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Maria Montessori Charter Academy (MMCA)

Parent Orientation Handbook

(For new and returning families of MMCA)

August 2019

Included within this orientation packet you will find information on our back to school “basics”:

- Back to School “basics”:
 - Staff Email Directory
 - PTA
 - School Calendar
 - Bell Schedule
 - School – Home Communication
 - Teacher – Parent Communication
 - Before & After School Childcare
 - Drop-off / Pick-up Procedure
 - Volunteers
 - Carpools
 - Community Code of Conduct
 - Safe and Caring Schools Program
 - Uniform Policy & Enforcement
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 - Electronic Devices at School

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 - Athletics
 - Garden Docent Program & Outdoor Classroom
 - Art Docent Program
 - After School Enrichment Clubs

August 2019

Dear MMCA Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! On behalf of MMCA, we are excited to get under way, and are looking forward to meeting all of our new families at our “New Parent Information Night” on Thursday, August 22nd at 6:00 p.m. Back to School Night follows from 6:30-7:30 p.m..

Should you have any questions about the contents of this packet, please feel free to contact me at brent@mmcharter.org.

Back to school basics:

The following “back to school basics” is intended as a summary of the basic “nuts and bolts” of the operations of the school. While this should be quite informative for our new families, it should also serve as good reminders for our existing families as well.

2019-2020 Staff Contacts

Executive Director

Mr. Brent Boothby, brent@mmcharter.org

Teaching Staff

Children's House (pre-k)

Mrs. Stefanie Baldonade, sbaldonade@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Melissa McKinnon, mmckinnon@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Yoko McClure, ymcclure@mmcharter.org

Yellow Room (K-1)

Mrs. Carol Royal, croyal@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Saisha Medeiros, smedeiros@mmcharter.org

Purple Room (K-1)

Mrs. Michelle Kelley, mkelley@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Kristen Weiss, kweiss@mmcharter.org

Red Room (2-3)

Mrs. Codi Wibbenhorst, cwibbenhorst@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Jill Wallace, jwallace@mmcharter.org

Blue Room (2-3)

Mrs. Darlene Harper, dharp@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Becky Schmich, bschmich@mmcharter.org

Aqua Room (4-5)

Mrs. Teresa Halbert, thalbert@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Kristy Mitchell, kmitchell@mmcharter.org

Coral Room (4-5)

Mrs. Chrystee Boothby, chrystee@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Laura Crouch, lcrouch@mmcharter.org

Orange Room (6)

Mrs. Julie Cohodes, johodes@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Adrienne Garcia, agarcia@mmcharter.org

Green Room 1 (7-8)

Mrs. Emily Jennings, ejennings@mmcharter.org
Ms. Sarah Oslick, soslick@mmcharter.org

Green Room 2 (7-8)

Ms. Hannah Guy, hannahg@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Alison Watkins, awatkins@mmcharter.org

Support Staff

Business Manager Secretary/Office Manager Webmaster

Ms. Denise Thorman, dthorman@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Cynthia Brown, cbrown@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Tamara Fernandes, tfernandes@mmcharter.org

School Custodians

Mr. Jason Mikels, jasonm@mmcharter.org
Mr. Jason Mitchell, jmitchell@mmcharter.org

Intervention Teacher RSP Teacher Speech Teacher School Psychologist Occupational Therapist Adaptive PE

Mrs. Jennifer Solinsky, jsolinsky@mmcharter.org
Ms. Carrie Kurpershoek, ckurpershoek@mmcharter.org
Ms. Stephanie Catalano, scatalano@schoolstepsinc.com
Ms. Coralie Wegner, cwegner@schoolstepsinc.com
Ms. Rachel Norton, Rachel@babystepstherapy.com
Mr. Mike Jensen, mjensen@placercoe.k12.ca.us

Before/After Care Program And/Or Lunch Supervision

Mr. Ray Baldonade, rbaldonade@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Shelley Houdesheldt, shoudesheldt@mmcharter.org
Mrs. Natalie Aldridge
Ms. Kelly Masters
TBD

- **MMCA's PTA:**

- The PTA is the main organization at MMCA that plans our community events and fundraisers.
- One of the main goals of the PTA is to bring the school community together to raise money for activities and programs not fully funded by the school and to increase and strengthen volunteer participation. For more information, please contact the PTA President Melissa Curle at mellsellshomes@comcast.net and visit the PTA link on the MMCA website.

