



**St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal  
Montessori Church School  
2022-2023  
Student/Parent Handbook**

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# St. Christopher's By-the-Sea

## Episcopal Church and Montessori School

Mrs. Deborah Roa Interim Head of School

August, 2022

Dear Parents:

Welcome to our Church School and a year of fine education, growth and learning for your child. For many of you this means a new classroom, new teacher and new assignments, while for others everything is new for the first time! Whatever the case, we are delighted to have you as part of our school community.

St. Christopher's Montessori Church School is an Episcopal day school, an integral part of St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Inc., a Church in the Diocese of Southeast Florida and operates under the authority and direction of the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church. St. Christopher's Montessori Church School values excellence, esthetics, and spirituality, which lead to health and growth.

We are dedicated to creating an atmosphere in which every student will feel important, successful, and motivated to learn in order to reach her/his full potential. We see that occurring when parents, teachers and administrators work together in an atmosphere of caring, trust, cooperation, and open communication. The faculty and administration are available to listen to your concerns as well as offer counsel and friendship.

Please take some time to read this Handbook with your child as it contains useful information and will help answer some questions regarding our procedures and expectations. This Handbook represents the spirit of the positive expectations of our community. We look forward to a wonderful year together!

Warmly,

*Deborah Roa*

Deborah Roa

## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This Handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that you and your parents may have during the School year. Because the Handbook contains information about student rights and responsibilities, parents and students are responsible for knowing its contents. Please take the time to become familiar with the following information and keep this Handbook available for your use. It can be a valuable reference during the School year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstandings when questions arise.

The School reserves the right to interpret the content of this Handbook, including the rules and regulations governing the academic and non-academic conduct of students. This Handbook is not a contract, nor is it intended to be so construed. Our School reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content of this Handbook at any time during the year. If any written modification or amendment is made to this Handbook, a copy of such modification or amendment will be distributed to students and parents.

If you have any questions about the Handbook or any of its policies, please contact the Head of School or the Principal.

## About Our School

### Mission Statement

The mission of St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Montessori School is to provide excellence in education using the Montessori method within the open-hearted, inclusive Episcopal tradition.

### History and Overview of the School

This year, St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church's Montessori Church School is happily celebrating its 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary. The School was founded in 1968 by a dedicated group of St. Christopher's parishioners who saw the need for quality education on Key Biscayne and realized their dream with the opening of its preschool program. In subsequent years, the School expanded to include elementary education for children in grades one through six. St. Christopher's first elementary student graduated in 2003. Today, St. Christopher's Montessori Church School offers an excellent educational experience within the diverse and international community of Key Biscayne.

The Montessori method of education sets the foundation for the first stage of fundamental learning – writing, reading and numbers. The organic, carefully designed classroom materials develop a child's visual, auditory, and tactile perception. The total learning environment is enriched with the study of art, music, foreign language, computers and physical education. Peace education is a focal point in the curriculum. The elementary program combines the finest textbook, technology, and other educational resources to complement the Montessori method. Most of the graduates of St. Christopher's Montessori Church School's elementary program achieve placement in the finest middle schools in Miami-Dade County.

The Montessori educational method utilizes mixed age grouping based on the belief that children learn best through observation and the role modeling of their peers. Consequently, The Toddler class includes students ranging in age from 15 months to three years old. PreK classes include three- to five-year-old students in a mixed age group setting. St. Christopher's Montessori Church School has two PreK classrooms, which include Pre-Kindergarten, Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten students.

The Elementary classes are also mixed age groups. The Lower Elementary classes include first, second, and third grade students. Upper Elementary includes fourth and fifth grade students.

At St. Christopher's by-the-Sea Episcopal Montessori Church School, we find that children who have been enriched by our Montessori education are superbly prepared for a lifetime of learning and can truly understand the world around them and their responsibility toward it. Indeed, as Maria Montessori stated, **"Within the child lies the fate of the future."**

### Vision



Our vision is to develop intellectual curiosity, creativity, and confidence in each child so they might engage our world with compassion and integrity. We seek to graduate young, independent-minded citizens with a heart for community service and a love for learning.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Church School is to develop mutual respect and interdependence in a diverse, creative Christian environment.

“Let us give the child a vision of the whole universe... for all things are connected to form one whole unity” (Maria Montessori).

## **School Philosophy – Montessori System**

Maria Montessori, M.D. came to the study of education as a clinician. Her scientific interests were directed toward discovering how children learn best.

In the course of her observations of children, Dr. Montessori’s medical background, her understanding of scientific method and her view that the environment is crucial in the learning process combined to produce a unique educational theory. According to her theory, children learn best not by dependence on a teacher, but rather by actual exploration of the world around them and by observing others.

As a result, Dr. Montessori developed didactic materials for children, which are designed to be experienced as a part of daily living, and these learning tools are the original concept behind today’s teaching materials for young children. Designed to develop and refine the child’s visual, auditory, and tactile perceptions, these materials contain within their structure controls for possible error. In essence, by using the teaching materials, the child educates her or himself and her or his intelligence is stimulated as the child gains increasing powers of observation, recognition, judgment and classification.

Today, the Montessori Method is accepted as an excellent form of preparation for the first stages of essential culture ... writing, reading and numbers. Through this marvelous method, knowledge is designed to come to the children as an easy, spontaneous and logical consequence of exploring the world around them.

## **Statement Of Expectations**

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At the heart of St. Christopher’s Montessori Church School is a culture defined by respect, balance, integrity, curiosity, leadership, as well as our commitment to the safety and health of students. All members of the community have an obligation to know and uphold the School’s values and strive to embody them in word and deed.

We therefore expect that all members of the community will:

- Respect other people and their privacy and property, both within and beyond the School.
- Treat all human beings with dignity, refraining from behavior that intimidates, insults, threatens, bullies, coerces, abuses, exploits, harasses, humiliates, or demeans, acting with tolerance, courtesy, and thoughtful regard.
- Have an open mind and heart to the views and experiences of others, creating space for all to belong and thrive.
- Support and promote a school climate that does not discriminate against any individual or group.
- Use words constructively, avoiding gossip and other inappropriate or unproductive sharing of information.
- Maintain high standards of honesty, avoiding deception, half-truths, and deliberately misleading words or behavior.
- Exemplify principles of responsibility and fairness in daily life.
- Observe safe behavior and report unsafe conditions or practices.
- Cultivate caring and compassion, seeking to serve others, both within and beyond the School.

Our School cultivates a school environment in which all members of the community feel valued and safe. Part of living our values includes every member's responsibility to support a safe school environment by refraining from harmful and unsafe behavior and reporting such behavior when observed. In addition, we prohibit all boundary crossing behavior between adults and students (as outlined in our Student/Adult Interaction and Communication Policy) and sexual misconduct (whether between students or adults and students). Adults are expected to identify and report suspicions of harassment, abuse, and sexual or other misconduct and will not engage in such behavior themselves. In addition, School employees are mandated reporters of suspected abuse, neglect, or abandonment as specified by Florida law.

All adults have an obligation to model through both language and behavior the values and expectations we have as a school, being especially conscious of their actions at times and places when student can observe them. Students must be mindful of the power they have in various roles at school. They must use their roles constructively, always avoiding intimidation and abuse of authority. Older and returning students must take seriously the power of their example on younger and newer students, accepting the responsibility to model and transmit our School values.

These community standards apply to our words and behavior not only in personal interactions, but also in all forms of electronic media and communications.

All members of the community help others to develop a sense of belonging, encourage empathy and compassion, and promote an environment that is safe, kind, and inclusive. As members of this community, we acknowledge that our actions reflect not only on ourselves, but also on the School as a whole and therefore strive to live in a way that is consistent with our values.

## Accreditation and Memberships

St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Montessori Church School meets the standards of the National Association of Episcopal Schools, Florida Kindergarten Council, Florida Council of Independent Schools, the American Montessori Society, and the International Montessori Council. St. Christopher's is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

The School admits students regardless of disability, race, color, creed, ethnic, or national origin who possess the motivation, ability, and character which would enable them to succeed in our School community to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School and the School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, ethnic, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## Academic Procedures and Guidelines

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## Arrival and Dismissal Procedure

St. Christopher's Montessori Church School facilities open at 7:30 a.m. to prepare the campus for parents and students arrival. Students may not be dropped off before 8:15 a.m.

Elementary Classrooms open at 8:15 a.m. and **classroom routine begins promptly at 8:25 a.m. Monday through Friday.** Pre-School classrooms open at 8:20 a.m. and **classroom routine begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.**

All traffic is to enter St. Christopher's Episcopal Church property on Fernwood Road and exit on Harbor Drive. For the safety of the children, it is imperative that all traffic travel slowly and in one direction only. Driveway and parking lot safety is everyone's responsibility. Please be patient and courteous.

Parents of children in the early childhood classes (Toddler, PreK through SrK) must park, walk and sign children into their classrooms between 8:20 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Please say your good-byes on your way to the classroom door and encourage children to walk into the classroom alone. Do not wait outside the classroom doors after drop off as it can be distracting and unsettling to the children.

All Elementary children must be dropped off at the front of the school between 8:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. A teacher and the Safety Patrol will receive students during the drop off time. This is a safety issue and requires your full cooperation.

**Any Elementary student who arrives after 8:25 a.m. must report to the reception for a late slip. To avoid disrupting the class, s/he will be permitted to go to class at a convenient time.**

**Dismissal times:**

**Toddler students** (18 months - 3 years old) are dismissed at 12:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m.

**PreK - JrK students** (3 years old) are dismissed at 3:00 p.m.

**SrK – Fifth Grade students** (5-12 years old) are dismissed at 3:00 p.m.

**AfterCare** 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. daily

All PreK through SrK students must be picked up at the classroom where parent/guardian will sign them out.

PreK through Fifth grade students will be dismissed from the Parish Hall. For car riders, cars will line up single file for dismissal. Teachers will open the driver side back door for students to enter the vehicle. For parents picking up their child without a vehicle, please go directly to your child's teacher outside the Parish Hall for pick up. Do not take your child out of line as they proceed to the Parish Hall Dismissal area.

If your child will be walking or riding their bike home, written parental permission must be on file in the office and with the classroom teacher.

**General**

Students are expected to be at School everyday and to report to their classes on time. Frequent absences and tardiness seriously affect academic progress and is disruptive to the teaching environment. The School requests that parents and students thoughtfully consider the impact of any absence other than one of a medical or family emergency. Families are discouraged from taking students out of School prior to a School break. Absences for vacations will be considered unexcused. Whenever possible, regularly scheduled medical appointments should be made after School hours. When a planned absence from School is unavoidable, requests for absence should be submitted in writing to the Head of School at least 5 days in advance. Students with excessive absences, excused or unexcused, may be denied re-enrollment or promotion.

