



Maryland's First Charter School
Established 2002

Parent Handbook

2022–2023

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Principal's Welcome

Dear MVMPCS Families,

It remains my pleasure to continue in service as your lead administrator. We have weathered a few unpredictable years together, but we have worked in steady collaboration to establish the firm footing needed to gracefully step into the 2022-23 school year. With so many exciting projects and opportunities on the horizon, it's hard not to get a little giddy! We welcome an assistant principal to the administrative team, anxiously await the news for our move-out/move-in plans to our new facility, and anticipate an enthusiastic welcome for our expansion to include our first class of freshman next year. All of this amid the core work of providing an inclusive, standards-driven yet authentic, quality Montessori education for 300 amazing students. Is it a wonder that I love what I do?!

Mr. Brandon Sowers joined us in August. He has enthusiastically jumped right in to explore and learn the nuances of our community, as well as to navigate our dynamic relationship with FCPS. This means lots of trainings, check-ins, and getting-to-know-you opportunities. He has experience teaching at the elementary level, both traditional and Montessori, and Title 1, as well as elementary level administrative experience. Brandon is increasingly assuming or sharing many administrative duties and identifying ways to participate in the school's various committees. He is a welcome addition!

So, have you seen the new building yet?! The facilities committees of both the school (MVM Future Facilities) and the Board of Trustees are to be commended for identifying this gem. They are working tirelessly to navigate the process. To say "it's complicated" would be a gross understatement; they are working through zoning, fit tests, systems checks, budgeting, and other due-diligence items with the City of Frederick, architects, mechanical specialists, bankers, lawyers, and realtors. To say that I'm grateful for their persistent, hard work is also a gross understatement. I am in awe of what they are doing for the benefit of our school and can't wait for the day that we start boxing up for our move!

Remember last year when we received the green light for our Charter Expansion and won a sizable grant from the State of Maryland? This year's work is to fine tune the plan and to begin putting things into motion. The High School Committee will be finalizing staffing, space needs, curriculum and materials of instruction, school/community partnerships, and regularly communicating progress. There are no other Montessori public high schools in Maryland, and we find ourselves once again on the vanguard in public education. Being part of our "pioneer class" will be amazing!

As part of my personal practice, I use "beginnings" as an opportunity for reflection. Starting a new school year is one of those times. If we are to meet every child where they are, we need to know where they are! That comes from teacher observations, formal and informal assessments, and progress monitoring. Student on-time, daily attendance is crucial. Students will receive multiple layers of support again this year, from social-emotional lessons, learning lab, expanded intervention in reading and math, continuing after school tutoring, and the use of restorative practices. Morning announcements feature "Words of Wisdom" which include messages on gratitude, kindness, perseverance, responsibility, etc., and our Meerkat pledge: "I pledge to practice civility by using kind words, leading

with compassion, and standing up for myself and others every day.” We hope to nurture and inspire all students to maximize their potential.

Finally, thank you for choosing to partner with us in your child’s education. With our amazing teachers and staff – your children couldn’t be in better hands!

Sincerely yours,

Amy Dorman

Staff Directory

Name	Role	Email
Ashkeboussi, Deanna	Speech Language Pathologist	Deanna.Ashkeboussi@fcps.org
Baxivanos, Athena	Special Education Instructional Assistant	AthenaJessica.Baxiva@fcps.org
Birckner, Stacy	Special Educator	Stacy.Birckner@fcps.org
Boss, Craig	Upper Elementary Teacher	Craig.Boss@fcps.org
Bostick, Sandy	Middle School Instructional Assistant	Sandra.Bostick@fcps.org
Burns, Katherine	SEIA	Katherine.Burns@fcps.org
Chadwick, Regina	Administrative Secretary	Regina.Chadwick@fcps.org
Cooper, Rudy	Maintenance Mechanic	Rudolph.Cooper@fcps.org
Cowles, Kim	Montessori Teacher Specialist	Kimberly.Cowles@fcps.org
Dorman, Amy	Principal	Amy.Dorman@fcps.org
Dutrow, Carol	Lower Elementary Teacher	Carol.Dutrow@fcps.org
Epote, Kimeisha	School Nurse	Kimeisha.Epote@fcps.org
Falibota, Becky	Math Intervention	Rebecca.Falibota@fcps.org
Green, Cindy	Counselor	Cynthia.A.Green@fcps.org
Hohn, Laura	Upper Elementary Instructional Assistant	Laura.Hohn@fcps.org
Hwang, Leslie	Lower Elementary Teacher	LiangYu.Hwang@fcps.org
Little, Samantha	Lower Elementary Instructional Assistant	Samantha.Little@fcps.org
Litzenger, Florence	Upper Elementary Instructional Assistant	Florence.Litzenger@fcps.org
Luhrs, Jennifer	School Psychologist	Jennifer.Luhrs@fcps.org
Nambiar, Suneethy	Primary Instructional Assistant	Suneethy.Nambiar@fcps.org
Nelson, Kyla	Upper Elementary Teacher	Kyla.Nelson@fcps.org
O'Malley, Jeanette	Lower Elementary Instructional Assistant	Jeanette.OMalley@fcps.org
Oland, Curtis	Custodian	Curtis.Oland@fcps.org

Overholtzer, Darlene	Physical Education	Darlene.Overholtzer@fcps.org
Peer, TamMara	Middle School Math & Sci 2 Teacher	TamMara.Peer@fcps.org
Sowers, Brandon	Assistant Principal	Brandon.Sowers@fcps.org
Sullivan, Amy	Special Education Instructional Assistant/Program Coordinator	AmyE.Sullivan@fcps.org
Swiger, Mikhaela	Health Room Tech	Mikhaela.Swiger@fcps.org
Szatmary, Ashley	Primary Teacher	Ashley.Szatmary@fcps.org
Titus, Allie	Primary Teacher	Allie.Titus@fcps.org
Trinidad de Doherty, Julia	Lower Elementary Instructional Assistant	Julia.Trinidaddedoh@fcps.org
Vandemmia, Shannon	Music	Shannon.Vandemmia@fcps.org
Warnert, Maria	Upper Elementary Instructional Assistant	Maria.Warnert@fcps.org
Watson, Shelby	Art	Shelby.Watson@fcps.org
Weber, Jennifer	SEIA	Jennifer.Weber@fcps.org
Williams, Danielle	Lower Elementary Teacher	Danielle.Williams@fcps.org
Williams, Lynn	Primary Instructional Assistant	Lynn.Williams@fcps.org
Worrell, John	Middle School ELA & SS Teacher	John.Worrell@fcps.org
Open	Upper Elementary Teacher	
Open	Spanish	
Open	Special Educator	

Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan

MISSION

MVMPCS is a small, intimate, and democratic learning community where children learn actively, think critically, and solve problems creatively. Students' innate desires to learn are fostered using the Montessori approach: a prepared environment, hands-on materials, mixed-age classes, and self-directed learning. Students are empowered to become responsible, confident, caring citizens who possess strong academic skills and an enduring love of learning.

OUR VISION INCLUDES

The hopes and dreams of our Founding Members:

- We will build a sense of community based on a shared vision;
- We will give intellectual priority to the centrality of language, understood broadly as the use and study of symbols: words, numbers, and the arts;
- We will develop a curriculum with coherence, based on the successful implementation of the Montessori Scope and Sequence by certified teachers and supplemented with cross-reference to the Frederick County Public School Curriculum;
- We will create a climate for creative and active learning; and,
- We will educate the whole child: body, mind, and spirit.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators come together every five years in a temporary Governing Council requested committee to create a five-year strategic plan. The plan develops long term goals to direct decision making related to MVMPCS' educational program, leadership and community culture, fiscal responsibility, and physical environment. The current Strategic Plan is approved through 2023 and can be reviewed here: [MVMPCS Strategic Plan, School Years 2018-2023](#)



What is a Charter?

