Trips will be developed relative to the curriculum. Parents will be notified and asked to fill out a permission and release form for each child in advance. Appropriate transportation will be contracted. A Field Trip is a privilege that can be revoked by the Executive Director or Designee based on suspensions, discipline concerns or student safety.

(Note: Severe Disruption of Education Process on page 14 of this document)

### **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Parents are expected to provide well-balanced, nutritional snacks and lunch for their student. All foods need to be sent to school ready to consume with minimal preparation. Lunch boxes and miscellaneous containers need to be appropriately labeled to prevent loss. The school does not have microwaves to heat food. Please try to provide snacks and lunches that follow Federal Child Health guidelines. More information is available at [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov) .



**Birthdays Treats- Please check with the teacher for classroom guidelines in advance of birthdays.**

## **PARENT COMMUNICATIONS / CONFERENCES**

**Parent Observations-** TMEMS respects parents/guardians desires to observe their child's class but must make every effort to avoid undue distractions to the educational process. It is requested that observations appointments be scheduled through the office pending the consent of the teacher in order to minimize classroom disruption.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences-** There are three parent conferences scheduled during the school year. In addition, the staff may request a conference with you to help them better understand your child and his/her development in the classroom.

**For situations which can not wait until conference time, please make an appointment to meet after school with the teacher concerning any particular problems you might be experiencing, whether it is related to home or school situations.**

## **WEBSITE**

Address: [www.tmesnm.com](http://www.tmesnm.com). Please access the site to keep abreast of any school news, particular policies, or scheduled upcoming events

## **PARENT NIGHTS**

There will be events throughout the year aimed at family participation and increasing your understanding of the Montessori philosophy and our school.

## **PARENT HELPERS / VISITORS**

Parents wishing to visit or help in a classroom must first complete a background check. Classroom visits then must be Executive Director or Designee scheduled with the teacher. Appropriate documentation may be required for regular parent participants. Parents/Guardians need to be prepared to produce on request appropriate identification/documentation before entering the school or picking up any student.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

As part of the PED mandated Safe Schools Plan, TMEMS is required to have drill practice in preparation for various emergency situations such as but not limited to fire, inclement weather, medical emergency, school intruder, or school evacuation.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records kept by TMEMS will be open to review by authorized parent/guardians and will be treated in a confidential manner, as prescribed by TMEMS policy, New Mexico State Public Education Department Regulations and the Family Educational Records and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. The act specifies rights to educational documents and a list will be provided upon request.

TMEMS maintains the following education records directly related to students:

- Personal information records
- Major disciplinary records
- Academic records
- Attendance records
- Health records
- Progress records
- Standardized testing records

## **TMEMS Policy Regarding Records**

- Educational records are to be kept to an essential and relevant minimum.
- Access to records is limited to the entitled persons under FERPA regulations.
- There will be a nominal fee for copying records unless such charge would prevent access to records.
- Individuals have the right to challenge the contents of the records.
- If records contain information on more than one student, the right to inspect relates only to that portion of the records concerning the particular student in question.

## **Publication of Student Information**

TMEMS does have occasion to photograph, record, and or publish student/parent information in development of our student directory, annual yearbook, school website, school newsletters, local newspaper coverage, broadcast television features,

signs/banners, and our Volunteer Database. The school assumes that the Parent Permission Form to release information filed as part of the enrollment packet is accurate. If you do not choose for any of this information to be released, please make sure your permission form is current in reflecting your wishes.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Student

Every student is responsible for helping maintain a safe, orderly and educationally efficient learning environment.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day and be on time for every class.
- Resolve differences with others in a positive, non-violent way.
- Remain drug, alcohol and tobacco free.
- Follow the school dress code.
- Care for school property and the property of others.
- Respect fellow students and all school staff members.
- Comply with the standards of behavior for your classrooms and your school.
- Properly use and protect classroom materials.

### Parent/Guardian

School officials are partners with parents in the process of educating our children. Every parent, guardian and family member of the school community shares in the responsibility for educating children in a safe and productive environment. You share in this responsibility when you:

- Get your students to school on time every day. Punctuality and good attendance are family responsibilities.
- Provide a suitable time and place for your child to study and practice at home.
- Make learning a priority.
- Maintain regular communication with your children's teachers and the school staff.
- Stay informed of your child's ongoing scholastic achievement and progress, and advocate for your child's learning needs.
- Understand TMEMS rules.
- Support the TMEMS Staff in enforcing these rules.
- Support TMEMS as we maintain high standards of behavior for all students.
- Make sure that your child does not bring gum, candy, money, toys, trading cards or other non-essential school items onto school grounds. If the child feels they are something of educational interest, please discuss this with the teacher before bringing it into the classroom.
- Check your child in and out using the procedures prescribed by the attendance office.
- \* Pick up your child promptly at dismissal time. If possible, let your child know before hand, that they will be picked up at a different time than they usually expect
- Make sure your child has an "a.m." snack everyday.
- Assist your child in following the TMEMS Dress Code

## DRESS CODE

**TMES/TMMS/Casita: Please remember that the dress code applies to ALL of our students. Our TMMS students must also abide by their UNIFORM standards. Please read the Dress Code and familiarize yourself with it, as we will be enforcing it much more strictly this year!**

The TMES/TMMS/Casita dress code is intended to create a safe distraction free, non-competitive, commercial-free school atmosphere. In addition, the student attire described will facilitate comfort and ease of movement for students while completing school assignments that can vary from outside activities to laying or sitting on the classroom floor. Student dress and grooming is to reflect high standards of personal conduct so that each student's attire promotes a positive, safe and healthy atmosphere within the school.