**Excused Absences**

1. Illness validated by a parent or guardian. For an extensive illness involving several days of absence, the School may require a statement from a physician. When a student is unable to attend School because of health reasons or other emergencies, parents should call the School Office by 9:00 A.M.
2. School sponsored trips and activities.
3. Death in the immediate family.
4. Religious holidays, subject to prior approval from the appropriate division head.

Students excused from classes for field trips or for special reasons are required to obtain assignments and be prepared for class, including tests, the next day.

Any student not well enough to attend all of her or his classes during the School day may not participate in any co-curricular or extra-curricular activity that afternoon or evening, except with the specific approval of the School Office.

## **Make Up Work for Excused Absences**

It is the responsibility of the individual student to see her/his teacher(s) to make up any graded work missed because of an excused absence. Students will have as many days to make up work, as they are consecutively absent. Make-up tests, if applicable, will be scheduled at a time designated by the teacher. If a student fails to make up a test and makes no other arrangement within the allotted time, at the discretion of the teacher, the student may not be given the test. Students or parents may request homework assignments for extended absences. For each day absent, the student will have the equivalent days to make up the work assigned during the absence. A student returning to School during the School day is required to locate the teacher of each class missed to get any assignment(s) and/or take any test(s) missed.

## **Unexcused Absences**

All other absences from School will be considered unexcused, subject however to the review and discretion of the appropriate division head. When an absence is considered unexcused, students are not permitted to make up tests, examinations, or quizzes that are missed. These guidelines apply to all School days including those immediately before and after vacations.

## **Excessive Absences**

Parents of students in grades SK-6 with more than 5 absences (whether excused or unexcused) will be required to have a conference with the Head of School and Lead Teacher to discuss the student's academic standing. Parents should be aware that students with excessive absences are at risk for not being promoted and/or being offered re-enrollment.

## **Tardies**

Elementary students are to be in class by 8:25 a.m. Anyone who arrives after 8:25 a.m. will be considered tardy. Students who arrive after 8:25 a.m. should report to the office for a pass. Elementary students who are late more than 3 times in a month will serve a 30 minute detention after school. All students in grades K-5 with excessive tardiness will have a parent/teacher conference. **Please remember that punctuality is important. We are building the foundation for your child's future.**

## **Sign-in and Sign-out Procedures**

There are specific procedures for signing a student in and out of School. Children who arrive late to School must have their parent sign them in School Office, and then receive a late pass to class.

Students who find it necessary to leave campus during the School day must notify the School Office. A parent must sign out the student when leaving, and sign in the student upon returning

to the School campus. The School will not allow a student to leave School early with another person unless authorized by the parent to do so.

### **Dismissal**

No teacher or other employee may excuse a child to any adult before the regular dismissal time. If a situation arises which necessitates taking a child out of School, the parent/guardian is required to come to the office and sign the early release log. The office will notify the teacher to send the student to the office. This procedure is to safeguard children from unauthorized persons seeking to remove them from class. Students will not be allowed to leave the School grounds, except for an authorized School trip, or under the conditions described above. Students who remain after School for activities will not be allowed to leave the School grounds and then return for pick-up.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND INFORMATION**

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### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are issued in January and June for all students. Students are evaluated using the scale below. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students are evaluated based on their level of achievement in skill sets listed on the progress report. Teachers typically provide comments for all grade levels.

#### Grades PK - K

- N = New Lesson
- M = Mastered
- G = Good Progress
- D = Having Difficulty

#### Lower and Upper Elementary School

- 1 = New Presentation
- 2 = Having Difficulty
- 3 = Making Steady Progress
- 4 = Making Rapid Progress
- 5 = Has Mastered the Skill

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

All work that students complete for which they receive credit must be their own. A student who asks or allows another person to complete or submit the student's work is responsible for the actions of the other person.

*Plagiarism & Cheating.* Cheating and plagiarism are academic dishonesty. *Plagiarism* is the presentation of the words, ideas, concepts, images, or works of another as one's own. Material (in whole or paraphrased) taken from a primary or secondary source without following standards of conventional attribution, and/or without appropriate reference citation is considered to be plagiarized. *Cheating* is obtaining (or attempting to obtain) something by dishonest or deceptive means. A failing grade will be recorded for any work containing any information improperly submitted as one's own, or, completed by means of academic dishonestly, or, deception.

Situations involving cheating or plagiarism on School work (tests, quizzes, homework) will result in a zero, and further disciplinary action. Lending homework to a fellow student to copy is considered cheating by both participants. Discussing the items on a test before all students have taken the test is also considered cheating by all participants.

The concept of plagiarism is explained and discussed in all grades, and thus, the student should be well qualified to make the necessary judgment to avoid erroneously representing someone else's work as her/his own.

## **Homework**

Homework is an important part of the student's day as it is a time for the learner to review the day's lessons, practice skills taught, master additional material, enrich the classroom program, and prepare for class the following day. As both short and longer term assignments are given, it is necessary for students, with the assistance of faculty and parents, to budget their time wisely. Students are expected to complete assigned homework as directed and in the spirit in which it is assigned; to return homework assignments to the teacher by the designated time; and to submit homework assignments that reflect careful attention to detail and quality of work. In addition, all student work must be School appropriate. When making videos, a power point presentation, or writing a report, students must refrain from making inappropriate sexual, drug, alcohol, violence, or cigarette/vaping references or innuendoes. Additionally, students must not ridicule others because of their disability, gender, religion, ethnic, or racial characteristics at any time.

It is counterproductive if homework becomes a family nightmare. If a child experiences undo frustration with a particular assignment, we advise parents to terminate the homework session and notify the teacher by note the following morning. If the child has persistent problems with homework, the teacher should be consulted.

## **Show and Tell**

Pre-school children enjoy sharing and are encouraged to do so on their special day. They may bring books, music, or items of special interest. Pets and games need special permission from the class teacher. No matches, lighters, toy guns or toy weapons of any kind are permitted in school.

In the elementary classes, children do not have "show and tell." They may bring books or items from nature. Sharing these items with the other children will become part of the child's learning experience.

## **Standardized Testing**

Standardized tests are administered to elementary students each year. Students are tested in several academic areas including English/language arts, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The purpose of the testing program is to monitor student achievement. The results of such tests are used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in academic areas, and may be used to determine eligibility for promotion to the next grade or the need for summer School. Also, test results are used to determine the effectiveness of educational programs and how programs can be improved.

## **Schedule and Teacher Changes**

Schedule and/or teacher changes will be initiated by the School when operational needs require or when the administration believes the change will be in the best interests of the student and/or institution. The School will not entertain requests for changes based on a parent or student's dislike of a particular teacher or to accommodate friendships. Please understand that the School and administration often place students in particular classes to ensure a quality mix of students and to enhance everyone's learning experiences.

## **School Communication**

At the beginning of the school year you will receive the school calendar. Constant Contact will be our primary means of formal communication informing parents regarding current events, reminders, calendar changes, and other specialty articles. We may also communicate via email so it is important to check your email for school notices. In addition, our website is a source for information about school activities.

In Pre-School, children's work goes home in the Friday folder.

Please check folders, backpacks and stapled work that goes home weekly for notes from teachers and the school's administrative office. Notes will also be posted from time to time around your child's classroom door and online.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled in the Fall and the Spring. Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time by making arrangements in advance with the teacher or School office. Likewise, teachers may request a conference with the child's parents at any time. In consideration of the great demands placed on teachers, the administration requests that you refrain from engaging teachers in a discussion at times when their attention needs to be on their class.



No member of the faculty will be interrupted during class for a telephone call. Parents may leave a message in the office and the teacher will return the call as soon as s/he is able. Please do not disturb a class in progress. Parents and students may not call teachers or the administrator at their home.

## **Pre-School Observations**

Beginning in late October, parents may schedule an appointment to observe in the classroom. The observations are followed by a parent/teacher conference. Please feel free to ask the teacher any questions about your child's progress during your conference. Please schedule appointments with teachers. Check in at the Church School office prior to each observation or class visit.

## **Summer Reading List**

Students in grades 1 through 5 receive Summer reading lists and assignments.

## **Re-enrollment**

A pattern of low grades, poor work habits, poor conduct, excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or the parents' failure to meet financial obligations can jeopardize a student's continued enrollment. Entrance into the next grade will be based on the classroom performance of the student, observations of the teacher, and appropriate testing.

## **SAFETY**

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### **Child Abuse and Cooperation with Governmental Authorities**

We take our responsibilities to report suspected child abuse, neglect, and abandonment seriously and will cooperate with governmental authorities in connection with their investigations. If you have any questions regarding the School's mandatory reporting obligations, please consult with the Head of School.

### **Harassment and Bullying**

The School is dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes kindness, acceptance, and embraces differences among individuals. Therefore, the School will not tolerate any type of harassment or bullying by a student, employee, or any third party (including vendors, contractors, donors, volunteers, parents, and visitors). Students should be aware that their off campus behavior is also covered under this policy, regardless of when and where the conduct occurred or who was affected by the student's inappropriate behavior. Harassment is broadly defined to include unreasonable conduct or behavior that is personally offensive or threatening, impairs morale, or interferes with the educational environment of students and includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, comments, teasing, and other offensive conduct relating to race,

religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, or disability. Harassment also includes sexual harassment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Demanding sexual favors
- Requests for pictures of a sexual nature
- Taking, sending, or posting images of a sexual nature
- Spreading lies or information about another individual's sexual activity
- Coercing sexual activity by threat of punishment or offer of reward
- Obscene or sexually suggestive graffiti
- Displaying or sending pornographic pictures or objects
- Offensive touching, pinching, grabbing, kissing or hugging
- Restraining someone's movement in a sexual way
- Sexual or lewd jokes, remarks, leering, whistling, brushing against the body, or other suggestive or insulting gestures or comments about another's body
- Intimidating or suggestive remarks about an individual's sexual orientation, whether actual or implied

Examples of other forms of harassment based on race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, or disability include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive, intimidating, or inappropriate comments, postings, or conduct relating to race, ethnicity, or color (using racial slurs, racial or ethnic jokes, comments, name calling based on race or ethnicity, etc.)
- Offensive, intimidating, or inappropriate comments, postings, or conduct teasing or joking about another person's disability, failure to speak English clearly, religious background, clothing, or beliefs, or similar behaviors.

Bullying includes a variety of behaviors, but all involve a person or group trying to take advantage of the power they have to hurt or reject someone else. These behaviors can be carried out, physically (hitting, kicking, pushing), verbally (calling names, taunting, teasing, threatening, ridiculing, spreading rumors, etc.), electronically, sometimes called "cyber-bullying" (posting defamatory remarks or photos, sending threatening emails, creating fake profiles, taking over an account and posting as someone else), or through relational aggression (harming or threatening to harm relationships or acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion) or emotional aggression (teasing, threatening, intimidating others).