Maryland charter schools are independent public schools with the freedom to innovate while being held accountable for improved student achievement. Charter schools foster a partnership between parents, teachers, and students to create an environment in which parents can be more involved, teachers are empowered and students excel.

To learn more about Maryland public school programs, staffing, admission, and funding, visit the MVMPCS [webpage](#).

Monocacy Valley Montessori Public Charter School (MVMPCS) is Maryland's first charter school and is entering its 20th year. The intent of the charter school movement was to offer additional school choice. Montessori, although founded in 1906, fits that bill!

... and why Montessori?

It may seem ironic that a method of teaching created over 100 years ago could fit the needs of today's learners, but to educators trained in this method, it makes perfect sense. Dr. Maria Montessori designed the model as she completed scientific research. She studied how children learn best. She was an astute observer and scientist who documented and detailed all of her observations.

One of her first discoveries was that children had a need to learn through repetition. She found this out when she began teaching children how to wash their hands. They learned to combine water with soap to make bubbles and washed layers of dirt from their fingers and nails. Even after the dirt was gone, they had the urge to repeat this task until they became fully satisfied with the process and were able to move onto cleaning something new such as a table. This is when Maria Montessori found a need for child-sized furniture.

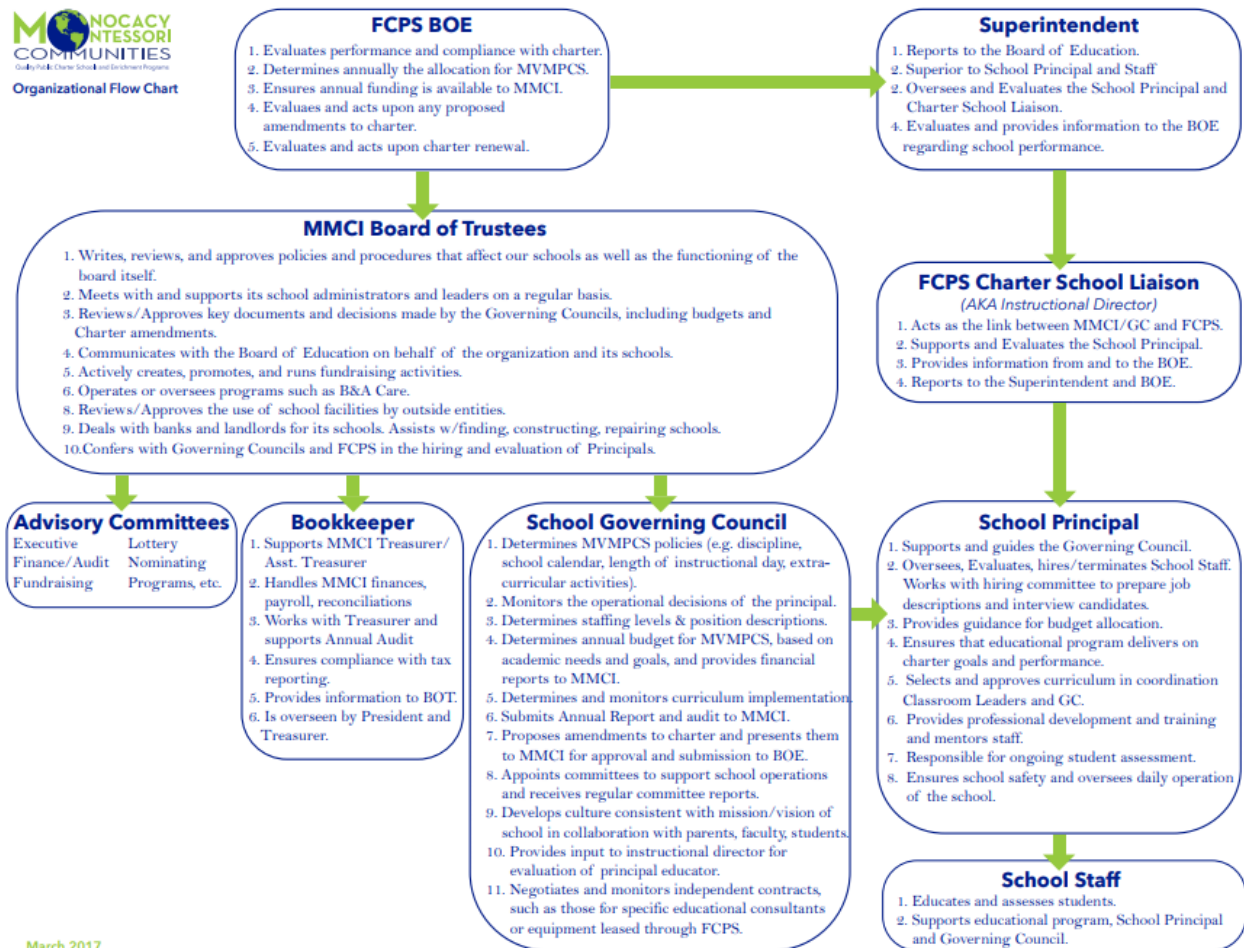
A critical component of her model became the element of choice followed by the need for the children to repeat and experience the work until they internalized the process and were ready for a new level of difficulty. Not that learning is a free-for-all, but that hands-on materials needed to be



available for children to choose from while engaging in learning until they mastered the task. Fair to say, sitting quietly and listening to a teacher's lecture held no interest for the students she observed.

And just why does this method check almost every box suggested by researchers of effective twenty-first century learning? Let's just say while the world may have changed, how children engage in learning has not. To learn more about the Montessori program philosophy and model, visit the MVMPCS website [here](#).

Governance of MVMPCS



Source: [4. MMCI-Organizational-Chart.pdf](#)

MVMPCS is a public charter school under the oversight of Frederick County Public schools and the Monocacy Montessori Communities Inc.— a not for profit organization.

MVMPCS’ charter allows the Monocacy Valley Public Charter School’s Governing Council (GC) to develop new and support existing policies necessary to realize the ever-evolving goals of the school. The GC is the policy making body at MVMPCS and is composed of four parent/ guardian representatives, two staff representatives, the principal, the MVMPCS vice president of Monocacy Montessori Communities Inc., board of trustees, and up to two community at-large friends of education representatives. All the members of the GC can be reached simultaneously by emailing them at gc@mvmpcs.org

Parent representatives and friends of education serve a 2-year term on the governing council. Open seats are filled annually by election in November of each year. The staff elects its representatives separately in accordance with the staff approved Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for GC Staff Representatives. Every MVMPCS family and staff member has the right and obligation to vote each year to elect the school's representatives.

The governing council provides the oversight of parent-led, volunteer-driven committees. These include: budget, building and grounds, communications, community outreach, future facilities, fundraising, hiring, library, strategic planning, volunteer, and expanded learning opportunities. Parents and staff members serve as members of these committees.