### Rationale

We believe that every student has genuine worth, based upon who he or she is and not merely what he or she wears. TMES/TMMS/Casita desires to create an environment in which each student can develop those innate qualities, focus on learning, develop an awareness of others, develop character and good citizenship skills, and instill respect and self-discipline.

Parents are asked to exercise control and good judgment over the clothing students wear to school and to support the school's Dress Code in any decisions made with regard to clothing.

### **Clothing**

Polo shirts, collared dress shirts, V or crew neck shirts and blouses in solid colors, stripes or patterns are acceptable. **No words or pictures. No cartoon characters or celebrities please** (ie: Mickey Mouse, Katy Perry, etc.).

- Jeans, chinos, and dress pants are recommended;
- Shorts and skirts and dresses must be no shorter than fingertips when arms are placed at sides;
- Comfortable **PLAIN** athletic or dress shoes with rubber soles that are comfortable for physical education and recess; **NO ROLLERS, WHISTLES, SQUEAKS OR LIGHTS. NO FLIP FLOPS. NO HEELS.**

### **Dress and Grooming**

- Clothing must be fitted so as to cover the student's mid-section at all times.
- A student who's clothing or appearance is a distraction to the learning environment of the classroom will be asked to change his/her clothing or appearance or the student's parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student or arrange to have a change of clothing brought to the school before the child is permitted to return to class.
- Clothing must fully conceal a student's undergarments.
- It is suggested that girls wear shorts under their skirts for recess and P.E.
- Students and their clothing should be clean and neat.
- Natural hair color – no unnatural colors (e.g. fuchsia, blue, green, etc.)
- No body glitter
- Earrings must be small and safe for physical activities.
- No excessive jewelry.
- No tattoos or body piercing except for pierced ears (earrings must meet guidelines)
- Hats and sunglasses are suggested to be worn outside
- It is recommended that students wear sunscreen daily.
- No spaghetti straps/straps must be at least two fingers wide.
- No words or pictures on clothing. Solids, stripes or patterns only please.
- Articles that are problematic may be confiscated by Executive Director or Designee or Teacher.

### **Executive Director or Designee's Discretion**

The responsibility to interpret and enforce the dress code/personal property policy rests with our Executive Director or Designee.

### **Special Conditions and Exceptions**

If a student has a condition that requires an exception to the TMEMS dress code, please contact the School to schedule a meeting with the Executive Director or Designee so that an appropriate exception can be made. If a parent/guardian has a concern about the dress code or difficulty in following any of its requirements, please contact the Executive Director or Designee to discuss the issue. Arrangements to accommodate concerns may be made at the discretion of the Executive Director or Designee.

### **Executive Director or Designee's Discretion**

The responsibility to interpret and enforce the dress code/personal property policy rests with TMEMS' administration.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY CODE**

Students are discouraged from bringing personal property to school except with the permission and consent of the classroom teacher for special activities. Personal property includes but is not limited to toys, make-up, jewelry, excess clothing, sports equipment, tools, pets, or any electronic devices.

**Cell Phone or Communication Device Policy**- Personal cell phones or communication devices for family contact may be at school only if stored in student's back pack and kept off at school or during school functions. Any cell phone or

communication device used during the school day will be confiscated, and returned directly to the parent at the end of the school day.

- *NOTE:* TMEMS will not be responsible for loss or damage to personal property brought on school premises, and reserves the right to confiscate any personal property arriving at school that is disruptive to the learning environment.

### **Administration Discretion**

The responsibility to interpret and enforce the dress code/personal property policy rests with TMEMS' administration. Articles that are problematic may be confiscated by Executive Director or Designee or Teacher.

### **Knowledge of Dress and Personal Property Code**

Students and their parents/guardians have the responsibility to be aware of the school specific dress and personal property code and to conform to those requirements.

## **THE MONTESSORI APPROACH TO STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

**Discipline versus Self Control-** To discipline literally means "to educate" or "to train;" yet the phrase is most often given the meaning "to punish." TMEMS seeks to minimize teacher imposed control by facilitating the growth of self-discipline in the child. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that the only true discipline is "active" or "inner" discipline, which is developed by the child himself or herself as s/he works at interesting tasks at home or at school.

**Freedom to do what's Right-** The ultimate goal of discipline is student self-control in preparation for a successful adult life. Within the Montessori philosophy of education is the concept of freedom within limitations. Dr. Montessori, when she was once abruptly confronted by individual demanding to know about "all this freedom in your classrooms," is reported to have replied, "Children always have the freedom to do what is right. They never have the freedom to do what is wrong."

**Making Appropriate Choices-** This concept is indeed the guiding principle for discipline in a Montessori classroom. There are many choices that children can make that are right and appropriate. However, if they make a wrong choice, it will always have consequences that come with it. TMEMS is committed to creating an environment in which learning is a rewarding experience for students. TMEMS will create a learning zone where independence flourishes, where students are safe in all respects (i.e., free from inappropriate and abusive language and actions) and where distractions to learning and development are minimized for all students.