For parents of younger children, these words are not always meaningful. Therefore, in explaining the concepts, you should stress that the School needs to know whenever anyone at School makes your child feel uncomfortable. In that regard, you should remind your child that it is not nice or permitted to call other students by mean names or to tease them in ways that are hurtful. It is also not nice or permitted to grab or touch another student's "private parts," to pull down another child's pants, to look up a girl's dress, or to intentionally open the door on a student who is using the bathroom. You should explain that your child should not engage in these types of hurtful behaviors when your child talks, writes, draws, or plays with other children. We like to

remind the students of the Golden Rule: "Treat others at the School the same way you would like to be treated."

Bullying or harassment can occur through any type of communications method, including face-to-face communications, phone, text, email, postings on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat GroupMe, etc.), camera phones, or other forms of technology. The communications can be direct or indirect, such as through friends or others. Any type of offensive conduct, whether on or off campus, on a school bus, or at a school-related event, can create an uncomfortable School environment.

It is the responsibility of all members of the community to ensure that their words, actions, and interactions with others always reflect the intent to promote respect and trust. Attempts to justify behavior as a "prank" or "joke" do not change its harassing or bullying nature if the object of the joke or prank is not a willing participant. Whatever the basis for the harassment or bullying, it is prohibited.

All concerns relating to harassment or bullying should be reported immediately to the Teacher and Associate Head of School. We also expect that anyone, whether student, faculty, staff or family member who witnesses, or has knowledge of an incident of bullying or harassment, will report the incident to the appropriate individual identified above.

When the School administration becomes aware of harassment or bullying, the situation will be promptly investigated. Any student found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal from school for serious violations, even in the case of a single expression, act, or gesture. Conduct need not meet the legal definition of harassment or bullying to violate the School's expectations for appropriate behavior and be actionable. No adverse action will be taken against any person who makes a good faith report of harassment or bullying. Retaliation in any form against anyone for making a complaint under this policy or for participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any retaliation should also be reported pursuant to this policy and is itself a cause for disciplinary action.

## **Playground**

Children must leave campus at their respective dismissal time. All playground areas are closed after dismissal. This is for the safety of the children and we ask that all parents adhere to this policy and inform the person picking up the children.

## **Student/Adult Interaction and Communication**

Our students and adults (teachers, administrators, staff members, parents, and visitors) are expected to interact with each other in a professional and respectful manner based on mutual respect and trust with an understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and students. Although our adults can and should be friendly with the students, becoming too friendly with each other sometimes results in confusion and anxiety.

If a student or the student's parents become aware of any adult's communications or actions toward one or more students that seems unusual, overly friendly, or otherwise inappropriate, such information should immediately be reported to the guidance counselor or administrator of the division.

Further, students and their parents should promptly notify Administration if they believe an employee has engaged in any of the following prohibited behaviors or similar activities (regardless of the age of the student):

- Initiating or continuing communications with students for a non-school matter, including oral or written communications; telephone calls; electronic communications (emails, texts); social media communications, etc.
- Touching students or their clothing in non-professional ways or inappropriate places, or touching a student with aggression or in frustration;
- Making comments that are too personal (about a student's clothing, hair, personal habits, etc.);
- Giving gifts to a student or exchanging cards and letters;
- Inviting a student into their home;
- Taking students off school property other than for approved field trips and school activities;
- Flirting or asking a student on a date;
- Excessive attention shown toward a particular student or students or calling or referring to students by pet names or inappropriate nicknames;
- Visiting students to "hang out" in their hotel rooms when on field trips or sporting events;
- Visiting a student in their home or another location;
- Socializing or spending time with students (including but not limited to activities such as going out for meals, movies, shopping, traveling and recreational activities) outside of class or school-sponsored events;
- Asking students to sit on a teacher's lap;
- Telling secrets or telling the student not to tell something that's a secret;
- Swearing, making inappropriate sexual, racial/or ethnic comments;
- Inviting students to visit the employee's social networking profile or become a "friend" or "follower" on a social network;
- Telling off-color or other inappropriate jokes or stories, or showing pornography to students;
- Providing students with alcohol or other mind-altering substances; or
- Vaping, smoking, or drinking with students.

## Visitors

This is a closed campus. Outside visitors are not allowed to visit a student's class without prior permission from the student's teacher and administration. Parents or guardians who need to visit campus during School hours are asked to follow these guidelines:

1. **Make an Appointment:** If you are coming to see an administrator or a faculty member, please call to make an appointment in advance.
2. **Check-in at the reception area on the main floor:** When you arrive on campus, please report directly to the main office for authorization. If you need to proceed from there to any other part of the campus you will be issued a visitor badge.
3. **I.D. Check:** If you are asking to see your son or daughter, please do not be offended if you are asked to show identification. This is a safety measure intended to protect your children.

**Please Note:** For the safety and security of our students, anyone seen on campus during School hours without a visitor badge will be reminded to obtain one or asked to leave campus.

## **Weapons and Threats**

The School takes all threats seriously, even when students make comments in jest, on the Internet, by text, or away from School toward or about another student, employee, or the School. Students are prohibited from bringing any type of weapon (whether operable or not and whether licensed or not) to School (including, without limitation, parking lots, athletic fields, and out buildings) or School-sponsored events, including knives, guns (all types), fireworks, etc. This prohibition includes, without limitation, pocket knives (even those that are part of a key chain), firecrackers, matches, lighters, smoke bombs, stink bombs, or any type of explosive device. Any such item may be confiscated and, if appropriate, reported to and turned over to law enforcement. Any pictorial depictions of weapons, or verbal or written comments that the administration determines in its discretion to be threatening in nature, or any behavior that is threatening, will result in disciplinary consequences. Violators of this Weapons and Threats Policy will be subject to disciplinary consequences from the School, up to and including, expulsion, as well as subject to penalties imposed by state authorities.

All members of our community are required to immediately report any comment, posting, text, or other form of communication or information that they receive or learn about that reflects that someone has made a threat toward or about another student, an employee or the School. If there is any communication or behavior that concerns you, report it to one of the deans or to any administrator.

Threats of violence or acts of violence by a student, employee, parent or other individual may be reported to law enforcement and any other authorities the School deems appropriate. The School will cooperate with investigations by authorities, and the School may also conduct its own investigation. With respect to such threats or acts by students, the School may report such threats or acts of violence to future schools, camps, athletic programs, and other organizations in which the student participates. The student's transcript or report card may also note the threat or act. In determining whether to report such threats or acts of violence, the School may consider, among other factors, the gravity and nature of the threat or act of violence, the disciplinary history of the individual, academic or work performance, behavioral history, social

profile, other information available to the school (i.e. access to weapons, mental health information, family situation, etc.), and/or the outcome of any investigations.

## **Child Safety from Sexual Offenders and Predators**

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), sexual perpetrators are commonly people the parents/guardians or children know, and these people may be in a position of trust or responsibility to a child and family.

Because of our concern for student safety, all employees, and those parents who volunteer for School activities with unsupervised access to our students, are screened through the School's criminal background process. Although the School performs such screenings, the School cannot attest to the background of the various parents whom their child may associate with away from School.

To keep their children safer, parents should talk openly to their children about safety issues. Parents should know their children's friends and be clear with their children about the places and homes that their children visit. Children should be taught that they have the right to say no to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touching or actions by others and to get out of those situations as quickly as possible.

Parents should regularly visit the public registry to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Information concerning registered sex offenders and predators in Florida may be obtained by visiting: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us>, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offenders database. Information may also be obtained by contacting the FDLE's toll free telephone number: 1-888-FL-PREDATOR (1-888-357-7332). To view a map of registered sex offenders living within a five mile radius of any given address, parents should visit: <http://www.familywatchdog.us>. To learn about additional child safety tips and links to child and internet safety sites and searches, parents should visit the Florida Attorney General website at <http://myfloridalegal.com>.

## **Social Guidelines and Expectations**

### **Purpose and Goal**

Our goal is to maintain a secure, challenging, and nurturing School environment in which students develop a strong sense of integrity and respect for others. In order to promote this goal, students are expected to be honest, use appropriate language and have appropriate interactions with others.

Another equally important goal is to help students mature and learn a sense of self-responsibility. For this reason, students are held to a high standard of integrity and are expected to appropriately seek help and report problems when circumstances arise. We encourage students to seek help and report problems on their own without parental involvement as much as possible.

The standards of student conduct are designed to provide students with guidance to help them meet the goals and expectations of our community. The list of rules and policies should be read carefully. Violations will result in serious consequences, up to and including suspension or dismissal from School. Students may also be held responsible for any damage or harm that they cause to individuals and/or the School community at large.

## **On and Off-Campus Behavior**

The School does not seek to unnecessarily involve itself in a student's off-campus behavior. However, the School reserves the right to take action with respect to off-campus behavior when it deems necessary, including, without limitation, when that off-campus behavior impacts the student's ability to continue at School, impacts other students' or employees' ability to be comfortable at School, compromises the welfare of other students, or damages the reputation of the School.

The policies and standards apply at all times a student is enrolled in the School, including when a student is on campus or in the immediate vicinity of campus; any time a student is participating in or attending a School-sponsored event on or off campus; any time a student is officially representing the School; any time a student is traveling on behalf of the School; and in the evenings, on weekends, and during school breaks, including summer break.

In addition, the School regards any behavior prejudicial to the best interests of the School, its students, and its employees whether at School or elsewhere, as sufficient grounds for a disciplinary response.

Consistent application of disciplinary policies is sought, although each situation is judged on its merits, and every effort will be made to ensure that decisions are not arbitrary.

The School's rules, policies, and standards provide general guidelines for the expected behavior. The rules, policies, and standards outlined below and elsewhere in this Handbook should not be read as an all-inclusive description of the School's standards, which are based on **honesty, respect, trust, and safety**. Any behavior that constitutes a breach of these School values may result in disciplinary action. Students are expected to comply with School standards and rules at all times, and they are also encouraged to discuss with their fellow students, teachers or administration any issues or infractions of School standards and rules toward the purpose of caring for one another in a spirit of kindness and of what is best for each person in the School community.

## **General Conduct**

Students and parents should be considerate and show respect toward other students, faculty, staff, all guests, and visitors. Students should respect School property and the personal property of other people. Students and parents, both as participants or spectators, are required to show good will, sportsmanship and courtesy at all School-sponsored events (on and off campus). Any person showing unsportsmanlike conduct may be asked to leave the event and may not be allowed to attend future events.

## **Student Conduct**

Student conduct should be of such high caliber as not to disrupt or distract from the instructional or other procedures of the school. The use of ethnic slurs, name calling and profanity are not permitted. The “Golden Rule” will be the foundation of all personal relationships.

