



Family Handbook Signature Sheet

Our family knows how to access the Urban Montessori Family Handbook. We understand that by signing this form, we confirm that we will follow all the policies and guidelines within in order to support a collaborative partnership between home and school.

Student Name(s)

Date

Parent/Guardian Name(s)

Parent/Guardian Signature(s)

Instructions:

- 1) The Family Handbook can be found on the parent portal in both English and Spanish.
- 2) If you would like a hard copy of the handbook, please reach out to [Ms. Rosi](#).
- 3) UMCS will reach out to families for digital signature confirming that families have read and understand the Family Handbook.



Family Handbook

Last Approved June 23, 2022

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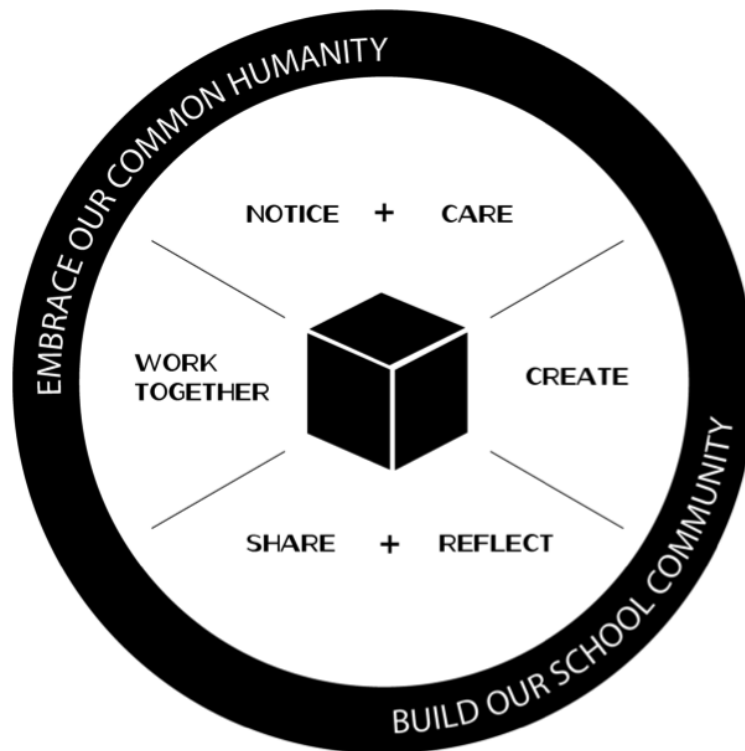
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SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mission

Urban Montessori Charter School's mission is to develop self-directed and engaged learners who are academically, socially and emotionally prepared to succeed in any high school. Nurturing the innovators of tomorrow to creatively meet the challenges of today's world with confidence, compassion and grace, Urban Montessori cultivates individual curiosities and strengths, while holding students to a high standard of excellence. At Urban Montessori, students deepen their understanding of what it means to live responsibly in a diverse urban community.

Core Values



Urban Montessori's core values help us do our work. They are:

We embrace our common humanity to build our school community.

We recognize that creating a truly inclusive and respectful community where all students achieve, differences are valued, voices are heard, and power is shared requires constant dialogue and hard work. We know we must create safe spaces to openly check each other's biases and assumptions, talk honestly about power and privilege, and ultimately become models of the society and community we wish for our students.

We notice and care.

Building a learning community means developing our grace and courtesy, as well as our empathy and inquiry muscles. Noticing means looking, listening, using our senses, asking questions, and identifying patterns. Caring is taking the next step to inquire about what we have seen, heard, and felt. Caring allows us to reframe problems and see opportunity spaces. It reminds us of our common humanity.

We work together and create.

We are problem solvers and innovators. Through collaboration we can accomplish more than we can alone and collaborating is a learned skill. We also recognize that our first ideas are not necessarily our best, and it is through prototyping, testing and iterating that we improve.

We share and reflect.

Our work is always in dialogue with the needs of others. We share our ideas and our creations. We seek feedback to improve our thinking and doing. We ask ourselves what we have learned and what we can do better next time.

School Rules

Be responsible.

Be respectful.

Be safe.

Be kind.

Urban Montessori's school rules are simple and they also help us do our work. Students are being taught to be responsible, respectful, safe and kind in classrooms, the hallways, in bathrooms, on the yard, and in the cafeteria.

Board of Directors

Urban Montessori shall be governed by a Board of Directors who shall be selected, serve, and govern the School in accordance with their adopted bylaws, which shall be maintained to align with the terms of this charter and applicable law. The Board will be responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the school.

The Board meetings occur monthly and are open to the public. For a specific Calendar of meetings, a list of the Board members, and the agenda and minutes of past meetings, please visit the website at: <https://www.urbanmontessori.org/governance>.

Instructional Model

The Urban Montessori instructional program holds High Fidelity Montessori at the core. Arts Integration and Design Thinking are interwoven throughout the Montessori pedagogy and play a large role in student learning throughout all academic disciplines.

Montessori

Montessori is a comprehensive pedagogy, curriculum and philosophy intended to maximize the potential of every child's academic, social, emotional and intellectual development based on the research of Dr. Maria Montessori, the first female physician in Italy in the early twentieth century. This philosophy supports a differentiated, self-directed, personalized program for each child, embracing his or her natural curiosity and love of learning. In a Montessori classroom, students are given the freedom to work actively with concrete, sequential materials within a carefully prepared environment. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of every child. Teachers provide enough guidance to help students work toward independence and self-discipline, which translates into an environment that encourages self-direction and personal responsibility. A multi-age classroom provides maximum opportunities for developing the social and academic skills of all learners. UMCS also includes a heightened focus on global awareness, social justice, and peace studies.

