



Rising Sun
Montessori School

2020/2021

Family
Handbook

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I. Welcome to Rising Sun Montessori School

Welcome Statement

On behalf of the staff, families, students, and Board of Directors of Rising Sun Montessori School we want to welcome you and your child to a community of learners in pursuit of an excellent Montessori education.

Handbook Use and Purpose

This handbook is designed to help family members and students get acquainted with RSMS. It explains some of our philosophies, beliefs, structures, procedures, and policies. Although this Handbook is not intended to be an official policy manual, we hope that it serves as a useful reference to you while your child is enrolled at RSMS.

Because RSMS is a growing and changing organization, it reserves full discretion to add, modify, or delete parts of this Handbook, or the policies and procedures on which they may be based, at any time.

Mission Statement

The mission of Rising Sun Montessori School is to provide an authentic Montessori school that embraces the diversity of our students, parents, and teachers. Our school community will nurture the individual needs of each child in a learning environment that encourages students to be self-directed, avid learners who are prepared for a diverse world.

Vision of RSMS

The vision of RSMS is to implement an effective educational program that has:

- **High Expectations:** Students that are expected to adhere to high standards of student behavior and academic achievement. Life-long guidelines that are directly taught and modeled by staff. Students that are expected to demonstrate these values in their schoolwork as well as their interactions with peers and adults.
- **Significant Support:** Smaller class sizes, and strong academic, social, and support programs.
- **Talented Staff Sustained by Extensive Professional Development:** Our school staff will improve their performance with a high emphasis on professional development goals, training and evaluation tools.
- **Parent and Community Involvement:** Parents that support their children and the school by encouraging studying and reading at home, supporting good behavior at school, and participating in school activities and committees. Parents will be a valued and included member of the school culture. Parental input will be actively solicited. The school will continue to develop meaningful community partnerships to help sustain and deliver its educational mission.

Rising Sun Montessori Charter

Charter schools are non-sectarian public schools of choice that operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. The “charter” establishing each such school is a performance contract detailing the school’s mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. The charter for Rising Sun is for five years. At the end of the term, the entity granting the charter may renew the school’s contract. Charter schools are accountable to their sponsor, in our case, Buckeye Union School District, to produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract. The basic concept of charter schools is that they exercise increased autonomy in return for this accountability. They are accountable for both academic results and fiscal practices to several groups: the sponsor that authorizes them, the parents who choose them, and the public that funds them.

II. Admission, Placement and Attendance

ADMISSION POLICY

Students will be considered for admission without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender or achievement level and any other characteristics as listed in Education Code section 220.

Admission Priority:

1. Siblings of current Rising Sun students
2. Children of Rising Sun employees
3. Children of Rising Sun founding board members
4. Children with prior Montessori experience
5. Students considered to be “in-district”, or residing within the boundaries of Buckeye Union School District.

Enrollment Process:

- A separate application must be completed for each child.
- Each application must include proof of residency or prior Montessori experience (if applicable) at the time it is turned in to the RSMS office.
- Parent/Guardian must guarantee that this application is completely filled out and the information provided is accurate. If the information is misrepresented, the child will be subject to dismissal.
- Parent/Guardian is responsible for understanding RSMS admission policy and for informing the school of changes in contact information.
- Prospective first grade students for the 2020-2021 school year, must be 6 years old by September 1, 2020.
- Lottery for all grades will be held in March. Parents are welcome to attend. Subsequent lotteries will be scheduled if needed.
- In the spring, current RSMS families will be asked if they intend to return in the fall.
- As openings occur, families on the Wait List are notified by via email and given 5 business days to respond in writing to the offer for placement. Supplying the school with alternative numbers and e-mail address information is encouraged.
- If a child is offered placement and parent/guardian declines, child will be deleted from the wait list.
- A student can only be enrolled at one school; should another school request student’s records after parent/guardian has accepted placement at RSMS, students will be dropped from RSMS’s class list and his/her records forwarded to the requesting school.
- Wait lists are not carried over to the following year. **A new application MUST be completed each year.**
- Students must agree to follow attendance and behavioral standards outlined in the Family Handbook.
- Students with SARB (School Attendance Review Board) contracts will be expected to complete the terms of their contracts before being considered for admittance to RSMS.
- If student is not in good standing academically and/or behaviorally, student and parents/guardians will meet with the Head of School and agree to a behavior or academic contract.