In addition, the health and well-being of all students is of utmost importance to the School. We expect students, at all times, both on and off campus (including evenings, weekends, and school breaks) to avoid all types of behaviors that may be harmful to the student’s or another person’s body, self-esteem, or health. All students are expected to help create a school culture of respect for oneself and others. As examples, Internet activity, criminal activity, sexual activity, use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other chemicals, or engaging in self-harming, may result in a student receiving disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from School.

If a student observes or receives information that another student may be struggling with personal issues or has concerns that a student may harm himself or herself or others, please report such information to the School’s administration.

## **Behavior in Class/Halls/Walkways**

Students are to refrain from talking in class or other required gatherings except as permitted, are to use a reasonable tone of voice, and should exhibit orderly behavior at all times. Students must walk from place to place on campus. Students must exercise good judgment in traveling from place to place, which includes watching for obstacles, not walking with items in the student’s mouth, not playing in the corridors, not blocking entrances or walkways, etc.

## **Cooperation with School Staff**

Students are expected to be honest and cooperative with school staff at all times.

## **Criminal Activities**

A student engaging in conduct that is defined under law as a civil infraction, a serious misdemeanor or a felony (whether charged by law enforcement or not) is grounds for expulsion. Violations of law that occur off-campus during the school day will be subject to review under School rules. Violations of law that occur after the school day may also be subject to review under School rules. In the case of offenses that occur at the end of the school year, the School may require punishments to be served during the summer. Transcripts and other reports pertaining to the student’s academic standing will be withheld until the completion of the assigned punishment. All decisions involving suspension or expulsion are subject to the final approval of the Head of School and the division head.

## **Cubbies**



Students are to keep their cubby clean. Personal items should be taken home each evening. Cubbies may be inspected periodically without prior notice or consent. Cubbies will be assigned by the teacher during the first week of school.

All cubbies are to be emptied by the last day of school. Any items or books left after that time will be given away or discarded as appropriate.

The School assumes no financial responsibility for items taken from cubbies.

## **Destructive Acts**

Students should govern their actions by the values of respect for self, person, and property. Thus, any destructive actions, including setting fires, causing damage to property, stealing property, harming others, serious threats to harm others, or similar conduct is prohibited.

## **Displays of Affection & Other Forms of Inappropriate Student Interaction**

Students are prohibited from inappropriate displays of affection on campus or any school-related events. Any unwanted or offensive conduct occurring on school property or a school event must be immediately reported in accordance with the Harassment and Bullying Policy.

## **Drugs and Alcohol**

**General:** Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling or purchasing any alcoholic beverages or other mind-altering substances (including synthetic salts or other substances), or possessing drug paraphernalia on or near School property or at School-related activities. “Mind-altering” substances includes any type of substance ingested, snorted, smoked or inserted into one’s body that may impact the individual in some way. Such substances include, without limitation, alcohol, legal or illegal substances (including medical marijuana pursuant to a prescription or physician certification), over the counter salts, spices, vapors, incense, or other similar items. Off-premises possession, use, sale or purchase of alcohol and other mind-altering substances is also prohibited.

**Testing:** Students may be required to submit to urinalysis drug screens, blood alcohol tests, breathalyzer tests and medical examinations under the following circumstances: (a) when a student is suspected of attending School or School-related activities with intoxicants or mind-altering substances in his or her system; (b) when a student suffers an injury or is involved in an accident while at School; (c) on a periodic or random basis, including but not limited to, in connection with the student’s participation in extracurricular activities; or (d) when a student is placed under disciplinary contract and such screenings or examinations are terms of the contract. The presence of alcohol or the presence of any other intoxicants or mind-altering substances in the body is a violation of this policy. Refusal of a student (by the student or the student’s parent) to undergo testing or to cooperate fully with any of these tests (including signing consent forms or providing testing results promptly to the school) is also a violation of our policy and will result in expulsion.

This policy does not prohibit the proper use of medication under the direction of a physician, although the use of medical marijuana is prohibited in all circumstances. However, the misuse or abuse of such drugs is prohibited. Students who are taking prescription or nonprescription drugs must notify an administrator in the School Office of this fact when they report to School.

**Consequences:** In addition to determining the appropriate disciplinary action pursuant to the School's Disciplinary Rules, the School reserves the right to impose the following additional or different requirements as appropriate for the circumstances: determination of possible legal action; required professional counseling approved by the administration; removal from all elected or appointed positions of leadership in the School; required random and/or regularly scheduled drug and/or alcohol testing at a School-approved local clinic or doctor's office for a time period and at intervals to be determined by the School's administration. Refusal of a student (directly or through a parent/guardian) to undergo testing or to cooperate fully with any of these tests is considered a positive result and will result in automatic expulsion.

### **Fights or Horseplay**

Fights and physical horseplay of any kind are prohibited and may lead to disciplinary consequences for all of the individuals.

### **Food, Drink, Gum**

Food and beverages will be consumed only in designated areas and at designated times. There will be no chewing gum or candy or sodas in School.

### **Honesty and Dishonesty**

Dishonesty in any form, including stealing, lying, cheating, falsifying notes, and/or academic dishonesty, is inconsistent with School standards. Dishonesty is considered a fundamental breach of our community's expectations. A student's dishonesty in connection with an investigation of misconduct will compound the disciplinary response, regardless of the severity of the original violation.

### **Investigations**

Students are expected to cooperate in investigations. Students are expected to be honest, but honesty is not necessarily a mitigating factor and students' own statements may be used against them. Failure to cooperate with an investigation may be cause for disciplinary action.

If a student refuses to participate or cooperate at any stage of an investigation, or is unable to do so for whatever reason, including without limitation, pending criminal charges, the school reserves the right to take action, including proceeding without a statement from the student, or to require the student to withdraw from school.

### **Language**

Students and parents are prohibited from using profane, obscene, bigoted, or other type of offensive language or gestures on campus or at School-sponsored events.

## **Leaving School Campus**

It is a serious infraction to leave campus without authorization.

## **Property**

Students are responsible for the proper care of classrooms, restrooms, supplies and furniture. Students who disfigure property, or otherwise damage school property or equipment, will be required to pay for the damage done or replace the item. For the protection of furniture and carpet, gum chewing is prohibited at all times. Library books are furnished by the school and loaned to the students for the purpose of study or enjoyment. Students will be required to pay for any lost or damaged materials checked out to them.

## **Smoking/Vaping/Tobacco Products**

School policy expressly forbids students from smoking, vaping, juuling, or using tobacco products, as well as possessing such products (as well as oils or liquids associated with same), at any time in or on School property, buses or other School vehicles, adjacent properties, or School-sponsored trips. All cigarettes (including electronic), vaping devices, smokeless tobacco, lighters, matches, etc. or other devices similar to cigarettes, lighters, matches, etc. brought on campus by students will be confiscated. Discipline will be imposed based on the circumstances existing at the time and may include suspension, probation, or expulsion. Depending on the circumstances existing at the time, a violation of this policy may also be a violation of the School's Drugs and Alcohol Policy and reportable to law enforcement.

## **Telephone Use**

Parents may not contact a student through the office phone. Similarly, students are not permitted to use the office phone (except with special permission). Students are not allowed to use their own cell phones during the school day.

## **Tuancy**

A student is truant if he/she is absent from School without the permission of a parent or guardian or leaves the School grounds once he/she has reported for classes without proper School personnel authorization. In case of truancy, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately and the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

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The teacher of each class is in charge of the ordinary discipline in the classroom. The student is expected to comply with whatever regulations or disciplinary measures the teacher may impose. At St. Christopher's Montessori Church School we teach the importance of respecting the dignity of each person. Faculty and staff members should always be addressed in a polite and respectful manner. Confrontational behavior with the teacher is at variance with conduct expected from all students and parents. We endeavor to encourage and model ways for students to handle conflict appropriately amongst themselves that are designed to allow each student to be heard in a respectful way (such as the peace table). We use positive reinforcement whenever possible to encourage progress and acknowledge contributions. However, we know that students will violate our standards and rules and when that happens, each situation will be handled at the School's discretion in accordance with the School's rules, policies, and practices, as well as general common sense.

Disciplinary matters, or incidents in violation of School rules and regulations, will be handled initially at the most immediate level possible. Violations will subject the student to disciplinary consequences. The level of disciplinary response for any violation of School rules will depend on a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to:

- Whether any person was harmed;
- Whether there was property damage or other loss of property;
- The level of any class or School disruption caused by the student's behavior;
- The number, if any, of prior infractions of School rules and regulations;
- Whether the student has been previously disciplined;
- Whether there were illegal substances (for example, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, etc.);
- Whether the student had been earlier warned about the same or similar conduct;
- Whether there was a weapon or other dangerous item involved;
- Whether the conduct is of the kind also prohibited by criminal law; and/or
- Whether the student was honest and cooperative in connection with the investigation of the behavior.

The range of possible disciplinary consequences include one or more of the following:

**Regulation Infraction Notice:** Written notice of the infraction. This document is to be signed by the parent and returned to the School the next day. A second regulation infraction notice requires a parent-teacher conference. A third regulation infraction notice requires a conference with the parent, teacher, and principal, and may result in suspension. A fourth regulation infraction notice may result in expulsion.

**Detention:** The student must spend a period of time (typically 30-45 minutes) in a designated area. During detentions, students are required to read specific essays or stories and report or respond to them in writing. If the student is late or absent from detention, an additional detention will be assigned.

**Disciplinary Warning Status:** Students who have serious or repeat infractions will be placed on disciplinary warning status, which means that further infractions will result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.

**Probation:** A student on probation is in jeopardy of being expelled if found guilty of a major offense. Probation lasts for a full semester. Students on probation lose privileges (such as participating in extracurricular activities, holding office, participating in student council, etc.).

**In School Suspension:** Students required to be on campus at a designated area but are not allowed to attend class or events. Students still have the responsibility to complete and timely submit all class work and to arrange to make up examinations. Suspension becomes a permanent part of a student's record.

**Out of School Suspension:** Students are banned from all School activities, including classes, and are to remain at home. Students still have the responsibility to complete and timely submit all class work and to arrange to make up examinations. Suspension becomes a permanent part of a student's record.

**Expulsion:** Students may be expelled for serious first offenses; repeat infractions (even if not related); conduct resulting in harm, damage, or disruption to the educational environment; parent or family member causing disruption to the School or the School's educational mission; non-payment of tuition or fees; not meeting academic requirements; or not meeting attendance requirements. Any matter taken under consideration directly by the Administration may be grounds for expulsion.

In addition, the School may report to the appropriate governmental authorities any actions that appear to violate law.

