FAMILY HANDBOOK
SY 2019-2020

R. Rodriguez, PhD – Executive Director and Head of School
Anthony King, Esq, Chair, Board of Directors
Welcome from the Executive Director & Head of School

July 15, 2019

Dear Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS Families,

Welcome to Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School. I am thrilled that we are beginning our eighth year of operations as an accredited, public Montessori program in Washington, DC serving over 300 students in prekindergarten through sixth grade. We will be adding a fifth Lower Elementary classroom (Rigoberta Menchu Stars), and expanding our dual language program, Primary classrooms, and expanding our own after school program (Montessori Afterschool Program or MAPs-EduVenture).

At Shining Stars Montessori Academy, our mission is to offer a quality Montessori Program with culturally inclusive principles to guide children to develop to their fullest potential. Our promise is to educate the whole child.” Montessori education has been in practice for over a century, and is characterized by multi-age classrooms, special materials used for instruction, morning and afternoon uninterrupted work cycles, student ‘choice of work’, collaborative work between students, and individual and small group instruction. Language and mathematics instruction and assessments during the uninterrupted work cycles are aligned with the District of Columbia Common Core Standards. Science, Social studies/Humanities, the Visual and Performing Arts, World Language, and Health & Fitness are also aligned with the national standards for that area of learning in the curriculum.

We are pleased that you are a part of our Montessori school community. As partners, we will work together to ensure your child’s academic, social, and emotional growth and prepare your son or daughter to be a successful individual, active community member, and responsible global citizen. The 2019-2020 Family Handbook supports our partnership by giving you important information about Shining Stars Montessori Academy policies, operations, procedures and academic programs. Everything from the school’s guidelines for celebrating student birthdays to our policies about student discipline and attendance is outlined here.

Finally, in order to know that you have received this 2019-2020 Family Handbook, you will need to sign the Acknowledgement Form, the SSMA Code of Conduct & Parent Contract and submit them all to the Front Office. If you have any questions regarding any section of the Handbook, please feel free to contact me or call the office at 202-723-1467.

Looking forward to a wonderful year (Esperando un año maravilloso).

Go Stars!

Sincerely,

Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia
Executive Director & Head of School
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Family Handbook SY 2019-2020
OUR MISSION

The Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School (SSMA) mission is to offer a quality Montessori education infused with culturally-inclusive principles, to guide children to develop to their fullest potential.

Living Our Mission: Growing a Culturally-Inclusive Montessori Public Charter School

Creating a “culturally-inclusive classroom” means that Shining Stars staff will be intentional about our environmental design, educational practices, and behavior modeling to ensure a true cultural competency within the community. Materials will be familiar to students, while also expanding their exposure to cultures around the world. Books on the shelves of the in-class libraries will reflect the ethnicities and cultures of our families, while also presenting children from a variety of backgrounds as heroes and heroines of their own stories.

A culturally-inclusive Montessori school across all classrooms is one where Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS students, staff and the parent community recognize, appreciate and capitalize on diversity so as to enrich the overall learning experience. Fostering a culturally-inclusive learning environment encourages all individuals – regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or political beliefs – to develop personal contacts and effective intercultural skills. Cognitive development, perspective-taking, critical thinking skills, academic achievement, and problem-solving skills are among the outcomes that researchers have consistently noted in studies about the effects of inclusive pedagogy and curricula. Accordingly, engaging in meaningful discussions about racial/ethnic, gender, religious, and socioeconomic differences, as well as privilege in all its forms, affords students opportunities to think critically about topics to which they previously had not been exposed. When faculty interweave multicultural perspectives into classroom discourse, students can challenge preconceived notions and learn about the unique knowledge that their peers of diverse backgrounds hold and bring to the classroom.

Shining Stars seeks to transform education for children ages 3-12 in the District of Columbia utilizing the Montessori approach to education that highlights cultural empowerment principles as the foundation for improving academic outcomes for students. We hope that the empowering educational experience at Shining Stars Montessori Academy will instill in our students a strong sense of personal identity, independence, respect for self and others, confidence, and an understanding of social justice and responsibility.
OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Our educational focus is derived from the Montessori Method of instruction. Montessori education has been in practice for over 100 years and is characterized by multi-age classrooms, special materials used for instruction, work periods that span long time blocks, student choice of work, individual and small group instruction, and collaborative work.

Montessori education is the education of the whole child. Maria Montessori believed that education begins at birth and continues through four subsequent stages of development from childhood to adulthood. Each stage of development is distinct in terms of characteristics and needs. From birth, human beings are in the process of adaptation to their surroundings and are engaged in a unique self-construction of personality. The first two planes of development are encompassed in childhood (birth to 12), during which a child undergoes the process of self-construction through work. The work of the child is done in a scientifically designed and carefully prepared environment. The guide’s (teacher’s) role in the environment (classroom) is to link the child to the materials in the environment. All of the materials used by the child are specifically designed to facilitate this process of self-construction. The teacher will observe the child’s work and make any necessary interventions or adjustments to ensure the child’s continuous development and active education.

Over the last 100 years, the Montessori approach to education has been quietly revolutionizing children’s learning. Started by Maria Montessori in 1907 Rome, the Montessori Method has continuously educated children the world over. Dr. Montessori had a vision that world peace and the eradication of war should be the ultimate aim of human endeavors and she believed wholeheartedly that every child could be an agent of change for peace in the world. She believed that all living things had a role to play, a “cosmic task”, so to speak, and that by nurturing the spirits and intellects of children, we could unlock this potential hidden deep within them, and thereby positively affecting our collective future. Many of her discoveries are being confirmed today by research being done on brain development.

According to Dr. Steven Hughes, a pediatric neuropsychologist and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, “Montessori education is a brain-based, developmental method that allows children to make creative choices in discovering people, places and knowledge of the world. It is hands-on learning, self-expression, and collaborative play in a beautifully crafted environment of respect, peace and joy … and it is ... the best brain-based model of education.”

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1 See: AMI/USA News: Parenting for a New World, January 2009, Vol. XVIII, No. 1
OUR BELIEFS

- Every child can benefit from a Montessori education.
- Cultural empowerment is an essential part of meeting the emotional needs of children.
- Children are naturally curious and creative.
- Children learn in different ways and at different paces.
- Children must be treated with respect.
- Children learn best through hands-on experiences, real-world application and problem-solving.
- Children need to be allowed to develop a high degree of functional independence and autonomy.
- Movement is essential to learning.
- The child benefits most when schools and families work together.
- School should be a joyful experience and foster the child’s love of learning.
- Children are the hope for humankind.
- Montessori is an education for life.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We will work to stimulate the growth of the whole child by following the natural developmental cycles of human beings.
- We will encourage children to follow their own individual interests as they learn at their own pace.
- We will provide multi-age classrooms to facilitate and encourage individualized learning.
- Shining Stars will be a place that provides an uninterrupted work cycle in which learning can occur.
- We will encourage collaboration between the teacher and the child.
- We will organize the child’s activities and learning according to their social development.
- We will encourage the child to be motivated and rewarded by his/her own individual achievement.
- We will promote the child’s ability to find out and do things for him/herself through manipulation of the materials (auto-education), leading to his or her functional independence.
- We will encourage the development of positive self-image through specialized culture-based learning activities and materials. We will promote and encourage parental development and involvement.
- We will provide a loving, secure, and ordered place for every child.
- We will provide trained and responsive staff.
- We will promote and encourage self-discipline and conflict resolution strategies.
- We will provide the opportunities for and encourage, purposeful movement, leading to the refining of fine and gross motor skills.
OUR SCHOOL SONG

We All See the Stars

Verse 1: Rays of Light through the clouds below. Feel its warmth and see its glow. All were given this gift and so we’re equally here to equally grow.

Chorus: Are you greater than the sun that shines on everyone? No matter who you are, we all see the stars Black, brown, yellow, red and white, the sun does not discriminate. No matter who you are, we all see the stars. We all see the stars. We all see the stars.

Verse 2: Babies are born every day. All colors of the human race. Teach them love and show the way. For one day they will take our place.

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2 The song is a sweet, thought-provoking yet powerful song published in April 2015 by World Unity, Inc. and Sarah Ting. Lyrics are by John Cambriello.
SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Location and Mailing Address: 1240 Randolph Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017
School Telephone & Fax Phone: (202) 723-1467 - Fax: (202) 723-0097

Campus Description

Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS is located in the Brookland neighborhood (Ward 5) of Washington, DC. The school is a multi-level (4), 28,000 square foot brick building built in the early 1980’s with a multipurpose room/auditorium, lower level library space, interior courtyard, exterior play and gardening space. Light renovation of the building began in September 2016.

School Website & Social Media Channels:
Website: [www.shiningstarspcs.org](http://www.shiningstarspcs.org)  
Twitter: [Twitter.com/SSMontessoriDC](https://twitter.com/SSMontessoriDC)  
Facebook: Shining Stars Montessori Academy  
YouTube Channel: [Shining Stars Montessori Academy](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo6d1DPF9gK1jZ0nBjI0QDw)

School Hours

**Before School/Kids Club @ SSMA Early Risers Program Hours**  7:00am – 8:15am

Note: The SSMA before school/early risers program dubbed “SuperKids/Early Riser Club” is open to all enrolled students. Service will be available on the first day of school. Parents must register through parent portal. Parents must register and pay fees for our Super Kids Club directly to Active Network, our account management service.

Day Program: Primary (1/2 day PreK 3 students only)  8:30am – 1:30pm
Day Program: Primary (PK3, PK4 & KG)  8:30am – 3:15pm
Day Program: Elementary Students (grades 1 -6)  8:30am – 3:30pm

**After School Hours & Montessori After School Program (MAP)**  3:30pm - 6:00pm

1. All after school programs end promptly at 6:00pm. SSMA MAP will assess fees accordingly, based on our program’s policy. Late fees are assessed at $1.00/per minute after 6:05pm.
2. Students, who have been absent from the school during the day program, are not eligible to attend Montessori After School Program (MAP) and/or any other programs offered after-school.
3. The school reserves the right to contact parents/guardians to pick up their child/children from MAP or Extended-Learning Programs due to behavior or disciplinary issues. Repeated violations of the school’s Grace and Courtesy goals/culture (and Code of Conduct) may result in your child being withdrawn or suspended from the MAP and/or Extended-Learning programs for a period of time without refund.

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3 Parents choosing this option must 1) have designated this on their enrollment application. For those who did not wish to do so through the course of the school year, you must 1) notify the Guide a week before initiating a change in the child/student’s schedule, and 2) notify the school’s Front Desk Manager following your notification of the Guide.
4. If you have any questions regarding the SuperKids Club@ SSMA /Early Rise Care Program and/or MAP afterschool programs, please contact the MAP Co-Director, Ms. Tais Taylor (see staff directory).

Classroom Names

Since our founding, Shining Stars Montessori Academy has set a standard of naming each classroom after notable individuals who have distinguished themselves in the service of others and/or in their field or endeavor. Our classrooms are named as follows:

Primary Classrooms (Pre K 3 - Kindergarten):
Dr. Maria Montessori Stars Cesar Chavez Stars
Mohandas Gandhi Stars Nelson Mandela Stars
Dr. Maya Angelou Stars Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Stars
Mary McLeod-Bethune Stars

Elementary Classrooms (Lower & Upper-Grades 1 - 6):
James Baldwin Stars Helen Keller Stars
Dr. Wangari Maathai Stars Justice Thurgood Marshall Stars
Josephine E Baker Stars Langston Hughes Stars
Rigoberta Menchu Tum Stars (New class for SY 19-20)

The school’s primary meeting and community assembly space is the Barack H. Obama Auditorium located on the first floor. The W.E. B. DuBois Library (1st floor) and Alfredo Schoenberg Library (lower level) are other spaces reserved for group assembly and/or instruction.
ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING

Shining Stars is a fully and dually accredited (PK3-6th grade) Montessori public charter school by the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Middle States Association - Council on Elementary & Secondary Schools. SSMA is the sole AMS-accredited school in the District of Columbia and one of only 11 public charter Montessori schools accredited by the AMS in the USA. All Montessori guides and classroom assistants are either AMS or AMI trained and certified. Classroom assistants are all certified by AMS (Barrie Institute), AMI (Loyola University) or a MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) approved programs.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The charter leader for SSMA is Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia, Executive Director & Head of School. She is responsible for overseeing all academic, operations, personnel fiscal, and external school policies and practices. The SSMA instructional leader is Mrs. Gail Jenkins.

Board of Directors

Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS is a non-profit corporation 501(c)(3) with an appointed Board of Directors. The Board of Directors plays a key role in setting forth the vision of the school and ensuring the school’s mission is fulfilled. The Board, as the governing body of Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS, selects, evaluates and supports the Executive Director; provides strategic direction for the school; and ensures the adequate financial resources and legal compliance. The Executive Director also serves as an ex-officio (al) member of the Board.

Board members:
Anthony King, Esq. - Chair & Treasurer
Kamal Wright-Cunningham, PhD - Vice-President
Aldel Brown
Willa Golden
Teisha Harris (Parent)
Tatiana Laborde (Parent)
Shawn Samuel
Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia (ex-officio)
### STAFF LISTING & CONTACT INFORMATION 2019-2020

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<tr>
<td>Doris Akintimehin</td>
<td>School Nurse&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole Austin</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant - Primary (Kindergarten)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mareillas Barrios</td>
<td>Dual Language Spanish Teacher - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frances Brooks</td>
<td>Director of English Language Learner Programs/Director of Culture &amp; Climate Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bettina Brown</td>
<td>Montessori Teaching Fellow /Co-Guide - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julius Brown</td>
<td>Dedicated Instructional Aide/Health &amp; Wellness Associate (Dayu Program &amp; MAP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ronelda Brown</td>
<td>Co-Lead Guide - Upper Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marcus Browning</td>
<td>Custodian Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaneka Bush</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darryl Buxton</td>
<td>Director of Special Education Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aja Campbell</td>
<td>Children &amp; Youth Services Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raquel Clark</td>
<td>Program Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rokhaya Cisse</td>
<td>Dedicated Aide &amp; Behavioral Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aldith Coleman</td>
<td>Cafe &amp; Food Services Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ansia Dial</td>
<td>Health &amp; Wellness Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerry Muhammad-Espinoza</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant - Lower Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delton Fontroy</td>
<td>Elementary Programs Coordinator/Lead Guide - Lower Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanessa Guardado</td>
<td>Dual Language Spanish Teacher - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherita Moore-Gause</td>
<td>Director of Operations &amp; School Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry Gray</td>
<td>Learning Specialist &amp; MAP Associate</td>
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<sup>4</sup> Staff listing is as of 6/14/2019. All staff emails are comprised of the initial of the first name and the full last name followed by @shiningstarspcs.org (e.g., Mr. James McGriff would be jmcgriff@shiningstarspcs.org).

<sup>5</sup> The contact email for the school’s nurse is nurse@shiningstarspcs.org.
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<td>Shaka Green</td>
<td>Co-Lead Guide - Elementary/Co-Director MAP</td>
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<td>Barbara Giordano</td>
<td>Front Desk Receptionist - Afternoon</td>
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<td>Jose Guevara</td>
<td>Operations Associate</td>
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<td>Antonio Hagans</td>
<td>Custodian</td>
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<td>Bessie Hubbard</td>
<td>Program Assistant</td>
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<td>Louise Kelley</td>
<td>Senior Reading &amp; Writing Specialist</td>
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<td>Sandra Larios</td>
<td>Bilingual Teaching Assistant - Primary</td>
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<td>Maurice ‘Mo’ Jackson</td>
<td>Montessori Teaching Fellow &amp; Co-Guide - Primary</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Jean</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant - Lower Elementary</td>
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<td>Principal</td>
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<td>Director of Student Support Services</td>
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<td>Natasha Johnson</td>
<td>Program Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Kelley</td>
<td>Senior Reading &amp; Writing Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanya Kornegay</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant - Lower Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kellie Matthews</td>
<td>Lead Guide - Lower Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>James McGriff</td>
<td>Senior Program Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenon Mitchell</td>
<td>Program Assistant &amp; MAP Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erma Molina</td>
<td>Lead Guide - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jose Muniz, Jr.</td>
<td>Bilingual Teaching Assistant - Lower Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aminat Onafuwa</td>
<td>Lead Guide - Lower/Upper Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nina Ouzounova</td>
<td>Lead Guide - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allie Petrone</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zufan Reddae</td>
<td>Bilingual Teaching Assistant (Floater - Amharic) - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia</td>
<td>Executive Director &amp; Head of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilara Schulman</td>
<td>Lead Guide - Primary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS
Shining Stars will follow DCPS for school closings and delays due to inclement weather or other emergencies. The school also reserves the right to implement a closing, delay or early dismissal at our discretion. Please check the major local TV and radio stations, as well as your email for information. Parents will be alerted about closings, delays and early dismissals via the school’s Send Word Now emergency alert system. The system is used to transmit emergency information to all school community members via email and cell phone. Please make sure that the school has your correct phone numbers and email address at all times.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS
The News & Notes is published weekly and provides parents with up-to-date information on school events and operations. Periodically we will issue a “Message from the Executive Director” on items of particular import to our school community. In the event of an emergency, parents are contacted using the One Call Now cell phone/email emergency messaging system.

SECURITY AND ACCESS TO THE BUILDING
Visitors/guests/vendors: During school hours, all visitors (i.e., to include but not limited to the following: guests, vendors, contractors, other external agency personnel or non-SSMA staffers, etc.) must ring the doorbell and wait to be admitted. You will be asked to sign in and out when visiting the school. All guests and contractors are required to wear a ‘VISITOR’ pass at all times when in the building beyond the Reception Desk.

Contractors and vendors must show proper identification, and leave this ID with the front desk before proceeding into the building. Additionally, the visitor’s ID will be kept at the front desk while s/he is visiting at the school and can be picked up at the conclusion of the visit. Visitors will not be allowed beyond the front desk unless accompanied by a SSMA staffer.

PARKING
There is on-street parking for visitors, parents and staff on Randolph Street and 13th St NE.

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6 Parking in the Shining Stars Montessori Academy parking lot(s) on Randolph and the 13th St. side of the building are reserved for staff and persons with disabilities or instances requiring parking assistance.
Please park in front or next to the school (school side) and not across on the residential side. **Also, please do not park in any of the neighbors’ driveways.**

Please also be aware that between the hours of 7am-9am and 3pm-5pm, there is **NO PARKING** allowed in front of the school on Randolph Street. MPD will ticket if you park during these times.

**ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT**

**Application**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy is open and tuition-free to residents of the District of Columbia. In order to apply for admission to Shining Stars Montessori Academy (for PK3), a child must turn three years of age by September 30th. Applications may be found on the My School DC website: www.MySchoolDC.org.

**Enrollment Policies**

Preference: According to D.C. Charter Law, siblings of currently enrolled students receive preference in the admissions process. The new sibling must have an application submitted by the advertised deadline for consideration in the lottery. Additionally, Shining Stars may give preference to the children of full-time staff members, board members and school founders, in accordance with federal regulations. Lastly, students who must withdraw from Shining Stars due to a parent’s job relocation or some other urgent family matter may be allowed to re-enroll within two years pending the Executive Director’s approval and seat availability. Re-enrollment is not guaranteed, but may be granted on a case by case basis.

Re-Enrollment: Families of current students must submit a letter of intent to re-enroll for the next academic year. An online form will be emailed and a hard copy will be available in the Main Office. Intent to re-enroll must be submitted by the advertised deadline or the student’s spot will be forfeited and s/he must enter the lottery application process through My School DC.

**Family And Guide “Meet And Greet”**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy continues a tradition began in SY 14-15 of Family/Student “Meet & Greets” at the start of the school year. Families are welcome to visit their child’s class to meet other families, students, and staff at the date and time listed below. This year, families are invited to the Obama Room to gather for our “Parent Breakfast” on Friday, August 30, 2019. This event is co-sponsored with the Parent Community Association.

**Open Houses**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy hosts open houses throughout the school year to recruit new families. One of the best ways to share information about our school is via parent advocates. If
you are interested in talking to prospective parents we hope that you will sign up when we request volunteers. You may contact the front desk for additional information on volunteering.

SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Shining Stars is a school with high academic standards that promotes a ‘culture of attendance’. In order for your child to have a complete Montessori experience we need to maximize the use of instructional time. Being late and absent puts the child’s development and subsequent academic performance in jeopardy. The ability to ensure that the child arrives on time and attends school consistently will help us to create a truly rich and meaningful school culture. It draws unnecessary attention to your child when s/he is tardy and may make him/her feel uncomfortable entering an already established, working environment.