2022-2023 MVMPCS Governing Council Member Contact List

GC Chair/ Parent Representative Jen Kuhn gcchair@mvmpcs.org Appointed End date: Dec. 31, 2022	Principal Amy Dorman gcprincipal@mvmpcs.org
GC Secretary/ Parent Representatives Tori McCarthy gcsecretary@mvmpcs.org Elected 2nd Term End date: Dec. 31, 2022	Staff Representative Darlene Overholtzer staffrep1@mvmpcs.org Elected 2nd Term End date: Summer 2024
Parent Representative Robert Weiland parentrep1@mvmpcs.org Appointed End date: Dec. 31, 2023	Staff Representative Cindy Green staffrep2@mvmpcs.org Elected 1st Term End date: Summer 2023
Parent Representative Rachel Schooley parentrep2@mvmpcs.org Elected 1st Term End date: Dec. 31, 2023	Friend of Education Janet Robertson friendofed1@mvmpcs.org Elected 1st Term End date: Dec. 31, 2022
BOT MVM VP Elizabeth Landru vp-mvm@mmci.md.org Elected 2nd Term End Date: June 30, 2024	Friend of Education Cita King friendofed2@mvmpcs.org Elected 1st Term End date: Dec. 31, 2023

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Inc. (MMCI)

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Inc. (MMCI) is a parent-led, volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that oversees the charter agreement for two, Frederick County public Montessori charter schools– Monocacy Valley Montessori (MVMPCS- opened in fall 2002) and Carroll Creek Montessori (CCM– opened in fall 2012). MMCI is the legal entity that holds the charter for both schools in conjunction with the Frederick County Board of Education (BOE). All MVMPCS and CCMPCS parents/ guardians are automatic voting members of MMCI. Per Maryland charter school law, MMCI must exist for our charter schools to exist.

MMCI is governed by a Board of Trustees (BOT) elected by parents/ guardians and staff of MVMPCS and CCMPCS. The BOT includes parent/ guardian leaders who represent each school as well as Friends of Education from the at-large community. The BOT holds public meetings on the 4th Thursday of each month. MVMPCS community members are encouraged to attend. All the members of the BOT can be reached simultaneously by emailing them at bot@mmcimd.org

2022-2023 MMCI Board of Trustees Member Contact List

BOT President Tara Dunsmore president@mmcimd.org End of term: June 30, 2023	Vice President for MVMPCS Elizabeth Landru vp-mvm@mmcimd.org End of term: June 30, 2024
BOT Secretary Meggan Sombat (interim) secretary@mmcimd.org End of term: June 30, 2023	Vice President for CCMPCS Michael Beth Edwards vp-ccm@mmcimd.org End of term: June 30, 2022
BOT Treasurer Diego Alvarez treasurer@mmcimd.org End of term: June 30, 2024	BOT Assistant Treasurer Amy Sullivan assistanttreasurer@mmcimd.org End of term: June 30, 2023
Parent Trustee, MVMPCS Elise Goodwin egoodwin@mmcimd.org End of term: December 31, 2023	Parent Trustee, MVMPCS Meggan Sombat MVMPT2@mmcimd.org End of term: December 31, 2022

2022-2023 MMCI Board of Trustees Member Contact List

Parent Trustee, MVMPCS Nichole Dowlearn nichole.dowlearn@mmcimd.org End of term: December 31, 2023	Parent Trustee, CCMPCS Jennifer Mayo ccmparenttrustee2@mmcimd.org End of term: December 31, 2023
Parent Trustee, CCMPCS Julie Clark julie.clark@mmcimd.org End of term: December 31, 2023	Parent Trustee, CCMPCS Molly Carlson mcarlson@mmcimd.org End of term: December 31, 2022
Friend of Education Kathleen Lutrell friendofed@mmcimd.org End of term: December 31, 2023	Friend of Education Vacant Vacant End of term: December 31, 2022
MVMPCS GC Chair (Non-voting) Jen Kuhn gcchair@mvmpcs.org End of term: December 31, 2022	CCMPCS GC Chair (Non-voting) Nikki Burgee gcchair@carrollcreekmontessori.org End of term: December 31, 2023

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival: Students (preschool through 8th grade) may begin to enter the building at 8:30 am. Instructional time begins at 9:00 am.

Parents/guardians are expected to report to the office with their child if the student arrives after 9:00 am. Parents/guardians complete a late slip and any related forms.

Dismissal: Kindergarten through 8th grade students are dismissed as they are called between 3:45-4:00 pm Monday through Thursday, and between 2:45-3:00 pm on Friday. Carline begins at 3:35 Monday through Thursday and 2:35 on Friday. Parents are asked to not pick up students from 3:00-3:35 Monday through Thursday and 2:00-2:35 on Friday unless it is for occasional appointments. Students not picked up during dismissal will be escorted to the office to wait for pick up. Please notify the front office as soon as you anticipate a delay. Alternate pick up arrangements must be approved by the front office. The staff work day ends at 4:00. It is important for families to do their part to ensure that students are picked no later than 4:00. Families can register with Clubhouse Kids to determine if there is space available in their program for occasional drop in care if they need care beyond 4:00. Families that arrive after 4:00 will need to come into the building to sign their children out and should be prepared to show their ID if necessary.

Preschool dismissal occurs from 11:30-11:45 am Monday-Friday.

Drop-off Procedures

Dropping off: Carline

- Families are encouraged to primarily utilize carline for dropping off. Please follow the traffic flow directions graphic below in the [Traffic Rules](#) section.
- All students will use the Evergreen Alley (main) entrance. Doors will open at 8:30 and students will go to their classrooms. Carline volunteers will assist your children in exiting from the passenger side of the vehicle.
- For traffic safety reasons, students must exit from the passenger side of the vehicle. If your vehicle cannot accommodate students exiting from the passenger side, we ask that you park and drop off your child using the instructions below.

- Additionally, if your child is unable to unbuckle their seatbelt independently, we ask that you park and drop off your student using the instructions below.

Dropping off: Parking lot

- Parents/ guardians who prefer parking are expected to escort students to the parking lot awning. Parents/ guardians are expected to remain with students until the student is prompted by the crossing guard to safely cross the alley into the school building.

Dropping off: Walkers

- Students who do not arrive at school in a motor vehicle are to go to the front/Dill Avenue entrance near the picnic tables and bike rack (which is available for student use). There is a doorbell to request access and gain entry.

Pick-up Procedures

Pick-up: All modes

- A school-issued pick-up card is required to pick up students at dismissal. A pick-up card is a colored card with the student's name and is displayed in the parent's/ guardian's dashboard for carline pick-up or held in hand for parents picking up from the parking lot. Parents/ guardians without the pick-up card will be directed to park (if driving), enter the building, and go to the main office to officially sign-out their children. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE PERMITTED.
- Carpools: Customized carpool cards should be requested by the front office secretary (with all members of the carpool cc'ed in the message). Once permission is verified, carpool cards will be sent home with students in their Thursday folder.
- Alternate pick-up arrangements: If you have scheduled alternate pick-up arrangements for your child (ie. your child is going home with a friend or alternate caregiver) please notify the office by sending an email to the administrative secretary (regina.chadwick@fcps.org).

Pick-up: Carline

- Families are encouraged to primarily utilize the carline for pick up. Please follow the traffic flow directions graphic below in the [Traffic Rules](#) section.
 - All students will be dismissed from the Evergreen Alley (main) entrance. Safety Patrol volunteers will assist your children in entering the vehicle from the passenger side.

- Your student(s) pick-up card must be placed on the dashboard of the vehicle so the student(s) name(s) is unobstructed allowing the carline caller to read and radio your student's name for dismissal.
- For traffic safety reasons, students must enter from the passenger side of the vehicle. If your vehicle cannot accommodate students entering from the passenger side, we ask that you park and pick-up your student using the instructions below.
- Additionally, if your child is unable to buckle their seatbelt independently, we ask that you park and pick up your child using the instructions below.