Homeless Students

RSMS abides by all federal policies regarding homeless students. Please contact the Head of School if you have questions, become homeless, or would like a copy of the complete policy.

Foster Child

RSMS abides by all state and federal policies regarding foster children. Please contact the Head of School if you have questions, become homeless, or would like a copy of the complete policy.

Nondiscrimination Statement

RSMS does not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes in the California Penal Code.

RSMS adheres to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

RSMS is committed to providing a work and educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX (sex), Title VI (race, color, or national origin), and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA. RSMS prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. RSMS does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including bullying, discrimination, or intimidation, by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which the Charter School does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of position or gender. RSMS will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted."

RSMS staff who witness acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying will take immediate steps to intervene, so long as it is safe to do so, will call for assistance, and will report such incidents. Upon receipt of a report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying from a student, staff member, parent, volunteer, visitor or affiliate of RSMS, the Head of School or designee will promptly initiate an investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Head of School or designee will notify the complainant of the outcome of the investigation. Students who engage in discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Placement

The School reserves the right to place students in grade levels determined by assessments, regardless of grade level a student was in at a previous school. For example, if a student applying to enter the fourth grade is assessed below the fourth grade competency level, the School may offer admission to the lower and more appropriate grade.

Student Promotion/Retention

Montessori instruction accommodates the varying interests and academic development of individual students. Students will progress each year by completing the Montessori and State Standard curriculum necessary to support their success at the next grade level.

When considering promotion (accelerating a student an additional grade level), the child's social and emotional growth is to be taken into consideration. Parents, teachers, and the Head of School will determine if this is the best course of action for the student by using criteria such as intellectual maturity, academic achievement, including standardized testing, physical, social, psychological, and emotional considerations.

Retention (remaining at the same grade level for a second year) is an action that may be taken to assist a student to be more successful in their learning. Risk for retention should be identified as early in a child's school career as possible. As soon as identified, the teachers and Head of School should begin interventions to assist the student in areas of concern. Parents should be included in this discussion as early in the school year as possible. Students are to be identified for retention or promotion on the basis of:

- Academic achievement and standardized testing
- Physical, social, psychological, and emotional considerations
- Special needs
- Information provided by teacher(s), parents, or guardians

The demonstration of individual student learning is to be measured by, but not limited to, the following:

1. Student grades in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level above / below)
2. Albanesi (Montessori) assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Math (more than one grade level above / below)
3. State testing scores in Language Arts and Math (assessing below or far below basic in all subject levels / assessing at advanced in all subject areas)
4. Writing Assessment (same as above)
5. The meeting of the intervention goals determined by the Student Study Team ("SST")

Exit Procedure

Should you find it necessary to withdraw your child from the School, you should notify the School Office immediately. A written, signed and dated statement should be submitted by the parent(s) as soon as they are sure the child will be not be attending RSMS.

An exit interview may be conducted with all exiting families and the Head of School will attempt to schedule the interview. In the event the Head of School is not available during the exit interview, a Board member will conduct the interview. The Head of School or Board member will report the results to the Board.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Philosophy

At RSMS, we view every day as an essential learning opportunity. Therefore, we expect excellent attendance of all our students. Student attendance becomes a pattern and missing school regularly not only is detrimental to a child's learning, but can also create poor learning habits. Attendance is taken daily and reported to the state. A child is considered absent when s/he is not in school. If a child is sick and cannot operate at school, or has a communicable illness, and in consideration of other students, it is best for the child to stay at home to rest and recover. Additionally, if a student has a fever of 100 degrees or higher without medication, they must stay home until they are free from fever for a 24-hour period.

Students are required to make up any and all work missed during their absence. Students are responsible for contacting teachers for make-up work missed during any absence, regardless of the reason.