We understand that there will be occasions when you need to pick up your child early for a doctor’s appointment or other obligation. To ensure that your child is ready, please send an electronic email or send a note in the Blue Bag to the classroom teacher letting them know the time that you will be picking up your child. Similarly, please contact the Receptionist to inform the school of your child’s early dismissal. When you arrive at school, please sign your child out at the reception desk. A Shining Stars staff member will escort your child to the main lobby. Shining Stars expects that a child will miss school only when an illness requires them to remain at home or in the event of a family emergency.

Arrival and Dismissal

Morning arrival begins promptly at 8:15 am so that children can be in class, ready to work by 8:30 am. Please use 13th Street NE to turn right onto Randolph. 13th Street can be accessed via Michigan Avenue or any street above Quincy. When driving to school, please do not turn onto Randolph from 12th Street. Please make sure your child is on the passenger side of the car so that the staff can safely take the child out of the car. Parents should stay in the car during drop-off to assist with the flow of carpool. After you drop off, please continue West on Randolph and exit via 12th Street. There is no place to make a U-turn.

- Please make every effort to drop your child off at school on time. A delay of just a few minutes is very disruptive and makes it harder for your child to begin his/her day in a peaceful manner.
- Children who arrive after morning arrival concludes at 8:30am have a 5-minute grace period to get to class. After 8:35am children MUST be accompanied into the building by an adult and signed in at the Reception Desk.
- Either a guide or a classroom assistant will be in the hallway to help direct children to their classrooms as necessary and the other adult will be receiving your children in the classroom.
(Depending on preference, or particular scheduled activities guides and CA’s may opt to switch locations during arrival and dismissal times).

- Please encourage/allow your child to walk down to their classroom independently. Your child’s guide is very busy during morning arrival time greeting students and helping them get started on their work. They are not available to discuss specific concerns at this time. Contact your child’s guide in order to schedule an appointment if you have any questions or concerns.

**Making Separation Anxiety-Free**

If your child is new to the school experience she or he may display some separation anxiety during the first couple weeks of school. Please make goodbyes consistent and brief, and know that parting will get easier as time goes on. The staff is prepared to help children with the transition and all adults involved (parents/guardians, person handling drop-off, and school staff) will assure children that they will be fine. It is atypical for a child to cry all day and once involved in the classroom work and social life, your child will settle down and become engaged in the routine of the day.

If your child is experiencing separation anxiety, work closely with your child’s teacher and maintain a positive attitude toward drop off time and keep your goodbye routine short and sweet. It is recommended that goodbyes happen outside or in the lobby so that your child can walk to their classroom independently as soon as possible. This will also lessen the duration and severity of the separation anxiety. There may be some reluctance from your child in returning to school the next day but consistency is a MUST and your child will become more comfortable with the separation as time goes on.

Parents are encouraged to ensure that your child receives a full night’s sleep, and is provided a healthy breakfast prior to their school arrival in order to encourage a successful day of learning. If you require assistance, please contact the school.

**Tardy Policy**

Parents must sign-in late students at the reception desk. Students are considered late after 8:35 am.

Tardiness records will be kept for all students. All parents will be notified of their child’s attendance status at each scheduled Parent-Guide Conference unless the number of tardies requires immediate attention or conference with the Principal prior to that time. Parents are encouraged to notify their child’s guide beforehand of any changes in their schedules that would impact their child’s attendance. Parents will be notified in writing when they are approaching the ‘concerned zone’ (3 or more tardies) and a parent conference will be called for persistent late arrivals (5 or more in one month), by the guide. An SST (i.e., SMART/Star Support Team) meeting may be requested by the Principal if it is deemed necessary.
If your child has five (5) unexcused absences, the school will schedule a family conference to discuss concerns, possible consequences, and a plan of action. In the best interest of the child, students with ten (10) unexcused absences and a failure to comply with the attendance plan of action may result in school communication with the Child and Family Services Agency. Attendance is a major indicator for academic success.

**Excused Absence/Tardy**

If you know your child will be late or absent, please call the reception desk at (202) 723-1467. An excused absence or tardiness must be accompanied with a note. Shining Stars has an online form for absences (Absence Form). You can also submit a handwritten note with your child’s name, date of birth, classroom name and reason for being absent/tardy when your child comes to school. If your child is late/absent due to a medical appointment or illness, the excuse should have the signature of the health care provider or other authorized person in order to be accepted. Your child will not be admitted to school after an absence due to illness unless accompanied by a doctor’s note.

Excused absences are:

1. Death in the student’s immediate family
2. Illness of the student (a doctor’s note is required for a student absent more than three days)
3. Observance of a religious holiday
4. Medical reasons, such as a doctor’s appointment

**Unexcused Tardy/Absences**

If you bring your child to school after 8:35 am, you must sign him/her in at the Reception Desk. Unexcused absences are recorded and will be reported in accordance with the Compulsory Attendance Law of the District of Columbia to the appropriate child-family protection agency.

**Early Pick-Up**

Early dismissals follow the same rules as tardiness. If a student has to leave school early during school hours (this does not include those 3-year old students who are to be dismissed by 1:30 pm), parents/guardians must notify the school in writing or by phone. Parents/guardians must check in at the reception desk to sign the student out. A child will not be released to anyone who has not previously been identified in the student’s file as a guardian or authorized to pick the child up. This person will be required to provide identification whenever requesting release. Parents must notify the school in advance of any change in pick-up arrangements. Staff will bring the child to the front desk.

**Early Dismissal (PK3 Students only)**

Parents are encouraged to pick up 3-year old students by 1:30 pm, if they are not scheduled to

7 Parents of students with 5 or more unexcused absences may be scheduled for attendance at a SST/SMART meeting to discuss how we can partner to better encourage and support student attendance and compliance with DC compulsory attendance laws. SST meetings may also be scheduled for PreK3 and PreK4 students with excessive tardies (>5) and/or unexcused absences.
remain for the full day. You must select the early dismissal option on the enrollment form or submit a request via email to your child’s guide and the front desk receptionist. Parents seeking to change from early dismissal to full day may do so in the month of January. The school does not allow month-to-month changes in the child’s daily schedule.

**Afternoon Dismissal**

Please make sure to arrive no later than the dismissal time. Staff members will wait with your children in the classroom or accompany your child to the dismissal point to await your arrival. In the event that an individual not on your Emergency Contact or Pick-Up Authorization Form needs to pick up your child, please inform the receptionist by phone, email or fax. This individual will need to present photo identification at the reception desk before your child can be released to him/her.

- Primary level student dismissal begins at 3:15pm.
- Lower and Upper Elementary dismissal is at 3:30pm.
- Exceptions are noted below.

**Late Pick-Up Policy**

Students who are not picked up by 3:30 pm will remain with a staff member until s/he is picked up by a parent or guardian. Families arriving for pick-up after 3:35 pm will be charged a late pick-up fee of $1.00 per minute. This fee must be paid in cash, check or credit card at the time of pick up.

**Parents who pick up their children late two (2) or more times will be urged to enroll in the school’s Montessori Afterschool Program (MAP) after-care program immediately.**

We have been alerted that students who are frequently picked up late without proper accommodations should be reported to CFSA for the family’s lack of after school planning. Registering for after care will avoid our need to make such a report. You may want to register ahead of time if you foresee timely pickups being a challenge.

**Please remember:**

Keep your Emergency Contact and Pick-Up Authorization Forms up-to-date. If your child is being picked up by someone else or is going home with another child, we need to have permission from the parents directly via phone, email or fax.
WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN BRING TO SCHOOL

Only at the invitation of the guide can a child bring books, pictures, an artifact, or special items to share.

Please ensure that your child leaves all toys, candy, dolls, gum, toy cars, cell phones, iPads, etc. at home or in your car.

If staff must remove such an item from a child, Shining Stars Montessori cannot guarantee that it will be returned. If staff removes these items, they will remain with them and be sent home at the end of the day. Students may not keep cell phones with them during the school day, or even in their backpacks and/or cubbies. Students must turn them into the front receptionist’s desk upon school arrival and may retrieve the phone at the end of the school day. If parents are in need of contacting their child during the day for an emergency, SSMA requests parents contact the school directly at 202-723-1467.

Cell Phones Check-In

Students are permitted to bring their parent-issued cell phone to school. However, they must turn in their phone into the Front Office upon arriving to school. It can be picked up by the student at the end of the day. Any student who fails to turn in their cell phone and is discovered with it in their possession will have the phone confiscated. All confiscated phones will only be released to the parent or authorized guardian. Parents are required to inform the school if their child will be bringing a cell phone to school. SSMA has a no-cell phone policy.

Technology and Social Media: Digital Citizenship

Students are expected to exemplify the student code of conduct in all interactions. All policies and behavior guidelines that cover student conduct on the school premises and at school-related activities similarly apply to the online environment in those same venues. Students must refrain from bullying and use respectful language and tone with others both on and offline.

Student Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Electronic Services and Technology Resources.

SSMA strongly believes in the educational value of electronic services and recognizes the potential to support curriculum and student learning by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Access to electronic services will enable the older students to access and explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums, and other repositories of information. Families should be aware that some materials accessible via the Internet may contain items that are inappropriate, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. While the purposes of the school’s network are to use electronic resources for constructive educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students from electronic services in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. Ultimately, parents and guardians are
responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Therefore, we support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to allow access.

In compliance with the Federal Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA") as well as safety for our students, SSMA has implemented filtering and/or blocking software to restrict access to Internet sites containing child pornography, obscene depictions, or other materials harmful to our students. If a student sees another user accessing inappropriate sites or engaging in inappropriate communication, he or she should notify a teacher or supervisor immediately.

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will comply with SSMA standards and the specific rules set forth below. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. Further discipline for violation of the Acceptable Use Policy may be imposed in accordance with the Code of Conduct up to and including suspension or expulsion depending upon the degree and severity of the violation. Each student is personally responsible for his or her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources. All students are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

Animals

Students are not allowed to bring animals to school except when authorized by the classroom guide, school nurse, Principal, and/or Executive Director. Please notify the school if your child needs to bring a service animal on campus.

BATHROOM INDEPENDENCE

The Montessori philosophy supports the building of a child’s independence. We strongly encourage all children to be independent of toileting needs by the 1st day of school. Shining Stars Montessori Academy will work cooperatively with you to ensure your child is functionally independent in the bathroom. We do understand that children will have occasional accidents. Therefore, we ask that you send at least two seasonally appropriate changes of clothing, labeled with your child’s name on each article of clothing. We do not allow pull ups or diapers of any kind. If your child has repeated accidents you may be called to bring in extra clothing and/or to change him or her.

All children should be potty-trained upon enrollment.
BREAKFAST/ SNACK AND LUNCH

Shining Stars is a PEANUT-SAFE and TREE NUT-FREE-SAFE school.

We all know that our children learn better when they eat healthy, whole foods. Growing minds and bodies need plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy fats and proteins, and properly prepared whole grains. Many of our families and staff members are passionate about healthy eating habits, and Shining Stars is committed to providing children with access to healthy snacks and meals.

In our classrooms, we will eat together, family-style. Parents have the option of participating in our lunch program. Please check with the office if you are interested in your child receiving school lunch. If you participate in the school’s lunch program, your child can choose among the following:

- Standard (no fish or pork but other meat and dairy could be included in the meal)
- Vegetarian (could include dairy)
- Gluten-free
- Dairy-free

If you do not qualify for free or reduced lunch, the lunch price is $3.57 per day. Invoices will be sent to families towards the end of each month. Payment will be due prior to the start of the month. If payment is not received, the student will have to bring a packed lunch to school. Once payment is received in full, the student may continue their participation in the school lunch program. Payment for school lunch can be made online, at the Receptionist Desk via cash or credit, or a check can be mailed to the school.

For students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, parents do not have to pay for their child’s school lunch.

If you will be preparing your child’s lunch, please support our efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and sustainable living by packing healthy, whole foods. Balance your child’s mid-day meal with foods from a variety of different food groups and help us to minimize waste by using reusable containers and utensils, cloth napkins, and water bottles. Many children react negatively to dyes, artificial flavorings, and other chemicals and additives. Please avoid packing snack or lunch items that contain such items, including partially hydrogenated oils and high fructose corn syrup. Juices, flavored beverages, and candy are discouraged and will not be served to your child.

Also, please be sure to use containers that you know your child can open and close independently. It is always a good idea when you go shopping, to take your child along and have him/her actually try out the items before you purchase them. Enlist your child’s participation in lunch preparation, and eventually, have your child pack his/her own lunch with these guidelines in mind. Please remember that children will not be able to keep their lunches refrigerated and they will not have access to a microwave oven.
Snacks (e.g. fruit, granola bars) will generally be served in the classroom and are available to the children throughout the morning (breakfast is served after 8:30 am) and possibly in the afternoon (1:30 pm – 2:30 pm) work cycles. Snack can be provided individually or within a group setting. Please check with your child’s guide about his/her particular snack routines and how they will be arranging snack time and routines.

CELEBRATIONS AND BIRTHDAYS
“Going Around the Sun”

Within the Montessori Method, a beautiful tradition for celebrating birthdays has evolved: The story of the child’s life is told as s/he walks around a ceremonial sun. Each turn around the sun represents a year of the child’s life. Your child’s guide will ask you for help in preparing for this special event. If you wish, you may send in a special snack in celebration of your child’s special day. **We ask that if you are sending in a special snack, that it be a healthy snack.** Cupcakes, cookies, brownies, juice, etc. will not be served at school. Please check with the principal about healthy snack options. **Please make sure this snack is not excessively sweet and does not contain nuts, artificial dyes or food colors.** Or you may choose to donate a book or a piece of Montessori material to your child’s classroom and/or to the school library. Please check with the guide or school leadership about suggestions for books or for a catalogue of Montessori materials.

If you are hosting a celebration outside the class and inviting some families from school, please be mindful of the impact of such celebrations on class life. Please do not send birthday invitations to school as staff will not be responsible for distributing them. Instead, you are encouraged to send the invitations through the regular mail or via email, out of sensitivity to children not included in the celebration, and to avoid confusion with school-sponsored events. Joyful celebrations should be part of every childhood, and we thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that these celebrations complement our program.

**Please note that birthday parties during the school day are not allowed.**

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Family members may schedule an observation of their child’s class by contacting the guide and/or principal. An adult observer has a unique and special role in a Montessori environment; Shining Stars does not allow “drop-in” observations. Observations should typically take no more than 15-30 minutes. Parents are encouraged to observe their child’s classroom at least once during the school year. New families are strongly encouraged to do classroom observations as part of the new student enrollment process after the class has been normalized.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT
Parent/Guardian Expectations
Parents and guardians are expected to do the following:
1. Adhere to the policies outlined in this Family Handbook.
2. Be knowledgeable of the Montessori model and committed to a Montessori education for your child.
3. Ensure that your child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
4. Support and respect your child’s social, emotional and academic development.
5. Support and respect the school’s redirection efforts for students experiencing difficulty following directions, or expressing negative feelings towards peers and/or staff.
6. Be an active participant in your child’s education to include participation in Parent-Guide conferences (3 per year) and participation in at least two (2) Montessori Academies or curriculum nights each school year.
7. Attend school-wide events.
8. Ensure all parental/guardian and emergency contact information is accurate and updated.
9. Demonstrate professional behavior in line with the Montessori philosophy while on school premises and attending school sponsored events.

All parents and/or guardians are required to sign the school contract in the appendix, acknowledging that they are aware of the SSMA’s conduct and behavior expectations for members of our student and adult community.

COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILD’S GUIDE

We strive to maintain regular and clear communication with families through the Blue Bag, emails and phone calls, all school text messages via One Call Now, an automated communications system. Please check your child’s Blue Bag daily for any communications from the office or your child’s guide. If you have questions, comments or concerns regarding your child’s classroom, please contact the classroom guide via email or by placing a note in the blue bag. Please keep in mind that the guides need to focus their full attention on the children during the school day and will get in touch with you as soon as they are able. If you would like to discuss concerns in detail, please schedule an appointment.

For questions regarding the school or Montessori education, please feel free to contact the Principal (academics@shiningstarspcs.org and/or the Executive Director (rrodriguez@shiningstarspcs.org). We hope that you will join us for the various parent education events and special evenings throughout the year.

DRESS CODE

In following the Montessori philosophy of respect for each child’s individuality and fostering their independence, Shining Stars does not have a formal uniform. However, families must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Students should wear comfortable, seasonally appropriate clothing that they can easily put on and
take off by themselves. Children are not permitted to wear any clothing that contains images of violence, violent characters, costumes or inappropriate subject matter. Shining Stars will not permit children to enter the classroom if they are wearing tops that expose the torso or chest, baggy pants that expose their underwear, undershirts with no covering, or mini-skirts without shorts. The Executive Director and/or her designee will make decisions regarding inappropriate clothing. Additionally, if a child is unprepared for outdoor activities in cold or wet weather, s/he may be required to remain indoors for safety reasons.

2. All students will be required to wear closed-toed, rubber-soled slippers/shoes in the classroom, which should be left in their cubbies at school. Shoes for outdoor use should be closed-toed and the child must be able to put them on and take them off independently (please no laces for children who have not mastered tying). Again, please do not send children in shoes (or apparel) that “can’t get dirty” and/or are too costly to be replaced if lost or damaged. Children are not permitted to wear flip-flops or high-heels. If your child does not have appropriate footwear for outdoor recreation, s/he may be required to remain in the office for safety reasons.

3. Primary students are required to keep at least two changes of clothes at school (please see note about bathroom independence for extra clothes). Elementary students should have one change of clothing at school. All clothing must be labeled to assist in their return. Please review your child’s change of clothes regularly to ensure that it fits and is weather appropriate.

FAMILY EVENTS
Throughout the school year we will be planning different activities to help develop school-community spirit. Families are encouraged to participate in these events and assistance with the planning and organization of events is greatly appreciated. Please check with the front desk and/or School Performance staff (ttaylor@shiningstarspcs.org) for more information.

FIELD TRIPS AND ‘GOING OUT’
Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS is located in the nation’s capital and is surrounded by a multitude of resources to support the learning of our children. Dr. Montessori called for “going out” to be an integral part of the elementary child’s education. A large part of the Elementary Montessori experience is the opportunity to “go out” (a form of expeditionary learning). At Shining Stars, not only are elementary students learning inside the classroom and from books, but they are also learning from what is outside the classroom by engaging in ‘project-based’ learning excursions.

As the younger children spent the Children’s House /Primary years discovering and developing his or her self, the older child spends this time exploring their role in relation to others in the world. Therefore, the ability to “go out” and speak to people who fill different roles in society (bakers, veterinarians, scientists, etc.) is critical to student/child development. In small groups, with adult supervision, the children leave the classroom to find professionals who can answer questions related to their in-class lessons and research. The group then returns to the classroom to share with
their peers. Parent volunteers as chaperones are welcome. Please check with your guide for field trip schedules and other instructions.

The Primary children will occasionally go for nature walks around the neighborhood, work in the Children’s Garden and will engage in a variety of performances that will be ‘bring the outside’ into the school for our youngest learners. This is scheduled on a monthly basis. Parents are welcome and encouraged to join us during these times.

**FUNDRAISING**

Shining Stars Montessori is a public charter school and non-profit organization, that relies principally on our per pupil allotment and fundraising to bridge the gap between public revenues and the cost of a Montessori education. Money raised through fundraising supports:

- Montessori classroom materials
- Physical and programmatic support
- Gardening program
- Expanding the school and classroom libraries
- Teacher training and faculty development
- Field Trips (to include NY Montessori Model UN and 6th Grade Study Tour)
- Capital Expenses

**The Shining Stars Montessori Fund**

Donations to the SSMA Montessori Fund support the activities listed above. Contributions to the Shining Stars Montessori Fund are tax-deductible. Gifts may also be eligible for matching funds from employers. This year we will have a ‘donate’ button on the website where these funds may be donated.

The School will continue its Annual Fund Campaign “Reach for the Stars’, in SY 2019-2020. All proceeds raised from fundraising campaigns and events will go directly to the school for planned or projected school activities.

**LIBRARY**

Shining Stars library program is a driving force behind fostering a love of reading in students. Students will have a minimum of 30 minutes per week to visit the library. For our older students, they will learn how to use the internet safely and appropriately conduct research and borrow books. Our library is very small and mobile. In some instances library time will be brought to the classroom (via cart) as well as be held in our Schomberg and DuBois Library/Learning Centers. Our Children’s & Youth Services Librarian staffs’ the library.