- **School calendar:**

- The one page school calendar for the year is available on our website at this link: <http://www.mmcharter.org/school-calendar>
- Want to know what's happening at MMCA? Please check our Google-based "activities calendar" located at this link on our website: <http://www.mmcharter.org/school-calendar>

- **Bell schedule:**

- School starts promptly at 8:30 a.m.
- On Minimum Days, K-8th grade bell schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- On Mondays, K-8th grade bell schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- On Tuesdays – Fridays:
 - Kindergarten: 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 - 1st – 8th grade: 8:30 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.
 - Lunch recess / Lunch schedule (note: no lunch on Minimum Days)
 - K-1st grade: 11:15 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
 - 2nd-5th grade: 11:45 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.
 - 6th – 8th grade: 12:15 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.

- **School - Home Communications**

- Office hours: The MMCA Front Office is open from 8:10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. every school day.
- Friday Flyers: At the end of each school week, we will send (via email) a weekly flyer about news and activities going on at the school.
- E-blasts: We will electronically distribute via mass email our *Flyers* and any other announcements that we want to get out to all of our families via our Google Apps distribution list. Simultaneously, we will also post our electronic communications to both our website and our Facebook page. If you have not been receiving our electronic communications, please send an email to our mmca@mmcharter.org account with the subject line "subscribe" and we will add your address. (Please check your spam folder/settings to make sure messages are delivered to your inbox.)

- Google Activities Calendar: Our Google calendar on our website lists all of our upcoming and on-going activities. If you would like a school activity added to the school calendar, please email Mrs. Brown at cbrown@mmcharter.org.
- **MMCA Communications Pathway policy**
 - The MMCA Communications Pathway policy is available for viewing at this link: http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_52899ec3ebc94844ae80f4ce0b225c4a.pdf
 - **Teacher – Parent Communication**
 - Teacher – parent communication occurs on multiple levels, including:
 - Notes home;
 - Via e-mail;
 - Class websites; and
 - Teachers are also available to communicate with parents **after pick-up is finished** (approximately 15 minutes after the dismissal bell).
- **Before & After Care Update:**
 - Before / After Care (B/A Care) will continue to be based in our Library, utilizing other facilities around campus as well.
 - B /A Care is available to K-8th grade students from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. For questions about the program, please contact our B/A Care Director Ray Baldonade at rbaldonade@mmcharter.org. Updated registration paperwork for our B/A Care program is now available both on the website <http://www.mmcharter.org/blank-mw9kc> and in the front office.
- **Drop-off / Pick-up Procedure:**

Safety is our number one concern when it comes to drop off and pick up. For us to ensure your child’s safety, please follow these basic parking lot etiquette guidelines:

 - There is only **one** lane of traffic coming down the long driveway.
 - The Pre-school loop is not to be used to “cut” in front of other cars waiting.
 - Pre-school parents: To ensure safety, **NO LEFT TURNS** from the preschool drop-off area; please proceed through the parking lot as you exit.
 - If you see a “hole” in the loading/unloading zone, this does not mean that you can go around cars in front of you to get that spot. Please use common courtesy and wait your turn.
 - The right hand lane (closest to the curb) is the only lane that we will allow kids to get into / out of cars from. This is the pick-up/drop-off lane. You are never to leave your car unattended when parked in this lane. **PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK CROSSWALKS!**
 - The left hand lane in the school parking lot is the drive-thru lane for parking purposes. For safety reasons, it is not the “hurry up and get in the car to bypass the long line” lane. Please use this lane if you are going to **PARK** your vehicle to drop-off / pick-up your child. Note: The church parking lot is available for MMCA parents during our school day or events at night.

- There are two cross walks for a reason, and we require everyone to use them. It's very important that the cross walk is used, and please hold the hands of the little ones, as they are hard to see over the hoods of cars. Please help us keep you and your family safe and use the cross walks at all times.
- If at all possible, please have your child load and unload from the passenger side, so that there are no accidents.
- We ask that you drive all the way up to the next car in the unloading/loading zone so that we can get more kids in and out of their cars. Teachers and parent volunteers will be on the sidewalk directing traffic during student pick-up, so please follow their lead.
- FYI MMCA Families: We are going to be offering "two for one" on volunteer hours for families volunteering to help us with drop-off / pick-up this year.