Excused Absences

Excused absences are absences where a student is too ill to report to school or has a medical, legal, dental appointment or death in the family. All absences require appropriate documentation, i.e. note from home, a note from a doctor of medical facility, court documents, etc. If appropriate documentation is not provided, the absence will be considered unexcused.

A parent or caring adult must notify the school the **same day** of absence by telephone, letter, e-mail, or in person. Please do your best to inform us of an absence by 8:30 a.m. If the school is not notified and the student does not report to school the next day with a note, the absence will be considered unexcused.

If a child exceeds 8 unexcused absences, the school will require a conference between parent, student, and administration to devise an action plan for ensuring the child does not fall behind in school. The school office should be informed promptly if your child has a communicable disease so that we can notify other parents, if necessary.

The newly passed Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") requires RSMS to report to the state of California on what ESSA considers "chronic absenteeism" which is defined as having missed 10% of the school year, based on attendance reporting.

Unexcused Absences/Truancy

Rising Sun Montessori School shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy, such as communication with parents/guardians and the use of Student Success Teams.

The school will confer with a School Attendance Review Board ("SARB"), as allowed by law, in order to meet the special needs of students with school attendance or school behavior problems.

Students who are habitual truants or habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance at school may be referred to the Country Truancy Court.

There will be a limit to the number of unexcused absences allowed. Consequences for unexcused absences are as follows:

Five (5) unexcused absences = Official notice from the School

Eight (8) unexcused absences = Intervention Conference with student, parent, administrator

Per passage of the ESSA, Rising Sun is required to report number of total absences to the state of California annually. The state considers students missing 10% of the scheduled school days as being "chronically absent."

When the student's attendance problems cannot be resolved or the student and parent/guardian have failed to respond to directives to correct the problem, the School Attendance Review Board or probation officer may ask the County Superintendent of Schools to request a juvenile court petition on behalf of the student.

Tardy Policy

All students are expected to arrive at school on time. A student is considered tardy if he/she is late to school...arrives after 8:30am. Parents/Guardians must sign-in their student(s) at the office when they are tardy. The student will receive a tardy slip to bring to his/her teacher.

Tardiness is only excused if a student has a medical, dental, legal appointment or there has been a death in the family. All excused tardies require appropriate documentation. Please notify the office if you know ahead of time that your student will be tardy due to one of the above reasons

There will be a limit to the number of unexcused tardies allowed.

Five (5) unexcused tardies = Official notice from the School

Eight (8) unexcused tardies = Intervention Conference with student, parent, administrator

Educational Program and Overview

Montessori Overview

Maria Montessori was truly a pioneer in her day. Montessori pursued an education in science and became the first female physician in Italy, practicing with the University of Rome. Because of her background in pediatrics and

psychiatry she was given a special assignment to run an experimental childcare in the poverty-stricken slums of the St. Lorenz Quarter in Italy. Because she was a scientist, and accustomed to observation, she made keen discoveries in her early work with children that inevitably led to her development of the Montessori Method.

Some of the principle foundations of the Montessori Method include:

- Teachers focus on the child as a person, not on the daily lesson plan;
- The teacher's role is to mentor students to think independently, explore, investigate, and discover;
- Teachers should present students with a carefully prepared environment that fosters warmth, safety, and confidence;
- Classrooms are a collaborative community of students in three-year multi-age groupings;
- Students will have mobility to engage in their environment in a meaningful way;
- Students have the confidence to view mistakes as an opportunity to learn;

Montessori education is found in hundreds of countries around the world. In the United States alone there are more than 8,000 Montessori schools, including over 400 public schools that use the Montessori Method. It is based on scientific research and has proven results in high student achievement and satisfaction with learning.

Curriculum

Students at Rising Sun Montessori School study traditional subjects in the areas of Math, Science, English, Social Studies, and Art, with relation to the Common Core State Standards; moreover, these subjects are presented to the students in new ways that make the curriculum more meaningful to the backgrounds and lives of our students. Our courses are designed to prepare students for both life and the world of work, as well as to encourage them to think critically and creatively. An emphasis continues to be placed on utilizing science and technology to advance the educational achievement and career development of our students.