**LOST AND FOUND**

To ensure your child maintains all of his/her belongings, please be sure to label everything with permanent marker or Mabel’s Labels (fundraiser). Lost & Found items will be kept in the office;
before the end of the Fall and Spring trimesters please look to retrieve lost items. After this time, they will be displayed in the hallway or in the main lobby before they are discarded or donated to a local charity.

**NAP AND REST TIME**

For our PK3 students, we recommend utilizing early dismissal if your family is able. That means an authorized person will pick up your child at 1:30pm daily.

Otherwise, your child is required to take a nap or rest-time in the afternoon. If children do not sleep, they are required to rest quietly. During the year, when the child turns four, they will gradually be transitioned back into the classroom. Montessori implores that we “follow the child” and if s/he struggles with this transition, s/he may read and play quietly if napping is no longer required.

Parents will be notified of the transition schedule, which would typically be at the beginning of each trimester. All remaining four-year olds will have a 45-minute rest period. Space and mats will be provided for napping. From time to time, any child may choose to take a nap with respect for their biological and physical needs outside of nap time, a space and mat will be provided for the child to use. We ask that you please send a small blanket so that your child can rest comfortably. All bedding will be sent home on Fridays for washing.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Shining Stars is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals. Accordingly, Shining Stars requires all employees to act in conformity with federal and District of Columbia non-discrimination laws, including Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977.

Moreover, Shining Stars provides educational opportunities to students absent consideration of, and does not discriminate on the basis of either in part or in whole on race, ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification or expression, religion, disability, marital status, national origin, age, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, homelessness, or family structure.

Additionally, Shining Stars does not and will not ask for a student or their family's immigration status as a condition of admission or continued enrollment.

Shining Stars also prohibits harassment based on any of the aforementioned protected traits and retaliation against a person because he or she has complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in a discrimination investigation or lawsuit. Shining Stars employees who are found to have engaged in prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation...
will be subject to disciplinary action.

Questions pertaining to Shining Stars non-discrimination policies should be directed to:
Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia
Executive Director & Head of School
1240 Randolph St NE
Washington, DC 20017
www.shiningstarspcs.org
202/723-1467

Ms. Tais Taylor, Shining Stars School Performance Manager and Title IX Coordinator, has been designated by Shining Stars to coordinate its efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Section 504, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, the Age Act, and the D.C. Human Rights Act.

To file a complaint of discrimination, students, parents and/or guardians having inquiries concerning Shining Stars compliance with Section 504, ADA, Title VI, Title IX, the Age Act, and/or D.C. Human Rights Act as they apply to students, employees or third parties or who wish to file a complaint regarding such compliance should contact Ms. Taylor.

Tais Taylor
School Performance Manager and Title IX Coordinator
1240 Randolph St NE
Washington, DC 20017
www.shiningstarspcs.org
202/723-1467

En Español: Shining Stars Montessori Academy no pide ni solicitará un estatus de inmigración de estudiantes o familias como condición para admisión (es) o (y) inscripción continua.

EMERGENCY MESSAGING SYSTEM

One Call Now is an automated telephone service that will be used to inform parents of urgent matters or emergencies. For instance, if early dismissal becomes necessary while classes are in session, or if there is a weather or security emergency, Send Word Now will be utilized to notify parents as soon as possible. Be sure your current phone number and email address is on file with the office. Please make sure to contact the front desk if you need to update your contact number.

PARENT-GUIDE CONFERENCES

Parents should feel free to contact guides and staff at any time to discuss or review a student’s academic or social progress. Guides should also be contacted to discuss situations which may be affecting a student’s educational and/or social development. Formal Parent-Guide conferences are
scheduled three times a year; the dates are in the academic school calendar. Parent-teacher conferences typically last 15-20 minutes, and we encourage both parents and/or guardians to attend. It is important that you are informed about your child’s performance. Although this is a formal meeting with specific information about your child’s academic progress, we encourage you to maintain open communication with your child’s guide (teacher) throughout the school year.

SSMA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (SSMCA): PARENT VOLUNTEERISM AT ITS BEST

The Community Association (SSMCA) is organized for the purpose of fostering collaboration and communication between all SSMA families and staff in an inclusive environment to support the school’s mission. All Shining Stars Montessori parents are automatically members of this group. The leadership team seeks to mobilize all families to support academic and enrichment activities, organize volunteer opportunities and provide financial support.

Please review the school calendar for Community Association meeting dates and times. You may email the Community Association at SSMACommunityAssociation@gmail.com. The CA leadership for SY 2019-2020 are as follows:

**President** - Carla Plaza (president@ssmaca.org)
**Vice President** - Andrea Cambron (vp@ssmaca.org)
**Secretary** - Jenny Senff (secretary@ssmaca.org)
**Treasurer** - Bryce Walker (treasurer@ssmaca.org)
**Community Engagement Chair** - Vacant- anyone interested please contact Carla at president@ssmaca.org
**Class Parent Representative** - Latisha Roberson-Marke (classparentrep@ssmaca.org)
**Green Team Chair** - Tatiana Laborde (greencommitteechair@ssmaca.org)

The Community Association will be adding additional committee chairs as needed.

**Parent Volunteers**

To help ensure Shining Stars Montessori Academy meets our ambitious objectives, we rely on parent support and participation. We believe everyone has something to contribute! Parents/guardians are asked to serve a minimum of 10 hours of volunteer service per family. Parents may assist in the classroom, serve on parent committees and/or assist with special events, such as field trips, book fairs, and school celebrations. We encourage parents to share any hobbies or special interests with their child’s class and/or the school. Please contact your child’s guide or the CA so that arrangements can be made. Parents may complete a CA volunteer interest survey in order to help facilitate a volunteer role in the school. For more information on committees, contact the CA.

**PEACE AND COMMUNITY GATHERING ASSEMBLY**

On the last Friday of every month, from September to May, Shining Stars students, staff, and
parents join together in a celebration of peace and community. Check the Shining Stars calendar, school bulletin and/or website for Peace Assembly dates and times.

RECESS

Shining Stars will make every effort to ensure that children are safe when they are outdoors. When the weather permits, daily recess will occur outside. Please be sure that your child wears appropriate shoes (closed toe) and brings the appropriate clothing during cold weather months (hat, gloves, scarf, and warm coat), and that you apply their sunscreen before leaving the house in the morning. Children will go outside every day unless it is less than 32 degrees, the playground is unusable, a code red day or inclement weather. If your family requires assistance acquiring warm clothes for winter weather, please contact the front desk.

RESPONSIBILITY CENTERS

If you have particular questions or concerns, please use the following as a resource for identifying the appropriate staff person.

Contact your child’s guide/teacher for matters related to:
- Your child’s progress in the classroom
- Classroom activities and/or schedules
- Work-at-Home activities and/or calendar
- Classroom procedures
- Becoming a Room Parent
- Volunteering in the Classroom
- Celebration routines (Going Around the Sun, Room ‘snacks’, etc.)
- Parent conferences

Contact the Director of Operations & School Performance for matters related to:
- Parking
- The National School Lunch Program
- Payment for school lunches, field trips, or other fees
- Emergency Preparedness & Fire Drills
- All facilities & real property issues (interior and exterior)
- Building Security
- Purchasing Items for the Classroom

Contact the Front Office Manager for matters related to:
- Student Records/Files
- Student Enrollment
- Notification of Student Lateness, Absence
• Changes to Student Release Authorization Form
• Child Needing Early Dismissal

Contact the School Performance Manager for matters related to:
• Montessori Aftercare/Extended Learning
• Volunteering
• School Tours
• Extracurricular activities
• Health and Wellness Programming
• Community Association Events and Scheduling

Contact the Director of Student Support for matters related to:
• Student Behavior & Discipline
• Star Support Team (SST)
• Student Counseling (individual and group)
• Locating referrals to community resources
• Individual parent education sessions
• Acquiring skills/strategies/tools for use in increasing positive student behavior
• Suspected, reported, and/or observed instances of bullying behavior

Contact the Director of Special Education for matters related to:
• Special Education Administration & Compliance
• Individualized Educational Programs (IEP)
• Academic/Medical 504 Plans
• Child Find Process
• IDEA/ADA Parental Rights

Contact the Director of English Language Learning for matters related to:
• Improving Phonemic Awareness and developing Reading skills
• Second Language Acquisition phases and stages
• The four language domains
• Improving writing skills
• English language Proficiency Levels

Contact the Principal for matters related to:
• All matters related to teaching & learning at SSMA
• Implementation of the Montessori Curriculum at all Grade Levels
• Common Core Standards alignment
• General concerns regarding your child or Guide (child’s teacher)
• Major changes in your child’s life
• Student Academic Progress and Achievement Outcomes
• Parent workshops
• Montessori Academy
• Student Attendance
• Student behaviors and classroom management
• Special Education
• Professional development for Guides & Classroom Assistants
• In-school Reflection Time (ISR)

**Contact the Executive Director & Head of School for matters related to:**

• School Vision
• Academic Achievement
• Student Attendance
• Special Education Services
• English Language Learning Needs
• Clinical and Behavioral Classroom Consultation
• Fundraising
• Governance
• Legal Matters
• Personnel Issues
• School Operations and Policies
• Out of School Reflections & Expulsions
• Civil Rights, Title IX, Immigration Issues
• Grievances
• Fundraising

**Student Folders and/or ‘The Blue Bag’**

Classroom/teacher notes, school announcements and student work will be placed in the blue bags (or backpacks). If your child is regularly picked up by someone else, please remind him or her to bring the Blue Bag home.

**Transportation**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy does not provide transportation for students. The exception to this policy and practice is for those students with exceptional needs, who have Individualized Education Programs requiring OSSE-support transportation assistance. Director of Special Education and the Principal manage this process.
Visitors

All visitors to the school must sign in and obtain a visitor pass at the Reception Desk, present valid photo identification upon arrival, and sign-out before leaving the building.

Work-At-Home (Homework)

Montessori schools do not assign homework to children prior to the elementary level(s). Your child’s Guide will communicate with you regarding work-at-home for your child. Your child may be offered supplemental instructional learning during the winter/spring/summer/long breaks if deemed appropriate through the SMART and Star Support Team processes (for grades K - 6th).

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

Access to up-to-date contact information at all times for each student is essential to students’ safety. In the event of an emergency, the office will call an ambulance before calling the parents/guardians.

Physical and Emotional Information

Parents/guardians must inform the school if a child has been injured physically or emotionally. Having this information will insure that the school makes appropriate accommodations for the child (e.g., not going to health & fitness if physically injured, taking additional care in supporting a child who has just experienced a death in the family, etc.).

School Nurse

The school nurse at Shining Stars is selected and hired by the D.C. Department of Health through the Children’s National Health System. The nurse is not an employee of Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS. Questions, comments or concerns regarding the nurse can be communicated to Shining Stars; however, parent concerns may also be directly communicated to the D.C. Department of Health and the nurse manager for the 2019-2020 school year. The School Nurse's office is located on the main (1st) floor.

Accidents

In the event of an accident, the parent/guardian will be notified, and if needed, an ambulance will be called. A school official and/or the School Nurse will travel with the student in the ambulance and will stay with the student until a parent/guardian or other authorized individual arrives at the hospital. If treatment is necessary but it is not an emergency, parents will be called to take the student for medical care. An Incident Report will be sent to the parent and kept on file in the permanent student record.

First Aid

The first-aid care the school can provide is very limited. If a child is hurt or complains of an illness, the teacher will immediately send the child to the School Nurse. Staff will treat simple cuts or
bruises by applying a bandage or ice, but cannot administer more serious medical treatment. The Front Office or School Nurse will call the parent/guardian in the event of a more serious injury or illness and the student will be kept in the nurse’s office until the parent/guardian arrives to pick up the child. The Red Cross in Pediatric and Adult CPR administration certifies all SSMA staff and select staff are also trained to administer doctor-approved medications should the school nurse be off site.

**Illness--When your child is sick**

In order to maintain a healthy school, parents/guardians must not send their children to school with any contagious diseases such as the flu, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, conjunctivitis (pink eye), ringworm, scabies, or lice. Students with any of these conditions will be sent home until they are no longer contagious. Parents must pick up their child within two hours of being notified of their child’s sickness with a contagious illness. Upon the return to school, Shining Stars Montessori Academy may request that the parent/guardian provide a doctor’s note showing that their child is no longer contagious.

**Please notify the front office if you discover that your child may have been exposed to a contagious disease.**

If your child is not feeling well in the morning, particularly if he or she has a fever of 100 degrees or more, **do not send him or her to school.** Parents/guardians should not send their children to school within 24 hours of vomiting or running a fever of 100 degrees or higher. Students should not return to school until 24 – 36 hours after beginning a course of antibiotics. If your child has lice, we ask that the child is treated thoroughly. Upon return, your child will need to be rechecked by our nurse or designated staff member **BEFORE** returning the classroom. If additional nits/eggs are found, the child must return home for additional treatments. Our nurse will be available for consultation regarding the most effective treatments for lice removal.

**Medication**

Medication cannot be administered without a completed Medication Authorization Form. Hard copies of the form are available at the front desk. All medication must be brought in by a parent or guardian. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to administer short-term medications, such as antibiotics, at home.

These medical policies and procedures are subject to change according to current local, state, and federal policy. Families will be notified in writing when and if there are any changes. Due to several students having serious allergic reactions, **WE ARE A NUT-FREE SAFE SCHOOL.**

It is unlawful for minors to have medications, including aspirin, in their possession or to medicate themselves. No medications, including over-the-counter medications, should be in a student’s possession.
In order for the staff to receive and use an EpiPen for children with food allergies, we must have an unexpired “Twin Pack” and a signed Medication Authorization Form.

**If we do not have the required medication or documentation, the child will have to wait for 911’s response to be treated.

Child and Family Services Agency Mandated Reporting

Every staff member and long-term volunteer at Shining Stars Montessori Academy is a “mandated reporter” requiring the reporting of any suspected abuse or neglect to DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). Below is the process and guidelines that Shining Stars Montessori Academy staff members follow.

Anyone involved in the care and treatment of children under the age of 18 is considered "a mandatory reporter" and is required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect, According to DC Code 2-1357, any mandatory reporter who fails to make a report will be fined or imprisoned. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, mandated reporters must immediately call DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) reporting hotline at (202) 671-SAFE (671-7233).

Mandated reporters must call the CFSA hotline immediately, even if all the information is not available. If requested, reports may be required to follow up with a written report to the CFSA. Once an abuse report is filed, CFSA will assess and investigate the case. CFSA determines the nature, extent, and cause of child maltreatment and assesses possible risk to the child if left in the situation. Please note that staff members who report suspected abuse or neglect are not allowed to disclose the report to parents or guardians.

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy

It is the expressed policy of Shining Stars that it does not, and will not, tolerate harassment of or discrimination against any employee, student, parent, guardian, or caretaker on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other basis protected by law as such harassment and discrimination is strictly prohibited. The school’s 2019-2020 Bullying Prevention Policy will be posted online for parents at [http://www.shiningstarspcs.org](http://www.shiningstarspcs.org).

Drug-Free Zone

Manufacturing, distributing, possessing, or using of any illegal drug, alcohol, or controlled substance while on the school’s premises is strictly prohibited. These activities constitute serious violations of the school rules, jeopardize the school, and can create situations that are unsafe or that substantially interfere with school safety.
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Notification of Parent or Eligible Student’s Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Shining Stars complies with all District of Columbia and federal laws as it pertains to the protection and safeguarding of student information, and ensuring personally identifiable information (PII) is protected consistent with established laws. Shining Stars treats all student records with the utmost confidentiality. Student records and special education files are secured in separate locked filing cabinets, aligned with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a federal law that protects student records and gives parents/guardians access to their records and parents access to their child’s record. Consistent with FERPA notification requirement, Shining Stars will annually notify parents/guardians of students in attendance of their rights under FERPA. The annual notification to parents/guardians will include information regarding the right to inspect and review the student’s education records, the right to seek to amend the records, the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain circumstances), and the right to file a complaint with the Office regarding an alleged failure by Shining Stars to comply with FERPA.

Shining Stars is not required to notify parents/guardians individually of the types of information it has designated as directory information. Instead, Shining Stars may provide notice to parents/guardians by any means likely to inform parents/guardians of the types of information it has designated as directory information, such as the use of Shining Stars website, family handbook, electronic mail, and/or letters.

The right of parents/guardians to access the child’s record is transferred to the student, once the student reaches the age of 18, at which point the child (student) is defined under FERPA as an “eligible student.” The law protects educational information, personally identifiable information, and directory information. Moreover, the law affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99, et seq. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents/guardians should submit a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect; this request should be addressed to the attention of the Executive Director or an authorized designee. The School official shall make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent/guardian believes are inaccurate. Parents/guardians may ask the School to amend a record that they
believe is inaccurate. They should write to the Principal (academics@shiningstarspcs.org), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian, the School will notify the parent/guardian of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Shining Stars to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance
Office U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Parents/guardians may request to review their child’s record at any time, or to be informed of information contained therein. A written request must be submitted to the Principal (academics@shiningstarspcs.org) to view the student’s record or to make a photocopy, which will be responded to within 45 days from the time of receipt. However, files may not be removed from the school location where they are maintained Shining Stars will not send or show student records to anyone outside the school without first obtaining written permission from parents/guardians.

There are exceptions to FERPA’s prohibition against non-consensual disclosure of personally identifiable information, such as disclosure of information that has been appropriately designated as directory information.
Information, known as “directory information,” may be disclosed by Shining Stars in accordance with the law without permission, for instance, when required to do so by subpoena issued by a court or by a government authority with power to issue such subpoenas. “Directory information” means information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, and may include the following information relating to a student:

- The student’s name
- Address and telephone number
- Dates of attendance

**Definition**

**School Officials**

For purposes of this policy, school officials are defined as: professors; instructors; administrators; health staff; counselors; attorneys; clerical staff; trustees; members of committees and disciplinary boards; and a contractor, volunteer or other party to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions.

**Legitimate Educational Interest**

A school official generally has a legitimate educational interest, if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

**Notice under FERPA**

Unless the parent/guardian notifies the school in writing that they do not wish for certain information to be designated as directory information, under FERPA, Shining Stars may disclose directory information without consent, if the school has given public notice of the following:

1. Types of information it has designated as directory information; and
   a. Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the following student information: student name, address and telephone number, electronic mail (e-mail), photo, date of birth, place of birth, grade level, and dates of attendance.
2. The parent’s/guardian’s right to restrict the disclosure of such information and the period of time within which a parent/guardian has to notify the school that s/he does not want any or all of those types of information designated as directory information.
   a. Parents/guardians may instruct Shining Stars to withhold any or all of the information identified under section 1(a) above by writing to the Principal (academics@shiningstarpcs.org), within thirty (30) days after the first day of the school year.

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8 Under 34 CFR §99.37 (a)(2), a parent/guardian has a “… right to refuse to let the school designate any or all of those types of information about the student as directory information.” However, notice must be given to the school in writing.
Insurance

Students’ medical needs, including those that may arise on school grounds, must be covered by parents'/guardians’ insurance. Parents/guardians should notify the office if they do not have insurance for their child or have any questions about their child’s insurance coverage. The school may be able to provide information to parents/guardians interested in obtaining health insurance.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015 reauthorizes the 50-year old Elementary Secondary Act (ESEA). Shining Stars Montessori will comply with the mandates contained in the ESSA.

Title I

Pursuant to Title I of the ESEA, the United States Department of Education provides funding to schools and school districts in exchange for full compliance with ESEA. In accordance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Title I requirements, parents have a right to request and receive information regarding the professional qualifications of their child’s classroom teacher. Parents seeking this information should contact the main office. Title I also enables children who qualify to receive free or reduced lunch. Please see the main office for guidelines for the school’s and/or your child’s eligibility for Title I services and support.

SECURITY POLICY

To maximize student and staff safety and security, doors to the outside will be locked at all times. Front desk staff will control the dedicated entrance to the school (on Randolph Street) by a closed-circuit security-camera and monitor. **Visitors admitted to the building must go directly to the receptionist, where they are required to sign in and receive a visitor’s badge.** Faculty and staff will inform the front office if a visitor is expected, including parent volunteers.

EMERGENCY CONTINGENCY PLANS

In the event of an emergency (e.g., a lock-down or evacuation of the building) our main concern is the safety of our students and staff. Parents will be notified as to the status of the situation, location of their child, and status of the scheduled activities for the day as soon as possible given the situation. **It is of utmost importance that we have correct contact information at all times.** If your phone numbers change, please notify the front desk manager/registrar. If the campus must be evacuated students, faculty and staff will be directed to the pre-planned evacuation route.