- **Volunteers**

- MMCA requests 40 hours per family of volunteering each year. Volunteer hours can be contributed in several ways, including:
 - Helping out in the classrooms;
 - Driving on field trips;
 - Assisting one of our parent groups (PTA, Board of Directors, Community Garden Committee, Art Docent, etc.) with one of their activities;
 - Helping one of our after school clubs or athletic teams;
 - Doing clerical work for the teachers at home;
 - Assisting with drop-off / pick-up

Parent Information Night will be the first of many opportunities to sign up to volunteer for one of these (and several more) activities. During the Back to School Night portion will likewise be an opportunity to sign up for most of our classroom specific volunteer opportunities.

- **Carpools**

- One of the "unique" characteristics of MMCA is that we have families that come from all over the area, ranging from Auburn to Sacramento. For any families looking for carpooling opportunities, we will publish your information in our flyers / newsletters / e-blasts to help assist you in finding a carpool. If you're interested in having a carpool request published, please contact Mrs. Brown in the office at cbrown@mmcharter.org.

MMCA Community Code of Conduct

MMCA has a detailed Community Code of Conduct, available on our website here: <http://www.mmcharter.org/important-info-forms>.

The policies that you will find within our Community Code of Conduct include:

1) MMCA Communication Pathways Policy (est. 2005)

2) Student-related policies, including:

- MMCA Student Discipline Policy;
- Student use of Technology Policy, including Electronic Devices;

- MMCA Extra Curricular Activities Student Code of Conduct;
- Healthy Lunch & Food Policy
- Playground Protocols
- Student Uniform Policy

3) Parent-related policies, including:

- Volunteer Commitment Policy;
- Visitor & Classroom Observer Guidelines;
- Parents as “spectators” at School-related events Policy;
- Field Trip Agreement to Transport;
- M.M.C.A. Events Policy (rev 2007)
- After School Extra-curricular Activity Leader Policy

Safe and Caring Schools Program

MMCA uses the Safe and Caring Schools Program (<http://www.safeandcaringschools.com>). This is a character education-based program that emphasizes teaching student skills and traits that fit within our Montessori philosophy, including conflict resolution, the ‘golden rule’, and personal responsibility.

Uniform Policy & Enforcement

MMCA’s Uniform Policy has three primary purposes: behavior management, equality and convenience for parents. A copy of the *school uniform policy* is available here:

http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_f8c2ffe62ee94ff3be48e88e101f9277.pdf

How will this uniform policy be enforced?

Students who violate the uniform policy will face an escalating set of consequences, including:

- 1) Having to wear clothes provided by staff from our Community Care clothes closet;
- 2) A uniform non-compliance note being sent home to parents;
- 3) Contacting parents to bring in uniform compliant clothes

I instruct my staff to focus primarily on the “base” tops and bottoms of what the kids are wearing (i.e., solid colored, non logo, blue, green or white tops and navy blue or khaki bottoms, regardless of style).

Free dress days, spirit days, etc.

We will have several “free dress” and spirit days (both school-wide and classroom-related) throughout the year. A calendar of the prescheduled “free dress” days will be published on our website. The first scheduled “free dress day” will be August 23, 2019.

- ***Where to buy school uniform clothes?***

We partner with All Awards in Carmichael for our school specific apparel provider. Their order form is available at our School Store website - <http://www.mmcharter.org/store>. We are able to place ‘bulk orders’ with All Awards approximately 5x per year (they prefer not to process individual orders).

- A couple times per year we will host a “used uniforms” clothing exchange.

Field Trip Basics

As a “hands on” learning program that believes in experiential learning, our classroom field trips are an integral part of our program. In order to do our field trips, we rely on parental support for both chaperoning and transportation. Please read our Field trip policy below for information on how to become a field trip driver and the “field trip driver commitment policy.” Returning families: Before you can drive on a field trip, we need an updated copy of your DMV print out and current proof of insurance. Please contact Mrs. Brown in the office if you have any questions (cbrown@mmcharter.org).

An electronic copy of our Field Trip Driver policy is available here: http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_1153eaf638dc48a0aae6b027c97b9c85.pdf. The key components of the policy are:

Field Trip Drivers Check List and Reminders

1. I have signed and returned the Agreement to Transport Students.
2. I have turned in my DMV printout.
3. I have turned in a copy of my Driver’s License and Insurance.