Design thinking and the arts play an integral role in the Montessori classroom. Artistic concepts, processes and materials and problem solving are presented daily in the prepared environment in

order to engage students' multiple intelligences. Arts and Design integration builds problem solving and artistic skills in visual arts, design, engineering, music, movement and theater, while nurturing artistic habits of mind in all students. The arts are used in the curriculum to demonstrate understanding of science, language arts, math, history or cultural topics through creative and expressive projects. They are also taught for their own sake to help students to explore and eventually master the technical skills of art such as cutting, drawing, color mixing, rhythmic patterning, or choreographic dance schools. Both trajectories help UMCS learners to develop a full sense of their artistic and intellectual strengths given this integrated, multi-faceted approach to learning, creating and communicating.

Minimum Day Schedule

UMCS has a regular minimum day each Wednesday that ends at 12:30pm. Please note that we have a week of minimum days in the Fall and Spring for Family Conferences. On conference days, minimum day schedules will be observed. For more details on the school calendar visit:

http://www.urbanmontessori.org/school_calendar/.

Field Trips

The community is considered an extension of the UMCS classroom. Some school days will be complemented with field trips. Field trips may be conducted by using a variety of transportation methods including walking, the use of public transportation, renting buses, and parent drivers. Field trip fees are mostly paid by families. No child will be denied participation due to their family's ability to pay the fees. Communications about the trips will include information about how to access them. Families will need to sign a permission slip to allow their student to attend field trips. Chaperones are often invited.

Homework

Families are expected to read with their children for at least thirty minutes every day. When students become independent readers, UMCS recommends that parents and students take turns reading aloud. Other than this, teachers do not regularly assign homework. There is a large body of educational research that suggests that homework in the elementary grades does not correlate strongly to improved learning. On occasion, the student may want to continue "work" that s/he began at school. Such continued work is encouraged because the student is motivated by the work and seeks more practice with it. Other times, the teacher may request that the student finish their work at home if they could not complete it during the work period or if there is an at-home project that correlates or enhances studies at school. Families are encouraged to use the time not spent doing traditional homework with children, exploring, discussing, and enjoying time together.

Progress Reports

Teachers prepare progress reports for each child three times a year (November, February, June). Progress reports are intended to provide families with information about learning and progress towards mastery of Montessori materials and the Common Core standards. Progress reports are part of a larger conversation with each family. Families are welcome to observe their child working in the classroom environment, in accordance with the classroom schedule and with a scheduled appointment, from October until the end of the year. After observing, families are invited to conference with teachers in the weeks following. The family conference weeks are minimum days, with school ending at 12:30pm and conference times available in the afternoon and early evening.

Birthday Celebrations

Each classroom celebrates in a different way, but essentially all classrooms have a tradition of celebrating the student's journey from their birth to the present day and acknowledging student birthdays through birthday appreciations (written and verbal).

We do not accept food, snacks or other goody-bags/gifts/etc on student Birthdays.

Birthday party invitations may not be distributed in school unless all children in the class are invited. Use the school directory to message invitations. For more details about how the student's classroom celebrates birthdays, please contact your child's teacher.

Holidays

Holidays of many cultures and religions are recognized throughout the year in each class from an educational point of view. We do not celebrate holidays within the classroom or school setting. Students and families are welcome to make a presentation in regard to a particular holiday and its customs. Please contact your child's teacher if you are interested in presenting in the classroom.

Opting Out of Celebrations

If you would not like your child to participate in an activity or event, please notify your child's teacher at the beginning of the school year or prior to the event. A written note regarding the exclusion is necessary and appropriate arrangements will be made for your child.

ATTENDANCE / DROP OFF / PICK UP

Attendance

Attendance is essential to learning and therefore mandatory. We are all working to establish positive classroom climates where students engage with the Montessori curriculum, develop new friendships and learn routines. Students can only access this environment when they are in school. In order for a student to have a successful day in school, it is important that students are on campus prepared to learn before 8:15 am.

Children may come to school at **7:45** am, where they will be supervised on the yard. The regular school day begins promptly at **8:15** am.

If a child is going to be absent, arrive late, or must leave early, a parent/guardian must notify the UMCS office in advance. Families are also strongly encouraged to email the lead teacher directly.

UMCS will closely monitor and track all absences, both excused and unexcused. A special attendance meeting will be held for students with excessive absences (beyond 5 in a trimester). In addition, the administration is required by law to file a report with the Department of Children and Family Services when a child has a pattern of excessive absences.

Please note:

- There are plenty of opportunities to take family vacations: fall break, winter break, spring break, all of July, and August before school begins. Please plan your extended family trips during these times and not during regular school days.
- There is a direct link between strong attendance and strong academic performance. It pays to be in school everyday. *Studies have shown that chronic absenteeism is the number one predictor for not graduating high school.*
- If one sibling is absent, that does not mean other children in the family must necessarily be absent, too.
- Please have a backup plan if your regular transportation to school is delayed or disrupted.
- *Student daily attendance is the single largest factor in how much state funding our school receives.* Absenteeism affects how much money we receive to support our students.

For the purposes of calculating chronic absenteeism **all** absences both excused and unexcused factor into a student's attendance percentages. We greatly appreciate parents letting us know about absences, as it helps us with our record keeping.

Any absence – excused or unexcused – results in a loss of public school funding (~\$60 per day).

Tardies & Admit Passes

Being at school on time ensures your child/ren will receive maximum exposure to Urban Montessori's educational program. Children should be in their classroom ready to learn no later than 8:15 am. A child is considered tardy if they arrive in their classroom later than that time.

Attendance is taken at 8:15. Doors open at 8:00, and the Yard opens at 7:45.