Fire & Lockdown Drills

Drills are conducted regularly to prepare staff and students for a safe and orderly evacuation of (and/or lock-down in) the building in case of an emergency.
THE MONTESSORI ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The Montessori Philosophy

“It’s not school, It’s Montessori.” Dr. Maria Montessori, an engineer, physician and as an educator; developed an approach to education that would assist the children in their development. This approach to education has been used in schools around the world for more than 100 years. The Montessori method is based upon careful observation.

The theory behind Montessori education is impactful: Children yearn for learning. From the time of birth through maturity, the child lives in what appears to be a chaotic world. The child is then able to gradually establish order by learning how to distinguish the senses and develop their inner resources resulting in a secure, self-confident learner.

The purpose of Montessori schools is to offer a cautiously planned, thought-provoking environment, which will help the child develop a foundation for innovative learning. Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to investigate their natural drive to work and learn. Montessori teachers embrace the whole-child approach to teaching. This means that we do not just focus on the academics. Skills in grace and courtesy and everyday living skills are also of extreme importance.

Dr. Maria Montessori developed the methods to enhance opportunities for the child to explore concrete examples of abstract ideas. The learning is a self-correcting one, allowing the child to move through the senses and discern concepts under the direction of a skilled Montessori trained guide.

Each piece of material teaches a single skill, and is introduced to the child when he is ready to receive instruction based upon interests and ability levels.

The Montessori approach believes that children are more receptive to learning experiences at specific times or during the “sensitive periods.” Montessori guides are trained to recognize these sensitive periods when the child exhibits a need for a new learning experience. It is then that the guide directs the child toward materials that will compliment his developmental needs. During these critical years, the child moves at his/her own pace, creating an environment for discovery learning.

Today, there are schools throughout the world offering Montessori programs for children beginning at birth and going to three years (Infant/Toddler), 3-6 years of age (Primary), 6-9 years of age (Lower Elementary), 9-12 years of age (Upper Elementary) and 12-18 years of age (Adolescent). According to research, there are almost 5,000 Montessori schools/programs in the U.S. and more than 20,000 in over 100 countries worldwide. (AMI/USA Bulletin 2012).

PRIMARY PROGRAM - SERVING CHILDREN AGES 3-6

Children in the first plane of development, ages 3-6, have an amazing ability to absorb all the world around them has to offer through their senses. The rich environment of the Children’s House is
carefully prepared to expose these absorbent minds to inviting and culturally diverse materials that are sure to captivate the interest of the young explorer. Many of the Montessori materials are designed to promote functional independence as the child gains mastery of self-care and care of their environment. The environment also enables children to develop personal dignity and an awareness of their responsibilities as human beings. Like the home environment, the Children’s House provides children with a comfortable and safe space to begin their journey toward maturity. As they choose the materials that appeal to them and are guided in their proper use, children begin to develop the inner discipline and lifetime love of learning that is crucial to their success as human beings.

Practical Life

Through the use of uniquely designed materials, the child learns to perform the basic actions that lead to functional independence through activities that involve care of the self, care of the environment and health and nutrition. The goal is for the child to develop concentration through repetition of these activities in addition to developing independence, coordinated movement, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and a sense of order. This area is the foundation for all the other areas.

Language

The materials and activities in this area are designed to give the child a working knowledge of syntax and grammar and enrich his/her vocabulary, as well as practice in public speaking. The idea is always to move from the concrete to the abstract, each activity building upon the next until the child demonstrates through speech and other activities, his/her mastery of the language.

Sensorial

The child’s use of the sensorial materials will facilitate a refinement of the child’s senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste); assist the child in classification, gradually developing finer and finer distinctions; and lead to abstract thought, always moving from the tangible and concrete to the abstract as the child learns to record sensory impressions accurately. This area includes music and biology.

Mathematics

The materials in this area are physical representations of mathematical concepts—this includes geometry. It is important for the child to have access to mathematical experiences through sensorial manipulation. Qualities of the other five core areas can be found in the approach to mathematics and the idea is to give the whole concept first and then move on to the details. There are six basic groups of mathematics instruction and each one is presented in a three-step pattern: a concrete experience of the concept, followed by isolation of the concept and finally, a combination of the concrete with the abstract.
Cultural Activities

This area encompasses his/her and geography and social justice issues. Again, the approach is to give the child a sense of the whole his/her of humanity and then move into the finer details, utilizing storytelling, experiments and limited field trips, with the child taking on more and more the burden of exploration as her abilities increase. The world is presented as a whole and then the child is encouraged to explore the details individually. This area provides the perfect entrée for the cultural empowerment curriculum. The learning materials used and subject areas covered with the cultural activities will be inclusive of all cultures around the world and will reflect the cultures of the children in the classroom.

Creative Activities

This includes art, music, drama and poetry, in addition to writing. Elements of each of these are interwoven with the other core areas whenever possible and the child is encouraged to engage the imagination in trying to figure out solutions to classroom problems as well as societal problems. As their awareness of these issues increases, the burden of responsibility gradually increases as well.

Dual Language Program

The Shining Stars PCS Dual Language program is designed to provide an immersion experience for the benefit of learning the target language while continuing to be a full Montessori model. This program consists of two primary classes along with the addition of one lower elementary classroom (Menchu Stars) beginning SY2019-2020. We will continue adding elementary grades in the coming years. In each class the children will have exposure to lessons both in English and in Spanish. They will have one lead guide and one Spanish teacher. The curriculum will continue to follow the Montessori teaching method. The goal is for students to learn to read, write, speak and understand at similar levels in both languages.

LOWER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM - SERVING CHILDREN AGES 6-9

A Shining Stars Montessori Academy Elementary education is student-tailored for each child. It also covers more than just the traditional academic curricula area; it is an education of the whole child: cognitively, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. The curriculum follows the child instead of forcing the child to follow the curriculum along with every other child at the same time. Only by following and studying the child can teachers match their efforts and provide appropriate jobs and environment tailored to the child’s developmental needs.

At Shining Stars Montessori Academy, we seek to nurture children’s natural desire to learn in order that they will develop to their fullest potential. Each day, children in the Elementary classrooms follow a routine that allows them to have confidence in the rhythm of the day and a sense of control in their environment.

After arrival, children have time ("Morning Meetings") where the students discuss their
community time for the week and set out the routine of that particular day. Children then move into the uninterrupted work time, when they are allowed to choose from work on which they have had lessons. Each child has a learning plan to complete during the week, and they are responsible, with gentle encouragement and guidance, to make sure they complete the work for which they are responsible. Rather than being in an environment that makes work sound mundane and boring to children, they learn to associate work with things they can accomplish and creating a sense of achievement and fun.

The Montessori philosophy considers "holistic development of the child to be essential". Work focuses on multiple forms of learning, stressing not only cognitive exercises but also tactile and auditory development. This is a time of high growth for the child, where she or he still rapidly absorbs the sights, sounds, and experiences in the world around her.

Outside time in nature is a critical element of the Shining Stars Montessori philosophy as well, and Elementary students will have the benefit of an outdoor classroom and nature to explore. Elementary serves in many ways as a continuation of the foundation built in the Primary classrooms. Some of the same activities remain from the Primary classroom, ones that are “developmentally appropriate and help foster confidence and personal growth across a range of developmental schema. At the same time, new work is added to help the student continue to progress, ensuring growth across the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual realms.” Montessori materials are laid out in an organized fashion throughout the classroom, at levels that are appropriate for children in this age range. The entire classroom is designed with the children’s needs in mind.

**Mathematics**

Math concepts at Shining Stars are aligned with the Common Core and presented in a logical sequence, beginning with the concrete and leading to the abstract. Understanding takes precedence over memorization, which develops through repeated work with the operations. Through student work with the Montessori and other supporting materials, Elementary students are introduced to advanced mathematical concepts. Operations are presented in the following order: addition, multiplication, division, and subtraction.

Geometrical concepts that are introduced at the sensorial level in the Primary Program, are explored further through the use of Montessori materials in Elementary. The study of geometric solids, lines, angles, basic shapes, plane figures, polygons, and quadrilaterals form an important foundation for further exploration of geometrical concepts.

**Language**

Language studies include multiple forms of learning in the Montessori Elementary classroom. Reading and writing are widely used forms of language development both through formal activities and daily interactions in all forms of communication. Students also focus on vocabulary development.
and word study.

Through introduction to research, students also learn about paraphrasing, applying appropriate grammar and conceptual analysis, as well as developing oral presentations and performances to share their learning. All language curriculum is an alignment of Montessori standards and specialized materials with the Common Core standards.

**Reading**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy utilizes the American Reading Company (ARC) Core for reading instruction. ARC Core provides a customized scope and sequence in a flexible framework that complements the Montessori method. Organized into thematic units, ARC Core is a structured project-based learning process that ensures that students are ready to meet the demands of college or career through extensive reading (both as a class and independently), multiple extended writing projects, and daily practice discussing ideas and texts with peers.

**Science & Cultural Studies including the “Great Lessons”**

In the Elementary classrooms, science and cultural studies are a central part of the Shining Stars Montessori Academy students’ learning. Lessons are planned in both history and geography. Science lessons span the areas of geology, botany, zoology, physical science, and the scientific method.

The Elementary classroom also includes the “Great Lessons”: the Coming of the Universe, the Coming of Life, the Coming of Humans, the Coming of Language, and the Coming of Numbers.

**Peace Education**

The Peace Curriculum is a central part of Shining Stars Montessori Academy education. The focus of the lessons includes problem-solving among peers (e.g., use of the peace tables), the cause of conflicts and why some conflicts lead to violence, as well as considering alternative solutions and problem-solving techniques.

**UPPER ELEMENTARY PROGRAM - Serving Children Ages 9-12**

The Upper Elementary Classroom is an extension of the students’ world. As such, the emotional aspects of the elementary students play an important role in their development. We help the students understand how to work, fit in and be a part of a community in a positive and productive way. At this level, we do not shy away from difficulties or issues; instead, we work through them in a healthy manner.

The classroom is very calm and productive, but at times also lively and exciting, as collaborative activities take place. Character lessons and team building create an ever-changing and engaging environment. Each year, we create a group Mission Statement, and discuss and make the
rules of the classroom. Emphasis is placed on this classroom as the students’ community—therefore, they must play an integral role in how it should be experienced.

The Upper Elementary Classroom

The look and feel of an Upper Elementary Montessori classroom is designed to encourage a positive learning environment and to foster independence. Our classroom environment includes:

- Plants, animals, natural light, beautiful materials, and a home-like feel that the students are responsible for taking care of
- Outside and corridor work space
- “Works” that are arranged to create independence
- Self-paced learning and organization skills building, using planners and binders

Students create ownership and shared responsibilities of their environment. They also understand how to complete work and have the confidence to ask for help from a peer or a teacher if needed. Within this environment, our job as teachers is to foster a love of learning. We also provide the space and materials that enable students to explore topics and concepts at a deeper level.

Upper Elementary Curriculum Overview

As educators, our goal is for the students to reach their fullest potential in all areas, so they can move forward with confidence in who they are and in their individual abilities—especially as they advance into their next level of academia successfully.

In Montessori, we explore the academic areas a little differently—and at times, go more in-depth—compared to a more traditional scholastic environment. For example, Montessori places more emphasis on Science and Math during the elementary years. It would not be unusual to have our Upper Elementary student extracting DNA from liver or a piece of fruit, learning about the Pythagorean Theorem or the Advanced Decanomial Sequence (based on the European math model), in addition to their regular standards of Science and Math.

A Typical Upper Elementary Day

The social and community building takes place daily in morning meeting. After meeting, students review expectations for the day with their daily planners. The students then start their work time where individualized and small group lessons take place.

Field Trips/"Going Out"

Maria Montessori called for “going out” to be an integral part of the elementary child’s education. Trips to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, the Smithsonian museums, Frederick Douglass House and the National Colonial Farm in Accokeek are just some of the places we plan to visit over the three-year cycle of the Elementary Program.
Community Service

Students are encouraged to bring forth areas of need in the community they are interested in making better. This helps to develop an awareness of the needs of others in their community. We will begin our community service outreach by coordinating a food drive for Martha's Table and S.O.M.E. (So Others Might Eat).

Music (Instrumental & Voice)

Music is an integral part of the Montessori philosophy. Consistent exposure to musical instruments, musical note work, and rhythm and melody work are a core part of the Shining Stars Academy philosophy of holistic development of the child.

Art

Regular art lessons are included in the Elementary classrooms. Lessons span the scope of visual arts, including drawing, painting, and sculpting.

Physical Education/Health and Wellness

In addition, to extracurricular physical education options, regular physical education will be included in the Elementary classroom.

World Language Exploration at SSMA

Spanish continues to be offered as part of the regular day with children in Primary through Upper Elementary. The school contracts with Little Linguists and Be Bilingual to offer Spanish to all students.

Common Core and Montessori Standards Curriculum Alignment

Shining Stars has aligned the Montessori Curriculum with the Common Core Standards to ensure students are meeting state learning standards. To assess academic progress throughout the year, every student will be evaluated using the NWEA MAP, based on Common Core Standards. Based on classroom work and observations as well as individualized standardized assessment data, students’ instruction will be tailored accordingly.

Student Information System: Compass

Shining Stars Montessori Academy uses Montessori Compass, a cloud-based record keeping system. To regularly monitor student progress, the school tracks each student’s work, mastery of content, and teacher observations. Montessori Compass enables the school to generate ‘on demand’ reports on student progress throughout the school year.

ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS MONITORING

The Montessori guide is a trained observer and assessor of the child. Regular, recorded observations of the child’s progress form the basis of the child’s assessment records. Guides will use
an appropriate combination of qualitative and quantitative assessment tools. Guides will also track growth using journals and portfolios, group discussions, self and peer-assessments, curriculum-based assessments, and meetings between the child and the guide.

These regular observations also inform the guide’s plan of instruction for each individual child. Shining Stars will perform performance-based standardized assessments of three and four year-old students and achievement and performance-based assessments of older children in the Fall, Winter and Spring. The results will be reported to parents, if requested, and the DC Public Charter School Board as part of our Performance Management Framework requirement for all public charter schools. Elementary students in the 3rd-6th grades, will take the PARCC district mandated assessment each spring. You may request the school’s schedule of assessments for the 2019-2020 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>What is Assessed</th>
<th>When Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-IPT, K-WAPT</td>
<td>Standardized assessment used to measure the English Proficiency of English Language Learners, given to Pre-K and K students who indicated on the Home Language Survey that a language other than English is spoken at home (exclusively or in addition to English).</td>
<td>Fall of every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)</td>
<td>Standardized assessment that measures vocabulary for PK3</td>
<td>Fall and Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test of Early Mathematics Ability (TEMA)</td>
<td>Standardized assessment that measures math skills for PK3 and PK4</td>
<td>Fall and Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWEA MAP for literacy (K-6)</td>
<td>Standardized assessment that measures literacy (reading) development (K -6)</td>
<td>Fall, Winter, Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWEA MAP for math (K - 6)</td>
<td>Standardized assessment that measures numeracy and computational abilities (K -6)</td>
<td>Fall, Winter, Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIDA: ACCESS for ELL Students</td>
<td>This large-scale assessment addresses the academic English language proficiency (ELP) for ELL students</td>
<td>Fall, Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARCC (grades 3-6)</td>
<td>District mandated assessment in Language (ELA) and mathematics</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASQ (Prek-K)</td>
<td>Ages and Stages Questionnaire (Child Find Early Screener)</td>
<td>Fall of every year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Montessori Showcase and Curriculum Mornings

In order to best inform and communicate to parents about teaching and learning at SSMA, the school will hold curriculum ‘showcases’ ‘curriculum mornings beginning each November. These sessions give parents an opportunity to network, discuss their concerns, talk about general parenting issues, and learn more about the Montessori Method and child development.

Elementary Curriculum Mornings are provided specifically for families of current and rising Lower and Upper Elementary students. Additionally, families of Primary students may want to attend to better understand the importance of investing in Montessori beyond Kindergarten.

STUDENT MONITORING ACADEMIC RESOURCE TEAM (SMART)
Academic and Behavioral Support Services for Students without IEPs or 504 Plans and English Language Learners

The SMART Team utilizes a three-tiered support model for our PK3 through 6th grade students to monitor the progress and institute timely in-classroom interventions (both academic and behavioral).

Tier I features a strong core academic curriculum, clear behavioral expectations/screeners and monthly academic measures to assess students’ academic and social achievement; while Tier II and Tier III provide students with academic and behavior individualized interventions to help them reach their fullest potential. We focus on early literacy skills, mathematics, behavior, and using data to guide instruction in those Tiers.

Tier I of the SMART Team Process is based on the foundation of Shining Stars’ educational philosophy. Shining Stars primarily utilizes the Montessori Method of education, Responsive Classroom and ‘positive redirection and intervention behavioral strategies’ to promote the academic and behavioral success of students. Academic progress is measured based on objective assessments and classwork to determine if additional support is needed within the multidisciplinary team approach. Some students may need additional support to develop and/or maintain grade level expectations.

Tier II interventions of the SMART Team Process provide students with research and guide-based interventions supported by Montessori experts, the Director of Student Support, reading and math specialists, and the Principal. Academic and behavioral growth is measured monthly to bi-monthly to determine progress in Tier II and a formal intervention plan may be developed, if deemed necessary at that time. If adequate academic and behavior growth is not observed, the student may be referred for Tier III level interventions. Student support might include individual academic and/or behavioral interventions, small group instruction, and consultation with guides and parents. Management of the
Tier I and II identification and creation of academic and/or behavior plans is the responsibility of the SMART/Star Support Team, with the point of contact being the Principal.

**Tier III** of the SMART Team Process may include the Guide(s), parents, administrators, intervention specialist, the Director of Student Support, behavior and/or intervention specialists as well as support staff working together in a collaborative effort to develop an individualized intervention plan to improve the academic and social performance of students. Students’ academic/behavioral progress will be assessed and reviewed intermittently.

Assessments to evaluate concerns with respect to learning, fine/gross motor, speech-language and/or behavior challenges may be requested during the Tier III/SST process. If assessments are requested, a referral for special education will be submitted based on a suspected disability. Parents and guides may also refer their students directly for special education evaluation without going through the SMART/SST process or at any point during the SMART/SST process. During the referral process, all Tier interventions will continue to be provided under the SMART/SST process.

To refer your child to the Star Support Team process, complete a SMART/SST referral form (which can be obtained at the receptionist’s desk) and submitted to the Principal or the Director of Student Support. To refer your child directly for a special education evaluation, contact the Director of Special Education and complete a Special Education Referral form.

It is the right of all Shining Stars Montessori Academy students with diverse learning needs to attend our charter school and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. SSMA provides eligible students with special education services in accordance with District and Federal education laws and regulations. Parents are encouraged to meet with their child’s Guide, the Director of Student Support, the Director of Special Education, and/or the Principal should you wish to determine the appropriateness of a special education evaluation. Parents may obtain a copy of the SSMA Special Education Handbook and the English Language Learner Procedural Safeguards Handbook by contacting the Director of Special Education.

**CHILD FIND POLICY**

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Shining Stars PCS is responsible for conducting continuous efforts intended to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years enrolled in Shining Stars PCS, including children with disabilities who are homeless, children who are in the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) or committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency (DYRS), children who are making progress grade to grade, and highly mobile children, who are in need of special education and related services. These
duties are called Child Find responsibilities. This policy establishes procedures for fulfilling Child
Find responsibilities at Shining Stars PCS, and applies to all children enrolled in Shining Stars PCS,
and to all staff employed by Shining Stars PCS. Shining Stars PCS staff is expected to know and act
in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by this policy. Shining Stars PCS
trains staff on an annual/semester basis to ensure staff understand and execute Child Find
responsibilities.