I must:

- Use car seats required for all students under 6 years of age and 60 pounds. (to be provided by parent)
- Follow all speed limits
- Drive directly to and from the destinations (no stops)
- Follow the path designated by the teacher staying between the lead and rear teacher
- Have my gas tank filled prior to leaving with students
- Not include siblings
- Under no circumstances buy/give the students snacks or beverages
- Not conduct personal or business cell phone calls
- Be flexible
- Make every effort to avoid cancelling the day of the trip

Hot Lunch

MMCA is partnering with Revolution Foods this year to provide hot lunch options for our students. Ordering information, pricing, free or reduced lunch eligibility applications and more is posted on our website's "hot lunch" page <https://www.mmcharter.org/hot-lunch> .

Medication

If your child has a medical condition that requires either over-the-counter or prescription medication, the M.M.C.A. Office Team will be happy to dispense medication to your child. ALL Medication is stored in a locked cabinet in the MMCA office. AT NO TIME ARE STUDENTS ALLOWED TO POSSESS THEIR OWN MEDICATION. Before medication can be dispensed, parents need to give us a doctor's note about the medication and fill out our Medication Dispensing form, included here http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_a5e6f288c15d471c9639b2522d364d68.pdf

Electronic devices at school:

MMCA has an electronic devices policy that basically says students are not allowed to use electronic devices like cell phones, MP3 players and gaming consoles when they are on school grounds.

How will this policy be enforced?

I recognize that a lot of our kids, regardless of age levels, will have these devices, in particular cell phones. As long as they stay in their backpacks, there will be no issue. Students who need to call their parents will be allowed to do so via school phones. Parents: If you need to communicate with your child(ren), please do so by calling the school and not your child(ren)'s phone. If students are seen overtly violating this policy, it will be enforced. Enforcement may include parent phone calls, detention of the item, etc.

Supplemental Program Information included below:

- Watch DOGS
- Athletics
- Community Garden & Outdoor Classroom
- Art Docent Program
- After School Enrichment Clubs

MMCA's Watch DOGS Program

This is our seventh year participating in the Watch DOGS Program (DOGS = "Dads of Great Students" – national program website: <http://www.fathers.com/watchdogs/>). Our goal this year is to have a volunteer dad on campus for just about every school day after Labor Day. We're going to be having an Informational Meeting about the Program soon. For questions about Watch DOGS, please contact Denise Thorman at dthorman@mmcharter.org.

After School Athletics (MMCA competes in the Sierra Foothill League for Middle Schools):

Fall Sports:

Cross Country (4th- 8th grade boys & girls)
Boys Flag Football (6th – 8th grade)
Girls Basketball (6th – 8th grade)

Winter Sports:

Girls Soccer (6th – 8th grade)
Boys Basketball (6th – 8th grade)

Spring Sports:

Girls Volleyball (6th – 8th grade)
Boys Soccer (6th – 8th grade)

MMCA Community Garden and Outdoor Classroom

- Part of the core tenets of the Montessori Methodology is meaningful work within a hands-on, experiential learning process. Our outdoor classroom and garden is one of the unique ways we do this. Each grade level receives regular Garden Docent lessons each month. We will be recruiting parents to be Garden Docents within the first couple weeks of the school year. For more information, please visit the Garden's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/MMCAGarden>

MMCA Art Docent Program

- The Art Docent Program provides a sequential, interactive education in art history and artistic skills for school children. It is taught by volunteers called "docents" who are led by a coordinator or "head docent". This year, our head docent is Dana Loschiavo. Our goal is that every classroom has one or two art docents. If you are interested in becoming an art docent in your child's classroom, please contact Dana at d.t.loschiavo@gmail.com

After School Enrichment Clubs

- MMCA is pleased to announce that we're looking to enhance our after school student enrichment opportunities. First, our After School Enrichment Programs Coordinator will be Mr. Baldonade (rbaldonade@mmcharter.org). Second, in addition to past student clubs like Chess Club, Science Club, Choir Club, Arts & Crafts Club, Early Engineers Club, etc., we are looking to expand our club offerings, at minimum by adding drama and martial arts clubs. If you are interested in leading a club activity, please contact Mr. Baldonade.