Utilizing the Montessori Method of Education, Rising Sun Montessori School provides students:

- uninterrupted work periods of 90-minutes to three hours, to allow students to develop concentration; repetition of work is allowed until the student feels satisfied and ready to move on.
- the methods for students to resolve their conflicts in a peaceful manner; peace education is incorporated into curriculum with grace and courtesy lessons modeled daily.
- opportunities to think, reflect, problem-solve, and make decisions on what they have gathered using critical thinking skills they have developed.
- ample time to observe, explore, and master materials, answering any and all questions they have about a concept that is introduced.
- a Montessori teacher who is a classroom facilitator, creating an atmosphere that empowers students to speak up in front of groups and share their ideas.
- emphasis on individuality; students have the freedom to move around the classroom to discover new concepts and explore them at length.
- freedom within limits, to discover and build confidence in an environment that supports healthy self-esteem. Intrinsic motivation aides in developing good work ethics.
- mixed-age classrooms for children to teach and learn from each other; classrooms are designed to create an atmosphere of family.
- carefully prepared class environments to set a calm tone for the student to organize their thoughts and work in a methodical manner, encouraging self-discipline.
- time for students to progress through materials at an individual rate; students can recognize their own errors and troubleshoot the possibilities to arrive at another solution.
- the chance to spot their own errors, in an environment that is free from shame, but rather, supports errors as a tool for learning; repetition of work internalizes their feelings of success.
- materials for students to discover a multitude of possibilities with extensions to lessons and concepts that were previously mastered.
- multi-sensory materials throughout the classroom allow children to enjoy awakening their senses through physical, hands-on exploration of real-world concepts.
- Montessori classrooms are child-centered. Students are engaged through Great Lessons, point of interest, hands-on experiments and exploration; the Montessori teacher encourages a child's natural sense of wonder.

- the classroom as an environment of “work as play”; teachers bring in new concepts and materials to engage a student’s curiosity and imagination in a fun and challenging way.
- encouragement to view learning as a life-long habit, realizing there is always room for improvement.

MONTESSORI ASSESSMENTS, GRADING, AND TESTING

Assessments

Assessment in the Montessori classroom is the hourly, daily, and weekly appraisal of a student’s progress at RSMS. Early in their educational career at RSMS, students learn self-assessment from the prepared environment of self-correcting materials and the examples/modeling provided by the teacher. Self-assessment, self-reflection and self-correction are important lifelong skills that students acquire from the earliest years in a Montessori environment. Additionally, students also learn that their learning is a partnership with their teachers and parents.

Adults and students establish and agree upon daily, weekly, and monthly goals. Teachers maintain written records of the work presented and mastered, and each child has an individualized “work plan” which is used to guide them through the lessons and academic work required for that week.

At any given time, a Montessori teacher knows precisely where a child is: academically, developmentally, socially and emotionally. With frequent one-on-one interaction and individual, personalized assessment of student work by the classroom teacher, issues and concerns are quickly addressed as they emerge.

RSMS teachers conduct Montessori Assessments (Albanesi) for placement in Montessori Math and Language. Pre-tests and post-tests are conducted to assess student mastery of concepts. Reading assessments are conducted for appropriate reading levels, and additional assessment tools are utilized to determine areas where a student may need reinforcement, as well as to demonstrate a student’s academic advancement in any subject area.

Grading

In such a highly structured program, parents are alerted quickly to any concerns throughout the year. Additionally, RSMS provides formal documentation of the student’s progress throughout the year.

Ongoing assessments will be used by teachers to evaluate student progress in the instructional process, and may need to be modified over time as deemed necessary. First trimester progress will be reported to students and parents through individual conferences with teachers. Student led conferences will be used as much as possible, depending on the grade level. At second trimester, student progress will be reported on the school’s standards based report card and will include a Montessori Progress Report.