**Points Of Contact**

Parents are encouraged to speak with any Shining Stars staff if they have concerns about their
child’s progress. Parents and other relevant stakeholders with questions or concerns about a child’s
educational needs should contact one of the following Shining Stars staff to discuss Child Find, the
referral process, and the availability of special education programming at Shining Stars PCS:

- **Gail Jenkins**
  Principal
  academics@shiningstarspcs.org
  202-723-1467
- **Darryl Buxton**
  Special Education Coordinator
  dbuxton@shiningstarspcs.org
  202-723-1467

**Target Populations**

This policy and Shining Stars Child Find efforts apply to children between the ages of three
(3) and twenty-two (22) years enrolled in Shining Stars PCS, including children who are:

- Homeless
- In the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency
- Committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency
- Making progress grade to grade; and
- Highly mobile children

**Outreach Efforts**

To ensure the local and school communities are aware of the availability of special education
and related services for eligible children with disabilities and the methods for requesting such
services, Shining Stars provides public notice through a variety of methods:

- Shining Stars provides information to parents and the school community at school events such as
  parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, summer enrollment events, etc.;
- Shining Stars publishes information and relevant timelines in parent/student handbooks,
  school manuals, calendars, and on its website at https://www.shiningstarspcs.org;
- Shining Stars staff provides information to parents during trimester parent-teacher
  conferences;
Brochures regarding special education services are available for parents and the public in the front office;

COORDINATION WITH NON-EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT AGENCIES

To ensure coordination with appropriate District agencies to facilitate the identification, location, and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled in Shining Stars PCS, the school maintains contacts with the following District agencies:

- District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Early Stages program;
- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA); and
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH).

Shining Stars conducts annual meetings with representatives of the above agencies to ensure open and cooperative lines of communication regarding our Child Find, referral, and initial evaluation processes and procedures, as well as continuously updating agencies of changes in appropriate points of contact.

Shining Stars may establish agreements with other entities responsible for administering various education, health, and social service programs to children from birth through age 22. Those agencies may include, but are not limited to: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in the Department of Disability Services (DDS).

Parent Engagement

Parents may obtain information about the availability of special education and related services through this policy, information posted on our website at https://www.shiningstarspcs.org, or by contacting Darryl Buxton, Director of Special Education.

Shining Stars also maintains written materials for parents, which can be found at the front office. Shining Stars’ staff provides information to parents upon request and at parent-teacher conferences.

Referral Processes

A referral for initial evaluation should state why it is thought that the child may have a disability. Shining Stars is required to make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for the initial evaluation within 30 calendar days of receipt of a referral, and must complete an initial evaluation and eligibility determination within 60 calendar days of obtaining parental consent.

The initial evaluation timeline does not apply if:
• The parent fails or refuses to respond to a request for consent for the evaluation after reasonable efforts
• The parent of the child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation or
• The child enrolls in another LEA prior to the determination of eligibility

If a parent or other person would like to make a referral for an initial evaluation to determine if a child is in need of special education and related services, please contact:

Darryl Buxton
Director of Special Education
dbuxton@shiningstarspcs.org
1240 Randolph Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
202-723-1467

All Shining Stars staff must accept an oral or written referral for initial evaluation. Upon receiving an oral referral, staff must document an oral referral in writing within (3) business days of receipt. Shining Stars provides a referral form to assist parents and other parties in documenting a referral, but the form does not need to be completed by the person making the referral for Shining Stars to act on the referral. To obtain this form, please contact:

Darryl Buxton
Director of Special Education
dbuxton@shiningstarspcs.org
1240 Randolph Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017
202-723-1467

Shining Stars accepts referrals for an initial evaluation from the following persons:
• A student’s parent
• The student, provided that educational rights have transferred to the student
• An employee of Shining Stars PCS who has knowledge of the student.

For children under the age of 6, Shining Stars PCS also accepts referrals from:
• Pediatricians or other medical professionals, including physicians, hospitals, and other health providers
• Child development facilities, including day care centers, child care centers, and early childhood programs
• District agencies and programs, including IDEA Part C programs
• Community and civic organizations
• Advocacy organizations
Shining Stars maintains regular contact with community-based referral sources, and works to collaborate with community-based service providers to provide information on the availability of special education and related services and the means through which parents or organizations may submit a referral.

Within 30 calendar days of receipt of a referral, Shining Stars must make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation. Reasonable efforts include attempting to contact the parent at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) modalities. Shining Stars must begin reasonable efforts within 10 business days of receipt of the referral. Shining Stars must conduct an analysis of existing data on the student to determine if additional assessments are necessary. Existing data that may be considered may include but is not limited to teacher observations, classroom assessments, schoolwide screenings and assessments, state assessments, student grades and records, parent reports, health records, or data from other interventions. Shining Stars PCS will provide the parent of a child suspected of having a disability with information about the nature of any additionally required assessment. For children under the age of 6, upon obtaining parental consent for disclosure of referral information, Shining Stars PCS will provide feedback to the person making the referral regarding the outcome of the referral in a timely manner.

Screenings
Shining Stars implements a comprehensive screening process to determine if a child should be referred for an evaluation, the result of which is provided to the child’s parent. Screenings utilize assessments and tools that are generally applied across the entire student population. Parent consent is not required for Shining Stars to conduct a uniform, schoolwide screening. A screening conducted by a Shining Stars teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation does not constitute an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services and does not require parental consent.

Shining Stars does not use screenings to delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)
Shining Stars PCS’ Response to Intervention (RtI) efforts will not be used to delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES UNDER IDEA PART C
Under IDEA, Shining Stars PCS must ensure a smooth and effective transition for children transitioning from Part C early intervention services to Part B special education and related services. In furtherance of this responsibility, Shining Stars:
● Identifies incoming children who were served by Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program (DC EIP) prior to enrollment at Shining Stars PCS, and participates in transition activities as appropriate at the request of DC EIP; and

● As applicable, regularly coordinates with DCPS Early Stages to ensure a smooth transition for students served by DCPS Early Stages prior to enrollment in Shining Stars PCS.

When a child is transitioning from Part C to Part B services, Shining Stars PCS participates in transition planning conferences as appropriate and ensures each child with a disability has an IEP developed and implemented by the child’s third birthday.

PARENT PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS AND RIGHTS

Parents’ legal rights during the Child Find process are defined by IDEA and District of Columbia law. In the event of a disagreement, parents may pursue dispute resolution and due process rights, including mediation, due process complaints, or state complaints. Parents can learn more about their rights under IDEA by referring to the Part B Procedural Safeguards located on OSSE’s website at: https://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards or by contacting Darryl Buxton to obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards.

Data Reporting

In accordance with District of Columbia law, Shining Stars counts and reports the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services annually on October 5 or the date set for the annual pupil count required by D.C. Official Code § 38-2906. The ability of Shining Stars PCS to share personal information about a child shall be governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC §1232g, 34 CFR Part 99.

School Referral

Initially, a student who is struggling will be discussed at a grade-level team meeting with the student’s team of teachers, to determine if the difficulties are isolated to one subject area, all subject areas, or is behavioral in nature. Progress Reports and NWEA Assessment Reports are reviewed and discussed at this meeting. If the difficulties are creating a noticeable negative impact on the student’s school performance, the student will be referred to the Star Support Team (SST). The SST will meet to provide suggestions for an Academic or Behavioral Accommodation Plan for the student. Once a plan has been developed, it is implemented by appropriate staff members.

The progress of the student is then regularly monitored. After the guide and SMART-team have made every effort to meet the needs of the student through the Academic or Behavioral Accommodation Plan, and if these efforts have not been successful, the SMART-team will notify the Director of Special Education to refer the student for a formal evaluation to determine eligibility for
Special Education. If Special Education services are required, a Multidisciplinary Team reviews information obtained from a variety of sources to develop an Individual Education Program, tailored to the student’s specific areas of need. The IEP will outline specific goals, educational setting, accommodations and progress monitoring measures designed to enable the student to access and make progress in the general education curriculum.

**Parent/Guardian Requests for Referral**

If a parent or guardian requests that an evaluation be completed; a meeting is set up with the Director of Special Education, Learning Specialist and at least one of the student’s teachers, who will represent the school team to discuss the parent/guardian’s concerns. At the conclusion of this meeting, the parent/guardian can decide to move forward and request an evaluation. If parents decide to move forward, they must complete a Parent Referral form detailing their concerns.

**Independent Evaluations**

If a parent/guardian is in possession of an Independent Evaluation on a student who is not on an IEP, our Multidisciplinary Team will meet with the parent/guardian within ten school days to discuss the evaluation findings. At this meeting, the team will determine whether the findings demonstrate the presence of a disability and also discuss the need for additional assessments, based upon the area of suspected disability. The Team can also decide that the Independent Evaluation will be used alone to determine eligibility.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)**

The SSMA English Language Learner Program of TESOL (or English Language Acquisition) provides specialized and individualized instruction for students according to their level of need. Depending on the student’s English language proficiency, the instruction occurs both in a partially or completely integrated setting. “Content based ESL” means an “English language acquisition process for young children in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language. Books and instruction materials are in English and all reading, writing, and subject matter are taught in English.

Although teachers may use a minimal amount of the child's native language when necessary, no subject matter shall be taught in any language other than English, and children in this program learn to read and write solely in English.” Lessons and activities are designed so that the English language development of the student is addressed.

Student progress is regularly reviewed and reported to parents/guardians. For more information regarding the SSMA English Language Learner Program, contact our Director of English.

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9 Discussion regarding struggling students may also be conducted during grade-level planning meetings. At this time, Guides can share instructional and classroom strategies with their colleagues prior to the need rising to a Tier II level intervention.
BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE
Montessori Approach To Discipline

At Shining Stars, we strive to foster an environment where children, guides, assistants, administrators and parents are respectful, caring and purposeful. Our approach to discipline at Shining Stars involves using discussions centered around restorative practices, Montessori Grace and Courtesy lessons and other vetted conflict resolution principles and strategies to help our young children learn self-discipline, and redirection techniques to use when they encounter challenging situations. However, there are times when we may have to take disciplinary action to address minor or serious misbehaviors/offenses to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff, to educate the student, and to ensure the student is successful academically, emotionally, and socially.

Upon visiting a Montessori classroom for the first time, you might wonder what magic spell has been cast upon these young children making them so calm and self-directed. Another person might look at that same class and be confused by the children's independence, wondering “where’s the discipline, these children just do as they please.” Visitors commonly issue such comments as, “I’ve heard Montessori is too free and chaotic.” Or “I've heard Montessori is too structured.” It does not seem possible that these two extreme opposites can both be true. Montessori is, however, all in the eyes of the beholder. This method or philosophy of education varies in interpretation from school to school, teacher to teacher, and parent to parent. There are certainly some Montessori classrooms that are very rigid and adult controlled, and there are also classroom that are disorderly and anything goes. Montessori when done well, however, is a beautiful blend and perfect balance of freedom and structure. The best Montessori Guides/teachers or facilitators understand that maintaining the delicate balance is one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of their job. It is on that foundation of freedom and structure that the child learns discipline.

Freedom is not a word that is traditionally associated with discipline. Parents are often concerned that the Montessori child’s freedom to choose activities presupposes that discipline is something alien to our classrooms. Does freedom mean license to act as he or she chooses or does freedom of choice carry with it certain responsibilities in the classroom community? Are we, as some would claim, a place where children can do what they like or, as a young Montessori student once told a visitor, a place where children like what they do? To have any meaningful discussion of these questions, it would seem that our first priority should be to define this thing called discipline. Montessori herself held that discipline is not “...a fact but a way.” True discipline comes more from within than without and is the result of steadily developing inner growth. Just as the very young child must first learn to stand before s/he can walk, she must develop an inward order through work before

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10 This ‘approach’ to discipline and classroom management was first published by Mary Conroy and Wm. Bravo in Tomorrow’s Child Magazine (2000 reprint).
she is able to choose and carry out her own acts. Surprisingly enough, Montessori found that it was through the very liberty inherent in her classrooms that the children were given the means to reveal their inner or self-discipline. Independence did not diminish respect for authority but rather deepened it. One of the things that aroused her greatest interest was that order and discipline seemed to be so closely united that they resulted in freedom.

Many people assume that discipline is something that is imposed by an authority figure who should be obeyed without question. Discipline in the Montessori environment is not something that is done to the child; nor is it a technique for controlling behavior. Our concern is with the development of an internal locus of control, which enables an individual to choose the right behavior because it is right for him or herself and right for the community.

If discipline comes from within, then what is the job of the teacher? Inner discipline is something which evolves. It is not something that is automatically present within the child and it cannot be taught. The role of the teacher, then, is to be a model and a guide while supporting the child as he develops to the point where he is able to choose to accept and to follow the rules of the classroom community. This level of obedience is the point where true inner discipline has been reached. One knows this level of discipline has been reached when children are able to make appropriate behavioral choices even when adults are not present.

Discipline presupposes a certain degree of obedience. Before the age of three a child is truly unable to obey unless what is asked of her/him happens to correspond with one of her/his vital urges. At this stage, her/his personality has not formed to the level where she/he is capable of making a choice to obey. It is this level which Montessori termed the first level of obedience. A toddler can obey, but not always. The second level of obedience is reached when the child is capable of understanding another person's wishes and can express them in her/his own behavior. When this second level of obedience is reached, most parents and teachers would think they had reached their goal. Most adults ask only that children obey. The goals of Montessori reach beyond this; however, to the third level of obedience which Montessori called “joyful obedience”. At this stage the child has internalized obedience, or we might say, has developed self-discipline where s/he sees clearly the value of what is being offered to her/him by authority and rushes to obey. This is not blind obedience at all, but is a fully informed choice by a personality which has grown in freedom and developed to its fullest potential. This is what we want for our children. With this level of obedience or self-discipline comes a degree of self-respect in which a child cannot help but respect the rights and needs of others alongside her/his own. S/he is then able to learn and grow freely in the security of a community of respectful individuals.

This of course, is a wonderful philosophy, but can Montessori truly deliver these results? Montessori can only benefit children when it moves beyond philosophy and takes a practical application. This involves the careful preparation of the teacher and the classroom environment. The
teacher or guide is a specialist, trained in child development, as well as Montessori Philosophy and methodology for the age group with whom he or she is working. Equally important, these adults possess robust enthusiasm for learning, a deep respect for all life, kindness, and the patience of a saint.

The classroom should be beautiful, orderly, and so inviting that the child cannot resist exploring. It should be steeped with a sense of wonder. Within this environment the child is free to explore, but with this freedom comes responsibility. **One of the secrets to success in the Shining Stars Montessori classroom is freedom within the limits of very clear ground rules.** Each classroom’s ground rules may vary but the essence is generally the same. 1) Take care of all people and living things in our environment, and 2) Take care of all of the material things in our environment. If you think about it, every do or don't one could wish to implore fits in these two rules, or could be narrowed even further to this one simple rule, be respectful of everyone and everything.

The rules are kept simple, yet they are explored in great detail. It should never be assumed that the child understands what it means to be kind or respectful. A great amount of time and energy is focused on teaching lessons that demonstrate socially acceptable behavior. Children don't just automatically know how to be a friend, express anger, or how to solve problems. As a matter of fact, many adults are still learning how to cope with these issues. Yet, we often forget to teach children the everyday skills necessary for getting along with others. These special skills are taught with the Grace and Courtesy lessons (see the Attachments section for a more detailed discussion of Grace & Courtesy). These lessons are presented through demonstration and then practiced through role-playing, and modeled by Guides and older students. They are the foundation of the classroom, as they set a tone of respect and kindness. The child learns such important skills as, how to shake hands and greet a friend, how to properly interrupt someone who is busy, and how to tell someone to please move out of my way. The children love these lessons. They are always eager to take a turn playing the roles, and they are thrilled to know a better way to handle personal situations.

Another important consideration is that children have the same range and depth of emotions as adults, but they don't have the maturity or experience to put these feelings into perspective. The goal of Grace and Courtesy lessons and conflict resolution techniques is to validate these feelings and give children the tools to successfully tackle them. Children learn what to do when someone is unkind or unfair and how to discuss conflicts when they occur. Guides and children act as mediators, coaching children in conflict through a process of expressing their feelings and finding a way to fix their mistakes.

In addition to lessons, which teach social graces, there is significant emphasis placed on developing practical life skills. What we commonly refer to as misbehavior is often a symptom of an insecure and disempowered child. In fact, some experts believe that misbehavior serves the purpose of communicating unmet needs. Children who are happily engaged in self-satisfying activities with
clear purpose experience a great sense of accomplishment and power. When the child can do things for her/himself, s/he will feel confident and in control. These everyday living skills such as pouring, scrubbing tables, dish washing, and polishing, also help the child learn to focus his attention and complete a task. These lessons require the child to follow an orderly step by step process, which will further develop both self-discipline and logical thinking, thus laying a foundation for the more abstract academic activities offered within the other areas of the classroom.

The magical spell that enables the Montessori Child to become disciplined is her/his love for meaningful activity. When the environment provides consistency, nurturing adults and stimulating work, the child can go about his most important work, creating the adult he will become. Montessori offers her/him valuable tools for this great task: independence, order, coordination, cooperation and confidence.

Montessori, however, is only one component in the child's life. A child's home environment and parents love are the most critical factors in her/his development. Unfortunately, our children are not born with an owner’s manual. Parents generally rely on the wisdom of grandparents, doctors, and educators, as well as their own instincts to determine the right parenting style for their family. Parents will be able to find within our Montessori school, a family friendly environment that is ready to offer support. When schools and families develop a partnership, there is greater opportunity for consistency and continuity.

Whether in the home or the classroom it is important to keep in mind the ultimate goal of discipline. Too often we discipline for the moment, hastily responding to the present problem, but possibly creating future ones. Disciplining with long-range goals means keeping in mind the independent adult you want your child to become.

The goal of the Shining Stars classroom whether it is the prepared environment for preschoolers, or elementary, is first and foremost the development of skills necessary for a productive and fulfilling life. The best of the academic curricula are useless if the child does not develop inner discipline, integrity, and respect for others and oneself. In today’s world, these goals may seem out of reach, but they are more important now than ever before. The young person who faces the world of tomorrow armed with self-confidence and self-discipline is far more likely to achieve success and happiness. They will be prepared to meet any challenges that the real world may present, and will hopefully bring to that world a bit of the peace and joy they experienced in the Shining Stars Montessori environment.

Furthermore, misbehavior on the part of a student is approached in a manner that is appropriate for the student’s age, which will enable the student to comprehend what s/he did and the consequences that such behavior may bring about. However, while Shining Stars believes and strives to address misbehavior at the lowest level possible, for those times where a student is exhibiting
severe misbehavior, Shining Stars has an obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff in accordance with D.C. Official Code §38-236 et seq., and other district and federal laws. Below is an outline of Shining Stars expectations of student behavior, identification of prohibited behaviors, and approach to corrective actions for misbehaviors.

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AT SHINING STARS**

**Behavioral Expectations**

As is expected in the Montessori approach to education, the adults are the models of appropriate behavior for the children. We must keep this in mind at all times as we interact with each other and with the children. Whatever behavior we want the children to exhibit, we need to make sure that we are also demonstrating that behavior, because children learn what they see, not what they hear. So, the first step in helping children develop self-discipline and self-control is for us to model self-discipline and self-control. We also need to model and teach the children appropriate strategies and techniques for them to use in handling conflicts. The general behavioral expectations for all at Shining Stars, whether staff, student or parent/guardian, are as follows:

**Be Respectful:**
- We use kind words
- We use gentle hands on our friends and the materials
- We use walking feet inside the building
- We keep self-to-self
- We use quiet voices
- We clean up after ourselves
- We walk around rugs on the floor

**Be Caring:**
- We ask a friend if they need help
- We help keep the classroom clean
- We cooperate with our friends
- We wait our turn

**Be Purposeful:**
- We work with concentration
- We choose work that we have had a lesson on
- We complete our work
- We control our bodies

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND CONSEQUENCES**

One of the most powerful discipline tools is the guide/adult’s ability to pair kindness with firmness, and to be a model of grace and courtesy. If a child displays difficulty following the rules of
the community, the adult response will be positive and age-appropriate. Verbal acknowledgment of a child’s difficulties with the use of compassionate statements, reminders of the behavioral expectations, encouragement to engage in desirable behavior, reinforcement of desirable behavior, planned ignoring, distraction, substitution and/or removal from the situation are among the various approaches utilized. When the adults charged with their care and well-being interact with children in supportive and respectful ways, the children are much more likely to demonstrate self-discipline and self-control. Moreover, many instances of misbehavior resolve themselves as the child, within the bounds of safety, experiences the logical consequences of his/her actions, for example, being directed to clean up after throwing something on the floor. If the child disregards the limits of the classroom community, the guide/adult seeks the underlying causes in order to help the child understand the inappropriateness of his/her actions. The guide/adult also assists the child in finding a constructive alternative.

Children at Shining Stars are also expected to always put forth their best efforts in making work choices, concentrating and completing chosen work tasks. When students exhibit both appropriate social skills and good work habits, they are said to have reached a level of “normalization”. This is a Montessori term not meant to mean that everyone is the same but to express a state of mind and classroom existence reflective of both social and academic independence for the child and the classroom.