**Clear Rules and Expectations-** Some parents are under the impression that Montessori is completely permissive when it comes to discipline. This is absolutely untrue. The school's ground rules are always communicated to students at the beginning of the year. Classroom rules are clearly posted in each room and the teaching staff and administration consistently and continually reinforce necessary adherence to these rules. The purpose of ground rules is to aid in the development of self-respect, respect for others and respect for the environment.

TMEMS is first and foremost a place for learning where the educational climate is strictly controlled to create the optimum environment for teachers to teach and students to learn. The following are principles and guidelines for student discipline at TMEMS.

### **Guiding Principles and Behavioral Expectations-**

- Students share in the responsibility for making the school a safe, orderly and pleasant place in which education can take place effectively.
- Each student has the right to learn without interference from others. The school and classroom rules have been developed to protect that right.
- Parents and legal guardians understand that the School is expected to hold students accountable for behavior while at School and during School's sponsored activities.
- Students are expected to obey adults without argument or disrespect.
- TMEMS teachers and staff are expected to use a consistent, common sense approach to handling repetitive misconduct.
- Rules and appropriate behavior expectations posted in every classroom
- Behavior management includes positive guidance, redirection and clearly setting appropriate boundaries to foster the child's ability to become self-disciplined.
- Disciplinary consequences are clear and understandable, consistent, and made known to students in advance as well as when disciplinary measures are implemented.
- Staff members will guide the child to develop self-control and orderly conduct in his/her relationships with peers and adults.
- Staff members will show children positive alternatives rather than simply telling children "no."

- Good behavior will be rewarded by positive reinforcement and there will be no recourse to physical punishment or abusive language.
- Staff members will address the behavior or situation rather than labeling the child as "good" or "bad."
- The staff members will respond quickly and calmly to prevent children from hurting each other while demonstrating understanding of the children's needs and feelings.
- Children experience teachers and staff who are compassionate and who understand each child's limitations. As a result power struggles often occur less frequently.
- Children are allowed to appropriately express their feelings, i.e. anger, hurt, frustration, etc. Aggressive behavior, however, may require that the student is taken aside by the teacher or staff member to help the child express and learn appropriate ways to express his/her feelings. With younger children, a teacher assists by giving them the language to communicate their feelings.
- Teachers try to maintain a normal tone of voice when addressing children, even while disciplining. Consequently, children will usually listen to what is being said rather than the way it is being said. The children's natural instinct is to please and not to displease.

## **GENERAL DISCIPLINE**

### **PRIMARY LEVELS OF CONSEQUENCES-**

Montessori does not employ any discipline method that would be emotionally or physically harmful to the child. All discipline is a response to a specific negative behavior – i.e. does not label the child “good” or “bad,” and is age appropriate.

### **Examples of Discipline-**

The following are examples of consequences for inappropriate behavior used by the school staff.

Child sits slightly apart from class where he/she may hear and observe the other children; this “Time out” enables the child to regain control of himself or herself. The teacher or aid has visual contact of the child at all times.

When confrontation occurs, teacher and child or children “explore feelings” in a kind, positive manner.

Occasionally it becomes necessary to remove a child from class and place him under the supervision of another staff member.

Teachers may contact a child's parent/guardian or have the student call his or her parent to advise of his or her misconduct in the presence of the teacher.

Occurrence Reports/Behavior Rubrics are used when a child's behavior is particularly disruptive. “Occurrence Reports/Behavior Rubrics” are notices to the parent/guardian describing the child's misconduct.

Parent/Guardian conferences or referral to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) will be called for repeated behavior issues.

### **Behavior Rubrics-**

The most common behaviors that result in issuance of an "Occurrence Report" include but are not limited to:

- ◇Temper tantrums      ◇Verbal abuse
- ◇Fighting              ◇Disrespect/defiance
- ◇Profanity              ◇Violation of class rules

### **Parent Responsibility re: Behavior Rubrics**

Parents/guardians are expected to sign and return the Behavior Rubric to the teacher or staff member issuing the Report or Rubric. Montessori educators have observed that the “Report or Rubric” generally requires no further action. In most instances, a class discussion of acceptable and unacceptable behavior heads off the need for parental conference or further consequences. However, it is recognized that parents are the child's first and most important educators. The Montessori Elementary & Middle School emphasizes the importance of the family in the child's development and seeks to create a partnership with parents/guardians. Such a partnership is a two-way, interactive process. Consequently, the primary intent of sending an “Behavior Rubrics” to the parent/guardian is to keep the family informed of the child's conduct at school and to enlist support and reinforcement of good behavior.

### **Search of Person or Property-**

- **Physical Searches** – Search of a student's person or property may be conducted only where there is individualized reasonable suspicion that the student being searched committed a crime or a breach of the disciplinary code.

- **Minimally Intrusive Searches** – Searches such as emptying of packets, searches of student backpacks, removal of hats, socks, and shoes may be conducted by any certified school employee.
- More Intrusive Searches** – Searches such as pat downs, and frisks may only be conducted by an authorized person of the same sex as the student being searched.

## SECONDARY LEVEL OF CONSEQUENCES-

Although it is the philosophy and policy of TMEMS to exhaust disciplinary problems using the Primary Level of Consequences, if a student’s behavior disrupts the learning environment such that neither he/she nor other students can learn, then TMEMS will consider using the following discipline measures to assist the student in learning positive behavior. Behavior contracts, referrals, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion from school may be used, if previous methods are not effective or if the circumstances warrant. **Note: Access to and participation in public education is not absolute right; it may be taken away, temporarily or permanently, for violation of school rules.**

The administrative response to unacceptable behavior may vary as the Executive Director or Designee, usually in consultation with the child’s teachers, decides whether to implement the following measures of discipline. Ultimately, it is the Executive Director or Designee’s decision as to if and when to implement any of the following consequences.