## **Pre-School Discipline**

The Florida Department of Children and Families require that we inform parents of our Preschool discipline policy, specific authority 402.301-F.S. A separate sheet is attached for you to read and sign. Our disciplinary practice, which we believe appropriate to our age group is outlined as follows:

At St. Christopher's Montessori Church School we teach the importance of respecting the dignity of each person. Faculty and staff members should always be addressed in a polite and respectful manner. Confrontational behavior with the teacher is at variance with conduct expected from all students and parents. We endeavor to encourage and model ways for students to handle conflict appropriately amongst themselves that are designed to allow each student to be heard in a respectful way. We use positive reinforcement whenever possible to encourage progress and acknowledge contributions. However, we know that students will violate our standards and rules and when that happens, each situation will be handled at the School's discretion in accordance with the School's rules, policies, and practices, as well as general common sense.

1. For minor unacceptable behavior: We use the thinking chair in order for children to take a step back and look around and think of more appropriate and cooperative behavior.

The child is asked to sit in a thinking chair (any classroom chair) until s/he feels ready to cooperate with school rules. The duration of sitting time is no more than five minutes.

2. For more serious infractions (biting or hitting other students) a child may be dismissed from school for the day or for succeeding days.
3. For a student who hits, kicks, uses bad language or strikes a teacher: the child may be dismissed from school for the day or for succeeding days.
4. For serious first offences or for repeated and continued undesirable behavior (even if not related) at school: A conference with the teacher, parent and Head of School will be mandatory and expulsion may result.

The School reserves the right at all times to take any one or more of the possible disciplinary consequences as set forth in our Disciplinary Procedures above, up to and including expulsion. Pre-school students may also be dismissed for a parent or family member causing disruption to the School or the School's educational mission; non-payment of tuition or fees; not meeting academic requirements; or not meeting attendance requirements.

## TECHNOLOGY

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### Cell Phones and Other Electronics

To the extent that a student brings any electronic devices to school (smart/cell phones, iPads, Gameboys, etc.), the student does so at her/his own risk. The School will not be responsible for the theft, damage, or loss of such devices. Students who choose to bring such devices to school must comply with all rules and regulations regarding same.

All electronic devices must be turned off during class unless the teacher has specifically authorized the use of the device during that particular class for educational purposes. If the device is being used for educational purposes, students must comply with the guidelines relating to such use. Otherwise, students may use electronic devices only before School and after School hours. Whenever such use is permitted, students may not use electronic devices in any way that is harassing or disruptive to the educational environment. The visible/audible content stored on an electronic device such as images, wallpapers, and ringtones are to be school-appropriate. Students are not permitted to use electronic devices to make threats, use camera features to take inappropriate pictures or videos, videotape or record classes, send text messages to other students in class, or in ways that would otherwise violate a School rule.

Any student found to have an electronic device in her/his possession and turned on during a test or examination will be presumed to have used the device to cheat and will receive a zero for the test/examination.

Students who violate this policy will have their cell phones or electronics confiscated. In such case, the School reserves the right to inspect the device, including all contents. Students must

provide any passwords to inspect the device upon request by a school administrator. Students and their parents consent to the School logging into the device and its contents and application, as well as accessing all communications, including, without limitation, stored communications. Parents will be required to come to the School office to pick up confiscated items. Students will also be subject to disciplinary procedures for violation of this policy.

## **Computer and Systems Usage Policy**

All persons using the School's computers, the School's computer systems, or personal computers on School property or over the School's systems are required to abide by the following rules. This policy also applies to the use of any personal electronic devices (computers, cameras, **iPhones, iPods, smart watches, smart/cellular phones**, video cameras, etc.) on School property or at a School-related event or used at or away from school for school work on a regular or intermittent basis. Failure to abide by these rules will result in appropriate disciplinary action determined by the School administration. All computers and devices should be used in a responsible, ethical and legal manner. Violations of the following guidelines may result in the revocation of access privileges and possible disciplinary responses, including expulsion for serious offenses.

**Purpose:** The purpose of providing access to the Internet and the School's computer systems is to support research and provide unique educational opportunities. The use of such resources should be limited to those activities that support the School's educational objectives.

**Privilege:** The use of the School's systems is a privilege and not a right. Inappropriate or illegal use of the School's systems or of the Internet will result in loss of the privilege and disciplinary action.

**Internet Access:** The School community--students, faculty, administrators and staff--have the privilege of full access to the Internet. The School encourages students and teachers to use the Internet to expand their knowledge. The Internet allows users to send and receive e-mail, to log onto remote computers, and to browse databases of information. It also lets users send and receive files and programs contained on other computers. Files may be downloaded only to personal disks. Files are not to be downloaded to the Schools local or network hard drives.

**The School does not provide any type of filtering system.** Although doing so generally can eliminate access to offensive and pornographic materials, it also has the negative effect of filtering out genuine educational materials. In addition, no filtering system is foolproof. Therefore, we expect users to act responsibly in their searches and to immediately disengage from any materials that are inappropriate and to report the situation to the faculty member or administrator in charge of the activity. Although the School cannot effectively restrict the content of information obtained by students via the Internet, obtaining material that is explicitly labeled, as not intended for minors will be considered a violation of School rules. Furthermore, making public or passing on any material that is pornographic, violent in nature, or otherwise harassing is totally unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately by the appropriate administrator.

**Internet Safety:** Students should never give out personal information (address, telephone number, name of School, address of School, date of birth, Social Security Number, credit card

number, etc.) over the Internet. Students also should not meet with someone that they have contacted on-line without prior parental approval. Safety is the responsibility of the parent and student. The School is not liable in any way for irresponsible acts on the part of the student.

**Pirated Software:** The term “pirated software” refers to the use and transfer of stolen software. Commercial software is copyrighted, and each purchaser must abide by the licensing agreement published with the software. There is no justification for the use of illegally obtained software. The School will not, in any way, be held responsible for a student’s own software brought to School for personal use.

**Network Access/Passwords:** Accessing the accounts and files of others is prohibited. Attempting to impair the network, to bypass restrictions set by the network administrator, or to create links to the School’s web page is prohibited. Obtaining another’s password or rights to another’s directory or e-mail on the network is a violation of School rules as well as a form of theft. Taking advantage of a student who inadvertently leaves a computer without logging out is not appropriate. Using someone else’s password or posting a message using another’s log-in name is a form of dishonesty, just as is plagiarism or lying, and will be treated as a violation. **Guard your password. You will be responsible for any activity done on the school’s system under your password.**

**School’s Right To Inspect:** The School reserves the right to inspect user directories for inappropriate files and to remove them if found and to take other appropriate action if deemed necessary, including notification of parents. The School also reserves the right to inspect any personal electronic devices brought onto campus, to a School-related event or used at or away from School for school work on a regular or intermittent basis. In such case, students must provide any passwords to inspect the device upon request by a School administrator. Students and their parents consent to the School logging into the device and its contents and applications, as well as accessing all communications, including, without limitation, stored communications. Do not assume that any messages or materials on your computer or the School’s systems are private.

**Electronic Mail:** Students are expected to use their school provided email for all school related work and communication. Students are expected to check their email daily. Electronic communication, such as e-mail and text messaging, may not be used to harass or threaten others. The School reserves the right to randomly check electronic communication. Electronic communication must not include personal attacks and should follow the normal rules of appropriate public language. They should not contain any language or content, which the author would not be willing to share from the podium at a School meeting. Students should be made aware that deleted e-mails can be undeleted.

Any person who believes that they have been harassed or threatened by an email communication should immediately report the concern in accordance with the School’s No Harassment/No Bullying policy.

**Viruses:** Every effort is made by the School to keep our system virus-free. Even with the best techniques, however, computer viruses can be transmitted to and from any computer, including



those in the computer center. The School is not responsible for the transmission of any virus or for damage suffered from a virus.

**Computer Care:** Members of the School community will not abuse, tamper with, or willfully damage any computer equipment, use the computer for other than appropriate work, or bring food or drink into any computer area. Any intentional acts of vandalism will be result in discipline and students will be held responsible for replacement or repairs.

**Reporting Requirements/Discipline:** Any student who accesses inappropriate material on the Internet, receives harassing, threatening, or inappropriate materials via e-mail, text, or on the Internet, must immediately report the concern to the teacher who is supervising the activity so that the situation can be investigated and addressed appropriately. Students who violate any aspect of this Computer and Systems Usage Policy will be subject to appropriate discipline and loss of computer or Internet privileges.

## **Online Learning Management Systems and COPPA Information**

We are committed to high quality teaching and learning. We realize that part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication and providing rich and varied contents and experiences for our students. The importance of teachers and students engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in digital environments is a part of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and provides students the opportunity to develop as literate and technologically competent individuals. Educational standards are now requiring the use of online education tools and our School uses several computer software applications and web-based/cloud-based education technology services operated not by the School, but by third parties. These applications include, but may not be limited to, Blackbaud, Google Drive, Discovery Education, Schoology, Explain Everything, See Saw, Scratch, MineCraft, Kodable, Zoom, Canvas, Code Monkey, and other similar educational programs. A complete list of the programs with the privacy policy for each can be found on our School website.

In order for our students to use these programs and services, certain personal identifying information—generally the student’s name and school email address—must be provided to the website operator. Please note that any personal information provided by the School is for educational purposes only and is used by the School solely to communicate with the service provider. Students will receive a school email address to participate in certain of these computer software applications and web-based/cloud-based services. Under federal law entitled the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), certain website providers must provide parental notification and obtain parental consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. For more information on COPPA, please visit <https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/businesscenter/guidance/complying-coppa-frequently-asked-questions>.

COPPA permits schools such as ours to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of its students, thereby eliminating the need for individual parental consent to be given directly to the website operator. Your signature on this Handbook will reflect and constitute your consent for our School to provide personally identifying information for your child consisting of

first name, last name, an email address, username, and school-related information, such as school name, class, and teacher name. Your signature will also reflect and constitute your consent for your child to participate in video conferencing, podcasts, and live chats, which means that their identity will be revealed, their voice will be heard, and their image displayed to others and both may be recorded. If you do not want your student to participate in these programs, please notify Administration.

## **Social Media and Social Networking Policies and Procedures**

Social media encompasses a broad array of online activity including social networks such as Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Facebook, GroupMe and Snapchat, blogs, and other similar online or Internet communications. Because this form of communication is vast and growing, we feel it is important to communicate to you the School's position regarding a student's use of social media or networking.

**Use at School or a School-Related Event:** We do not permit students to access social media and/or social networking sites while on School property or at a School-related event unless such use is on a School social media platform or School sanctioned site and the use is for School related work. We have taken steps to block many of the social media/networking sites on our network, but technology will undoubtedly work faster than our IT Department. Therefore, even if you are able to access such sites on School property or at a School-related event, you should understand that your activities are in violation of School policy and may result in disciplinary action.