- Students who are not in the classroom at 8:15 will be marked Absent
- Breakfast is available before 8:10 or after 8:30 to ensure proper attendance is recorded
- If a student is outside socializing or having breakfast, they are not in the room and will be marked when they arrive in the classroom.
- Students who arrive in class between 8:15 and 8:45 are marked Tardy. **A Tardy under 30 minutes does not need to be excused.**
- Students who arrive more than 30 minutes late (at or after 8:45) will be marked **Unexcused Tardy Over 30 Minutes** unless a Doctor's Note is provided.
- You will receive Daily Notifications for Absences and Tardies, as well as a Weekly Summary at 5, 10, and 15 Absences or Tardies.
- If you're not sure why your student was marked Tardy or Absent, **reach out to your teacher.** Your teacher took attendance and knows why they marked your student Absent or Tardy.
- An "excused" absence is one where a note or documentation of a qualifying event is provided to the Front Office, for up to two days of absence. For three days or more, you must provide a note or documentation from a doctor or other service provider which explains the student's absence.
- Families can excuse an absence by emailing attendance@urbanmontessori.org or using the attendance voicemail line, 510-225-9071. Please leave a message. We strive to respond to Attendance emails within 48 hours. You will receive a call back only if we have questions or concerns.
- **Three unexcused absences is considered Truant by the State of California.**

Examples of excused absences:

Doctor or dental appointment
Sick leave or Quarantine under 3 days
Sick 3 days or more, with Doctor's Note
Serious family emergency

An "unexcused" absence is one where there is an unqualified cause or there is no communication with the school. Examples of unexcused absences:

Student or adult slept in
Vacation or day trip
Car trouble
Sadness

Drop Off

Please review the Daily Schedules and Drop Off procedures [here](#).

Pick-Up

Please review the Daily Schedules and Pick Up procedures [here](#).

Early Release Passes

If you must take your student out of school early on any given day, you are required to first get an "Early Release" pass from the main office. This ensures proper recording of your student's attendance and assists in keeping all students safe.

Teachers will not allow admission to late students nor will they release students early without this pass.

Unplanned Absences

You can report an absence by emailing attendance@urbanmontessori.org or leaving a voicemail at 510-225-9071 as soon as you know your child will be absent. If your student is sick, particularly if they have a fever or have been vomiting, please keep them home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours. This is best for the health of our staff and other students.

When at all possible, please schedule any necessary appointments or checkups outside of the morning work period, which ends at lunch. This helps to minimize disruption to the academic progress for all students. Wednesday afternoons, when students are dismissed at 12:30 pm, and teacher institute days are ideal. You can find the school calendar on the school website at www.urbanmontessori.org/school_calendar.

Planned Absences: Independent Study (IS)

We do not recommend that you take your child out of school for any reason, but if you must take your child out of school for an extended trip or your child has a prolonged illness, we strongly recommend you request Independent Study. The length of IS may be from three days to no more than fifteen days.

There are a variety of reasons to request IS. Most families who apply for IS for their children are out of the country or state during their IS term to participate in cultural, religious, or family events. Another reason to apply for IS is in the case of children who have periodic health episodes that may result in frequent in-person absences, i.e. asthma, serious allergies, etc. Also, a child may be recovering from an injury that does not require hospitalization, but precludes daily attendance at school.

Any child who participates in IS, completes the appropriate school assignments, and meets with the supervising teacher upon return will be counted present at the school for the IS period. The child's parent or guardian must fill out the application and agreement for IS and must supervise the child's work during the student's participation in IS. Average Daily Attendance (ADA) is accrued to the school while on a successful IS.

If the student does not complete their Agreement according to the terms for a portion or all of the time enrolled in IS, the student will be marked absent for the corresponding days. The consequences of such absences (partial or the entire period) shall be the same for any other student.

If your child requires IS, please inform the school at least **two weeks** in advance by emailing attendance@urbanmontessor.org, or leave a message at 510-225-9071.

[Learning Everywhere Addition to the Family Handbook](#)

Please review the *Learning Everywhere* addition to the family handbook to learn more about how attendance will be recorded in the event of a return to UMCS's *Learning Everywhere* program.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Family Communication

School faculty and staff strive to return parent communications within 48 hours. All community members are expected to be solution focused and think creatively about problem solving. The problem solving process begins with addressing the concern directly with the person to which it relates.

Regular communication between the school and families is critical in building a strong home-school partnership and ensuring our children's success. To ensure there is regular communication between home and school, UMCS will utilize the following methods:

School Newsletter: A weekly school-wide newsletter or email will be delivered electronically typically on Fridays.

Dialogue: There are several opportunities for dialogue depending on the nature of the concern.

Parents are encouraged to speak directly with their student's teacher with regards to issues concerning their child or the classroom. If the problem continues or the parent is unsatisfied with the result, please reach out to our Assistant Head of School for academic concerns and Behavioral concerns. If after these steps the concern persists, please reach out to the Head of School for further guidance.

Finally, for any general questions to gain information or about the school go to our main office and we will be happy to assist you.

The Head of School will hold a monthly office hours through zoom and in person (times and locations will be posted on our public calendar). Through connecting in this way, we hope to strengthen community, gain input and suggestions, and address any questions or concerns.

Online Communication

We are committed to maintaining the UMCS website so that it is a primary source for school information and updates. Families should check the website regularly for updates.

1) www.urbanmontessori.org Our website contains a variety of information, including our school's mission and philosophy, admissions procedures, fundraising opportunities, and community events. Please flag pages that need to be updated by emailing it@urbanmontessori.org.

2) Classroom communities are on ParentSquare:

1. [ParentSquare.com/signin](https://www.parentsquare.com/signin)
2. Sign in or sign up with your email address or cell phone number, and set your password
3. Confirm your information is correct, and if need assistance please email it@urbanmontessori.org

Once logged in, individuals control how they receive ParentSquare communications and notifications, including any combination of instant or daily digest emails, text messages, and in-app notifications.

3) School Calendar: urbanmontessori.org/school_calendar

This calendar is updated frequently, so check back often for the latest info about events, committee meetings, etc. Google Calendar users may click the “+Google” button in the bottom-right corner to have events automatically added to their personal calendar.