Pick-up: Parking lot

- Parents/ guardians may park and walk to the awning area to request their children be called by the awning attendant for dismissal.
- Parents/ guardians must present their children's pick-up card (s) before student(s) will be called to the awning.

Pick-up: Walkers

- Parents/ guardians may walk to the awning area to request their children be called by the awning attendant for dismissal.
- Parents/ guardians must present their children's pick-up card (s) before student(s) will be called to the awning.

Preschool dismissal

Preschool dismissal occurs from 11:30-11:45 am Monday-Friday. Parent/guardians must bring your child(s) pick-up card to the main door (on Evergreen Terrace side). A member of staff will dismiss preschoolers directly to their card-holders. Carpool families should request customized cards with all carpool riders in the main office.

Entering the building during arrival/ dismissal

Parents/ guardians are encouraged to avoid entering the building during the busy arrival and dismissal times to ensure student safety and efficiency. Parents/ guardians who enter the building must proceed directly to the office to sign-in.

Students must be signed out by the office if leaving before the end of the school day. It is helpful to have your ID with you in the event that a sub is filling in at the front desk.

Late Pick-up

Students who have not been picked up by the end of dismissal will be sent to wait in the office. Parents/guardians who are running late are expected to call the office to let them know. Otherwise, the office will begin calling parents/guardians and move down the list of emergency contacts to determine who will be picking up the student(s). Upon arrival, you must park and come into the office to sign out your child. After three late arrivals, families will be asked to make child care arrangements with aftercare, who typically offers drop-in services as long as the paperwork has been completed.

MVMPCS is required by the City of Frederick to adhere to the following traffic flow. Please take note of this traffic flow and notify anyone picking up or dropping off students. It is extremely important that parents/guardians and their alternate pick-up designees understand that right turns are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** onto Evergreen Place from Elm Street. Additionally, as a courtesy to our neighbors, please use Bruner Alley as a **ONE WAY EXIT ONLY** during carline and do not park in the neighborhood to walk to the awning or have students called out as “walkers.”



When arriving in carline, please remember that both Evergreen Place and Dill Ave are active streets and many of MVMPCS neighbors have parking spaces abutting the road. Please be courteous to neighbors entering and exiting their properties.

20



NO
PARKING

(Neighboring house
parking, Food Truck
and Pedestrian area)



Attendance

When possible, avoid scheduling outside appointments in the morning. This is when the bulk of lessons are taught in Montessori schools. On-time arrival is important. Children begin their day with more joy and peace when they have enough time to adjust and transition into the environment. Maria Montessori observed that a three-hour work period leads to the deepest concentration, which is followed by calm, peaceful, cooperative, and kind characteristics in children.

Vacations should be scheduled during school breaks and when school is not in session. As a school in the Frederick County Public School system, MVMPCS adheres to the FCPS Absences from School Policy. For more information on this policy, see [here](#).

In the event of illness, notify the classroom teacher and the front office. Notes are accepted in-person or through email sent to mvms.attendance@fcps.org and your student's teacher. If a child is absent more than 3 days due to illness, a doctor's note is suggested. If a child has a contagious illness, please call the school. County reporting is necessary.

Visitors & Volunteers

Visitors are welcome at MVMPCS! Visitors are defined as anyone who is not a staff member or student. The first time visitors and volunteers enter the school each school year they will need to provide their license to the administrative secretary to be scanned in through the Raptor system. During subsequent visits, all visitors and volunteers entering the school must be prepared to provide identification to the office as requested.

In compliance with FCPS Safety Regulations, all visitors should ring that bell at the Evergreen Place door, stand within the camera view, and expect to announce who they are and why they are requesting access to the building. Upon entry to the school ALL visitors are required to sign-in at the office and be issued a visitor's badge prior to going anywhere beyond the lobby/ front office area of the building. Visitors who do not follow this procedure will be escorted to the front office.

Before coming to the school, ALL volunteers MUST register with FCPS as a volunteer via the [FCPS Volunteer Center](#). Please note that the approval process may take a few days to process so please be sure to complete the registration at least a week before your first volunteering role.

Upon arrival, volunteers must sign in as a visitor in the front office to report the purpose for their visit and their destination. All volunteers will be given a visitor's badge by the front office and are expected to wear this badge in a visible place for the duration of their time in the school. Upon departure, volunteers must return their visitor's badge to the front office and they must sign out

prior to exiting the building. First time volunteers must complete a Confidentiality Form for protection of privacy.

If interested, parents/ guardians are asked to reach out to the office to schedule an in-classroom observation.

Parents/ guardians bringing forgotten items to school for a student will be instructed to leave items in a designated area (clearly labeled with the student's name and classroom) in the front office. Students will be notified by the front office so that pick up can be arranged at a convenient time.

Positive Discipline Policy

The creation of a respectful, democratic, and productive learning community were the main goals of the founding parents of MVMPCS. The Governing Council, in partnership with the faculty, has developed a discipline policy that aligns with FCPS and these goals.

Freedom with Responsibility

In a Montessori classroom, the goal is for children to feel safe as they develop an intrinsic desire to be productively engaged. MVMPCS' approach is to teach and model respect and kindness. If anyone behaves in a manner that is not respectful or kind to another person, we seek to facilitate conflict resolution and create understanding.

A positive emphasis also includes setting boundaries relating to unsafe, unkind, or aggressive behaviors. MVMPCS will protect the rights of all community members and ensure a safe environment. Staff are trained to redirect and manage disruptive behaviors.

Teachers and Instructional Assistants may intervene using a variety of classroom management strategies when students present mild disruptive, disrespectful, unsafe, or unkind behavior. Teachers will have discretion in using these interventions, keeping in mind that the goal is to return the students to productive work time. Some strategies might include: redirection, close proximity, self-regulation strategies, or visiting the school counselor. Students who are frequently off task or disruptive during work time may benefit from more intensive teacher interventions, referral to an interventionist, or initiating the SST (Student Services Team) process. Parent-teacher communication will occur early and often.

MVMPCS expects full parental cooperation with the above policy. All rules apply before, during, and after school, and at all times on school sponsored outings. In the event of major chronic misbehavior that does not respond to the above steps, additional interventions may be necessary.

Please refer to the "Discipline" section of the [FCPS Calendar Handbook](#) for more detailed description of policies and intervention.

Our school mascot is Monty the Meerkat. MVMPCS Meerkats are essential to cultivating a peaceful environment.

- Meerkats will treat others with dignity and respect;
- Meerkats will respect the work and property of others;
- Meerkats will respect the classroom environment and materials;
- Meerkats will bring only necessary items to school; and,
- Meerkats will have consistent attendance.

Montessori Peace Curriculum

Because a Montessori classroom is composed of students of varying ages, creating a safe and nurturing environment is important. MVMPCS has incorporated the Peace Curriculum to provide students with training in voicing and solving their conflicts. Time is spent practicing the exchange of concerns between students. Students know that the ‘peace rose’ is available for them to use at any point in time. By handing the ‘peace rose’ to a classmate, students begin the process of expressing their concerns. This model has been effective with children of all ages.