**Use Away from School Property:** It is not our goal to regulate a student's personal online activities when not on School property or at a School-related event. Please understand, however, that certain activities might impact a student's relationships with other students or school employees or School rights that we do reserve the right to regulate. All students should ensure that they are familiar with School's conduct policies to avoid any online communications that might violate those policies.

**Guidelines:** You should ensure that your online activities do not violate a School policy regarding bullying or harassment, or other similar policies pertaining to how students interact with each other. If you post or say something online that makes another student feel uncomfortable, your activity may result in an investigation and possible discipline.

Students should also be aware that teachers and administrators periodically check such sites and may determine that off campus behavior violates the School conduct code by making disparaging or negative comments about the School, administration, or faculty members in a manner that is disruptive to the School's educational mission or activities.

Students should not "follow" or be "friends" with any faculty member or other adult member of our community (other than the Student's parent) on any of these social networking sites. Any violation of this prohibition must be reported to the Administration immediately.

In addition, postings on social networking or other Internet sites of students engaging in inappropriate behavior (such as drinking, smoking, vaping, sexual actions, etc.) is prohibited.

Students are not permitted to use the School's name, logo, trademark, or service mark in online activities. Students are not permitted to post photographs of the School, its locations, activities, students, parents, or employee-related activities on line. Students are not permitted to create websites or social networking profiles to rate teachers, discuss aspects of the School, or otherwise disclose information online that the School would find offensive or inappropriate if posted in the School's newspaper. Finally, students are not permitted to disclose any confidential information of the School, employees, students, parents, or activities online.

**Your Identity Online:** You are responsible for any of your online activity conducted with a School email address, and/or which can be traced back to the School's domain, and/or which uses School assets.

What you publish on such personal online sites should never be attributed to the School and should not appear to be endorsed by or originated from the School.

**School's Right to Inspect:** The School reserves the right to inspect all electronic data and usage occurring over the School's network or on School property without prior notice. We also reserve the right to assess information in the public domain on the Internet and to discipline students for any violation of these guidelines.

## DRESS CODE

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St. Christopher's Montessori Church School has a dress code requiring our school uniform to be worn daily to school. Please check your child to ensure all codes are adhered to.

The uniform for girls is:

- Knit dress Red or Navy (Toddlers)
- Plaid jumper or skort (Preschool through Third)
- Plaid skirt or skort (Upper Elementary)
- Knit shirt w/collar & embroidered school logo in white or red (only for skort)
- White peter pan collar blouse (only for jumper)
- Navy blue sweater, fleece jacket, sweat pants
- White socks
- Black leather shoes with non-skid soles (safe for running and climbing)
- **No sandals or platforms shoes please!**
- **Small post earrings only**

The uniform for boys is:

- Navy blue short or navy blue slacks
- Knit shirt w/collar and embroidered school logo in white or red
- Navy blue sweater, fleece jacket, sweat pants
- Black leather shoes with non-skid soles (safe for running and climbing)
- **No sandals please!**

For all students the winter uniform is: Navy blue warm-up suits. Girls may wear white tights or navy blue sweat pants.

The uniform may be purchased through Dennis Uniform which is located at 8807 S.W. 132 Street in Miami, phone (305) 254-0000, website: dennisuniform.com. Or, online at Lands End: www.landsend.com

Physical Education Uniform:

Elementary Students must wear P.E. uniforms and white tennis shoes with white socks on P.E. days (Monday and Friday). The P.E. uniform for elementary students is available for purchase at the school office.

## HEALTH

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### Accidents

Any accident/injury in a School building, on the School property, at athletic practices, or at any athletic event sponsored by the School must be reported to the person in charge immediately. Students should not assume that someone in authority knows there was an accident or injury.

### Animals

As a part of the educational curriculum, each class maintains a pet in a carefully housed environment. Outside of the classroom pets, **no** animals are allowed on campus, or at school-related events (even if the animal remains in vehicle or on a leash).

An exception may be made if a child wishes to bring a pet to “Show and Tell” and has received prior permission from the teacher. “Blessing of the Animals” is also an exception.

### Health Information Sharing

Parents and student agree, as a condition of continued enrollment, to consent to the release of any of the student’s health related information, including information relating to drug treatment, testing, medical and mental health records, to employees or agents of the school, as determined by the Head of School or his or her designee, to meet the medical or safety needs of the student and the community or the legal responsibilities of the School.

The School will maintain appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the security of all health-related information within its care or custody. While it is the obligation of the School to safeguard student medical information, we must also balance matters of privacy and confidentiality with safeguarding the interests and well-being of our students and our community. Thus, parents/guardians and students consent to allow employees and agents of the School, who have a need to know, to receive and/or share medical and/or psychological information necessary to serve the best interests of the student and/or community. In the event

of a disclosure required by law, every effort will be made to notify the student and/or parents/guardians in advance.

## **Health Care, Immunizations, and Medications**

Prior to the beginning of School, a physical examination must be completed or transferred for each student entering the School. Immunizations must be kept current, and an original (no photocopies) a valid Certificate of Immunization, signed by a physician and provided in accordance with Florida law, must be kept on file in the School office. Students may not attend School without an appropriate immunization record (this includes, without limitation, a current immunization record, in accordance with state requirements, at all times.

St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church and Montessori School mandates immunizations as required by the Florida Department of Health.

In addition, in light of the recent resurgence of measles and other preventable diseases, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church passed the following resolutions at its June 2019 meeting.

The Episcopal Church does not recognize a valid claim of theological or religious exemption from vaccines for its members.

The Church urges members to adhere to science-based medical practices and to seek and follow the guidance of trained medical professionals.

St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church and Montessori School will be following this policy as adopted at the meeting of the Board of Trustees on October 14, 2020.

All students must have the required vaccinations and submit to the school the Florida Department of Health forms: a Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH680) and a School Entry Health Form (DH-3040). These forms are to be given to the school prior to the start of each school year.

New Students and students entering Senior Kindergarten must present current forms completed within six months before the start of school.

These forms are obtained at the physician's office.

An exemption from immunization requirements is permissible only with a physician's certification as to the need for either a temporary (for those who are in the process of completing necessary immunizations) or permanent (for those who are unable to be fully immunized due to medical reasons) medical exemption. See [floridahealth.gov](http://floridahealth.gov) standards.

An exemption from immunization requirements is not permissible for religious, philosophical, personal, or other reasons other than medical.

No student will be admitted to class on the first day of school unless current health and immunization forms are on file.

Many students must have medication available at School for certain illnesses and conditions. School personnel cannot administer medication, including pain relievers, without explicit written parental/guardian permission. A permission form completed by the parent/guardian is required in the event a student must receive medicine at School. The medicine, in its original container, labeled with the student's name, name of medicine, dose and time to be given, doctor's name (if prescribed) and possible side effects, must be given to Administration together with the signed permission form. All medication must be delivered to Administration of School. Students are not permitted to carry medications except for epi pens and then only with specific physician instructions and a signed release from the parents.

Students who return to School after an extended illness or surgery or who may not participate in sports or gym classes following an extended illness or surgery require a physician's statement confirming the student's ability to return to School and any necessary limitations or restriction.

Parents are responsible for informing the Administration of any changes in their child's medications, health status, behavior, family dynamics or other factors that may affect their child's well-being during the school day. In addition, parents must immediately contact the Associate Head of School about behavior, comments, or other concerns that potentially evidence that their child could harm himself or any other individual.

## **Student Illness and Communicable Diseases**

The School has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, parents, students, and visitors. In the case of global or local threats of a communicable disease, the School will take all reasonable measures that may be necessary to protect the safety and health of members of the School community. These may include implementing infection control guidelines designed to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. The School will apply guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and its affiliate, NIOSH, state and local health departments, and World Health Organization (WHO), and other agencies and resources as appropriate. Each communicable disease is unique. The School's response depends on public health guidance for the specific communicable disease, the nature and stage of the disease, whether mitigation methods are or can be used, and public health guidance on the risk and exposure. Response may include, without limitation, a determination that no risk exists or that no action is required, immunization programs may be put into place, mandatory health screening may be implemented, mitigation steps may be needed such as a student refraining from some activities, utilizing bandages or other barriers, enhanced housekeeping, cancellation of field trips, a medical exam and release, and being sent home from school. Depending on the event, the School may require parents to disclose upcoming travel plans and to self-quarantine their child upon return. School closure may be necessary or the School may need to modify its curriculum, schedules, length of the school year, and/or means of learning and teaching methods. During certain communicable disease events, threat levels may change rapidly and the School may need to modify various measures as additional information becomes available.

Examples of communicable diseases include seasonable influenza; tuberculosis; measles; chicken pox; mumps, scarlet fever, hepatitis A, C, and D; meningitis; antibiotic-resistant staph; Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS); H1N1 Flu; Swine Flu; Avian Flu; Ebola; and novel coronavirus - COVID-19. Lice, ringworm, pinworms, impetigo, pink eye, strep infection, hand, foot and mouth disease, mononucleosis, and other similar childhood illnesses are covered by this policy. We recognize that some diseases may not be infectious under certain circumstances.

We rely on our parents as the first step in preventing infection in the school environment. We count on them to use good judgment in protecting our school community. A sick child should not be in school but should remain at home in an environment where proper care may be given. If a student is not feeling well, s/he should inform the classroom teacher and ask to be excused to go to the office. If a student asks to go home, the student will be released only with permission from the parent/guardian or from the person designated on the student's emergency

card. A student who presents at school with symptoms of an illness and/or is unable to participate in the day's activities will be removed from the classroom and the parents, or an emergency contact if the parents cannot be reached, will be contacted. Students must be picked up within the hour of the School's request that the child be sent home due to illness. The student should be signed out by the office. Teachers will be informed of the student's dismissal for illness. To prevent the spread of infection through direct contamination (coughing, sneezing, talking, sharing articles, etc.) students must be asymptomatic without the aid of medications before returning to School. In other words, students must have no fever, vomiting, etc. for 24 hours prior to their return to School.

Parents/students who know or have a reasonable basis for believing that a student has a communicable disease that may pose a threat to other students, parents, school employees, visitors, or the public should immediately contact their health provider. Parents/students have a "reasonable basis" for believing that a student has a communicable disease when they show or feel signs or illness, such as coughing, sneezing, fever, joint aches, have an overall ill feeling, or when they know that they have been exposed to someone with a known communicable disease or suspected communicable disease. For the health and safety of the School community, parents should report to Administration if their child has a confirmed communicable disease that poses a risk to others in the School community. The Florida Department of Health shall be notified when a student is sent home because of a communicable disease. In case of student absence due to the reportable communicable disease, a release card from the Department of Health or a letter from the family physician indicating that the Department of Health regulations have been fulfilled must be presented when the student returns to school (indicating that the student is no longer infectious).