4) Public Social Media Pages: Facebook.com/UrbanMontessori | Twitter.com/UrbanMontessori
Similar to the public pages on the school website, these social media pages are for communications that reach a broader audience of interested families and funders and other communities who care about what we do.

Social media users are encouraged to like/follow these pages/feeds and engage in the conversations that happen there.

5) Private Facebook Group: Facebook.com/groups/umcsfamilies
Please note: this is NOT an official UMCS communications group and participation is optional. Parents and caregivers of current students as well as current Faculty and Staff at UMCS are welcome to contribute to the conversation that happens there, but it is not actively monitored by UMCS Administration.

To join the group, visit the URL above and click the “Join Group” button. If your Facebook name does not match your name in the school database, or if you have not yet registered on the school website (as described above) you may experience a delay in being admitted to the FB group. Check your “other” mailbox for a message from one of the group’s administrators, as they will be asking you to confirm your association with the school.

6) Text Messages and Recorded Voice Messages: In a short-notice circumstance or emergency, the school uses text messages, text-to-voice messages, and recorded phone call messages.

If you have any questions, please contact your Room Parent or the Main Office for help.

7) Directory and Messaging on ParentSquare:
Students and parents will be listed by name in ParentSquare classroom lists, and families wishing to get in contact with other families may use ParentSquare to send direct messages. ParentSquare messages will be delivered by email, SMS, and/or ParentSquare app depending on the recipient’s preferences. Personal email addresses and phone numbers will not be shared via ParentSquare by UMCS. Families may share their own additional contact information via messaging with others and may opt-in to contact sharing on their ParentSquare profile. Urban Montessori bears no responsibility for the content of personal messages, regardless of platform. To opt out of the Student Directory, sign in to the Aeries Parent Portal or email it@urbanmontessori.org with your request. To report abuse of the Directory and ParentSquare communications, please email it@urbanmontessori.org.

Family Advisory Council (FAC)

Families have an opportunity to participate in the governance of Urban Montessori Charter School through involvement in the Family Advisory Council as a representative or by attending their meetings. The FAC provides a forum for parents to request information, support classroom events and initiatives at UMCS, review school-wide performance data, and give feedback on school policy. It works to facilitate effective communication among parents, teachers and administration.

The Family Advisory Council works to increase the achievement and engagement of every student through continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and culture. All school community members are welcome to all meetings. FAC representatives provide information,

feedback and make recommendations to the School Administration and the FAC Board representatives, who will be charged with sharing FAC recommendations with the UMCS Board of Directors as appropriate. The FAC will select two of its members to be representatives on the UMCS Board of Directors.

For more information about the FAC, please visit: http://www.urbanmontessori.org/fac_faqs.

Family Volunteers

Families provide invaluable support to the school and its community through volunteering. We are grateful for the contribution of time and energy that every family is able to make. Volunteering ranges from providing classroom snacks, to rug washing to reading buddies to classroom family communications to family and affinity group outreach to organizing or supporting large scale events and fundraising like the walkathon. If each family volunteered 1 hour per week this would be equivalent to an additional full time staff member per class! We couldn't do it without you. You're an essential and important part of UMCS and we are grateful for all of your efforts!

To volunteer in our classrooms on a regular basis, individuals must provide the office with:

- proof of a negative TB test from their doctor within the last 2 years. This test is good for four years.
- proof of COVID-19 full vaccination or a weekly negative test.

Additionally, the UMCS office will run a Megan's Law Clearance check.

Those working with students while unsupervised by UMCS staff or driving groups on field trips will require fingerprint clearance as well. For information on how to obtain this clearance please visit the main office or message the Office through ParentSquare.

Background clearance information is completely confidential and solely for use by UMCS. Only UMCS administration access this information.

Family Observations

Family observations of a children's classroom(s) take place throughout the year with a pre-scheduled appointment. The family observation is an opportunity for you to get a glimpse of what life is like in a Montessori classroom and to observe how your child is interacting with the Montessori prepared environment. This observation provides the family with data for the family conference. There are specific guidelines for observing in a Montessori classroom that will be provided prior to the observation.

Family Conferences

Family-teacher conferences will be conducted twice a year. Each teacher will contact families to set a time to meet and review student academic progress. Student-led conferences take place in the Upper Elementary and Middle School levels. These conferences are very important to academic success, and it is expected that parents or guardians will attend both scheduled conferences. All conference days are minimum school days. Children must be picked up no later than 12:30 pm.

[Learning Everywhere Addition to the Family Handbook](#)

Please review the *Learning Everywhere* addition to the family handbook to learn more about family conferences during UMCS's *Learning Everywhere* program.

SUPPORTING LEARNING

Responsiveness to Instruction and Universal Screenings

At the start of the school year, teachers assess all students in math, english language arts, and perform behavioral observations. This information is used to create an education plan unique to the needs of each student. Those in need of additional support receive classroom-based interventions initially to find effective teaching methods for their learning style. If a student needs additional support the classroom teaching team may conduct a Child Study Protocol to set specific goals, interventions, and support for the students in collaboration with family. If these supports are found to not be effective, then a student is referred to the school's CARE team. This is a group of teachers, administrators, special education teachers and members of a child's family that work together as problem solvers to identify appropriate academic and behavioral interventions. Interventions at this level may include the creation of individualized learning plans and/or individualized behavioral plans.

If a family member has concerns that his or her student is struggling academically or behaviorally, the family member should address these concerns directly with the student's classroom teacher and if necessary, can ask the teacher to refer the student to the CARE process to seek the input of the CARE team. Once the student is referred to the CARE process, the family member will be notified of the date, time and place of the CARE team meeting and be invited to attend.

Behavioral Expectations Policy

Our school climate is influenced by how we interact with one another. Together, we can create safe spaces where individuals are respected, welcomed, and nurtured. To do so, we must have a common language and intention around our goals.