Incorporating the Peace Curriculum at Home

Children will learn in school that they have the power to resolve conflict independently. Ask your child about their process in their classroom. An adult should be nearby to help if mediation is necessary, or to ask clarifying questions. Provide a “peace rose” or an object used to designate the person talking. The two people involved in the conflict will take turns holding the “peace rose” and sharing their side of the story in a calm manner. Each time checking in with the other to ensure understanding of what was said. Teachers encourage students to use “I” statements while sharing what happened. The conversation ends when both parties can “declare peace,” shake hands or hug, and move on from the matter.

In addition to following a similar procedure, it is a good idea to have a designated space for your child to go when they need space or time to think or when they are feeling frustrated. Our peace corners may have other activities such as a simple wooden puzzle, meditation drawing, calm down jar, or stress ball. This helps refocus their emotions until they are ready to talk. We want to encourage you to provide one or more of these simple activities for your child to have when needed.

Restorative Practices

Students feel safe within a community that has a sense of order, well established guidelines, and procedures for restoring order when it has been disrupted. Montessori educators establish routines and expectations for students which promote a peaceful environment. One of the best practices for building community is the thoughtful and intentional use of Classroom Circles. Classroom Circles are a hallmark of restorative practices and serve many purposes. Classroom Circles can be used to build community, keep the peace, solve problems, and restore the community once a harm has occurred.

Many students learn by testing the limits, and sometimes behave in challenging ways. When this occurs, MVMPCS teachers recognize an opportunity for the student to learn important social and emotional skills. Rather than opting to punish a student, staff assists the child in understanding the

harm they caused, what action they can take to make things right, and how they can restore the relationship. Restoring relationships is an important step for ensuring positive re-entry to the community.

The use of restorative practices promotes a positive climate and culture within the school, and it helps to reduce instances of bullying. Nevertheless, incidents of bullying should be reported immediately. Students are encouraged to contact their teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator. When an incident of bullying has been reported or observed, a staff member will reach out to both families to determine next steps for resolving the issue. In addition, FCPS has a Bullying, Harassment, or intimidation Reporting Form which can be used to report bullying. Information is also available in the [FCPS Calendar Handbook](#) and [Regulation 400-48](#).

Toileting Policy

When you checked the lottery acknowledgement, you agreed that your child would be independently toileting by the first day of school. MVMPCS defines “Independently Toileting” as:

“The child can go into the restroom and use the toilet successfully, navigating clothing (up and down/ on or off), wiping, dropping toilet paper into the toilet, flushing, washing hands, and returning to class.”

Staff Role in Accident Management

MVMPCS’ preschool program is not a licensed daycare. Consequently, the staff is prohibited from changing diapers, dressing or undressing children, entering the stall with the child, or wiping students.

In the event of an accident:

1. Staff will escort the child to the restroom.
2. The child will enter the stall alone, change clothes, put clothing in a bag, and wash hands.
3. Staff will escort the child back to the classroom.
4. The child will put the bag in his backpack.
5. Staff will put an incident report in the backpack.
6. The lead teacher will email parents an incident report.
7. Parents/ guardians must return clean, dry clothes the following day in a labeled Ziploc bag.
8. If the child is not able to complete items 1-7 without assistance, a parent guardian will come to the school to assist the child.

In the event of subsequent accidents:

1. Staff will follow the procedure detailed above.
2. After two or more accidents within a two-week period, the lead teacher will contact the parent/ guardian to schedule a conference.
3. The goal of the conference is for the parents/ guardians and staff to collaborate on how to best meet the needs of the child in learning this important, practical life skill. Conferees will discuss Montessori aligned toilet training and work together to identify any health needs or concerns.
4. The parent/ guardian must avail themselves or make other necessary arrangements to assist the child when accidents occur.
5. Parents/ guardians will continue to team with staff to implement a home plan and monitor progress.
6. Once the above steps have been executed in good faith by all parties, then the ultimate resolution will lie with the principal.

This policy is applicable to preschool students for the duration of both school years.

Health Guidelines

FCPS Back-to-School 2022-23 Plan and FAQ

During the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years MVMPCS' operations were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving into this new school year, MVMPCS will continue to follow FCPS guidance with regards to school safety and operations. The [Frederick County Public Schools' School Opening Plan & Continuity of Services 2022 – 2023](#) includes information on FCPS' continuing COVID-19 protocols beginning on Page 14. . Changes to school operations, including health and safety updates, will be communicated to families through MVMPCS' Find Out First email system. Please see the [School Communication](#) section below for information on how to sign up for Find Out First.

Medication/ Treatment Policy

Students who need to visit the health room will need to wear a face mask because it is a healthcare setting. Students who elect not to wear a mask to school will be provided a disposable one to use.

If it is necessary for a student to take medicine during the school day, a parent/ guardian must provide a written Medical Authorization Form from the student's physician for all prescription and over-the-counter medications. (Tylenol, Benadryl, etc.) Medication must be provided to the school health room tech by the parent/ guardian in the original pharmacy bottle and be correctly and completely labeled. Medications sent in envelopes, plastic bags, or daily reminder containers cannot be accepted.

Any medical treatment required by a student requires a written order from a physician. Please contact the school health room as soon as you know that your child requires a treatment so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

If you have any questions, you may contact our School Health Technician directly by calling (240) 236-6108 or emailing mikhaela.swiger@fcps.org.

When to Keep Children at Home

Please do not send children to school if they are experiencing:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- A rash
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Or if the severity of the illness would not be in the best interest of the child or other students. It is recommended that your child be symptom-free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school. If a student is on medication for a contagious condition, such as strep throat, pink eye, etc., he or she is to have taken medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school. In addition, please inform the health technician if your child has had any conditions such as: COVID-19, chicken pox, head lice, pink eye, or other communicable conditions. We must report them.

Health Screenings

All students new to the Maryland Public School system or students in preschool, kindergarten (if not previously screened), and first and eighth graders will receive vision and hearing screenings.

Breakfast and Lunch Procedures

Students may bring bag lunches or purchase a hot breakfast and/ or lunch from FCPS Food Services. The provision of free meals for all students has ended. Free and reduced priced meal forms will be sent home at the beginning of the school year and can be accessed online at <https://www.fcpsnutrition.com> Parents may contact the FCPS Food and Nutrition Services Office through <https://www.fcps.org> or by calling (301) 644-5061 with any questions.

Students eat in their classrooms and are expected, in Montessori fashion, to help clean up the tables and floors after breakfast and lunch. A classroom count of hot lunch orders is taken each morning and turned in by 9:30 am. If your child is late and misses the order count, there is no guarantee that a meal will be available for them. It is best to make a lunch arrangement for your child if you arrive after 9:30.. Menus are posted by the beginning of the month at <https://www.fcpsnutrition.com>

FCPS offers parents/ guardians a convenient way to monitor and add funds to their child's lunch account by using the MySchoolBucks online program. This service will require logging in with the student's FCPS identification number, which can be obtained by calling the MVMPCS front office. For more information, see <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>

If parents/ guardians do not wish to use this service, MVMPCS' food service workers may be paid directly at arrival. Another option is to send a check (payable to FCPS) to the student's teacher in an envelope with the student's name and designed as "lunch money."

More information about meals, menus, and meal prices can be found on [FCPS' website](#).

Clothing and Dress Codes

Montessori students work on the floor daily. Students who wear dresses or skirts may want to consider adding bike shorts to their outfit. Students will go outdoors whenever weather and school activities permit. Dressing in layers is recommended.

In the winter, be sure to include mittens, hats, and boots. **Please label removable clothing with the student's full name.** A complete change of clothes must be left at school for all primary students.