**Contracts-** Behavior contracts may be used if previous attempts to learn positive behavior have not been successful. Ideally parents, teachers and the student will be involved in drafting the terms of the contract.

**Suspension Generally-** A suspension is the removal of a student from a class or classes and all school-related activities for any period of time. Suspension will include a range of responses from short-term suspension alternatives to long-term removals of one year or longer. Long-term suspensions are those suspensions for a period of ten days or longer.

**Notification-** Immediately upon the occurrence of a student’s misconduct, that results in suspension the Executive Director or Designee will call the parent or other authorized person to pick up the child from school. The Executive Director or Designee will provide a written notice concerning the suspension to be presented by the child on the day he or she is sent home from school. It shall be the child’s responsibility to present the written notice to the parent/guardian. The Executive Director or Designee will keep in a student’s record a copy of the notification for any suspension occurring during a school year. Copies of suspension notification may be discarded at the beginning of each academic year for prior year actions, except for any long-term suspensions or expulsions still in effect.

**Short-Term Suspension-** Short-term suspension is removal of a student from school for any amount of time less than ten school days. In the event of a short-term suspension, a student will be given rudimentary due process. That is, he or she is not entitled to a formal due process hearing as described for long-term suspensions and expulsions. Rather, prior to the suspension, the student will be notified of the school rules he or she has violated, any “evidence” that the Executive Director or Designee has to support that the child broke the rules; and an oral summary or written statement of any witness (es) concerning the violation. The child will have the opportunity to respond and present whatever information she or he may have to rebut the accusation before the Executive Director or Designee decides on the length of the suspension.

**Long-Term Suspension-** Long-term suspension is defined as the removal of a student from instruction and all school-related activities for more than ten (10) days and up to the balance of the semester. A student must be given a rudimentary due process hearing as described in ‘Short-Term Suspension’ paragraph, above, prior to implementing a long-term suspension. In addition, a student is entitled to a formal due process hearing as described in Section V., below. If a formal due process hearing can be scheduled within 7 school days from the date the student was suspended, the Executive Director or Designee may implement the suspension immediately after the informal due process hearing. In no event, however, will a student’s suspension last beyond the 10<sup>th</sup> day, if a formal due process hearing has been requested and not completed.

**Expulsion Generally-** Expulsion is the removal of a student from The Montessori Elementary & Middle School for a period exceeding one (1) semester. The student’s position at the school will then be forfeit.

**Referral for Legal Action-** The following acts by a student will be reported to law enforcement or other authorities.

- Communication of intent to commit any illegal act or actual illegal action by a student will be forwarded to the appropriate authority or law enforcement agency.
- New Mexico law requires that, if any school employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child is or has been in possession of a firearm on school premises; the employee shall immediately report the child’s actions to a law enforcement agency and the Children, Youth and Families Department.

**Bus Misconduct-** These guidelines apply to students’ conduct during field trips where school buses or transportation is provided. Teacher or administrator may select a different consequence in handling an incident. This depends on the seriousness of the infraction.

- First Offense – A warning to the student with a report to the parent/guardian will be issued. It is expected that the parent/guardian will help to prevent a recurrence.
- Second Offense – Disciplinary action will be taken at the discretion of the school administrator, depending on the seriousness of the infraction. It is recommended that the student be transported by his/her parent/guardian for the next field trip and the matter to be reported to the parent/guardian.
- Third Offense – Suspension of riding privileges may result for all future field trips depending on the severity of the infraction. There will be parent/guardian conference.
- Severe Disruption – The following inappropriate and dangerous behavior will result in automatic suspension of transportation privileges:
  - Physical harm to other students
  - Physical harm to the driver and/or bus assistant
  - Physical damage to the bus

### **Severe Disruption of the Educational Process-**

This list is not all-inclusive; whether there is an act of severe misconduct, specified herein or not, shall be at the sole discretion of TMEMS Executive Director or Designee, subject only to review using the Grievance Process. These types of behavior shall result in suspension. Examples of severe and unacceptable conduct for which suspension or expulsion will be imposed, unless in the sole discretion of the Executive Director or Designee such discipline is unwarranted under the circumstances, are as follows:

Arson, Extortion, Assault/bullying, Acts of racism	
Assault, Battery/Fighting, Severe disruptive conduct	
Harassment – (gender, ethnic, race, sexual orientation, Racialized Aggression)	Threats of any kind
Bomb threat/false alarm	Abusive, obscene or profane language
Purposeful misuse or destruction of school materials	Gang related activities
Possession of a controlled substance	Possession of drug paraphernalia
Theft	Use or possession of tobacco
Defiance of directives from school personnel	Vandalism
Weapon possession/ weapon use/Threat of (or any object intended to do physical harm)	

Weapon Possession\*\*\* Possessing a weapon such as but not limited to a firearm, any type of gun, knife, club, firecracker, explosive, spiked wristband, chains, or other item that may cause or is intended to cause injury or death. This specifically includes “lookalike” guns and knives, such as toys. (Weapons covered by the Gun-Free Schools Act are defined under Firearm, Possession/Use.). \*\*\* “Possession”, includes not only possession on one’s physical person, but also custody and control. Thus, a student may be found in possession of any item if the item is in the student’s backpack, locker, car, or elsewhere, if subject to the student’s custody and control.