Dr. Maria Montessori said that to let the child do as s/he likes when s/he has not yet developed any powers of control, is to betray the idea of freedom. The Montessori approach is one of nurturing the development of self-discipline, effecting positive behavior change through a prepared environment that is a unique interaction between the teacher, other students, and the physical space. Self-discipline is a personal goal that a student usually achieves. However, we recognize that a student will make mistakes as they develop, and that this is part of learning. As adults who are responsible for guiding the student, we have developed a school policy that reflects the positive culture of our school and is clear, consistent, and equitable to support the whole community during an incident.

We employ the five criteria for "effective discipline that teaches."

1. Helps children feel a sense of connection. (Belonging and significance)
2. Is mutually respectful and encouraging. (Kind and firm at the same time)
3. Is effective long-term. (Considers what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about himself and his world – and what to do in the future to survive or to thrive)
4. Teaches important social and life skills. (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community)
5. Invites children to discover how capable they are. (Encourages the constructive use of personal power and autonomy)

Discipline is based on:

- Respect for the community and the child,

- knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child,
- the needs of the group, and
- the understanding that appropriate behavior is not only taught, but modeled.

At Urban Montessori Charter School, we understand that children become thoughtful, responsible, respectful and caring adults when:

- The adults around them model the expected behaviors
- The children are explicitly taught and coached the expected behaviors – children are guided, assessed, and held accountable
- The children deeply understand and value the expected behaviors
- The environment around them supports the development of these behaviors

As a school community, we want to model expected behaviors for children through use of our core values. Our overarching value is to embrace our common humanity to build our school community. As part of that, we notice and care about what is happening around us; we work together and create solutions to move forward; and we share and reflect about our work together.

To that end, Urban Montessori's behavioral expectation policy defines a respectful process that supports the school community, the child, the teacher, the family, and helps the child to learn to socialize and take responsibility for actions as part of personal growth. Our goal is to keep students in class and learning, while maintaining a safe learning environment for the entire class. If students are not responding to the structure in the classroom, then a deeper partnership between the student, family and school is needed and the families of those students will be asked to come into class to support the behavior plan for that student.

Other Resources:

[Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

[UMCS Anti-bullying training Presentation](#)

[Discipline Plan](#)

Common Behavior Modification Practices

In order to support students to meet common behavioral expectations we offer additional structure and use Positive Behavioral Incentives and Supports (PBIS). We believe that these opportunities allow for "teachable moments" for students. We aim to be nonjudgmental, and to support the child or youth to redirect their own behavior. Our larger goal is to develop self-reflective, self-disciplined young people. The following behaviors generally require in-class redirection and inquiry to address root cause:

- General off-task, slightly inappropriate behavior
- Minor name-calling
- "Playing" too much or inappropriately and being generally "off-task"
- Being too loud
- Minor unsafe behavior in playground
- Disrespectful attitude or comments
- Initial defiance to adults
- Disturbing others (or disruptive) during work period/class (Not greatly inhibiting as stated below)
- Minor unsafe behavior in the classroom (e.g. running, throwing small objects, etc.)

In all of our classrooms, we expect to see the following behavior modification techniques:

- Adults will subtly remind the child that the behavior does not align with the community's norms – this can be a verbal or nonverbal cue (such as a hand signal) or reminder.
- Adults will name the behavior that does not fit within the community's norms if the student does not redirect his or her own behavior, give a warning, and provide time for the child to correct the behavior.
- If a child continues the behavior, adults should speak to the child one-to-one asking questions to get to the root cause of the behavior. If it is possible to address the root cause immediately, the adult should do so. If it is not possible in that moment, and the adult feels the child requires adult intervention or support immediately, the adult should redirect the child to administration and/or ask that a parent support the student in class or engage the student's family in supporting a behavior plan in another way.

Physical restraint will only be used on rare occasions as a means to prevent a student from physically injuring him or herself, other students or staff and as a means to move the student to a safe place where he or she can calm down.

Use of Consequences

At times, students struggle to correct negative behaviors, despite the use of our common behavior modification practices. Teachers and/or administrators may choose to use consequences for students' negative actions within the following parameters:

- Consequences must be logical, predictable, and consistent.
- Consequences, whenever possible, are logical, restorative and linked to the action.

When discussing consequences adults should:

- Respond calmly and respectfully.
- Create space for the child to reflect on his or her behavior.
- Listen to the child's side of the story; demonstrate empathy for the child's experience.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy of the student.

Office Referrals

Occasionally, a classroom teacher or an adult on campus will require additional support around a child's behavior. This can be because the behavior is extreme (see below) and requires administrative attention immediately, because all attempts at redirection have failed, or because the adult in charge cannot address the needs of that particular child in that moment and requires additional support (i.e. teacher is in the middle of teaching a class, and two children require conflict mediation immediately).

A student will generally be referred to administration for:

- Continuous disruption of the learning environment (student does not seem able to redirect himself after numerous attempts at redirection, one-to-one conversation, and root cause analysis).
- Serious verbal abuse – discrimination, offensive personal comments, intimidation, threats, more serious name-calling, constant name-calling, cursing at a person.
- Causing, attempting to cause, or threatening to cause serious physical harm to another person.
- Physically fighting.
- Biting.
- Committing an obscene act or engaging in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- Sexual harassment, advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

- Unwanted intentional physical contact – pushing, hitting, kicking, throwing things at, any playful behavior that can and will obviously lead to injury, pulling hair, pushing into or towards dangerous situations, using anything as a weapon.
- Alcohol, drug, or cigarette use, purchase, supply, ownership on or off campus.
- Possession of a weapon.

Potential actions and consequences for the student who is referred to the office are:

- Opportunity given to child to reflect verbally or written on behavior and to develop his or her own solution to the situation.
- Dialogue about severity of situation and developing consequences together.
- Phone call home – parent or caregiver conference arranged.
- Parent or caregiver invited to accompany child in classroom for part or all of school day.
- Referral to the CARE team.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- Expulsion.