The School will generally not identify an infected student to School employees or other students or their parents, although public health guidance will guide the School's communications. It may be necessary to alert others in the community who were in certain areas or at certain times that exposure could have occurred. The School will disclose sensitive medical information of students no further than is necessary to ensure the health and safety of our employees, students, parents, and visitors in a manner consistent with applicable law. The School will comply with all federal and state laws in regard to confidentiality and privacy requirements.

## **Student Services, Activities and Resources**

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

We understand that there may be circumstances when a parent may request that the School provide an adjustment or accommodation for a student's medical needs or physical, mental, or learning disability. As the range of requests have grown over the years, the School believes that it is appropriate at this time to outline the School's policy and general guidelines for addressing such requests.

**General Policy:** In general, it is our School's policy to provide accommodations or adjustments for a student's minor needs in circumstances in which the administration determines, in its sole discretion, that doing so is within the reasonable ability of the School and/or its staff and will not result in a significant disruption to the teacher's ability to instruct other students, to classroom or school order and discipline, will not require a threat of harm to the safety of other students or employees, will not require a fundamental change to our educational environment or mission, and will not impose responsibilities on school employees for which they are not trained. We also ask parents to realize that, given the size of our school and our available resources, we may not be able to provide all requested accommodations. To the extent we agree to provide accommodations, we may require a sharing of responsibility for the accommodation.

**Request and Documentation:** For any type of accommodation (including administration of medication at school), the parent must contact the Head of School to discuss the need. The Head of School will then advise the parent of the type of medical documentation needed, which generally will state the student's diagnosis, how the condition limits the student, the recommended accommodations, and the length of time that the accommodation(s) will be needed.

**Release for Communications with Physician:** Sometimes, the documentation received from the physician may raise questions or be unclear as to the recommendations. For that reason, the parent(s) must sign a Release of Information form, permitting the School to contact the medical professional, when necessary. In addition, if there is any cost associated with the physician's cooperation (i.e., to answer a set of questions submitted, etc.), the parent must agree to bear the cost of such process.

**Assessment of Request:** Once the parent's request and medical documentation has been received by the School, appropriate persons within the administration will meet with the parents to clarify information and to discuss whether the School will be able to implement the accommodation requested. In some cases, the parent may be asked to provide (at the parent's cost) any special equipment needed, training for the School's staff, or other associated matters. In addition, the School may advise the parent that the School will allow a particular accommodation, but the full responsibility for doing so will rest with the parent. For example, if the student needs to be tested or have certain types of medicines administered during the day that the School believes are beyond the scope of the School's responsibility, the School may allow the parent to make arrangements to visit the campus for the purpose of testing and administering.

**Limitations on Requests:** Please understand that the School is not a medical facility and does not have the personnel, training, or equipment to handle certain types of medical procedures best left to the student, parent, or physician. Examples of accommodations made for students include appropriate classroom locations, extended time on tests, use of computers, and/or dispensing with medication through the office.

## **After School Programs**



St. Christopher's Montessori Church School offers both an After-School Care and Enrichment Program. As a convenience to our families, **Aftercare** is available from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Sign-up sheets will be posted outside each classroom and sign up must be done in advance.

If you are unable to pick up your child by 3:10 p.m child will automatically be placed in After Care. Parents must come to After Care to sign out their children. Aftercare will commence on the first day of school. Aftercare will be invoiced on a monthly basis.

A schedule of School Enrichment Courses is sent home in August and again in December for the Spring Semester and may be viewed on our website: [www.stchriskb.org](http://www.stchriskb.org). A full array of courses is offered. Enrichment classes are optional, must be paid in advance and sign-up is on a semester basis. Parents have one session to withdraw their children. **After one session, the Enrichment Course fee is non-refundable.** Parents must sign out their child from each Enrichment course. Students not picked up on time will automatically be placed in Aftercare and the standard Aftercare fee will be charged. Note: Enrichment Class offerings are based on adequate student enrollment. Should there not be a sufficient number of students per class, the class may be cancelled.

## Library Media Center

The Library Media Center is designated as a quiet zone used for studying, reading, research, and checking out books. Library Media Center privileges may be denied to students who do not comply. All books, periodicals, or other cataloged materials which are checked out by students, must be returned and cleared by the Librarian prior to taking final exams or having files forwarded to any other institution or released to any individual.

During weekly visits to our Library Media Center, students learn library skills and research techniques. They are encouraged to read for pleasure and research through special programs, book talks, story-telling, reading aloud, and times for silent reading. The circulation of books is computerized in conjunction with our on-line catalog.

Students may use library materials after school hours only with parent supervision or with prior permission from the Librarian. Library hours are posted outside the library.

The accelerated Reader Program offers students the opportunity to enhance their active reading skills. Students may take assessments in the library as well as the classroom.

Books are checked out for two weeks and can be renewed for additional time. Some reference materials can circulate overnight to students in Grade 3 through Grade 5. We expect students to be responsible and consider the needs of others in their use of library materials.

- There is to be no food, drinks etc. in the library.
- Talking or socializing is to be done quietly in the library.
- Students must sign out all materials at the main desk prior to leaving the library.

- Students are responsible for taking care of and returning any book checked out to them. If a book is lost or damaged while checked out to a student, that student will be expected to pay for it.

## **Chapel**

All St. Christopher's Church School students attend chapel once each week. The Chapel Service starts promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesdays in the Church.\* Students are active participants in the Chapel Service. This is a joyous time where our full school community joins together. Parents are invited to attend all Chapel Services and are welcome to be seated in the rear of the sanctuary prior to the commencement of the service. If a child is late, the parent must sit with the child at the back of the church or stay outside until chapel ends. Please do not drop off your child to the teacher during chapel service.

\*Note: The Church is God's House. Being in God's House demands a higher standard of deportment because it is a Holy Place where Sacred Rituals take place. Proper decorum, for example, means that food and drink are not permitted inside the Sanctuary. Photography is limited. Unnecessary and loud conversations, before, during or after the Service is disrespectful to the people who come to find a quiet place to sit in God's presence and pray. Faculty, parents and visitors who attend are asked to help set an example of proper decorum for our children.

## **Field Trips**

Day and overnight field trips are part of the educational process. It must be stressed, however, that only those students who, in the administration's sole discretion, have demonstrated good conduct during their classes will be permitted to attend.

Proper behavior during the trip continues to be of utmost importance. Parents of any student unable to follow the given guidelines will be notified. In severe cases, the parent will be requested to come and/or provide transportation home for the student.

A condition of a student's or parent's participation in any field trip is the execution of the School's standard Participation Release. For any students whose parents have not executed the release, the student will have the option of attending an alternative class for the period of the field trip or remaining at home.

Because we must conform to traffic safety and seat belt laws, preschool age children do not go on field trips. However, special enrichment programs are brought to the School.

**Children are not allowed to sit in the front seat on any field trip.**

**Siblings who do not attend the school and are not in the same classroom are not allowed on field trips.**

## **Chaperone Guidelines/Field Trips**

Parents who are interested in volunteering to assist on field trips must have been cleared through the School's criminal background process, as well as complete the Safeguarding God's Children course provided on-line through the Diocese of Southeast Florida. To sign up for the course, please see the Office Administrator. Drivers must have a valid Florida driver's license and appropriate insurance on file with the School. This process is for the protection of all students and is not intended to hinder volunteerism or embarrass any family. We sincerely hope that you understand our concern for student safety and will willingly cooperate in this process.

Chaperones' undivided attention is required at all times. Parents need to be aware that they are in a supervisory capacity when serving as a chaperone on a field trip. To this end, all cell phones must be silenced AT ALL TIMES and conversation with other parents must be kept at a minimum. Drivers are **prohibited** from using cell phones while driving. All traffic rules and speed limits must be observed and chaperones must refrain from smoking. Each child must be buckled in his or her own seat belt – no "double-buckling" is permitted. Drivers may not make stops along the way and all chaperones must follow the schedule and direction of the teachers in charge of the field trip. Parents who are unable to fulfill their responsibilities as chaperones will not be permitted to serve as chaperones on future field trips.

## **Birthdays and Holidays**

If you wish your child to celebrate her or his birthday at school, teachers will be happy to assist you with your plans. Elaborate celebrations and gift exchanges are considered inappropriate. Your child's teacher will distribute invitations for parties at your home **only when the whole class is invited** - this eliminates hurt feelings.

There will be special activities on holidays that are planned by the teachers. St. Christopher's Church School appreciates parent help and hopes that you will be able to assist. Sign up sheets for parent participation are available in the classrooms on Orientation Day and during the first week of school. Room parents assist in coordination of these parties.

We follow the Miami-Dade County Public School calendar regarding the observation of some holidays and vacations. The Florida Council of Independent Schools determines the school days and hours. There will be occasional Teacher workdays. (see Calendar). These workdays are used for teachers to confer, update children's records and prepare lessons for the classrooms.

## **Parent Classroom Coordinators(PCC)**

Parents play a vital role in the life of St. Christopher's Church School community. A room parent coordinator (or co-coordinators) helps to organize room parent volunteers from each classroom for "fun" (i.e., Halloween, Christmas Party, Valentine's Day, Teacher Appreciation, etc.) and "fund raising events" (i.e., Annual Spring Gala, etc.) that benefit our students.

Throughout the year, there are opportunities:

1. To welcome new families.

2. To nurture the spirit of community among parents, faculty, staff and alumni. The PG promotes social interaction among our school, the families of students, neighbors and the community at large.
3. To raise funds for the support and benefit of St. Christopher's Montessori Church School.
4. To volunteer for events and activities that complement and enrich educational programs at St. Christopher's Montessori Church School.

The Parent Coordinator(s) meet once a month with the Head and Associate Head of School. We encourage all parents to attend meetings and volunteer to participate in Church School activities.

## **Lunch and Snacks**

Parents may provide their child's own lunch and drink. Children need nutritious lunches that they can easily feed themselves. A microwave oven is available in every classroom and in the parish hall kitchen.

Children are asked to eat their sandwich or warm meal before their dessert. Candy, soda and gum are not allowed in school.

The parents also provide the mid-morning snack for the Toddler and Pre-School classes. Sign-up sheets are posted on the classroom doors at the beginning of the month.

Children in the elementary classes bring their individual snacks in their lunchboxes.

## **Flowers**

We ask each family to occasionally supply fresh flowers to add to the beauty of each environment and allow students to enjoy the process of flower arranging. Flowers from your yard are acceptable.

## **Garden**

Our school's organic garden, with a dedicated area for each classroom, serves as a living laboratory and hands-on area for instruction. Students, teachers and parent volunteers work together to cultivate and care for the garden.