Suspension of a student may result in restriction of privileges such as but not limited to field trips, special school events, and/or after-school activities. Any such restriction is at the discretion of the Executive Director or Designee.

### **When are the TMEMS Student Discipline Policies in Force?**

TMEMS student discipline policies as outlined herein apply:

- \* During regular school hours and/or on school property;
- \* During transportation of students;
- \* At times and places where appropriate school administrators and staff have jurisdiction including, but not limited to school-sponsored events, trips, field trips, athletic functions and other school-related activities; and
- \* On the way to or from a school school-related event.

Additional sanctions may apply above and beyond the minimum mandatory consequences of this policy for violations which occur when the TMEMS Handbook is in force (i.e. on school property, during school time, or at school events). The Executive Director or Designee, any public school official or designated chaperone is authorized to take administrative action when a student’s misconduct away from school during a school activity may have a detrimental effect on the other students, staff or on the orderly educational process. The Executive Director or Designee has the responsibility to take discretionary action any time the educational process is threatened with disruption. Nothing in the following is intended to prevent a staff member, teacher, Executive Director or Designee or other administrator from using his/her best judgment with respect to a particular situation.

# **BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, HARASSMENT, HAZING, VIOLENCE, AND DISCRIMINATION PREVENTION POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT.** The Montessori Elementary and Middle School believes that providing an educational environment for all, free from harassment, intimidation, violence, hazing, racial discrimination, or bullying of any kind, supports a total learning experience that promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships and wellness. The safety and wellbeing of all students in the SCHOOL learning environment is of primary importance. TMEMS prohibits bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, hazing, violence, Discrimination and it is the school's goal to prevent and respond to all such acts, in accordance with applicable laws, including the New Mexico Safe Schools for All Students Act, NMSA 1978, §§22-35-1, et seq. This Policy and prohibition applies on TMEMS property, including electronic communication on or using School property; at TMEMS-sponsored functions; and on TMEMS to-and-from transportation or any TMEMS-sponsored transportation.

## **A. DEFINITIONS.**

1. **Bullying.** Bullying includes any severe, pervasive or persistent act or conduct that targets a student or group, whether physically, electronically or verbally, and that (1) may be based on a student/group's actual or perceived race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, spousal affiliation, physical or cognitive disability or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on an association with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived distinguishing characteristics; and/or (2) can be reasonably predicted to: (a) place a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student's person or property; (b) cause a substantial detrimental effect on a student's physical or mental health; (c) substantially interfere with a student's academic performance or attendance; (d) substantially interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the School; or (e) create a hostile environment on the school campus that is so severe or pervasive as to substantially interfere with student educational benefits, opportunities or performance.

2. **Harassment.** Bullying includes harassment, which is knowingly pursuing a pattern of conduct that is intended to annoy, seriously alarm or terrorize another person or group.

3. **Hazing.** Includes committing an act against a student, or coercing another student into committing an act, that creates a risk of harm to that student, in order for that student to be initiated into or affiliated with an organization, gang, clique, group or for any other purpose.

4. **Cyberbullying.** Includes any bullying that takes place through electronic communications that is published with the intent that it be seen by or disclosed to a student/group and that substantially interferes with the student/group's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by SCHOOL.

5. **Electronic Communication.** Includes a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, computer, electronic tablet, pager or video/audio recording, and any other forms of electronic resources/mobile devices.

6. **Gender Identity.** Includes a student's self-perception, or perception by another, of the student's identity as a male or female based upon the student's appearance, behavior or physical characteristics that are in accord with or opposed to the student's physical anatomy, chromosomal sex or sex at birth.

7. **Physical or Cognitive Disability.** Includes a physical or cognitive impairment that substantially limits one or more of a student's major life activities.

8. **Discrimination.** Prohibited forms of harassment include sexual harassment and harassment on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic.

9. **Racialized Aggression-** racialized aggression (Defined broadly as hostility/aggression toward, or denigration/Invalidation of, a different racial group or member(s) there of



involving any student or school personal, is strictly prohibited. When the statewide hotline is established/available to report such incidences TMEMS will post on its web page.

10. ***Progressive Discipline.*** Includes disciplinary action other than suspension or expulsion from school that is designed to correct and address the basic causes of a student's specific misbehavior while retaining the student in class or in school, or restorative school practices to repair the harm done to relationships and other students from the student's misbehavior, and may include (but is not limited to):

- Meeting with the student and student's parents/guardians;
- Reflective activities, such as requiring the student to write an essay about the student's misbehavior;
- Counseling;
- Anger management;
- Health counseling or intervention;
- Participation in skill-building and resolution activities, such as social-emotional cognitive skills building, resolution circles and restorative conferencing;
- Community service; and
- In-school detention or suspension, which may take place during lunchtime, after school or during weekends.

11. ***Sexual Orientation.*** Includes heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality, whether actual or perceived.

12. ***Regular Volunteers.*** Means those persons, including relatives of students, who commit to serve at school on a regular basis.