Suspension Policies

Depending on the violation and situation, suspensions may be done **in school or at home** as described in the California Ed Code. If a student is suspended, the parent/guardian will be called and a letter will be sent home with the student stating the violation and when the suspension is to take place. The student will be required to return home for the remainder of the day on which the violation is made and may be suspended from school for one or more days. For an in-school suspension, the student will report to school and remain in a designated work space for the day. Whenever possible, Urban Montessori Charter School will use in-school suspensions to ensure learning continues, and the infraction transforms into a teachable opportunity. In all cases, the suspension is used when all other practices have been exhausted and/or the student continues to demonstrate the problematic behaviors.

Special Education and 504 Accommodations

Urban Montessori will ensure that it makes the necessary adjustments to comply with the mandates of state and federal laws, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973, regarding the discipline of students with disabilities. Prior to recommending suspension for a Section 504 student or special education student, the charter administrator will consult with a special education team to determine 1) if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability; or 2) if the conduct in question was the direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the 504 plan or IEP. If it is determined that the student's misconduct was not caused by or had direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability or the conduct in question was not a direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the 504 plan or IEP, the student may be suspended.

Expulsion Policies

Urban Montessori Charter School follows the guidelines set forth in the California Education Code Section 48900, et seq., for grounds and procedures for student expulsion. They can be found at: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=edc&group=48001-49000&file=48900-48927>.

Disciplinary Records

The School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the School. Such records shall be made available upon request by parents/guardians.

Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

Pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs including but not limited to programs within the County or their school district of residence.

Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board of Directors at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the School for readmission. Rehabilitation plans will focus on providing the student a re-start in a new setting.

Readmission

The decision to readmit a student or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors following a meeting with the Head of School and the pupil and guardian or representative, to determine whether the student has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the student poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Head of School shall make a recommendation to the Board of Directors following the meeting regarding his or her determination. The student's readmission is also contingent upon the School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission or admission.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Nut-free campus

We are a nut-free school. We have students with life-threatening nut allergies, so please do not send anything to school with nuts. This includes no peanut butter, Nutella or any other foods containing nuts.

Meals

In 2021-2022, UMCS offers breakfast and lunch meals at NO COST to families, regardless of income level. To participate, all families first complete and return the [Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application](#).

The best way to submit your form is online using [our secure Dropbox](#).

- If Dropbox isn't working for you, you can email your form to lunches@urbanmontessori.org.
- Forms can also be placed in the physical dropbox outside the Main Entrance.

Based on income level, families may also qualify for access to additional community benefits.

Meals are provided by Revolution Foods. Families order meals online at <https://secure.boonli.com/login>. Information on creating Boonli accounts is provided below.

Free / Reduced Meal application numbers affect state and federal funding. Please fill out your qualifying application even if you do not intend to take advantage of meals. Please reach out to lunches@urbanmontessori.org with any questions or if you need support.

Breakfast is available each school day in the cafeteria from 7:45 am to 8:10 am for students who ordered meals ahead of time.

Please remind children not to share food with other children because we want to keep everyone safe and because some children have serious food allergies.

- We are working to limit waste, so please use reusable metal or plastic containers and avoid plastic baggies (e.g., Ziplocs), plastic wrap (e.g., Saran Wrap), and tin foil.
- High sugar foods and foods with low nutritional value have a direct impact on student behavior. Please avoid sending items like these with your child.
- Families are asked to reinforce calm bodies while eating and self-directed clean up.

Snacks

UMCS will provide a daily nut-free snack in each classroom. These snacks include a fresh fruit or vegetable and a low sugar snack.

Student Medication

Students are prohibited from carrying most over-the-counter or prescription medication (allergy medication, Tylenol, cough drops, etc.) at school. If your child's doctor has prescribed medication that must be taken during the school day, even on an occasional basis, you must communicate directly with the main office.

If Your Child Is Sick

Please do not send your child to school if s/he is not feeling well or has a fever. You can report an absence by emailing attendance@urbanmontessori.org or calling 510-842-1181 x 9071 as soon as you know the student will be absent.

If a student becomes ill or has a fever, the emergency form will be used to contact an adult for early pick-up. For insurance and safety reasons, no medication will be administered unless special arrangements are made in writing. Please share any special considerations—physical, emotional, social, behavioral—for your child with us; it is important we are aware of your child's needs.

Lice

School employees shall report all suspected cases of head lice to the school designee as soon as possible.

If a student is found with active, adult head lice, parents will be called and encouraged to pick up their child. The parent/guardian of any such student shall be given information about the treatment of head lice and encouraged to begin treatment of the student immediately and to check all members of the family. The parent/guardian also shall be informed that the student shall be checked upon return to school.

In order for the student to return to school, the parent will accompany their child to school for a readmission check. The school designee shall check the student for active head lice. If it is determined that the student remains infected with head lice, the school designee shall contact the student's parent/guardian to discuss treatment.

When it is determined that one or more students in a class or school are infested with head lice, the principal or designee may, at his/her discretion, notify parents/guardians of students in that class or school and provide them with information about the detection and treatment of head lice.

Staff shall maintain the privacy of students identified as having head lice.

CAMPUS

Cell Phones / Electronic Devices Policy

The use and presence of cell phones and other electronic devices during school hours is disruptive to instruction and may impair school safety.

All cell phones/electronic devices (gaming devices, iPads, iPods, MP3 players, tablets, etc) must be turned off and out of sight during school hours including transitions, recess and lunch periods. Urban Montessori is not responsible for the loss or damage to cell phones/electronic devices.

Students who violate the cell phone/electronic devices policy will have the phone or device held by school staff, securely locked and given to the student at the end of the day. On the third violation the device must be picked up by a parent or guardian. Repeated violations may be subject to further disciplinary action.

Clothing & Dress Code

It is important that every student feel comfortable and safe at school. As such we ask that students follow the code below. In Spring 2022, a group of student leaders engaged the community to revise our dress code to be more culturally responsive, gender supportive and inclusive.