## **Recycling**

St. Christopher's Church School recycling initiative is a school-wide program. Recycling takes place within each classroom and in the lunchroom. Students are responsible for disposing recycled materials in central deposit containers for weekly pick-up. Our ongoing recycling programs instill a respect and reverence for our environment.

A recycled uniform exchange is located at the reception with the after school director.

## TRANSPORTATION

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### **Transportation -- Private/Carpools**

Parent(s) are expected to provide transportation for their daughter's and son(s). The School will be glad to help identify neighboring families; however, School personnel cannot be responsible for the formation of carpools. Students must go home with their own driver or carpool unless prior arrangements have been made, and the School has been notified. A note to the classroom teacher, an e-mail to the office or, in an emergency, a telephone call to the office will serve as notification.

### **Bicycles**

Elementary students may bicycle to school. Students must wear helmets and enter school at the Fernwood entrance. Students must dismount and walk their bicycles to the designated bicycle racks. A parental permission slip must be signed and submitted to the school office authorizing a student's transport by bicycle. A bicycle lock is recommended.

### **Ride Sharing**

The School will not allow students under the age of 18 to use any Über, Lyft, or similar transportation services to obtain transportation to or from School or any School-related activity, unless accompanied by an Über or Lyft account holder who is over the age of 18.

Both Über and Lyft prohibit persons under the age of 18 from utilizing their services without an adult present. Please be advised that the School will treat violations of this policy as it would treat other violations of School rules and policies. In addition, should the School become aware of a violation, it will contact the third-party car service and report it.

### **Other Important Information and Policies**

### **Evacuation**

A map can be found in each room showing the quickest and safest route for leaving the building. Please familiarize yourself with these maps. Students will be appointed to turn off lights and air conditioners and to close the windows and doors during fire drills or an evacuation.

Emergency drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. Students, faculty, and parents on campus at the time of a fire drill are all required to participate. Everyone should move quickly and quietly to designated area. Movement and noise during fire drills should be kept to a minimum. Talking is prohibited.

## **Emergencies other than Fire**

In the event of a national or local emergency, when possible, parents will be contacted to pick up their children in an orderly fashion. If a special circumstance were to arise in which the administration implements a School-wide lockdown, students will remain inside their classrooms with their teachers until an "All Clear," is given at which time parents will be contacted to pick up their children.

## **Fund Raising**

No class, individual, or organization is to begin any money raising activity without permission from the School. No class, individual or organization may request money from any other class, individual, or organization within or outside the School without permission from the School administration office. All extracurricular organizations should strive to be self-sufficient, raising money through approved concessions and approved service-type projects.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

School closing or delays due to inclement weather will follow the decisions made by the public school system of Miami-Dade County. Students should, however, tune into local radio or TV stations for additional information and a recorded message will be left on the school answering system.

School closings will also be posted on Constant Contact and the school's website; [www.stchriskb.org](http://www.stchriskb.org).

## **Inspection Policy**

Parents and students authorize the School to inspect and conduct a search of any place or item on School campus or at a School-related event including, but not limited to, a student's locker, purse, book bag, backpack, vehicle, computer, or personal electronic devices. Inspections and searches may be conducted on a routine or random basis or as deemed necessary. Students must provide any passwords or other access required to inspect such places or items upon request by a school administrator. Inspection of electronic devices includes laptops, phones, cameras, and any other electronics, including the contents of same (texts, emails, photos, images, address books, applications, etc. whether such message or information was sent over the school's system or any personal account such as Yahoo, AOL, Gmail, etc.). Students and their parents consent to the School logging into the device and its contents and applications, as well as accessing all communications, including, without limitation, stored communications. Further, the parents authorize the School to seize and permanently retain property disclosed by an inspection or search which is considered potentially harmful, dangerous, illegal, or inappropriate, or the possession of which is a violation of the School's rules, community standards, and/or local, state, or federal law.

## **Lost and Found**

Books, clothing and other personal items, which are left at the end of each day, will be placed by the Front desk and may be claimed before or after school. Unclaimed items will be donated to charitable organizations or disposed of at regular intervals.

All personal items that your child brings to school such as lunchboxes, sweaters, show and tell objects and books need to be clearly labeled with the child's first and last names. Labeling of all items helps prevent loss.

## **Messages**

In order to maintain an appropriate classroom environment, classroom interruptions should be limited to emergencies. Please do not ask the office to relay messages to your child. This should be done prior to School. Students are not permitted to call home for homework, test papers, folders, etc. If a true emergency occurs then the office should be notified.

## **Parent/Family Cooperation**

As stated elsewhere, the School believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the School and family member (defined as parent, student, or other person associated with the student) is essential to the fulfillment of the School's educational purpose and responsibilities to its students. If the parent's or other family member's behavior, communications, or interactions on or off campus (including during school-sponsored events) is disruptive, intimidating, overly aggressive, or reflects a loss of confidence or disagreement with the School's policies, methods of instruction, or discipline, or otherwise interferes with the School's safety procedures, responsibilities, or accomplishment of its educational purpose or program, the School reserves the right to dismiss the family or family member from the community. In addition, the School reserves the right to place restrictions on parents' or other family members' involvement or activity at School, on School property, or at School-related events for reasons that the School deems appropriate.

Additionally, the School requires that all parents (married, unmarried, divorced, or separated) cooperate with one another in the best interests of their child(ren)'s education at the School. Failure of parents to cooperate with one another may lead to dismissal of their child(ren) from the School or non-renewal of enrollment for future academic years.

## **Payment of Tuition and Fees**

The School strives to provide the highest quality education while maintaining affordable fees. We depend on the timely payment of tuition and registration fees to cover our obligations. Enrolling your child requires a financial commitment much like any other major purchase. Please make School tuition a budget priority. Failure to make tuition/fee payments by the contractual dates may result in a child being removed from School or not being allowed to take examinations. Transcripts and student records cannot be forwarded to another School if there is an outstanding balance in his/her account, or if there are other outstanding debts.

## **Posters and Announcements**

All posters must be approved at the office before they are displayed in School. If a student wishes to put up a poster, he/she should bring it to the office first. General announcements are made in the morning. An advisor must sign club or class announcements. Any announcement originating from a student must be cleared by administration.

## **Principles and Expectations Relating to the Parent/School Relationship**

We have ten expectations that we believe will help us to have a positive and cooperative relationship throughout the entire school year:

- (1) As a part of our joint role to help students grow and mature, parents are expected to encourage their student to address perceived inequities appropriately and independently, including reporting if necessary.
- (2) Parents must cut the constant phone ties from their students. Let your student make decisions on their own without the constant need for parental reinforcement. Sometimes they will make a decision that is different from the one you would have encouraged. That's fine too.
- (3) Students must learn to seek assistance from an adult on campus for academic, athletic, or other assistance. We have resources for your student for this purpose, including the student's advisor, mentor, or other person installed on campus.
- (4) When parents contact the school without the student's knowledge ("John doesn't know I'm calling, but . . ."), the school will need to address the issue directly with the student. We cannot promise you that we will maintain confidentiality over your phone call. Refer to expectation number one.
- (5) The school will typically investigate issues and question students without the parent's presence. This helps us move quickly to resolve issues.
- (6) Although your student's issue is important, concerns take time to address. Please be patient and do not call repeatedly for an update.
- (7) Please do not ask us to tell you about discipline imposed on other students. We would not disclose discipline of your student to others and expect that you understand the same principle applies to other students.
- (8) The school will not communicate everything that occurs in the student's daily life to a parent. We have a lot of students under our care (including your student) that we need to ensure are safe, secure, and happy. We expect that you would like our attention to be focused there.



(9) Neither the teachers nor the school will provide a daily email, text, or call regarding the student's progress or difficulties. We will communicate with you through appropriate school channels if we believe there is a concern that you should address with your student.

(10) All communications between the parents and any person at the school must be professional, cooperative, and appropriate. If we cannot have this type of relationship, this may not be the right school for your child.

## **Tutoring**

Occasionally a student may need extra help in a specific area. Usually, the classroom teacher is able to provide support for a range of learning differences among students, but when this attention is not sufficient to allow a particular student to master the material being presented, the classroom teacher and the interim Head of School may ask parents to arrange for additional help, usually outside of school hours.

The School understands that some parents may engage tutors who are working or have worked at the School in some capacity, such as a teacher, substitute teacher, etc. Please know that the School does not provide an authorized tutor list and private tutoring may not take place on the School's campus. The School's decision on who to employ or retain to provide services to the School are independent decisions from the parent's decision on who will tutor their child. In addition, it could be that the individual the parent has retained to tutor their child is a person that the School has chosen to no longer employ or retain to provide services because of the quality of their work or because of behavioral issues. Parents have an independent obligation to interview candidates and to conduct a background check, screening, and investigation to ensure the individual is suitable as a tutor, that his or her judgment, background, safety practices, training, and other matters impacting the decision on who to choose as a tutor are acceptable to the parent, and to supervise the individual's interactions with their child.

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, teachers are not permitted to tutor their current students for pay. We ask for your cooperation and support by refraining from asking any of our teachers to do so.

## **School Business Office Hours**

The School's Business Office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## **School Closure or Modifications Due to a Force Majeure Event**

Should events beyond the control of the School, including, but not limited to, any fire, act of God, hurricane, tornado, flood, extreme inclement weather, explosion, war (including armed conflict), governmental action, act of terrorism, risk of infectious illness, epidemic, pandemic, shortage or disruption of necessary utilities (water, electricity, etc.), or any other event beyond the School's control, occur, the School has the discretion to close the School and/or modify its operations, curriculum, schedules, length of school day, length of school year, and/or means of learning and teaching methods. The family's contractual financial obligations for tuition and fees remain in full force and effect. Should the School close, the School's duties and obligations shall be suspended immediately without notice until such time as the School, in its sole and reasonable discretion, may safely reopen. If the School cannot reopen due to a force majeure event, the School is under no obligation to refund any portion of tuition paid.

## **Student Records and Information**

Requests for student records and transcripts must be directed in writing to the School Office. The School reserves the right to withhold student transcripts and records for non-payment of tuition or fees. The School will also require the parent to sign a consent form before a student's transcript or other records/information will be released.

The School makes reasonable efforts to ensure that both natural parents (or legal guardians) receive substantially the same information (transcripts, records, appointments, etc.). The School must rely upon the correctness and completeness of parental information when the student is enrolled. In situations of divorced or separated parents, if one parent believes that the other parent is not entitled to receive certain information, the parent wishing to restrict information provided by the School must provide the School with a court order that is still in effect that specifically restricts the other parent from receiving such information.

## **Web Site**

Our site [www.stchriskb.org](http://www.stchriskb.org) contains pertinent information about the Church School, our philosophy, calendar, photos and activities.