We follow FCPS dress code guidelines, which restrict students from wearing overly revealing clothing and apparel that is offensive or derogatory. Students are not to wear hoodies or hats in school. They can be worn outside at recess or a walking field trip.

<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/439>

Electronics Policy

Cellphones, tablets, smart watches, etc. need to remain in students' backpacks during school hours. Any electronics that are found in violation of the electronics policy will be confiscated and stored in the front office until a parent/ guardian comes to retrieve it. If you have a specific question regarding this policy, speak to your child's teacher. (<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/400-18>)

MVMPCS cannot be held responsible for any electronic items brought to school.

Student Progress

Parent/ guardian conferences are held once a year. Sign ups will be sent electronically in early October. Parents/ guardians can expect to see any of the following during conferences: work samples, current grades, or evaluation results.

Report cards are prepared each quarter and sent home. MCMPCS preschool students receive report cards in January and June. Middle school students' grades are maintained online and available for parents/ guardians to follow their assignments and grades.

School Communication

It is vital that parents/ guardians stay connected with news and events in the school community. There are various sources of news at MVMPCS:

- **eNews/ Find Out First –**
 - eNews is an email subscription service run by parent volunteers. Each family automatically receives eNews via the parent email address used in the MMCI lottery/ enrollment process.
 - Find Out First (FOF) is an email subscription service managed by Frederick County Public Schools. Each family is automatically signed up to receive FOF communications from FCPS and from the school(s) in which their children are enrolled. You may sign up to receive text alerts and FOF communications from additional schools [here](#).
- **Community Chat/ MVM Community Connections Facebook Group –**
 - Community Chat is a Google group provided for community members to post requests and news. Some examples of Community Chat topics include: play dates at the park, committee events, extracurricular events, and carpool requests. All MVMPCS parents are added to the Google group annually. Community Chat group email is: mvmpcs-community-chat@mvmpcs.org.
 - MVM Community Connections is a Private, Closed Facebook Group that is optional, and open to all current parents and guardians, teachers and staff, and Friends of Education at MVMPCS. The group can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/648129453010956>.
 - Please refer to the [Social Media Use Policy](#) for rules and expectations for posting and replying to Community Chat and in the MVM Community Connections Facebook Group.
- **Social Media–** MVMPCS has an active, public facing Facebook page where parent volunteers post news, announcements, and event information. We also utilize Twitter and Instagram to share news and information.
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MVMPCS/>
 - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mvmpcs/>
 - Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mvmpcs?lang=en>
 - LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/monocacy-valley-montessori-public-charter-school>
- **Website–** Our school website (<https://www.mvmpcs.org>) serves as a source of information for prospective families and as a comprehensive resource for our Meerkat community. The website includes information about the school history and governance, Montessori education, current school events and news, volunteer opportunities, fundraising information, etc. Community members are responsible for staying informed, and we recommend adding

a shortcut icon on the home screen of your mobile device for easy reference. Each family receives news and website updates via the email address used in the MMCI lottery/enrollment process.

- **Classroom and Staff Communication/ Thursday Folders**—Teachers and staff establish email lists for each classroom, and will communicate directly with parents through email, newsletters, and/ or paperwork sent home in Thursday Folders. Typically, paperwork from classrooms, committees, and FCPS is sent home in Thursday Folders each week and empty Thursday Folders are expected back the next day.
- **Student Directory**— Each year the Communications Committee updates a private, online Student Directory. The students are organized by classroom. Families may choose to opt out of having their names, phone number, email address, and class assignment listed in our school directory by notifying the Administrative Secretary in writing by September 30. Additional information about FCPS’ student records and information policies can be found [here](#).
- **Staff Communication**— A [staff directory](#) is located in the parent handbook and on the [website](#). Members of staff are expected to respond to emails and phone calls within 24-48 hours during regular school hours.

Social Media Use Policy

The Community Social Media Policy is applicable to posts and replies in our Community Chat forum as well as posts, comments, and reviews on our MVMPCS social media accounts. All community members must sign their acknowledgement of the Community Social Media Use Policy.

1. Posts that serve to jeopardize the charter application of MVMPCS, or MMCI as the charter holder, are prohibited.
2. Posts that injure the future success of the school or its students are prohibited.
3. Posts that are threatening to any member or are of malicious intent are prohibited.
4. Inappropriate content, including but not limited to personal topics, posts seeking monetary donations, and posts including profanity, are prohibited.
5. All posts must be directly related to MVMPCS or MMCI.
6. The Community Chat Forum and other MVMPCS social media accounts shall not be used to address personnel issues or grievances against school administration, teachers, committees, or other parents.
7. The Community Chat Forum and other MVMPCS social media accounts shall not be used for questions that are directed to one person.
8. All questions related to general school operations should be directed to the school secretary or an administrator, and should not be posted on the Community Chat Forum or other social media accounts.

9. It is strictly prohibited to redistribute or reprint (including sharing screen shots of content) any content published on MVMPCS social media channels.
10. Sharing of the Community Chat Forum membership list is strictly prohibited.
11. You must be a current member of the MVMPCS community to receive a Community Chat Forum account. When you leave the community, your account will not be renewed.
12. All Community Chat Forum account holders must sign their acknowledgment of this policy before receiving an account.
13. Anyone found not adhering to these guidelines will be asked to resign the social media policy agreement, and any additional violations may result in posting privileges being revoked.
14. Any online communication between members of the community outside of our official social media channels is considered outside the scope of this policy. This includes personal email accounts, personal Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, and other sites. Therefore, community members are strongly encouraged to use common sense and “proper netiquette” when communicating online. We each have a responsibility to act as positive online role models for our children.
15. Regarding suspected violations of the Community Social Media Use Policy, any community member who suspects a violation may send a written complaint to the MVMPCS Governing Council. Community members are asked to highlight specific text they believe is in violation of the Policy. Policy violations are determined by the MVMPCS Governing Council, within one month of receiving a complaint. The Governing Council should examine the circumstances and text in question to determine if the Policy has been violated.
 - a. Violations of the Policy will result in the following consequences:
 - i. First Violation– written warning from the Governing Council. The community member(s) will be asked to resign the Policy.
 - ii. Second Violation– Posting privileges will be revoked for the remainder of the school year.
 - iii. Posting privileges may be reinstated the following school year, and the community member’s record should be cleared.

School Calendar

School calendar handbooks will be distributed to each student during the first week of school. It is also available for viewing or download on the FCPS website: [FCPS 2022-2023 Calendar Handbook](#). Please note that any variation for MVMPCS students will be announced via FOF, or eNews, and on our website in advance.

MVMPCS 2022-2023 School Year Calendar

MVMPCS' calendar is available on our website [here](#), and our shared MVMPCS Google Calendar can be found [here](#). Both calendars can be added to your computer and mobile devices for easy reference using the links below. Please note, these links will add the MVMPCS calendar to the device/account where they are accessed and these steps will need to be performed for each device/account you would like to connect.

View only on any device:

1. View the MVMPCS Calendar at cal.mvmpcs.org

Add MVMPCS Calendar to your Google/Android Calendar:

1. Click this link: addcal.mvmpcs.org

Subscribe to the MVMPCS calendar on your iPhone/iPad:

1. Open **Settings > Calendar > Accounts > Add Account**
2. Choose **Other**
3. Under Calendars, click: **Add Subscribed Calendar**
4. Use Server: ical.mvmpcs.org
5. Click **Next > Save**

Additional information about school closures and vacations, can be found on the Frederick County Public Schools website here: [FCPS calendar](#).