- **All Clothing:** No obscene words or pictures, weapons, drug, alcohol, or tobacco-related items on clothing. No undergarments should be visible (ex. bras, underwear, under-shorts, etc).
- **Shirts:** Shirts can not be cut lower than your armpit.
- **Pants/Shorts/Skirts:** No undergarments should be visible. No tears or holes exposing undergarments.
- **Footwear:** Shoes should secure around the toe and heel. No heels at P.E or recess activities such as basketball, foursquare, play structure etc. (Most classrooms do not remove shoes inside class but a few of our primary classrooms do. Please reach out to your teacher for guidance on this.)
- **Accessories:** Any jewelry or accessory that becomes a distraction to the wearer will be considered a toy and are not allowed.

A Lost and Found is located on the yard near the Mango gate against the outside of the main building (under the overhang). Families and scholars are encouraged to check the Lost and Found regularly. Unclaimed items are donated at specified times throughout the school year.

Dress Code Enforcement

Students who are out of dress code may be asked to change their clothes. They will be given dress code items to change into in a private place and/or the option to call home for a change of clothes. Every effort will be made to contact parents if students are asked to change clothes at school.

Toys

Children may not have personal toys, sports equipment, trading cards, music players, or electronic games at school. These items are a distraction, cause disagreements and get lost, broken or taken. If a teacher or staff see any of these items out at school, s/he will hold the items for the student until the end of the day or turn it into the front office. These items may be allowed under certain

circumstances with prior written arrangements for behavior interventions, special projects or activities.

Visiting Campus

UMCS is committed to safety. While building access procedures may feel cumbersome at times, it is imperative that these procedures be followed to ensure safety. We are a school that deeply values the commitment of our community. Our goal is to establish and maintain a healthy balance between community involvement and a space that UMCS students can call their own. The following procedures aim to minimize the inconsistencies that may be created by a number of unfamiliar visitors:

- Any person wishing to enter the campus during the instructional day will be asked to state their name and the purpose of their visit through the intercom at the front door.
- Adults inside the building are instructed to refrain from opening the front door and are to direct visitors to the intercom.
- Upon entering the building, all visitors must sign in at the main office and wear a visitor badge while on campus. This is a mandatory requirement even for those families who frequently volunteer.
- All visitors are asked to wait to enter the building until all students have fully transitioned in the morning to their classrooms and the hallways are clear of students.
- All volunteers must have a **pre-scheduled** appointment, task or be participating in a scheduled event.
- All deliveries including forgotten lunches or snacks will be left in the main office and a staff member will deliver to the correct destination.
- Visitors must sign out when leaving.

Authorized Pickup

Please remember to fill out the form that lists all individuals who are authorized to pick up your child from school. If the person is not on the list, the teacher cannot release the child. To add any individuals, contact the main office or use the AERIES parent portal to update this information. All persons picking up a child should have their identification available in case the teacher requests it.

Emergencies

Please be sure that your school year registration paperwork is complete by the time school begins. Copies of these forms are kept confidential and on-site.

In case of illness, accidental injury, or emergency during the day, the emergency contact list will be used to notify the family. In the case of serious medical or health emergencies, staff will contact a local hospital for professional advice or, if needed, ambulance service and/or treatment by a physician. Families are asked to provide us with information concerning emergency treatment preferences on the emergency form in the registration paperwork.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL POLICIES

English Learner Reclassification

UMCS complies with all federal, state, and judicial mandates for English learners. Urban Montessori expects that a significant number of enrolled children will be classified as English Language Learners. The school is dedicated to providing these children with an exceptional education and transitioning them into English Proficiency through the use of the school's services and teaching methods. All new students who are identified as English Language Learners will take the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) each year by the end of October. Returning English Learners will take the ELPAC annually in the spring. Urban Montessori will use multiple criteria in determining whether to reclassify a pupil as proficient in English. Urban Montessori also recognizes the importance of valuing each child's home language, and reinforces an appreciation for the cultures, customs, and languages of our school community through the school's core curriculum and extended care programs.

For more information about the ELPAC test and the reclassification procedure please reach out to the Assistant Head of School or Head of School.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All Urban Montessori Charter School staff are mandated child abuse reporters and will follow all applicable reporting laws, as well as the same policies and procedures used by the District.

Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect is required under the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act by any mandated reporter. "Child" is defined as a person under the age of 18 years. A mandated reporter is any individual who is an employee of a youth organization or public school. The term "child abuse or neglect" includes sexual abuse; neglect defined as the negligent treatment or the maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child's health or welfare including both acts and omissions on the part of the responsible person; willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment; unlawful corporal punishment or injury; and abuse or neglect in out-of-home care. Child abuse or neglect does not include a mutual affray between minors or an injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his or her employment as a peace officer.

All employees of Urban Montessori Charter School must also comply with the reporting responsibilities outlined in the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act in reporting the concern immediately or as soon as is practicably possible (within 36 hours) by telephone, to child protective services, any police department, sheriff's department, county probation department, if designated by the county to receive mandated reports, or the county welfare department. School police or security departments are not considered acceptable reporting agencies. The individual making the report must also prepare and send a written report to the reporting agency within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

Employees shall not contact the child's family or any other persons to determine or investigate the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. Any personal interview of the child should be conducted in a professional manner, after consulting with the School's Executive Director. In any investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect, all persons participating in the investigation of the case shall

consider the needs of the child victim and shall do whatever is necessary to prevent psychological harm to the child.

Anti-Bullying Policy

At UMCS, we recognize that bullying is a serious issue that must be explicitly addressed. We understand that it takes ongoing effort from our entire community to reduce bullying. We acknowledge that reducing and resolving bullying issues takes time. At UMCS, we commit to being both patient and persistent in our efforts to do so.