B. ***EXAMPLES of PROHIBITED CONDUCT.*** Actions, including actions using electronic communication, that will be viewed as prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

1. ***Bullying, Cyberbullying and Harassment.***

- Spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.
- Repeated teasing, use of sarcasm or malicious jokes.
- Name-calling, belittling comments.
- Nonverbal behavior such as gestures, or graphic written statements.
- Conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, intimidating or humiliating.
- Inappropriate physical restraint.
- Posting mean, embarrassing, threatening, intimidating or humiliating pictures, videos, websites, comments, fake profiles or other communications over social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest (not an exhaustive list).

2. ***Hazing.***

- Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, shocking, or placing a harmful substance on the body.
- Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subject the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
- Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
- Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame, or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.
- Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves a violation of state or federal law, or school policies.

C. **REPORTING AND COMPLAINTS.** Students and parents may, and are strongly encouraged to, file verbal or written reports concerning suspected Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination to school personnel or to the Principal. See, “Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination Report Form” attached to policy, available online or in the SCHOOL administrative offices. Students, parents and/or staff should use the following guidelines when reporting Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence, Discrimination:

1. **Who and What?** Any student who believes he/she has been the victim of conduct prohibited by this policy by a student or school personnel, or any person with knowledge or belief of such conduct that may constitute Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination toward a student, should immediately report the alleged acts, either orally or using the Report Form. Reports may be made in the reporter’s preferred language. Reports may be made anonymously, and will be investigated pursuant to this Policy, but no formal disciplinary measures shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

2. **Report to Whom?** The report may be made to any staff member, including a teacher, or directly to the Principal.

3. **Prompt Notice & Form.** Teachers, Regular Volunteers, and school staff who witness Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination or who receive student reports of Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination are required to promptly notify the Principal. Reports should be made in writing using the Report Form, and submitted to the Principal.

4. **Assisting Student Reporting.** If a student makes a verbal report to a teacher/Regular Volunteer/staff member, the teacher/Regular Volunteer/staff member shall complete the Report Form or take the student to the Principal, where a form will be completed on the student’s behalf.

5. **Staff Obligation to Report.** A school employee who has information about or a reasonable suspicion of conduct that may constitute Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination toward a student shall report the matter immediately or as soon as practical to Principal, but in no event later than two calendar days after the employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying.

D. **INVESTIGATION.** The Principal or an administrator designated by the Principal will accept and promptly investigate *all* reports of Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination. The administrator will notify the parents of the student(s) alleged to have committed the act of Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination and the parents of the student(s) targeted by the alleged act, unless the administrator believes, in his/her professional capacity, that notifying the parents would endanger the health or well-being of a student, in which case the administrator may delay such notification, as he/she deems appropriate. The Principal may take immediate steps to protect the reporter, the alleged victim, other students, school faculty and staff, or other individuals on school grounds pending the completion of an investigation.

1. **Process.** The investigation shall consist of personal interviews with the reporter, the individual(s) against whom the report was filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of other methods or documents deemed relevant by the investigating administrator.

2. **Confidentiality.** The right to confidentiality, of the reporter, the victim and the accused, shall be preserved consistent with applicable laws and to the extent possible. However, SCHOOL cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality, because it may be necessary to discuss the report with others who are witnesses or who may have information about the report.

3. **Outcome.** The investigation shall be completed as soon as possible. The Principal (or designated administrator) shall make a written report concerning the results of his/her investigation. In determining whether the alleged conduct violates this Policy, the totality of the circumstances, the nature

of the conduct, the student's history, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this Policy. A copy of the investigation materials and completed report will be maintained by the Principal for no less than four years from the date of the completed report. To the extent permitted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)(to protect the privacy of the accused student) the Principal will notify the parents/guardians of the accused student and the victim of the outcome of the investigation, but shall not provide a copy of the written report. The Principal or designee shall notify the parent or guardian about a determination that their student has committed an act violating this Policy, and the consequences for the student's actions.

E. *CONSEQUENCES*. Verified

Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination conduct shall result in intervention by the Principal or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that this Policy is enforced. The Principal will use Progressive Discipline approaches appropriate to the situation to address

Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Violence/Discrimination, and/or may impose other disciplinary consequences. The level and severity of the prescribed consequence shall be determined by the Principal. All consequences shall be designed to (a) appropriately correct the bullying behavior; (b) prevent another occurrence of bullying or retaliation; (c) protect the target of the bullying; (d) be flexible so that, in application, the consequences can be unique to the individual incident and varied in method and severity based on the nature of the incident, the developmental age of the student who is bullying, and any history of problem behavior from the student who is bullying; and (e) for cyberbullying incidents, use the least restrictive means necessary to address the interference with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the school, to the greatest extent possible. Certainly, repeated offenses will warrant increasingly severe consequences, up to and including suspension/expulsion.

F. *CONSEQUENCES FOR KNOWINGLY MAKING FALSE REPORTS*. False allegations against another student, member of the faculty or staff, or others, pursuant to this Policy shall be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

G. *RETALIATION*. Retaliation against an individual who witnesses, orally reports or files a written complaint regarding Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination, or who acts as a witness, participates in or cooperates with an investigation of such, is prohibited.

H. *APPEAL*. A student accused or bullying/harassment/cyberbullying/hazing/violence/Discrimination, or a student who is the target, who is not satisfied with the outcome of the Principal's/administrator's investigation may appeal the investigation report's conclusions to the SCHOOL Governing Council in the manner described in the SCHOOL Grievance Policy.