Essential standards will be highlighted, and relative progress on all standards addressed will be marked. At the end of third trimester, or year’s end, achievement levels for each grade level standard will be indicated on the standards based report card, along with a year-end portfolio presentation designed to illustrate the student’s growth through the year. Individual student conferences will be held at any time based on teacher or parent request

Testing

Rising Sun Montessori School participates in standard grade level tests for grades 3 and above. Assessment data, including SBAC scores, standards based report cards, Montessori Progress Reports, interim benchmark assessments, teacher observations, portfolios, and other assessment tools as appropriate, combine to form a battery of multiple measures, disaggregated annually by gender, ethnicity, language, and other significant category.

CAASP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress)

Students in grades 3-8 and 11 will take two Math tests (a Math Computer-Adaptive Test and a Math Performance Task), two English Language Arts (ELA) tests (an ELA Computer-Adaptive Test and an ELA Performance Task), as well as a computer based science test in grades 5 and 8. CAASPP testing takes place in the Spring. Notwithstanding any

other provision of law, a parent's or guardian's written request to the Head of School to excuse his or her child from any or all parts of this state assessment shall be granted.

RSMS uses an online data management system to provide teachers with instant access to data, literacy assessments, and multiple measures for every student. Teachers are able to review and reconfigure data so that they can have a detailed analysis of current students and new incoming student groups each year. This system is used in conjunction with progress monitoring interim assessments to monitor all students' progress annually, and to monitor students needing additional support tri-annually.

Homework Policy

Homework is not a traditional component of the Montessori philosophy because it is hard to re-create the Montessori classroom environment in each student's home. However, RSMS acknowledges that homework can be a valuable way to extend the classroom lessons, giving students extra practice and review of the concepts they have learned, as well as learning how to be disciplined and responsible with time management.

Homework assignments may consist of weekly math drills, spelling practice, reading or research projects. It should relate to classroom instruction, reinforce and extend learning, promote immediate recall of basic skills, and match the student's needs and academic level. RSMS teachers have developed their own homework practices that will be shared with parents at the beginning of each school year. Homework which is not completed by the due date must be completed by the following Monday. Habitual failure to complete homework will result in a conference with the Head of School, the parent, and the student. A behavioral contract may be put in place for homework completion.

Field Trips

Teachers schedule field trips to correspond with lessons in the curriculum. Field trips are an integral part of our enrichment curriculum and are treated as regular school days. Parents will be notified in advance when their child's class is going on a field trip. Drivers and chaperones will be requested as needed. All field trips begin and end at the school site. Individuals cannot "join up" on the way or at the field trip location.

Students will NOT be allowed to participate on a field trip unless they have turned in a signed permission slip.

California Law (Effective 01/01/2012):

- **Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat.**
- **Children under the age of 8 who are 4'9" or taller may be secured by a safety belt in the back seat.**
- **Children who are 8 years and over shall be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint system or safety belt.**
- **Passengers who are 16 years of age and over are subject to California's Mandatory Seat Belt law.**

Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash. Also, seat belts are the best defense against impaired, aggressive, and distracted drivers.

If you do not want your child to attend a specific field trip, his or her teacher will make arrangements for him/her to take their regular school work to another of our classrooms during the time that his/her class is off-campus. Attendance is taken on field trip days, and absences due to a choice to opt-out of a field trip will not be excused.

FIELD TRIP DRIVERS/CHAPERONES/VOLUNTEERS:

All adults that may participate in a field trip must be cleared by the RSMS office. In addition they will follow field trip protocols, which include, but are not limited to the following:

1. It is NEVER permissible to take children to destinations other than what is on the field trip permission slip.
2. It is NOT permissible to buy food or snacks for the children riding in your car, including your own child.
3. Only RSMS cleared adults may chaperone/volunteer/drive or attend any field trip.

Fully cleared parents or aides may be requested to attend fieldtrips if it is determined their child requires additional assistance during an off-campus setting.