First and foremost, we seek to address bullying by creating a school culture of warmth, care, and support that includes explicit expectations that bullying is not acceptable. To do this, we implement the Positive Discipline Curriculum, keep students academically challenged and engaged, ensure that adult behavior at school is consistent and respectful, determine when and where bullying tends to happen and ensure adult supervision as adequate, involve students in creating and setting expectations, share the results of school-wide surveys with all stakeholder groups to increase awareness, create an adult mentors program for identified bullies, and implement school-wide education about bullying using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program to define bullying.

At UMCS, we define bullying as student behavior that is characterized by 1) aggressive or intentional “harm doing,” resulting in the bully feeling more superior than the target, 2) carried out repeatedly over time, and 3) occurs in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power derived from position, physical size, or number of people. We recognize that bullying can be verbal (name calling, taunting, harassment either in person or electronically), physical (hitting, hurting, physical threats, taking objects), relational and emotional (innuendos, whispers, body language, rumors, social media, email, resulting in the systematic exclusion of the target from a perceived group of other persons), or any combination of the above. We also acknowledge that bullying involves three significant participants: bully, target and bystander. Bullying is harmful to all three participants and will not be successful if any one participant is absent. Therefore, interrupting the pattern of behavior of any participant will disrupt bullying. At UMCS, we recognize that focusing our work on bystanders is a particularly useful and empowering tool.

UMCS works to actively increase recognition and awareness of bullying among staff, students, and families. We increase staff awareness by devoting professional development time to understanding the definition of bullying and how to recognize it, to recognizing the secondary signs of bullying (decreased interest in school, decreased academic performance, avoiding recess, increased absences, missing belongings, not eating lunch, depression, significant change in friendship groups), and to training staff on our anti-bullying curriculum: Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. We increase student awareness via classroom discussion, age appropriate literature, explicit teaching of our anti-bullying curriculum, and school-wide assemblies. We increase family awareness through letters home, discussions during conferences, recommended reading, family book groups, training the FAC on our anti-bullying curriculum during the summer (FAC will then share with families in the fall), and educating family members about how to train their children to assert themselves positively. Finally, UMCS also conducts annual bullying surveys of staff, students, and families based on the “California Healthy Kids Survey” or similar tool.

UMCS seeks to ensure consistent and predictable adult responses to bullying. We educate adults about the difference between telling and tattling, ensure that all instances of bullying are reported by creating a process for adults to document bullying and developing safe ways for students to report it, and ensure a clear process and consistent outcomes for reported bullying episodes. These outcomes may include a serious, one-to-one conversation between the bully and a school administrator, a

one-to-one conversation between the target/bystanders and a school administrator, consistent notification of parents/guardians, and a clear, immediate opportunity for the bully to “fix” the mistake or “give back” to the school community.

Finally, at UMCS we recognize that reducing bullying is an ongoing process. As such, we engage in continued education and training for staff, students and families, we conduct regular reviews of responses to bullying to ensure consistency, we collect and review school-wide data on a regular basis, and we continue to work to develop and maintain a mentor program.

Complaint Policy

Urban Montessori Charter School is overseen by the Alameda County Board of Education and as such has a board-approved [uniform complaint policy](#). A complete copy of that policy is available and posted in the front office. Please note all concerns regarding Urban Montessori Charter School must first be addressed at the school level.

Retention Policy

Urban Montessori Charter School’s pedagogy allows students to grow academically at their own pace in mixed grade level classrooms. This model means that students are rarely recommended for retention. However, in some cases, retention may be discussed when a student is positioned to move from one level to the next and is not progressing in the way expected. Before any student is retained, the CARE team will meet at least twice to discuss specific concerns, implement interventions and track student progress. Considerations will be made in multiple areas, including: academic achievement and progress, physical, social, and emotional maturity, and special need. If the team believes that retention is in the best interest of the student we will complete the Light’s Retention Scale before finalizing the decision.

Media Release

Urban Montessori may take photos and video of children and activities at Urban Montessori. These are used solely for UMCS purposes, and include but are not limited to our website and promotional materials.

UMCS Gift Giving Policy

As per our employee handbook, faculty and staff may not accept gifts other than food, child made crafts and those given by a designated school committee with attention to equity across employees.

Parent Technology Agreement

A twenty-first century education requires the use of technology both in and out of the classroom setting: in many ways, grade-school children of this generation are more familiar with devices, applications, coding, virtual and augmented platforms than previous generations combined. Simultaneously, concerns about online privacy, identity theft, market research/marketing to children and online harassment are all hallmarks of the digital age. Just as students are learning the concepts in the disciplines of math, reading, writing, science and art and music, understanding how to use technology appropriately and mindfully is a critical practical life skill for digital citizenship.

UMCS is invested in equity and as such, considers equitable access and processes related to technology. While the use of social media and third party service sites can increase efficiency, if parents/caregivers do not have access to a computer or internet connection or if they choose not to use a service, other modes of communication must be utilized. This includes maintaining current bulletin boards, and other modes of communication.

The school administration is responsible for federal and state regulatory compliance with regard to technology use, developing policies and procedures, and addressing parent and/or teacher concerns through clear communication and consistent processes. Administration is also responsible for vetting third party vendors and applications used for curriculum and instruction. Teachers will facilitate classroom discussions about digital citizenship (online privacy, safety, limited screen time, etc.), and instruct students on how to use software and hardware in a safe manner.

As members of the UMCS community, parents/guardians, including classroom coordinators and volunteers, agree to the following:

- Utilize only websites or web-based tools which the teacher has selected for classroom communication (announcements, important dates, images, work at home, etc.)
- Avoid the sharing of personal information (email, address, phone numbers, pictures) of other parents/caregivers and students without prior communication and permission
- Communicate student access issues to teachers
- Support and participate in classroom dialogues and discussions about digital citizenship (online privacy, safety, limited screen time, etc.) towards student learning outcomes
- Respectfully address compliance concerns with teachers and administration

More information will be available throughout the school year.