Early Dismissal, Snow Days, and School Closings

MVMPCS follows the FCPS calendar and closings. The Early Dismissal Days are noted in the [school calendar](#) and the [FCPS webpage](#). MVMPCS closes at 1:45 pm on 2-hour early dismissal days, except when they occur on a Friday. MVMPCS closes at 12:45 on 2-hour dismissal days that occur on Fridays only.

Inclement weather days are determined by FCPS and communicated via the following methods:

- Find Out First (email and text)
- MVMPCS eNews
- FCPS Cable Channel 18 or <https://www.schools-out.com>
- On the radio (WAFY 103.1 FM, WFMD 930 AM, WFRE 99.9 FM, WTHU 1450 AM)

Preschool exception: In the event of an inclement weather delay, preschool at MVMPCS will be canceled. Note that this is a departure from other FCPS preschool programs.

When FCPS cancels evening activities due to inclement weather, MVMPCS is required to comply. If there is a building concern that merits closing for MVMPCS, parents/ guardians will be notified by the office via FOF after FCPS grants permission for closure. Please refer to the [School Communication](#) section of this handbook for information on how to sign-up for FOF.

Address and Phone Changes

Parents/ guardians must inform the school office immediately if there is any change in the home address, home or work phone numbers, or emergency phone numbers. For your child's health and safety, it is critical that these numbers are kept current. Supporting documentation is required for address changes, such as a signed lease or utility bill. We must always have a phone number to reach a parent/ guardian in case of emergency.

The Montessori Celebration of Life Ceremony

In Montessori classrooms, birthdays are a special way to celebrate each student's life. At the elementary level, these celebrations are rich with ritual and personal expression. For example, primary students do a "walk around the sun" to honor each year of their life. Parents/ guardians are often present for these celebrations, either in person or virtually. Students should be honored in a healthy, respectful manner. Food treats are not permitted during celebrations. Birthday party invitations are only allowed to be distributed at school when every child in the class is invited. Invitations may be given to the teacher to put in each child's backpack. Teachers will not provide contact information for party planning. If you have specific questions about the celebration of life, speak with your child's teacher.

Lost and Found

Families are expected to mark personal belongings with the student's full name. Items left at school can be found in the lost and found area near the lunch distribution space. If your child has lost an especially valuable item, please contact the office. Items such as mobile phones, jewelry, etc. are kept locked in the office.

Items are donated at least twice a year, so please encourage your child to look carefully for lost items.

Before and After Care

Contact Clubhouse Kids

On the web:
www.ClubhouseKidsOnline.com

By Email:
info@clubhousekidsonline.com

By Regular Mail:
P.O. Box 455 Walkersville MD 21793

By Phone:
301-685-5100 Office
301-685-5120 Fax

Clubhouse Kids is a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) licensed child care company.



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
PREPARING WORLD CLASS STUDENTS

We are also a proud participant of MSDE's MD Excels "Check for Quality Child Care" program.



MARYLANDE  **XCELS**
CHECK FOR QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS

During the school year, Clubhouse Kids provides before and after school childcare at MVMPCS for children ages 5-15. Additionally, information about Clubhouse Kids including programs, rates, and enrollment forms can be found on the Clubhouse Kids website: <http://www.clubhousekidsonline.com> or by calling (301) 685-5100.

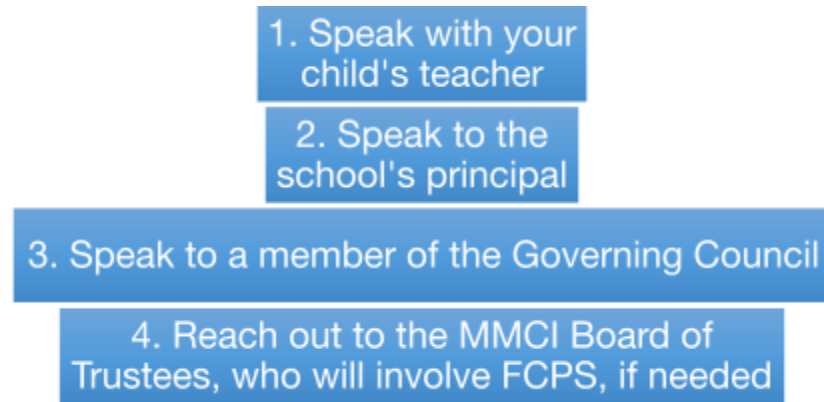
Please note, registration and enrollment is a must for all families who will require care, whether needing a regular enrollment plan or drop-in care. Contact Clubhouse Kids for additional information.



Families who are habitually late picking up students will be asked to enroll in after care.

How to Solve a Concern?

Should parent/ guardian concerns arise, families are advised to follow the channels in order as outlined below.



Parent Involvement

At MVMPCS, each student, parent, teacher, and family is part of a community dedicated to educational choice, to our children, and to the future of our school.

Did you know that even though MVMPCS is a public charter school, it does not receive the same funding from the Board of Education as a traditional public school? In fact, our students receive only 75% of the per pupil allotment allocated to the rest of FCPS schools.

Simply put, our school operates with less— less funding, less technical support, and no support of our facilities from the Board of Education. MVMPCS is allowed more operational independence, but we must count on our community to make up the difference in the following key ways.

Volunteering

At MVMPCS, each student, parent, teacher, and family is part of a community dedicated to education choice, to our children, and to the future of our school. Volunteering is a way to connect with and experience the MVMPCS community. Every year, the MVMPCS community has been recognized by FCPS for the incredible number of hours our families have served. Our community not only volunteers in great numbers, but often far exceeds the number of hours of volunteering required for each family.

MVMPCS volunteers recorded over 7,900 hours in the 2021-2022 school year!

Because we are a charter school, volunteerism is essential to help account for the funding we do not receive compared with traditional public schools. Simply put, our school operated with less— less funding, less technical support, and less support of our facilities from the local Board of Education. This allows us more operational independence, but requires us to count on our community members to make up the difference in critical ways.



MVMPCS relies on community members willing to share their professional expertise. Experience in architecture/ construction or real estate law? The Building Search Committee could use your expert advice. Have a background in accounting or business? The MVMPCS Budget is prepared and managed by volunteers. Consider offering your professional services pro bono. Whatever your profession or skill might be, you can use it to give back to your community.

Two-parent/ guardian households are asked to volunteer a minimum of 30 hours annually; single parent/ guardian households are asked to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours annually. All volunteers are required by FCPS to participate in an annual orientation and background check before volunteering at MVMPCS. Volunteers are asked to keep track of their volunteer hours and log them on the [MVMPCS website](#). Each spring, MVMPCS submits an annual report of the volunteer hours.

Volunteer Contact Form– At the start of the school year, our Volunteer Committee collects information through the online Volunteer Contact Form to help our community Get Connected and Get Involved. Please take a moment to fill out the [Volunteer Contact Form here](#).

New volunteer opportunities open frequently. Email volunteer@mvmpcs.org, check out the [volunteering webpage](#) for a list of active committees and watch eNews for more information.

Fundraising and Donations

Throughout the school year, fundraising may be done in a variety of ways including community gatherings at restaurants, spiritwear sales, and community events. However, for the 2022-23 school year, the primary focus will be on soliciting monetary donations through the annual giving campaign. Your financial contribution will help us provide much-needed funding for educational materials, maintenance of our facilities, staff training, and the growth of our Montessori program.