All members of our community are expected to respect one another, use manners with adults and peers, care for their space, and care for the environment. Children at Shining Stars learn to resolve their conflicts with one another and to seek the help of an adult if necessary, to aid them in peacefully solving problems. It is imperative that misbehaviors be addressed for the social, emotional and academic well-being of Shining Stars community. The table below provides identification, classification, and an explanation of infractions, minor to serious misbehaviors, which disrupt the peace and safety of our community:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier I Offenses</th>
<th>Tier II Offenses</th>
<th>Tier III Offenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Offenses that may rise to the level of in-school suspension)</td>
<td>(Serious Disciplinary Behaviors/Offenses that may result out-of-school suspension and/or expulsion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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| Disrespectful behavior | Property/material damage/destruction (greater than $100 but less than $500) | Severe harassment/bullying\(^{11}\)/threatening Social or group bullying
Hurtful teasing or name-calling (creating an emotional distress for the student(s) and/or staff). |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Property/material misuse/damage (less than $100) | Inappropriate/disrespectful language (direct) | Threatening or physically assaulting another person (any member of the SSMA community including students, staff, and/or parents).
Physically dangerous behavior (where a student has assaulted or threatened to assault another students or students), illegal behavior, alcohol, drugs, and/or weapons.
Mistreating another student by recklessly or intentionally endangering the health or safety of, or inflicting bodily injury on the student in connection with or for the purpose of threatening them.
Conduct including fighting, making threats, stalking or intimidation that endangers the wellbeing of other students or staff. |
| Refusal to participate or work | Physical contact/horseplay | Smoking or taking illicit/illegal substances
Selling/distribution of drugs
Bringing a weapon to school
Selling/distribution and/or consumption of alcohol |
| Leaving the classroom w/o permission | Mild physical aggression | Severe disruption
Repetitive defiance
Repetitive Non-compliant that causes a disruption to the class and creates an inability for the other |

\(^{11}\) Shining Stars defines bullying as repeated exposure, over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons. Please review SSMA’s Bully Prevention Policy.
Incident Reports

Parents/guardians are notified of issues/incidents, which occur during the school day via an incident report (IR) form. If the incident requires further review or investigation, the parent/guardian will be notified of additional findings. The parent/guardian may be requested to attend a meeting to discuss the following:

1. The offense;
2. The student’s conduct;
3. Illicit the assistance of the parent/guardian, to conduct an at-home discussion with the student and to develop a plan for the student to avoid any further incidents from happening in the future;
4. Provide an opportunity for the parent/guardian to discuss any concerns, thoughts, and/or provide the parent/guardian an opportunity to request the school’s assistance with student; and/or
5. Provide the student an opportunity to discuss his/her feelings and what may have led the student to misbehave.

Two types of behaviors are documented on incident reports:

1. When a student is involved in an accident and/or has a medical concern; and
2. When a student does not respond to adult redirection attempts.

Any staff member who encounters a student who has experienced an accident completes an IR form or who is demonstrating repeated difficulty complying with our school-wide behavioral expectations. When staff other than the classroom Guide completes a report, the Guide should be notified immediately, so that s/he can report the incident to the child’s parent as soon as possible, but before the end of the day. Once an IR has been initially processed by administration, the form is emailed to parents, the Guide, the Executive Director, the Principal, and the Director of Student Support. If further investigation is deemed necessary, a timely resolution to the concern is pursued.

Shining Stars’ Response to Bullying Behavior

Bullying behavior is not uncommon among elementary school-aged children. The term bullying can be defined as
“intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words, or behavior such as name calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more persons against another. The victims do not intentionally provoke these negative acts and for such acts to be defined as bullying, an imbalance of real or perceived power must exist between the perpetrator and the victim.”

Bullying behaviors can be verbal, physical, electronic, and/or exclusionary. Some amount of teasing or physical interaction is developmentally appropriate and expected among elementary aged children. However, bullying experts believe that social gain is at the root of 95 percent of bullying behavior, and therefore children who continually engage in bullying others are most often motivated by a desire for social power. When a school employee believes that a child is bullying another child, the Guide will intervene immediately with both children. The staff member will also contact the school’s Bullying Prevention Team so that follow up intervention procedures are conducted with all students involved and their parents. Please visit the SSMA website (Parent Portal) for more information about our Bullying Policy Manual.

To obtain further information regarding how we respond to bullying behavior, you may contact our bullying prevention team coordinator, Willa Jones, PhD, at wjones@shiningstarspcs.org. Shining Stars’ Bullying Prevention Team is comprised of teachers and administrators who meet monthly and on an as-needed basis to investigate all bullying claims.

When students demonstrate difficulty executing their responsibilities, a series of actions may be taken depending on the significance and magnitude of an inappropriate behavior. Each student incident is treated individually but the following staff responses may occur:

**Progressive Responses for Less Serious/Minor Behaviors**

Misbehaviors can include minor student conflict, not following directions, disruptive behaviors, and/or those offenses identified under Tier 1 and Tier 2. These less serious/minor behaviors are addressed in the following ways listed below:

**Level I and II Offenses**

1. Student redirected by Guide and/or staff
2. Problem discussed with students
3. Conflict resolution/Peace Table
4. Calming area/talk with staff
5. Short and Extended In-School Reflection Time (i.e., both within and/or outside of the classroom)
6. Assigned seating near the teacher for a period of time
7. Reflection assignment
8. Logical consequences (see below)
9. Parent note or phone call (staff member will complete an incident report)
10. In-School Reflection Time (in-school suspension)

In-School Reflection (In-School Suspension)

Based on the seriousness of the infraction and the child’s behavioral history, the school may implement in-school reflection (ISR), a disciplinary response to a persistent, disruptive, and harmful behavior for students 5 years old and above. ISR will be considered if a repeated attempt to redirect a child’s behavior is implemented; positive behavior interventions have been implemented; a parent call/conference has been completed; and/or support has been requested and have all proven ineffective in modifying the child’s behavior to meet school expectations. If Administration determines that ISR is recommended with input by the Guide, an incident report will be generated and sent home to the parent. ISR will start immediately, if possible. ISR will be completed in another supervised working area where the student will continue to work and complete a Reflection exercise to assess his/her behavior, to identify the triggering event and to problem-solve for future success. Prior to the completion of ISR, administration will talk with the student to assess learning and reflection prior to returning to class. Depending on the infraction, ISR can last through a working cycle up to several days.

Depending on the duration, on the following day, upon arriving at school, the student will report to his/her classroom Guide to receive his/her work assignment. The student will then report directly to the Principal (or designee) with his/her work and be reminded of the behavior that warranted the ISR. Periodically, the student’s Guide may visit the ISR site to supply additional work and check on the student’s progress. The student’s freedom of movement and the privilege to be in the classroom environment are restricted during an ISR. Depending on the duration, the student will receive lunch and a movement breaks without his/her peers. The student will be closely monitored for the duration of the ISR. The ISR will not be held for a period greater than three hours (or the equivalent of one work cycle) for a Primary Student. If ISR extends to more than one day and the student becomes absent, ISR continues upon their return to school to full completion.

Immediate Responses for Serious Disciplinary Behaviors/Offenses

Shining Stars endeavors to ensure all students receive the education they are entitled to; thereby addressing incidents/offenses at the lowest level possible. The following incidents/offenses, including those identified under Tier III, may lead to out-of-school reflection time (out-of-school suspension) or expulsion: punching; hitting; kicking; spitting; profanity; physical aggression; carrying a weapon, possession, use, or distribution of drugs, repeated bullying; sexually suggestive/explicit behavior, inappropriate touching; verbal aggression, etc.

Consistent with D.C. Official Code § 38-236 et seq., and school policy, Shining Stars will not suspend or expel any student unless the incident/offense shows that the student willfully caused,
attempted to cause, or threatened to cause bodily injury or emotional distress to staff, another student or students on and off school grounds. In response to those offenses classified as serious, to include serious safety incidents, Shining Stars may suspend (out-of-school) or expel a student to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff. Upon notification of the incident, Shining Stars may do the following

1. Removal of the student from the classroom or incident site (staff member must complete an incident report)
2. Outside assistance from school administration or other personnel
3. Immediate phone call to parent/in-person to notify and schedule a conference
4. Referral for Star Support Team (SST)
6. Financial penalty in the case of proven theft or purposeful property damage
7. Out-of-School suspension (an opportunity for the student to have a time to reflect his/her actions away from school) (see below)
8. Expulsion

Out-Of-School Reflection (Out-of-School Suspension)

Out-of-School Reflection Time (OSR), is a disciplinary response to a persistent, disruptive, disrespectful, injurious, violent and/or harmful behavior that has resulted in severe destruction or unsafe condition/situation for the offending student and others. Students whose behavior is persistently disruptive, harmful to themselves and/or others, and/or to school property, and does not change in response to the adult’s redirection attempts, will be subject to disciplinary action. This action may include OSR and/or Expulsion.

Shining Stars’ maintains that it is within the school and classroom environments where we can most effectively support and create change for a child. However, if and when prior interventions have failed and depending on the severity of the infraction, administrators may recommend OSR and its duration to the Executive Director/head of school who makes the final decision.

Before Shining Stars issues an OSR to a student, the following procedures will be followed to determine whether or not a suspension is warranted or if a less serious discipline will be a more appropriate response:

Investigation

While investigating, the student, depending on the severity of the incident/offense, may remain at school or be sent home while an investigation is being conducted. The Executive Director will appoint an administrative staff to conduct an investigation into the

- Incident
- Circumstances surrounding the incident/offense
• Interview the student
• Interview witnesses
• Interview Guide and/or aide
• Review any files or incident report(s) generated as a result of or in response to the incident and/or offense

Findings
Upon the completion of the investigation, if the investigation shows the student violated school policy and his/her conduct is serious and warrants a suspension, the Executive Director/head of school, will determine how long the student will be suspended. The length of the suspension will be based on and determined in conjunction with the severity of the incident, student’s age, discipline history, and any other relevant information.

Notification
The OSR shall become effective immediately. The decision to remove (suspend) a student from school (for reflection) shall be documented in writing (i.e., Incident Report) and given to the parent/guardian on the same day that the decision is made. Both the student and his/her parent/guardian will also be notified in writing the length of the suspension, along with the reason(s) why the school was taking such action against the student, how the parent/guardian may obtain the student’s classwork and homework, and the parent/guardian will be provided with the teacher’s and Principal’s contact information. A call will be placed to Child and Family Services (CSF) for students who are not picked up if OSR has been determined during the school day. The student may return to school without being accompanied by his/her parent/guardian. However, the parent/guardian will be required to meet with the Principal at a scheduled time, to discuss expectations of the student and parent/guardian, to ensure the student’s academic and emotional success. As required, all OSR incidents will be reported to the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) and OSSE. There is no appeal for an Out-of-School suspension for five (5) days or less. If a child is placed on OSR for three (3) or more instances within the same school year, an expulsion will be considered.

Length of suspension
Depending on the severity of the offense, an OSR shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days for any individual incident in grades kindergarten through 5 and ten (10) consecutive school days for grade 6, during an academic year. A student, regardless of grade, may not be subject to an OSR, for longer than twenty (20) consecutive days, without a written justification to the student and parent/guardian from the Executive Director describing the following: why exceeding the twenty (20) day limit is a more appropriate disciplinary action than alternative responses; or the student's conduct necessitated an emergency removal.

12 D.C. Official Code § 38-236.04(b)(1) and (b)(3).
13 D.C. Official Code § 38-236.04(b)(3)(A) and (b)(3)(B).
Continuity of student’s education while on suspension

During a student’s OSR, s/he will be given work and all appropriate assignments for the duration of the suspension. This will ensure the student does not get behind on his/her schoolwork. Additionally, it will ensure that upon the student’s return to school, s/he will be able to transition with little to no difficulty. Should the student’s parent/guardian have any follow up questions, concerns, or requires additional assistance pertaining to the student or assignments provided to the student, the parent/guardian is encouraged to contact the Principal at academics@shiningstars.org.

If there are assignments the student is not able to complete from home, during the suspension, the student’s parent/guardian may schedule a meeting with the student’s teacher, Principal, and/or both, to create a plan that will allow the student to make up any assignment s/he missed. This may require the student and his/her parent/guardian, along with the teacher, Principal, and/or both, to create a plan that will require the assignment(s) to be completed before school starts (come to school before 8:35am) or after school (3:30pm), to ensure the student does not get behind in his/her schoolwork.

Expulsion

For serious, repeated major offenses and/or repeated OSRs, expulsion from Shining Stars may be considered. This is an action of absolutely last resort. Shining Stars requires that a parent/guardian attend a meeting with the Executive Director, the Principal, and the student’s Guide/teacher to review the expulsion decision. The Director of Student Support may also be involved in this meeting (please see due process and grievance procedures below).

Due Process For Long-Term Suspension/Expulsion

If the student is recommended for a long-term out-of-school suspension (suspension that is for 6 consecutive days or more for grades kindergarten through 5 and 11 consecutive days or more for grade 6) or recommended for expulsion, following the meeting with the Principal, the parent has the right to attend a hearing on the matter. Except as provided otherwise in the District of Columbia laws and Federal Regulations, the Executive Director will not impose a long term suspension or expel a student as a consequence of a serious offense without: (1) first providing the student and the parent/guardian written notice, (2) providing the student and the parent/guardian an opportunity for a hearing on the charge, and (3) the parent/guardian an opportunity to participate in such hearing. The Executive Director shall provide written notice to the student and the parent/guardian either in English and/or in the primary language of the home, if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

HEARING PROCEDURE FOR LONG TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

Written Notice to student and parent/guardian

The Executive Director shall convene the school’s disciplinary committee, with the exclusion of the designee who conducted the initial investigation, to make a final decision regarding the
decision to institute a long-term suspension and/or expulsion and notify the parent/guardian in writing of the final decision. During the hearing, the student and his/her parent/guardian will have the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student’s explanation of the alleged incident. The final decision and next steps (procedures for returning to school after the long-term suspension and/or procedures for expulsion) will be communicated with the parents/guardians in writing. Should the student be required to return to school, the student may return without being accompanied by his/her parent/guardian. The Principal will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a meeting to discuss expectations of the student and parent/guardian, to ensure the student’s academic and emotional success.

The written notice to the student and parent/guardian may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, and electronic mail (e-mail), to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the Family Handbook. The notice shall outline the student and parent’s/guardian’s right to attend the suspension and/or expulsion hearing. The notice shall set forth in plain language:

1. The disciplinary offense
2. The basis for the charge
3. The potential consequences
4. The purpose of the hearing (to discuss proposed long-term suspension and/or expulsion recommendation)
5. Invitation to the student and parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
6. Date and time of the hearing
7. Location of the hearing
8. Right to request an interpreter
9. An explanation of the student and parent’s right to have an interpreter be present, should one be needed for the student and/or parent to participate

Parents/guardians may request to attend a long-term suspension and/or expulsion action in the following way:

The parent may submit a written request to the Executive Director within five (5) business days of receiving the written notice to suspend student long term and/or expel the student. The written request shall be addressed to the following:

Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS
Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia
Executive Director
1240 Randolph St NE

14 D.C. Official Code § 38-236.04(e).
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR LONG TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

If the parent disagrees with the decision or wishes to contest the final decision of the Executive Director and the hearing committee; the parent/guardian may submit his/her request for an appeal within five (5) business days of receiving the decision via email to the SSMA Board Chair, Mr. Anthony King, Esq. at aking@shiningstarspcs.org. Parents/guardians should only contact the Chair after taking all of the steps outlined above. The Chair will then schedule a hearing to address the parent’s/guardian’s grievance.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in the school’s Family Handbook and the SSMA 2019-2020 Special Education Procedural Safeguards Handbook. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) provides certain procedural protections for special education students as set forth below. Special education students can be suspended from school for up to ten consecutive days in one school year or up to ten cumulative days in one school year.

For removal of more than ten consecutive or ten cumulative days, special education students are entitled to a manifestation determination hearing that shall occur prior to the tenth day of removal. The Director of Special Education will convene a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meeting to conduct a manifestation determination and answer the following two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student’s IEP; or
2. Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student’s disability?

If the answer to either of these questions is “yes,” the student’s conduct is a manifestation of his disability. If the answer to both of these questions is “no,” the conduct is not a manifestation of the student’s disability.

If the manifestation determination is positive, the multidisciplinary team will

1. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment and create a behavioral intervention plan; and
2. Review the behavioral intervention plan, if one already exists, and modify it as
necessary to address the behavior in question.

If the manifestation determination is negative, the student can be subject to disciplinary procedures in the same manner and extent as a regular education student except that the student must continue to receive services such that he is able to make progress toward his IEP goals and objectives. Students on 504 plans are entitled to a manifestation determination for removals for more than ten consecutive or cumulative school days in a given year. If the manifestation is negative, the student may be disciplined as a regular education student with no further entitlement to educational services. If the manifestation is positive, the student shall be returned to the placement from which the student was removed.

RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES
Guidelines for Emergency Behavior Intervention Strategies

One of Shining Stars primary responsibilities is to ensure the safety of its students, staff, and visitors. Shining Stars firmly believes that every student has a right to learn and grow in a safe learning environment. To create a safe learning environment, Shining Stars administrators, teachers, and therapists carefully plan for social, emotional, and behavioral development of individual students and the social climate of the school community. As coping with strong emotions and conflict are natural parts of childhood, Shining Stars develops specific plans to support students through moments of emotional crisis using positive behavior support strategies. In a moment of high emotional crisis, a student may exhibit behaviors that seriously challenge the physical safety of him or herself and/or the safety of others. When such dangerous incidents occur, positive behavioral support strategies may not regain the safety of the student and others. At this point, further intervention is needed and Shining Stars school personnel must consider using emergency strategies in order to prevent the student from harming him or herself and others. The following document includes specific guidelines for employing emergency behavior intervention strategies: physical restraint and seclusion. These guidelines were written while reviewing special education laws, current research, and Shining Stars best practices. Most importantly, these guidelines have been written from a child-focused perspective and are intended to ensure the safety and dignity of all Shining Stars’ students.

Background Information

Shining Stars believes that in almost every situation and for all students; positive behavior support strategies can prevent the use of restraint and seclusion. Shining Stars also acknowledges that at times, a student’s behavior in an emotional crisis can become so heightened that it will directly challenge the physical safety of him or herself and/or the safety of others. In such moments of high emotional crisis, school personnel are forced to take drastic steps to manage the student’s behavior to protect the student and school community. When school personnel are not trained in child-focused crisis intervention techniques, Shining Stars believes that the students and staff are at risk of further harm. Shining Stars has staff that are specifically trained in how to physically restrain and seclude students as an appropriate emergency behavior intervention strategy to address only high emotional
criterion incidents that place a student or others in imminent danger of physical injury. Shining Stars has also adopted best practices to ensure that the physical restraint and seclusion techniques used are preventable and respectful of all students’ right to safely attend and enjoy school.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS is led by the Executive Director & Head of School. The “ED” has the ultimate responsible for ensuring the success of the school, and is accountable to the SSMA Board of Directors. The school has four (operating) units (and directors or administrative team) that are responsible for managing the following program and compliance areas:

- **Academic** - Mrs. Gail Jenkins
- **Operations & School Performance** - Mrs. Cherita Moore-Gause
- **Student Support Services** - Dr. Willa Jones
- **Special Education** - Mr. Darryl Buxton
- **English Language Learner(s) Programs** - Ms. Frances Brooks
- **Title IX** - Ms. Tais Taylor

*All of the above directors report to the Executive Director/head of school.*

**Governance Structure**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS is a public charter school, governed by a board of trustees. The board sets policy for the school. Working through the executive director, the board ensures that all laws and regulations are being followed and that operations are consistent with the mission of the school. See School Information section for a list of the board officers.

**Accountability**

As a charter school, we have the flexibility to use innovative methods of education while being highly accountable to our stakeholders, which includes our school’s families, the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, the Office of the State Superintendent for Education, and the Department of Education. We continue to work on ways to show our stakeholders evidence of our children’s great work each day. Since our environment is hands-on and individually paced, this is a challenging but important task. Our goal is to collect qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources that will enable Shining Stars to communicate school performance to stakeholders with fidelity and transparency.

**GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY**

**INFORMAL COMPLAINT**

Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School maintains an “open door” policy. Parent complaints will be addressed in a timely and consistent fashion. Disagreements should be
resolved whenever possible among the people most closely involved while preserving positive relationships. We would ask that all parties come to the discussions assuming the good intentions of the other party. When parents have complaints or disagreements with any parties at Shining Stars we ask that you observe the following guidelines:

1. If the complaint involves a situation in the classroom, parents should seek to resolve the issue by discussing it with the classroom Guide when students are not present.

2. If a resolution is not possible, the parent should seek to resolve the issue by making an appointment with the Principal or supervisor/Director responsible for the area of concern.

3. If a resolution is not possible, or if the complaint is with a school-wide policy or procedure, the parent should seek to resolve the issue by making an appointment to discuss it with the Executive Director.

4. If resolution is not possible with any of the parties above, parents should address their concerns to the Board Vice Chair vicechair@shiningstarspcs.org who will document the concern and forward matters of concern to the Board Chair (chair@shiningstarspcs.org).

Parents should also keep the following in mind when addressing a complaint to the board of trustees:

1. Complaints should be made in writing and should include details of your efforts to resolve the issue in steps 1 and 2, and where the discussion broke down. This allows all parties involved to work from a consistent body of information.

2. The Board of Trustees, in general, will not address a complaint based on hearsay or made on behalf of another parent or family.

3. The Board of Trustees, in general, will not address a complaint if resolution with the appropriate individuals if steps #1 and #2 has not yet been attempted in good faith.

4. The Board of Trustees reserves the right not to address a complaint that is made anonymously.

5. The Board of Trustees, in general, will not address specific complaints about the performance of individual school employees in a public meeting. If such a complaint is brought at a public meeting, the Board will take the complaint under advisement and will provide an appropriate response at a later time.

6. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to notify individual school employees about
complaints brought against them. Parents may request that they are not personally identified as the party bringing the complaint.

If a parent complaint is not addressed to the satisfaction of the people involved, parents should notify the board chair and the executive director that they are seeking resolution via other regulatory government entities.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Shining Stars works diligently to ensure students, parents, and members of its community are treated fairly and given the utmost respect. This mission is effectuated by implementing proper procedures for complaint filing and conflict resolution. While Shining Stars strives to be a premier educational institution, there will be times when disagreements will arise and proper implementation of a fair and just resolution is required, moments like this we look towards a written guidance. This guidance/or procedure allows Shining Stars to resolve disagreements and misunderstandings, while preserving the schools integrity and relationship with members of our community.

An individual may file a formal grievance, if s/he is unable to resolve his or her concerns informally, or if s/he would rather make his/her concerns formal and reduce the concern to writing. In order to bring a formal grievance, you must complete a Formal Grievance Form. This form is available upon request. You must submit a Grievance Form and include any supporting documents you wish to present as evidence or in support of, this must be delivered either in person or by postal mail to the address below.

Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia  
Executive Director & Head of School  
1240 Randolph St NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
www.shiningstarspcs.org  
202/723-1467

Students who desire to file a formal complaint are required to complete the Student Complaint Form, or speak to anyone on the administrative staff about his or her desire to file a formal complaint. You may obtain a copy of the form at the front desk or you may request for one from an administrative staff member. Once you have completed the form, you may drop the form in a drop box, located at the front desk or to an administrator.

Resolution of Formal Grievance

Upon receiving a formal grievance, within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the complaint, the Executive Director, in her authority, will determine which member of the administrative staff or teacher, non-involved party, will investigate and resolve the grievance. The designee will follow the
following steps:

1. Review
Determine if s/he has all the information or documents required to begin an investigation. If all documents/or information has been provided to conduct an investigation, the designee will begin his/her investigation into the complaint. However, if additional information is needed, the designee will contact the grievant in writing or via telephone and schedule a meeting to obtain the additional information needed.

2. Mediation
The designee will evaluate the complaint and will determine whether mediation is possible or appropriate. Prior to scheduling mediation, the Executive Director will determine one (1) or two (2) school officials, who are not involved, that will mediate the matter before the parties (the grievant and the involved party) and discuss possible solution or resolution to the issue at hand. Shining Stars goal for mediation is to facilitate open communication, to aid in the resolution of conflicts in a non-adversarial, confidential manner.

3. Investigation
If the designee determines that mediation is not a viable option, the designee will conduct an impartial investigation into the grievance. The designee will interview all parties involved and/or named, obtain statements, and documents responsive or pertinent to the grievance.

4. Final Determination
Designee shall conclude his or her investigation within thirty (30) business days from the time the investigation began. Shining Stars shall provide a final determination letter to the grievant of his or her findings, including a determination of whether the grievance was substantiated, and possible solution that designee is proposing. Dissemination of information or documents to grievant must correspond with District of Columbia and federal laws that govern the release of records.

Appeal Process
A grievant may appeal the final determination of his or her formal grievance. The grievant must appeal the response to his or her formal grievance within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the final determination letter; the appeal must be addressed to the Executive Director of Shining Stars. The appeal must be in writing and delivered either in person or by postal mail to the address below.

Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia
Executive Director
1240 Randolph St NE
Washington, DC 20017
www.shiningstarspcs.org
A final response shall be provided to the grievant no later than twenty (20) business days from receipt of the appeal. The response shall include an explanation of the outcome of the appeal and any corrective or remedial action to be taken by Shining Stars.

In following the above, the parent disagrees with the appeal decision of the Executive Director, parents, students, or guardians may submit their request for an appeal to the SSMA Board Chair, Mr. Anthony King, Esq at chair@shiningstarpcs.org. The Chair will then schedule a hearing to address the parent grievance.

Please note: this grievance policy is not designed to supersede or supplant federal law and parent rights under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as amended, 1996.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION AND REPORTING POLICY

Mandatory Reporting Requirement

Any Shining Stars Guides/aides, administrative staff, employees, and contractors, consistent with District of Columbia mandatory reporting law, who suspects, observes and/or has knowledge of a Shining Stars staff who has had or is having an inappropriate relationship, encounter, inappropriately touched a student, or sexually abused a student, is required to report it immediately to the Executive Director, who will contact CFSA at (202) 671SAFE (671-7233) (reporting hotline) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) promptly. All Shining Stars, under District of Columbia law, are deemed mandatory reporters.

Additionally, any Shining Stars staff who suspects or witnesses the following about a student and/or a student reports the following to a staff: physical abuse (marks, bruises, burns, fractures, indents, etcetera), exhibiting signs of sexual abuse (this may include but is not limited to, engaging in child pornography or prostitution), exhibiting extreme behavior, fears going home (either because the student is being abused physically or mentally, witnessing domestic abuse, or is being threatened at home), difficulty walking or sitting, appears to be withdrawn or unable to concentrate, contemplating harming him or herself, threatens to harm others, engages in inappropriate or risky behavior (sexual,

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15 This policy is consistent with D.C. Official Code §§ 38–951.02, 38–952.02, 4–1321.02, and 22–3020.52.
16 Under D.C. Official Code § 4–1321.02(b), Shining Star employees, Guides, aides, contractors, and/or administrative staff are mandated to report abuse (mental or physical) or neglect. Moreover, D.C. Official Code § 22–3020.52 states in pertinent parts “Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, that a child is a victim of sexual abuse shall immediately report such knowledge or belief to the police. For the purposes of this subchapter, a call to 911, or a report to the Child and Family Services Agency, shall be deemed a report to the police.”
17 Collectively referred to as Shining Stars staff.
inappropriately touching other students, using drugs, under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, or is in possession or attempting to distribute drugs), and/or shows signs of neglect (malnourished, appears disheveled, poor hygiene, fatigue, sleeping in class, persistent health related issues), shall report it immediately to the Executive Director. The Executive Director should also be notified if there is a failure to reach a parent/guardian or difficulty in obtaining parent/guardian involvement after notification has been made and a meeting has been requested to address concerns raised. The Executive Director and/or designee shall contact the student’s parent/guardian. The reporting staff and the Executive Director and/or designee shall write a report documenting the incident and/or what was observed, along with the protocols that were followed.

Notification to students and parents/guardians

When an allegation of sexual abuse, inappropriate conduct, and/or inappropriate touching is reported, whereby the complaint made is against an employee of Shining Stars or against another student (student-on-student), the Executive Director and/or designee shall contact the parent/guardian of the student(s) and schedule a meeting to discuss the incident and plan of action. Moreover, the Executive Director and/or designee shall inform Shining Stars students and parents/guardians of the incident. While Shining Stars community will be provided notice of the incident or allegation, specific details will not be disclosed to protect the student(s) and the integrity of the investigation. In the notification, which may be done via a written letter or an electronic mail (e-mail), the name of the student(s), the name of the staff member, and any other identifier or personally identifiable information (PII) shall not be released. The communication shall contain the following

- Incident
- What actions the school took
  - The accused staff member is removed from school grounds and placed on administrative leave pending an investigation. Staff members should consult Shining Stars Employee Handbook for additional information pertaining to discipline.
  - The accused student is removed from school grounds, where a parent/guardian is notified immediately for pick-up, and placed on out-of-school suspension, until the investigation concludes and a determination has been made.
    - If a student is suspended, the same procedures will be followed pertaining to continuity of education. Additional information may be obtained under the Discipline section of this handbook.
- Status of the accused staff member and/or student
  - While Shining Stars is conducting an investigation, the accused will be notified of the process, how long the investigation will take, if s/he will be interviewed, and decision rendered against him/her, along with appeal rights (for students only).
  - Complainant(s) will be provided with internal and external resources.
- Invitation for parent/guardian to schedule a meeting to discuss any concerns or questions they may have
Parents/guardians who suspect or have knowledge of student sexual abuse, should (1) contact 911 and notify the Metropolitan Police Department, (2) contact CFSA at (202) 671-SAFE (671-7233) (reporting hotline); and/or Shining Stars Executive Director at rrodriguez@shiningstarspcs.org or (202) 723-1467.

Shining Stars staff are prohibited from discussing incidents of this nature or discussing the parties involved with students and/or parents/guardians outside of school, including correspondence by electronic mail, telephonic, or other means.

**Prohibited Behavior**

Students, Guides, aides, and any other Shining Stars employee/community member are prohibited from (1) touching a student in a manner that is sexually explicit or suggestive, for purposes of sexual gratification or that may otherwise constitute abuse; and (2) grabbing, touching, hitting, and/or physically moving a student in an aggressive, angry and/or hostile manner with the intent or purpose to inflict harm or intimidate the student.

Guides, aides, administrative staff, contractors, and any other Shining Stars staff member are prohibited from: (1) using profanity, derogatory words, making suggestive statements towards students, and/or use abusive words or language with or against students; (2) being alone with a student or students where the student or students are not visible to any other individual or individuals. This prohibition pertains to both while on school grounds, facilities, classrooms, and/or at school sponsored events/activities.

**Training**

**Staff**

Guides, aides, administrative staff, and contractors will be provided with annual training every Spring on (1) prohibitive behavior; (2) mandatory reporting requirements; (3) investigating an incident; (4) documenting procedure; (5) what signs to look for to determine physical abuse, mental abuse, and/or neglect; and (6) how to appropriately stop and/or respond to student-on-student acts of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and dating violence.

**Students**

Students will be given annual, age appropriate, training and instruction every Spring on how s/he can safely report or file a complaint of physical or mental abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and information on dating violence. Students will also be provided training on how to play safely and appropriately, how to keep their hands to themselves, how to play non-aggressively, and good touching versus bad touching.
### External and Internal Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Website/Contact Information</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(CFSA) (202) 671-7233</td>
<td>CFSA takes reports of child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, seven days a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1-800-656-4673)</td>
<td>Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RAINN allows victims of sexual assault and/or family members to chat with a trained staff member who can provide confidential crisis support.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RAINN’s online hotline is available in English (online.rainn.org) and Spanish (online.rainn.org/es).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC Rape Crisis Center (DCRCC)</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://dcrcc.org/">http://dcrcc.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(202) 333-7273</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:dcrcc@dcrcc.org">dcrcc@dcrcc.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DCRCC offers crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy to survivors and/or their families, to heal from the aftermath of sexual violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counseling is available in English and Spanish.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a confidential service, however, DCRCC hotline advocates are required by law to report to the appropriate authorities any cases of child sexual abuse, abuse of vulnerable adults and persons who are at risk to themselves or others. If you provide the advocate with identifying information during a hotline call, a mandated report will be filed in these required cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DC SAFE</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.dcsafe.org/">https://www.dcsafe.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-844-443-5732</td>
<td>24 hours a day, 7 days a week crisis intervention agency for domestic violence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACCION
Si usted requiere servicios en español puede llamar directamente al 1-866-962-5048
Spanish speakers may call 1-866-962-5048

https://www.dcsafe.org/accion-line
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
SAFE empezó la línea de ACCIÓN. Una línea de emergencia diseñada especialmente para Latinas. La línea provee interención de crisis y recursos inmediatos que están disponible 24 horas al día 7 días a la semana.

Dr. Regina Rodriguez
Executive Director & Head of School
rrodriguez@shiningstarspcs.org
202-723-1467

Ms. Doris Akintimehin
School Nurse
202-723-1467

Mrs. Cherita Moore-Gause
Director of Operations & School Performance
emooregause@shiningstarspcs.org
202-723-1467

Mrs. Gail Jenkins
Principal
academics@shiningstarspcs.org
202-723-1467

Dr. Willa Jones
Director of Student Support Services
wjones@shiningstarspcs.org
202-723-1467

OPEN MEETINGS POLICY
Shining Stars is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors that includes parent members. The Board is responsible for developing policies, and ensuring the school is financially viable. The Board’s responsibility also includes ensuring academic achievement. As part of the school’s Open Meeting Policy, the school holds a total of 6 meetings (or bi-monthly) meeting per school year. The meetings take place on the third Saturday of the month at Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS. The Board’s meeting calendar is posted online on the school's website at http://www.shiningstarspcs.org/8-content/6-board-of-directors.html, and also on the school’s website master calendar at http://www.shiningstarspcs.org/school-calendar.html. The meeting times are also announced in the Shining Stars News and Notes, distributed weekly to Shining Stars parents via electronic mail. The school will hold one public meeting to address any proposed campus changes to include but not limited to grade level change(s), location change, or expansion.
ATTACHMENT A

PHOTO OF THE CHILD (WALLET SIZE)
4 ELMER'S GLUE STICKS
1 SCOTCH TAPE
1 ELMER'S WASHABLE SCHOOL GLUE 7OZ BOTTLE
1 CRAYOLA 7" COLORED PRE SHARPENED PENCILS 24CT
1 CRAYOLA MY FIRST CRAYONS 8/16CT
ASSORTED FOOD COLORING (4 Vials .25 FL OZ)
1 CRAYOLA WASHABLE WATERCOLORS 8 CT
1 KLEENEX TISSUE 85CT FLAT
2 BABY WIPES SOFT PACK 80CT
1 CLOROX/LYSOL WIPES (GREEN) 35 CT
1 FISKARS 5" BLUNT SCISSORS
2 TWO POCKET SOLID COLOR FOLDERS
1 50 CT BOX OF ZIPLOC Gallon size
1 100CT SET OF 5 OZ DIXIE CUPS
1 FLUSHABLE WIPES 42 CT
ONE CHILDREN’S BOOK – FICTION OR NON FICTION
2 CHANGES OF CLOTHING IN A GALLON SIZE ZIPLOC BAG (EACH ITEM MUST BE LABELED WITH THE STUDENT’S NAME)

PK4
FAMILY PHOTO 4X6
PHOTO OF THE CHILD (wallet size)
4 ELMER'S GLUE STICKS
1 ELMER'S WASHABLE SCHOOL GLUE 7OZ BOTTLE
1 REAM XEROGRAPHIC PAPER
1 PRISMACOLOR PRE-SHARPENED PENCILS 12CT
● 2 CRAYOLA WASHABLE WATERCOLORS 8 CT
● 1 KLEENEX TISSUE 85CT FLAT
● 2 BABY WIPES SOFT PACK 80CT
● 1 BEGINNERS LARGE TRIANGLE PENCILS WITH ERASER 6CT
● 1 ANTIBACTERIAL WET ONES W/RED TOP 40 CT
● 1 MEAD MARBLE COMP STORY PAPER RED BASELINE 100CT
● 1 CURAD BANDAIDS (LATEX FREE) 60CT
● 1 CRAYOLA CRAYONS 24CT
● 1 50 CT BOX OF ZIPLOCK/GLAD LOCK BRAND QUART BAGS
● 2 TWO POCKET SOLID COLOR FOLDERS
● 1 HEAVYWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION PAPER 50CT (MULTI-COLORED)
● 1 CHANGE OF CLOTHING IN A GALLON SIZE ZIPLOC BAG LABELED WITH STUDENT’S NAME

KINDERGARTEN
● FAMILY PHOTO 4X6
● PHOTO OF THE CHILD (WALLET SIZE)
● TICONDEROGA PENCILS 12/18CT
● 1 PENCIL SHARPENER
● PAPER MATE ARROWHEAD ERASER CAP 1 SMALL BOX
● 2 PINK PEARL MEDIUM ERASERS
● 2 TWO POCKET SOLID COLOR FOLDERS
● 1 RULER 12” LABELED
● 1 CRAYOLA MARKERS WASHABLE 10CT
● 2 MEAD PRIMARY RULED MARBLE COMP BK 100CT
● 1 PRISMACOLOR PRE SHARPENED PENCILS 12CT
● 1 CRAYOLA WASHABLE WATERCOLORS 8 CT
● 1 XEROGRAPHIC PAPER REAM
● 2 ELMER’S GLUE STICK
● 1 KLEENEX TISSUE 85CT FLAT
● 1 FISKARS 5" BLUNT SCISSORS
● 1 50 CT BOX OF ZIPLOCK/GLAD LOCK BRAND SANDWICH BAG
● 1 ANTIBACTERIAL WET ONES W/RED TOP 40 CT
● 1 CHANGE OF CLOTHES IN A GALLON SIZE ZIPLOC BAG LABELED WITH STUDENT’S NAME
LOWER ELEMENTARY (1st-3rd GRADE)

1ST GRADE
● FAMILY PHOTO 4X6
● PHOTO OF THE CHILD 4X6
● 24 NO#2 DIXON TICONDEROGA PENCIL LATEX FREE
● 4 MEAD PRIMARY RULED MARBLE COMP BKS 100CT
● 3 MAGIC RUB ERASERS (PEN/PENCIL)
● 1 CRAYOLA 7" COLORED PRE SHARPENED PENCILS 24CT
● 1 CRAYOLA 4" X 7/16" LARGE CRAYONS 8CT
● 1 CRAYOLA WASHABLE WATERCOLORS 8 CT
● 1 REAM XEROGRAPHIC PAPER
● 2 ELMER'S GLUE STICKS
● 1 KLEENEX TISSUE 85CT FLAT
● 1 FISKARS 5" BLUNT SCISSORS
● 1 MR CLEAN MAGIC ERASER 2 PACK
● 1 ANTIBACTERIAL WET ONES W/RED TOP 40 CT
● 1 ELMER'S 4 OZ SCHOOL GLUE
● 1 25CT BOX OF ZIPLOCK/GLAD LOCK BRAND QUART BAGS

2ND & 3RD GRADES
● FAMILY PHOTO 4X6
● PHOTO OF THE CHILD 4X6
● 1 CRAYOLA 7" COLORED PRE SHARPENED PENCILS 24CT
● 5 100 CT BLACK MARBLE COMP BOOK WR
● 1 REAM XEROGRAPHIC PAPER
● 2 SHARPIE ACCENT PENS STYLE HIGHLIGHTER FL. YELLOW
● 1 USB 2.0 FLASH DRIVE 2GB
● 48 NO2 DIXON TICONDEROGA PENCIL
● 4 ELMER'S GLUE STICKS
● 6 BLACK EXPO2 LOW ODOR FINE POINT MARKERS
● 1 KLEENEX TISSUE 85CT FLAT
● 2 MAGIC RUB ERASERS (PEN/PENCIL) LATEX FREE
● 2 GREEN PLASTIC POCKET & BRAD FOLDERS
● 2 BLUE PLASTIC POCKET & BRAD FOLDERS
● 1 RED PLASTIC POCKET & BRAD FOLDERS
● 1 YELLOW PLASTIC POCKET & BRAD FOLDERS
● 2 GREEN MED STICK PEN
● 2 ANTIBACTERIAL WET ONES W/RED TOP 40 CT
UPPER ELEMENTARY SUPPLY LIST - 4TH - 6TH GRADES

- Family Photo 4”x6”
- Photo of Child 4”x6”
- Hard or firm-cover journal with at least 100 lined pages (approximately 5”x 8”)
- 2 quad ruled notebooks (at least 100 pages each)
- 3 composition notebooks (wide ruled)
- 2 green plastic pocket-folders with brads
- 2 red plastic pocket-folders with brads
- 2 blue plastic pocket-folders with brads
- Box of colored pencils (24 ct)
- Plastic protractor
- 48 Ticonderoga No.2 Pencils
- 2 large erasers (latex free)
- 3-5 glue sticks (larger size is better)
- 2 ballpoint pens (blue or black ink)
- 2 non-scratch dish sponges
- Box of Kleenex tissues
- 1 Ream of blank printer paper
- USB flash drive (2gb)
- 2 packs of 3” x 5” index cards
- 1 set of watercolor paints
- 1 pack of multi-color construction paper
- 1 pack of wide-ruled paper for loose leaf binder (3 holes)
- 1 box of eraser caps (to put on top of pencil)
- 1 small student-safety scissor
SUGGESTIONS FOR DELICIOUS AND HEALTHY LUNCHES

● All varieties of fresh fruits (berries, grapes, apple or orange wedges, watermelon cubes,...) and fresh vegetables (carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, snap peas, celery broccoli florets,...), with yogurt-, cottage cheese-, or seed-butter-based based dips, black bean dip or hummus
● Whole wheat mini bagels with cream cheese or seed butters
● Whole wheat tortillas stuffed with fun fillings and sliced into pinwheels (filling ideas: refried beans and cheese, seed butter and banana, cream cheese and berries)
● Quiche or frittatas prepared in muffin tins
● Quesadillas with black beans, rice, cheese and salsa for dipping
● Beans and legumes (chickpeas, black or kidney beans, dried peas, edamame) left whole or blended into spreads for sandwiches or dipping
● Cooked whole wheat pasta (spirals, letters, tortellini, or other interesting shapes)
● Brown rice cakes with sliced banana and seed butter
● Cubed cheese
● Hard-boiled eggs
● Shredded carrot and raisin salad or make your own
● Dried fruits (raisins, apricots, apple rings, bananas, cranberries, cherries...)
● Seeds
● Whole grain pretzels or crackers, or baked chips
● Natural or organic granola bars or fig bars
● Trail mix (with seeds, and dried fruit or coconut instead of candy)
● Fruit leather (made with real fruit puree, not fruit roll-ups)
● Plain popcorn (without artificial flavorings)
● Unsweetened applesauce and other fruit purees
● Healthy baked goods (blueberry muffins, banana bread, corn bread...)