Please refer to the RSMS Volunteer Clearance Guide found in the Enrollment Packet or in the office.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE POLICY

RSMS will follow the dress code policy in effect for the Buckeye Union School District...as follows:

Students should give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities in which they participate, including clothing that provides appropriate sun protection. Students' dress and grooming must not present a health or safety hazard to themselves or others or a distraction that would interfere with the education process. A student who violates the dress code may be subject to disciplinary action.

The development of attitudes and behavior patterns in dress and grooming should be a part of each student's total educational experience. School clothing is, in some degree, a reflection of one's attitude about self and school. We try to maintain a professional, friendly atmosphere in which teachers can teach and students can learn. Students are expected to attend school in clean, neat clothing. Dress, hair style, or makeup that is distracting in nature or interferes with the study habits of students in the class or school shall not be acceptable. The following guidelines are intended to define appropriate student attire and personal grooming.

1. Shoes must be worn at all times. Backless shoes, "wheelies", or shoes with wedges or heels higher than 1 inch are not permitted.
2. Clothing and jewelry shall be free of writing, pictures, or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane or which advocate racial, ethnic or religious prejudice, incite violence or the use of drugs or alcohol, deemed to be gang related, or considered inappropriate.
3. Hats may only be worn outside and with the brim facing forward. Head coverings may be worn for religious reasons.
4. Clothes shall be sufficient to conceal undergarments and upper torso at all times. See-through or fish-net fabrics, halter tops, tops with straps less than 1" wide, off-the-shoulder, low cut, bare midriff or bareback tops, crop tops, and half shirts, skirts or shorts shorter than mid-thigh are prohibited. Mid-thigh is generally defined as the point where fingertips touch when a student is standing upright with arms straight down. Revealing trousers or shorts worn too low are not allowed. Holes, rips, or tears in pants should not expose skin above the knee.
5. Hair shall be clean and neatly groomed and may not distract the learning environment. Hair may not be sprayed by any coloring that would drip when wet.
6. Shorts and other appropriate undergarments shall be worn under dresses and blouses for the sake of modesty and while participating in PE or playing on equipment.
7. Sunglasses may be worn out to recess unless they are deemed a distraction or a problem of any kind. They must be put away when in the classroom.
8. Other articles or apparel which may be considered objectionable or dangerous may be prohibited by the Head of School.

Students wearing inappropriate attire or footwear will be sent to the office and will be asked to call their parent or guardian. Students will be given the opportunity to change into appropriate clothing, if available at the school site, or request the parent to bring a change of clothing or footwear. Students will return to class upon meeting dress code standards.

Student Storage Areas

Each student will receive their own storage area in which they store their belongings. At the end of each day it is your child's responsibility to check their storage areas and take items home. When the students are in school it is our job to teach them to act independently. It will help the teachers and benefit the students if parents are consistent in modeling these expectations when they pick their children up from school.

Personal Belongings at School

Students **should** bring the following items to school **every day**:

- Reusable lunch box/bag
- Reusable water bottle (required on P.E. days)
- Inside shoes are optional (can remain at school)
- Sweater, outerwear, if necessary (please see dress code)

Students **may bring** the following items, **if** they are willing to take the risk of the items being lost or damaged:

- Books
- Objects related to our studies (please see "Sharing")

Students **may NOT bring** the following items to school:

- Any over-the-counter or prescription medication; including cough drops, and medicated ointments or lotion
- Backpacks
- Balls, Frisbees or other outdoor play equipment
- Toys or stuffed animals
- Electronic devices or games
- Trading or playing cards
- Cellular phones and watches must be handed to the classroom lead teacher for storage at the beginning of each school day. Students will be handed their phones and watches at the end of each day.
- Make-up
- Gum

Teachers will confiscate any items which are not permitted at school, or items which cause distraction during class time. Confiscated items will be returned to a parent, not to the student.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

RSMS admits and serves students with special needs under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), state legislation (G.S. 115C-106 et seq.), and pursuant to the State Board of Education's rules and policies.

Students with special needs shall receive a free appropriate public education ("FAPE") in the least restrictive and appropriate environment. RSMS will refer every student suspected of having special for a multidisciplinary diagnosis and evaluation. RSMS may initiate this process with a Student Success Team ("SST") meeting for which the parent will receive prior notification.