The suggested donation amount is \$250/ household, or \$150 for single-parent households. MVMPCS understands that every family's situation is different, and that the suggested donation

amounts may be out of reach. Please know that any amount you are able to work into your budget is appreciated. It is not just the amount given, but the participation that makes a difference. When seeking grants from outside sources, a key factor for approval is 100% participation from our community.

“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.” Edward Everett Hale

When parents/ guardians choose to send their children to a public Montessori school, they become a part of a dynamic community. Fundraising, donations, and volunteer hours are critical components of this community.

If each household contributes 30 volunteer hours and \$250 (10 volunteer hours and \$150 for single-parent/ guardian households) annually to support our school, we will be well on our way to bridging the funding gap. If your family simply does not have the time to give, consider increasing your donation amount. Alternatively, if you are unable to contribute financially, consider offering more time.

Examples:

Family A has two working parents/ guardians. Between work, carpooling, after school activities, there simply are not enough hours in the day. With this in mind, Family A opts to donate \$500 to MVMPCS each year. Additionally, each parent will try to chaperone 1 field trip during the school year, bringing their volunteer hours to around 10.

Family B has one working parent/ guardian and one stay-at-home parent/ guardian. They find a good balance in donating the suggested amount of \$250, and volunteer at least 30 hours annually by serving as a committee chair.

Family C has one working parent/ guardian. Both time and money are limited for this family so the parent/ guardian sets up an automatic donation through PayPal. Each month, \$5 is automatically sent to MVMPCS. Additionally, the parent/ guardian tried to fill at least one hour of volunteer work each week by completing projects at home as needed.

In each of the above examples, the family has fulfilled their family partnership agreement.

MVMPCS recognizes and appreciates all families and their dedicated involvement, through volunteer hours and monetary donations. Your support plays an important role in your children's education experience, and we couldn't do it without you.

Montessori Terminology

When parents first come to a Montessori school, it can be hard to understand some of the terminology used. We have created this Montessori Glossary to better help parents learn about the Montessori Method.

Absorbent Mind - The ability and ease with which the young child, from birth through approximately age 6, learns from her environment without conscious effort, naturally and spontaneously.

Choice - Allowing the child to develop skills and deepen knowledge in an activity that has been introduced. This free choice allows the child to bring an enthusiasm to learning that might be extinguished under force.

Concrete to Abstract - A logical, developmentally appropriate progression that allows the child to an abstract understanding of a concept by first encountering it in a concrete form.

Cosmic Education - Maria Montessori urged us to give elementary-level children a “vision of the universe” to help them discover how all parts of the cosmos are interconnected and interdependent. Impressionistic lessons are designed to spark the child’s imagination and arouse the child’s interest in further study. Education is centered around the “Great Lessons,” which include the “Birth of the Universe,” “The Timeline of Life,” “The Coming of Humans,” “The Story of Language,” and “The Story of Numbers.” As children develop respect for past events, they become aware of their own roles and responsibilities in the global society of today and tomorrow.

Didactic Material - Didactic meaning “designed or intended to teach,” these are specially designed instruction materials— many invented by Maria Montessori— used in Montessori classrooms.

Freedom and Responsibility - The child’s free movement and experiences in an environment that provides discipline through liberty and respect for his rights rights. The child is free to act within the limits of purposeful activity.

Going-Out - Students in a Montessori elementary classroom will go out in small groups of two to six students into the community to gather information or experiences in areas of interest. This is different from a class field trip in that the outing relates to a specific topic of study being engaged in by a small group of children. Typically, students plan these outings independently.

Grace and Courtesy - The lessons in grace and courtesy are designed to build vital social skills. From the basics of learning how to make an introduction, how to ask for assistance, how to greet a guest, and many more, the child is introduced to foundational skills for a lifetime of healthy relationships.

Independence - The overcoming of obstacles and dependence on others in his attempt to gain freedom and self-development. Throughout the four planes of development, the child and young adult continually seek to become more independent. It's as if the child says, "Help me to help myself."

Montessori - The term may refer to Dr. Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori Method of education, of the method itself.

Normalization - A natural or "normal" developmental process is marked by a love of constructive activity, concentration, self-discipline, and joy in accomplishment. Dr. Montessori observed that the normalization process is characteristic of human beings at any age.

Order - The giving of a specific time, location, and meaning to everything in the environment to help the child establish order in his mind and his learning habits.

Practical Life - Those exercises through which the child learns to care for himself and his environment. Activities related to self-care, personal hygiene, care of the environment, and grace and courtesy help children learn to work independently, develop concentration, and build self-esteem.

Prepared Environment - An atmosphere created to enable the child to be free to learn through his own activity in peaceful and orderly surroundings adapted to the child's size and interest. The teacher prepares the environment of the Montessori classroom with carefully selected, aesthetically arranged materials that are presented sequentially to meet the developmental needs of the children using the space. Well-prepared Montessori environments contain appropriated-sized furniture, a full complement of Montessori materials, and enough space to allow children to work in peace, alone or in small or large groups.

Sensorial Exercises - Those exercises pertaining to the development of the five senses and to providing a foundation for speech, writing, and arithmetic by use of the sensorial materials.

The 3-Period Lesson - A 3-step technique for presenting information to the child. In the first— the introduction or naming period— the teacher demonstrates what "this is." In the second— the association or recognition period— the teacher asks the child to "show" what

was just identified. Finally, in the recall period, the teacher asks the child to name the object area. Moving from new information to passive recall to active identification reinforces the child's learning and demonstrates her mastery.

Work - Purposeful activity. Maria Montessori observed that children learn through purposeful activities of their own choosing; Montessori schools call all the children's activities "work."

Work Cycle - A basic work cycle begins with choosing an activity, doing that activity, returning the activity to order, and then experiencing a sense of satisfaction. The sense of satisfaction motivates the child to choose the next activity, thus creating another cycle of work. Montessori advocates that children have three hours of open, uninterrupted time to choose independent work, become deeply engaged, and repeat to their own satisfaction.

2022-2023

Family Partnership Agreement

At Monocacy Valley Montessori Public Charter School parent/guardian involvement is critical to our success.

By accepting a class spot and signing this form your family is agreeing to the following terms:

1. We acknowledge the importance of understanding the Montessori principles central to our child's school. Parent/guardian Education Nights, Back to School Nights, class newsletters, Open Houses, and Tours are provided to help MVMPCS families learn how to incorporate Montessori elements into their lives.
2. We will volunteer at least 30 hours for the school. Volunteering can be completed by joining a school committee, attending Governing Council or Board of Trustee meetings, helping the classroom, helping with fundraising efforts, etc.
3. We will be mindful of the financial needs of the organization. If possible, we will make a financial contribution through participation in the pledge drive, company matching programs, school fundraisers, etc.

The relationship between the school and home contributes to success at Monocacy Valley Montessori Public Charter School. We are pleased to have your family as part of our school.

Please click here to digitally sign this agreement.

If you would like to print the form and submit it via mail, please click [here](#).



Maryland's First Charter School

**MONOCACY
VALLEY
MONTESSORI**

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Established 2002

PARENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023

Upon completion of reading this handbook, parents/guardians are asked to use one of the links below to acknowledge that you received the MVMPCS Parent Handbook and have read the entire document.

[Please click here to digitally sign this acknowledgement.](#)

If you would like to print the form and submit it via mail, please click [here](#).

Document Approvals and Updates

This document was approved by the MVMPCS GC via vote during the September 2022 Monthly GC voting meeting. Minutes for this meeting can be reviewed [here](#).

The following changes/updates have been made to this document since the initial approval:

Date	Editor Initials	Changes/Updates