Together with your child, prepare a list of favorite lunch items you can refer to when it’s time for lunch preparation. Encourage your child to assist with lunch preparation, doing things such as peeling, chopping, spreading, etc. Your child can help prepare lunch the night before so it is ready in the morning.
ATTACHMENT C

CODE OF CONDUCT & PARENT CONTRACT

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities – SY2019-2020

1. Adhere to the policies outlined in the Parent Handbook.

2. Be an active participant in your child’s education – to include participation in at least two (2) parent Montessori Academies or Curriculum Nights each school year and attendance at school-wide events.

3. Be knowledgeable of the Montessori model and committed to a Montessori education for your child.

4. Support and respect your child’s social, emotional, spiritual and academic development.

PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT SY2019-2020

By signing this agreement:

1. I acknowledge receipt of the parent handbook.

2. I agree to read thoroughly and abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this parent handbook.

3. I agree to attend all parent conferences during the school year and observe in the classroom at least one (1) time.

4. I agree to participate in school wide events and attend parent workshops and help build the Shining Stars community in a positive way.

5. I agree to further my understanding of the Montessori approach to education so as to aid my child’s social, emotional, spiritual and academic development.

____________________________ _____________________________     __________
Student’s Name (PRINT)            Parent/Guardian’s Signature      Date

____________________________ ___ ___________
Principal            (SSMA)                          Date

_______________________________
Executive Director (SSMA)                      Date

Family Handbook SY 2019-2020
Attachment D

2019-2020 DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Walking child(ren) to before care and signing them in daily

2. Utilizing Kiss & Go ONLY as outlined in the handbook (do not park or exit your car)

3. Arriving at school no later than 8:30am for drop-off

4. Adhering to the Independence Day rule of allowing children to walk from the lobby to their classrooms independently during regular drop-off

5. Adhering to the tardy policy guidelines (which go into effect after 8:35am)
   a. Parent must sign in at the front desk to receive a tardy slip
   b. Parent must walk the child(ren) to the classroom
   c. Parent must wait with children outside of the classroom until the guide extends an invitation to enter. Do not open the door.
   d. Parent must refrain from disturbing the classroom by walking in, escorting the child into the class, or attempting to converse with classroom staff

6. Making appropriate and timely accommodations for before and after school needs.
   Repeated late pick-ups or early drop-offs (of children who are not registered for before and/or after care) illustrate that appropriate planning has not taken place for the child, which is a safety risk.

   SSMA has been informed that failure to do so may warrant a report to Child and Family Services Agency.

PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT SY2019-2020

By signing this agreement:
6. I agree to follow drop-off and Independence Day procedures
7. I agree to arrive at school no later than 8:30am
8. I agree to follow the tardy procedure if I do not arrive by 8:35 am
9. I agree to make proper accommodations for my child’s before and after care needs
10. I understand that repeated early drop-offs and late pick-ups warrant a report to CSFA.

____________________________ _____________________________     __________
Student’s Name (PRINT)                Parent/Guardian’s Signature      Date

____________________________ _______________
Executive Director  (SSMA)  Date
GRACE AND COURTESY

The Grace and Courtesy lessons are the glue that holds the Montessori Primary (3-6) environment together and lays the foundation for success in the Montessori Elementary (6-12) environment. The lessons are formal and designed to preserve the harmony in the environment. In this context, “grace” can be defined as “harmony between the mind and the body”; and “courtesy” can be defined as “harmony between the self and other people”. In both instances, we are talking about our social interactions with each other and how we move about in the prepared environment. It is extremely important that we are careful with our movements, adults as well as children, because of the direct social interactions in which we are all involved.

Grace deals primarily with efficiency and control of movement. The focus in a Montessori environment is on control of movement, so becoming a graceful person should be a natural outcome of all movement experiences in a Montessori prepared environment. We are also taking advantage of the 2 1/2 to 4 1/2 year old child’s sensitive period for movement and the fact that they are especially enthralled and interested in refining their movements.

Courtesy is what we use to help establish and maintain our social relationships in the environment. This does not necessarily mean that you have to make friends with everyone, but more so it pertains to the development of the ability to communicate what you need to do so that you could live in harmony with those around you. We also need to remember that the primary child is in a sensitive period for social relations and grace and courtesy are very important issues to them.

Ideally, through Grace and Courtesy, the Guide/adult may be able to prevent some things from happening. Children can be spared feelings of awkwardness, confusion, embarrassment, and total dependence on adults in the environment with regard to what to say or do in a given situation. The lessons can go a long way towards avoiding those feelings and also serve to counteract the negative impacts of adults who are not fully aware of how children learn.

Grace and Courtesy lessons allow the avoidance of commanding and directing and explaining to children what they need to do or correcting them when they do something. The idea is to demonstrate what needs to be done before the child is faced with a situation so that the child has all the information needed to function when actually faced with the situation. This allows the child to feel oriented and comfortable and able to function within the environment. We are not expecting that the child behave in exactly the way that we demonstrate. We give the lessons knowing that the children will find their own ways.

Some suggested lessons that can be taught at home include:

- How to sit in a chair
● How to close/open and door
● How to carry a book; how to read a book
● How to greet someone
● How to say goodbye
● How to interrupt someone
● How to offer/refuse help
● How to know when the bathroom is occupied
● How to talk softly
● How to honor and negotiate your and/or classmate’s ‘personal space’

Additional Conflict Resolution Strategies

Children need to be taught how to handle conflicts. They also need to be given the opportunity to practice how to handle conflict situations. The adults in the environment need to be aware of this and always be ready to demonstrate appropriate conflict resolution strategies when the situation warrants it. A good rule of thumb to follow when helping children resolve conflicts is to first observe the situation before you step in. The only exception to this would be in the event that someone may be hurt if you do not intervene.

As much as possible, we want to encourage the children to solve their conflicts on their own with as much support from us as they need in order to do so safely. At neutral times, we give grace and courtesy lessons on what to say and do in certain situations so that children are able to handle conflicts independently. At other times, we may need to be more involved in the resolution process, offering comfort and/or re-direction as children attempt to resolve issues and come to some resolution. Use of the ‘peace table’ (located in every room) will be among those behavioral strategies used to calm difficult situations.
GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED MONTESSORI TERMS

Absorbent Mind - Maria Montessori uses this term to describe the minds of young children. Their minds are like sponges soaking up information from their environment. Just think about how much a child learns in the early years: how to talk, walk, understand social cues and relationships, objects, laws of nature (like gravity), and even the rudiments of reading. Much of this learning is unconscious because the brains of young children have been hard-wired to absorb information automatically and effortlessly.

Assessments - In education, the term assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, and skill acquisition of students. Assessments can range from formal traditional testing to an informal series of observations and strategic questions to better understand the child's mastery of a particular skill or subject area. The term frequently used is 'observations' rather than assessment in Montessori schools.

Circle Time - Circle time is a specific time during the day where students and teachers come together as a community of learners. During this time, we share our thoughts, actively listen to one another, actively participate together, introduce new concepts and ideas, read together, sing together, and build a sense of respect and support for each other. Circle time aids in the development of social awareness, self-esteem and fosters a sense of community.

Children’s House – In many Montessori schools, this is the classroom for children ages 2.5 (or 3) to 6 years. Other schools may refer to this classroom as Casa, preschool, or primary school.

Common Core State Standards - State Standards that outline a clear and distinct set of shared goals and expectations for content knowledge and skills in English language arts and mathematics. Each student needs to meet said standards in order to be considered proficient at each grade level.

Control of Error - Children make mistakes as they learn. Maria Montessori recognized that it was vitally important that children not lose motivation or become discouraged when mistakes occur. So into each didactic material she built in a way for the child to recognize if his/her work was done correctly or not, along with the ability to make it right this in turn is called a control of error. As a result, no one criticizes his/her error or circles his/her mistakes with a big red pencil for the entire world to see. If a child is putting the lids on bottles and one top does not fit, he knows he’s using the wrong sized lid without having to be told.

Cosmic Curriculum – The Cosmic education is Montessori's umbrella term for elementary education. The concept is strongly related to "Whole to Part." Stories about the universe, as well as "Great Lessons," form the basis of the curriculum. Once the students have heard the grand design, have received the big picture, they feel satisfied by an apprehension of the whole and "their minds become fixed and they can concentrate." Didactic Materials – In Montessori didactic materials are designed to be artistically pleasing and to teach through the senses. The child progresses through the curriculum by repeatedly handling and manipulating these materials. Each one is scientifically designed to teach one concept only. There is also a specific order in which the materials are presented to the child: for example, in the geography area the sandpaper globe showing the difference between land and water is presented first. The globe of the world showing the continents are shown second.
Then a round blue ball of clay is cut in half and pressed flat to explain how we arrive at a map. These unique didactic materials have a control of error built right in (you won’t find them anywhere except in a Montessori classroom).

**Dual Immersion** - Dual language education integrates language minority and language majority students for academic instruction that is presented separately through two languages. For both groups of students, one of the languages is their native language and one is a second language (although for some students it may be their third or fourth language).

All Dual Language Educational programs must have the following **four critical components:**

1. The program essentially involves instruction through two languages, where the minority language is used for a significant portion of the student's instructional day.
2. The program involves periods of instruction during which only one language is used.
3. Both native English speakers and native speakers of the minority language are participants.
4. The students are integrated (heterogeneous grouping) for most content instruction.

**Grace and Courtesy** – Mini lessons where children are formally taught social skills they will use throughout the rest of their lives. Some grace and courtesy lessons can include, saying “please” and “thank you,” requesting rather than demanding assistance or materials another child has, respecting others space and learning how to politely interrupt conversations or get someone’s attention.

**Guide** – The lead teacher in a Montessori classroom, the role of the Guide is to direct or guide individual children to purposeful activity based upon the Guide’s observation of each child’s readiness. The child develops their own knowledge through hands-on learning with the use of educational materials. The Guide’s goal is to facilitate, not force his/her own ideas of what students should learn, and when.

**Lower Elementary** - The lower elementary classroom (1st through 3rd grade, or ages 6-9), the initial expectations are that the child will be able to accept direction, listen attentively in small and large group presentations and will be able to work in a cooperative learning atmosphere.

**Maria Montessori** - Dr. Maria Tecla Artemisia Montessori (August 31, 1870 – May 6, 1952) was an Italian physician and educator best known for the philosophy of education that bears her name, and also for her writing on scientific pedagogy. She opened the first Montessori school the Casa de Bambini also known as Children’s House in Rome on January 6, 1907. Her educational methods are commonly used today in many public and private schools throughout the world.

**Normalization** – Normalization is the Montessori term for a healthy, well-adjusted child who learns effectively in any situation. This is a natural or “normal” developmental process marked by a love of work or activity, concentration, self-discipline, and joy in accomplishment. Dr. Montessori observed that the normalization process is characteristic of human beings at any age.

**Planes of development** – The Planes of Development are four distinct periods of growth, development, and learning that build on each other as children and youth progress through them.

Ages 0 – 6 years (the period of the “absorbent mind”), ages 6 – 12 years (the period of reasoning and abstraction), ages 12 – 18 years (when youth construct the “social self,” developing moral values and becoming emotionally independent) and lastly ages 18 – 24 years (when young adults construct an understanding of the self and seek to know their place in the world).
Practical Life—A unique area in the Montessori classroom that contains activities through which the child learns to care for themselves as well as the environment. Some of the purposeful activities in the Practical Life area include but is not limited to hand washing, table setting, dish, table and clothes washing, polishing, spooning, pouring etc. The materials used are familiar ones taken from the child’s daily life and is used to develop self-confidence and independence.

Prepared Environment—Unlike traditional education, where there is primarily a two part structure (Teacher/Student), Montessori classrooms have three equal parts (Teacher/Student/Environment). A Montessori teacher has the responsibility of preparing the classroom environment with appealing hands-on materials so that the environment also becomes the child's "teacher." The teacher prepares the environment of the Montessori classroom with carefully selected, attractively arranged materials that are presented sequentially to meet the developmental needs of the child. Well-prepared Montessori environments contain appropriately sized furniture, a full assortment of Montessori materials, and enough space to allow children to work in peace, alone or in small or large groups.

Primary –The Primary classroom (Preschool and Kindergarten or ages 3-6) provides nurturing opportunities for children’s individual development within the context of a group setting. They will emerge from this stage with polished social, emotional and academic skills, while more importantly learning how to function within a group.

Sensitive period—A critical time during human development when a child is biologically ready and receptive to learning a specific skill or ability, such as the use of language or a sense of order. It is therefore particularly important to stimulate and promote the development of skills during this time. A Montessori teacher prepares the environment to meet the developmental needs of each sensitive period. During these periods the child will get involved in a repetitive activity until it develops into a new skill. Montessori Directors are trained to be receptive to these sensitive periods of time, and to give the child every opportunity to take in what they are ready for at that moment.

Sensorial- An area of the Montessori classroom unique to and specifically for the development of the five senses. This area provides a foundation for speech, writing, and arithmetic through use of sensorial materials. This area is scientifically designed with didactic materials to help the child learn through the senses. This fine tuning of the senses carries over to other areas of learning. For example the Aural skills are sharpened by using the Sound Cylinders (This teaches the child how to match sounds) that later help in differentiating the sounds used in learning how to read. Another sensorial material is the Pink Tower (made of up of blocks that gradually reduce in size) helps children understand spatial relationships, which lays a foundation for learning math later on. Teaching Assistant - Teaching assistants work in conjunction with the Guide to prepare and maintain an orderly, attractive classroom environment. As a team the Guide and Assistant strategically prepare and create lessons and activities that will engage the child, helping them reach their fullest potential. Assistants provide an extra pair of observant and attentive eyes and ears in the classroom. Their presence is crucial to modeling courteous and respectful behavior within the classroom. As well as contributing to the warm, supportive, and calm atmosphere that is the hallmark of Montessori classrooms. [Note: Teaching Assistant and Classroom Assistant are used interchangeably at Montessori school/programs].
The 3-Step/Period Lesson—A 3-step technique used to present new information to a child. In the first step is the introduction or naming period the teacher demonstrates what “This is.” In the second step is the association or recognition period where the teacher asks the child to “show” what was just identified. Finally, in the third step the teacher asks the child to name the object or area. Moving from new information to passive recall to active identification reinforces the child’s learning and demonstrates their mastery.

Uninterrupted Work Cycle - A basic work cycle begins with choosing an activity, properly doing the activity, returning the activity in its right order, and then finally experiencing a sense of satisfaction. This sense of satisfaction motivates the child to choose the next activity, thus creating another cycle of work. Montessori children have three hours (a period in the morning and in the afternoon) of open, uninterrupted time to choose independent work, become deeply engaged, and repeat to their own satisfaction.

Upper Elementary- In the Upper Elementary classroom (4th through 6th grade, or ages 9-12), content is not presented in “course subject” form; instead, ideas and concepts are explored across the board and to the depth demanded by the child. For example, flowers are not just observed in books or through the window. The flower (possibly cultivated by the child) is brought into the environment, touched, named, identified by parts, compared and contrasted with other plants(presently and historically), reviewed within its life cycle, located in the world, etc. Thus the education is more about experiencing, senses are engaged whenever possible, aiding in the child’s natural capacity to learn.
WHO TO ASK IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION@ SSMA

(Reminder: All staff emails are the first name initial followed by the , last name @shiningstarpcs.org)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM AREA</th>
<th>YOUR FIRST CONTACT and EMAIL</th>
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| Montessori Academic Program  
Classroom Issues or Concerns  
Behavior/Discipline & Incident Reports  
In-School Reflection (ISR)  
Assessments  
Dual Immersion Program  
Recess and Nap | Mrs. Gail Jenkins  
academics@shiningstarpcs.org |
| General discussion regarding student learning  
Classroom issue regarding your child  
Volunteering in the class  
Donating classroom supplies  
Planning Classroom Events | Lead Guide (Please see Staff section for the contact information for your Guide) |
| Enrollment  
Student Records  
Attendance/Tardy Concerns (Students) | Mrs. Cherita Moore-Gause  
cmooregage@shiningstartspcs.org  
Mrs. Gail Jenkins  
academics@shiningstarpcs.org |
| Special Education  
(all students with an IEP or 504 Plan)  
Special Education Administration & Compliance  
Child Find Process | Mr. Darryl Buxton  
dbuxton@shiningstarpcs.org or |
| English Language Learners Program | Ms. Frances Brooks  
fbrooks@shiningstarpcs.org or Dr. R. Rodriguez's (see email below) |
| Student Support Services  
Counseling (where indicated in the students IEP)  
Bullying Prevention  
McKinney-Vento Liaison  
Parent Engagement Workshops (PEP) | Dr. Willa Jones  
wjones@shiningstarpcs.org |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building &amp; Grounds</th>
<th>Mrs. Cherita “Mrs. G.” Moore-Gause - <a href="mailto:cmooregause@shiningstarpcs.org">cmooregause@shiningstarpcs.org</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All issues related to the management, maintenance, use, and security of the building and exterior grounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>The National School Lunch Program/Lunch Accounts &amp; Food Services Management Fire Drills Emergency Preparedness DC One Card Program</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Ms. Aja Campbell - <a href="mailto:acampbell@shiningstarpcs.org">acampbell@shiningstarpcs.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montessori Afterschool Program (MAP)</td>
<td>Ms. Tais Taylor or Mr. Shaka Green <a href="mailto:ttaylor@shiningstarpcs.org">ttaylor@shiningstarpcs.org</a>; <a href="mailto:sgreen@shiningstarpcs.org">sgreen@shiningstarpcs.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title IX Compliance</td>
<td>Tais Taylor <a href="mailto:ttaylor@shiningstarpcs.org">ttaylor@shiningstarpcs.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversee all School Operations to include but not limited to the following: School Policies Personnel (Staff Hiring &amp; Evaluations) School Budget School Compliance &amp; School Performance (Academic, Non-Academic, Governance) Conflict Resolution Out-of-School Reflection Time &amp; Expulsions PoC to OSSE and PCSB Liaison SSMA Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dr. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia <a href="mailto:rrodriguez@shiningstarpcs.org">rrodriguez@shiningstarpcs.org</a></td>
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