I. *ANTI-BULLYING INCLUDED IN HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM*. Anti-bullying education shall be included in the School's health education curriculum, in accordance with health education content standards with benchmarks and performance standards as set forth in NMPED regulation 6.30.2.19 NMAC.

J. *DISSEMINATION OF POLICY*. Parents and Staff will be reminded at the beginning of each school year about this policy as well as their responsibilities regarding preventing and reporting Bullying/Harassment/Cyberbullying/Hazing/Violence/Discrimination. A copy of the policy will be disseminated annually and be posted on the School's website. This Policy will be included in the Student Handbook.

K. *TRAINING*. All School employees, and regular volunteers with significant contact with students, shall complete annual training on bullying, harassment, hazing, violence, Discrimination and cyberbullying prevention. New employee training shall incorporate training on this Policy and procedures.

L. *STUDENT SAFETY SUPPORT PLAN*. The SCHOOL shall develop a student safety support plan for students who are targets of conduct prohibited by this policy that addresses safety measures the

School will take to protect targeted students against further acts of bullying/cyberbullying/harassment/hazing/violence/Discrimination.

M. **ANNUAL REPORTING.** The School shall report aggregate incidents of bullying/harassment/cyberbullying/violence as required under applicable federal or state laws, along with the School's responses to these incidents, and shall report this information annually to the NMPED in the form and content required by NMPED.

N. **PUBLICATION.** This Policy shall be made available on the following public websites:  
WWW.TMESNM.COM

The School's Principal or his/her designee shall be the point of contact for any bullying-related concerns, or other concerns relating to this Policy. Parents and students shall be informed about this Policy at least annually, through student handbooks and the School's Web Page.

#### **ANTI-BULLYING INCLUDED IN SECOND STEP CURRICULUM-**

"Second Step" is a TMEMS instructional program that provides the opportunity to motivate and assist all students to maintain and improve peer interactions and social relationships. It meets the Content Standard 2 with benchmarks and performance standards as set forth in 6.30.2.19 NMAC.

All students need to be aware of bullying behavior beginning in Kindergarten and continuing throughout their school years. It's imperative that students are comfortable with understanding, describing, and recognizing appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, and then in the later grades being able to analyze those behaviors and role play refusal skills.

#### **Reporting Complaints-**

Students and parents/legal guardians are encouraged to resolve concerns with the Executive Director or Designee. If the Executive Director or Designee is unable to resolve your concern see griev procedue.

#### **Student/Parent and Staff Conflicts-**

Any grievance or concerns about teachers and staff should be brought to the immediate attention of the Executive Director or Designee (in writing). Concerns with any actions of the Executive Director or Designee should be brought to the Human Resource Director Issues or concerns of former employees of TMEMS can be expressed in writing to the State Department of Education Certification Department in Santa Fe, NM.

#### **STUDENT RIGHTS**

##### **Educational Opportunity**

A free public school education shall be available to every school-aged person, and each student who enrolls has an equal responsibility not to deny this right to any other student. TMEMS affords all students equal educational opportunities.

##### **Expression and Association**

Students are protected in the exercise of the constitutional rights of free speech, press and assembly.

##### **Privacy**

Students have a limited right to privacy while at school. All students should understand that school property is subject to scrutiny at any time and that they should have no expectations of privacy with respect to school-supplied cubbies, materials, desks, etc.

**Questioning of Students-** Prior to a student being questioned concerning an alleged illegal act, the School Executive Director or Designee will attempt to contact the student's parent/guardian and shall advise the student that he or she does not have to discuss his or her involvement in the alleged illegal without advice of an attorney. The parent/guardian shall be permitted to be present for questioning.

#### **PROTECTION OF STUDENT RIGHTS**

**Equal Education Opportunity-** TMEMS does not discriminate on the basis of ethnic identity, religion, race, color, national

origin, sex, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability in any program or activity of, or sponsored by, the school district.

**Reports of Discrimination-** Any report will be addressed in accordance with the appropriate procedures as specified in IDEA, Section 504, ADA, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, First Amendment, XIV Amendment, New Mexico Human Rights Act, or with the New Mexico Public Education Department Regulation 6 NMAC 1.4 and any amendments made to these regulations, which are incorporated within this policy statement.

**Violation of Student Rights-** Students who believe that their rights have been violated should report their concerns to their parents, the Executive Director or Designee, or other appropriate school personnel. Thereafter, all concerns should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director or Designee. If the Executive Director or Designee is the alleged offender, then the complaint should be brought to the attention of the president of the Governing Council or his/her designee.

**Denial of Rights-** Free public school education is a right guaranteed to a student. The courts have defined the basis on which the denial of that right is justified. This right may be denied in response to behaviors that threaten the safety and security of the school population, are illegal, or have the potential to disrupt the educational process.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

The Grievance Procedures will be followed as appropriate for disciplinary actions including, but not limited to suspensions and expulsions.

### **Informal Procedures-**

1. *Teacher/Parent/Student-* Faculty, parents and students shall attempt resolution of problems affecting students and the education process by informal means.
2. *Executive Director or Designee /Parent/Student-* If any student or parent believes that disciplinary decisions made by TMEMS staff are not fair or reasonable, he or she may request a conference with the Executive Director or Designee or his/her designee to present their concerns. Ultimately, the final decision for disciplinary consequences rests with the Executive Director or Designee. Following a Executive Director or Designee conference, should the parent have further concerns they are encouraged to pursue the Formal Hearing Procedure below if allowed.

**Formal Hearing Procedure-** The Governing Council prescribes the formal hearing procedures for students recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion, which are intended to protect the student's rights to due process. The following procedures must be followed by the student and his/her representative as well as the school. Failure to follow the procedures may jeopardize a student's right to a hearing.

1. *Request for Hearing.* A student who has been recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion must notify the Executive Director or Designee by no later than 3 school days from the date the disciplinary action is taken that he or she is requesting a formal hearing. Notice of a request for hearing may be made by the student or his parent/guardian or representative.
2. *Representation.* The student may, at his/her own expense, choose to be represented by an attorney or other representative during any due process hearing. If a student chooses to be represented by an attorney at the hearing, he/she must notify the school within five (5) days of the scheduled date of hearing.
3. *Notice of Hearing.* Upon receipt of request for hearing or if a hearing is required (See, No. 6, below), the Executive Director or Designee will prepare and deliver to parents/legal guardians a written notice of the date, time and location of the hearing. The notice shall be made by personal delivery, certified mail return receipt requested or some other method that provides the school with evidence of the date and time of delivery.
4. *Date of Hearing.* The hearing shall be scheduled no sooner than five (5) and no later than ten (10) school days from the date of receipt of notice of hearing by the parents, unless a shorter or longer time frame is agreed to by both the school and the parents/guardians in writing.
5. *Evidence.* TMEMS and the student/parents/guardian or representative will exchange copies of any documents that will be used as evidence in support of their case at the hearing by at least two (2) working days in advance of the hearing.
6. *Waiver.* The parent/guardian may choose to waive the student's right to a hearing and accept the disciplinary consequences recommended by the Executive Director or Designee. Failure to request a hearing within three days shall constitute an acceptance of the discipline and waiver of a hearing unless an extension is agreed upon in writing prior to expiration of the three days and except in cases of expulsion.
7. *Expulsions.* Expulsion hearings cannot be waived.

### **Hearing Authority and Transcript-**

1. *Hearing Officer.* An impartial hearing officer will be appointed by the Governing Council or its designated representative.
2. *Transcript.* An audio recorded transcript of the proceeding shall be recorded and kept at TMEMS' office for a period of one year, after which the recording will be destroyed, except in cases of expulsion where records are kept

for longer periods

#### **Burden of Proof-**

1. *Evidence.* The hearing is not a legal proceeding, and formal rules of evidence shall not govern the conduct of the hearing.
2. *Burden.* The burden of proving that the student violated a provision of the TMEMS Student Behavior Policies is on the school authorities.
3. *Witnesses.* The student or his/her representative shall have the right to call witnesses on his/her behalf and to question witnesses against him/her. TMEMS officials, its representative or attorney, shall also have the right to call witnesses and to question any witnesses who testify.

#### **Decision of Hearing Authority-**

1. *Decision.* The hearing officer shall decide first upon whether the information provided to him/her supports the Executive Director or Designee's recommended disciplinary action. If the information supports the Executive Director or Designee's actions, the hearing officer will then decide whether the discipline is appropriate or whether some lesser discipline should be administered. In no event, will the hearing officer's recommendations for discipline exceed that recommended by the Executive Director or Designee in the first instance.
2. *Additional Evidence.* The hearing officer may request additional evidence from the parties than presented during the hearing.
3. *Student's Response to Evidence.* The student shall have the right to comment upon the evidence orally and/or in writing. If the comments are written, they must be received by the hearing officer and school before the date and time of the hearing.
4. *Written Decision.* The hearing officer shall serve his/her written decision on the parties, stating his/her findings and conclusions, within five (5) school days after hearing the evidence.
5. *Effect of Decision.* The hearing officer decision shall take effect immediately upon notification of the parent/guardian and shall continue in force during any subsequent review. Notification (service) of the parent/guardian shall be deemed to be three days from the date the decision is mailed.

#### **Appeal to the Governing Council-**

1. *Notice of Appeal.* The student/parent may appeal the decision of the hearing officer to the Governing Council by serving a written Notice of Appeal to the President of the Governing Council or his/her designee within five (5) school days after the decision has been served. The Governing Council may appoint a committee of no less than three members to hear the appeal.
2. *Review Period.* Governing Council shall, within ten (10) school days after receipt of the Notice of Appeal, review the record of the hearing and the decision in this case.
3. *Discretion.* The Governing Council shall have discretion over whether to permit the aggrieved student and school authorities to submit additional written materials and/or to present their respective views in person at a conference or hearing.
4. *Decision.* The Governing Council shall then serve on the parties, within five (5) working days after the review is concluded, his/her decision affirming, overruling, or modifying the decision of the hearing officer. The severity of any sanction may not be increased.
5. *Extension of Related Time Limits.* The hearing officer or President of the Governing Council shall have the option to extend the time limits after a showing of good cause.
6. *Final Decision.* The decision of the Governing Council is final.

**It is the intent of the Governing Council of TMEMS that every reasonable effort is made on behalf of the student's education, even in the case of suspension or expulsion.**

**This Parent Handbook and Student Behavior Policies are subject to review by the Governing Council at any time, at which time suggested amendments or additions submitted by administrators will be considered. However, if the Governing Council deems necessary, these policies may be reviewed and revised more frequently. The current handbook is available online on our website year round. Hard copies are available upon request.**