Parents have a right to request a psycho-educational assessment at any time. That request must be put in writing. Special Education services are available for students who qualify and an Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") is then written to support those students in the least restrictive environment.

RSMS will provide additional services for those students that have an IEP.

Policy on 504 Student Accommodation

Background

The 504 plan refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary or post-secondary schooling. Additional information about parent/student rights regarding Section 504 are available in your enrollment packet.

Process

1. The first step in establishing a 504 plan is gathering information. The vehicle that is used for this process at Rising Sun Montessori School is the SST Meeting. This meeting generally includes the student's parents, teacher(s), and other school staff and staff. During this meeting information about the student's strengths, known information (classroom and home academic performance and behavior) and concerns are shared.
2. The team then brainstorms strategies they think will address the team's concerns. Based on these strategies, a plan to help the student be more successful in school is developed. This plan may include assessment and/or classroom observations in preparation for writing a 504 plan.
3. After the needed information is gathered, a follow-up SST meeting will be scheduled. During this meeting the team may modify the plan developed during the last SST meeting, develop a new informal behavior or academic plan or write a 504 plan for the student.

Qualifications

In order for a student to qualify for a 504 plan, there must be evidence of a disability provided by a medical doctor. (If a learning disability is suspected, the SST team may refer the student for special educational assessment). Following the identification of a "disability," a 504 plan will be developed as determined by the SST team. If a parent requests in writing that his/her child receive assessment for a 504 plan, a 504 plan meeting (which follows the SST meeting format described above) will be conducted.

Student Records

"The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 5 business days after the day RSMS receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Head of School a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. An RSMS official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Amendments to student records must be requested within thirty (30) days of the discovery of the issue.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask RSMS to amend a record should clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. The School will respond within 10 days of the request. If RSMS denied the request to amend the record, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be made available at that time.

3. The right to provide written consent before RSMS discloses personally identifiable information ("PII") from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by RSMS as an administrator, supervisor,

instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the RSMS board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of RSMS who performs an institutional service of function for which RSMS would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, RSMS discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

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

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

For more information please refer to the FERPA notice found in the enrollment packet, call 1-800-872-5327 or visit www2.ed.gov.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Rising Sun has created and adopted a Technology Use Policy and Agreement Form to ensure that students' access to, and use of the Internet is consistent with the educational goals and purposes of RSMS and in compliance with Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). RSMS sets forth student responsibilities and duties when accessing and using the Internet through RSMS equipment and resource network maintained by RSMS. RSMS has deemed certain uses of the Internet inappropriate for an educational setting and therefore not appropriate for use with RSMS equipment and resource networks. RSMS stresses that an inappropriate use does not always mean that the use in itself is "bad" or illegal, but only that the use does not further the educational goals and purposes of RSMS. Students are reminded that their use of RSMS equipment and resource networks reflect upon RSMS, and students should guide their activities accordingly.

- School officials retain reasonable discretion to apply this and related School policies to determine when a proper or improper use exists and what sanctions, if any, may apply.
- The School and its staff take all reasonable measures to guide, monitor, and protect students in their use of the School's technology resources, including the use of software filters to screen unwanted materials. However, parents/guardians are primarily responsible for instructing their children in the proper values governing the use of such resources. Parents/guardians should communicate to their children an understanding of responsible and safe use of these resources and monitor their children's use of such resources at home or anywhere outside the School's jurisdiction.
- School technology is to be used for educational, organizational, and communication purposes directly related to the School's educational mission and program. Unless otherwise prohibited, personal or incidental use of School technology resources are permitted if such use complies with these policies, is reasonably limited, and does not interfere or threaten with the School's operational and educational objectives.

Student Use Policy

- Be polite. Do not write or send abusive messages. Use appropriate language.

- Be respectful. Do not view or modify other’s work/data; to include student folders and work books. Treat the equipment with care.
- Be trustworthy. Do not alter the computer, screensaver, sounds, settings, etc.
- Use of the computer is for classroom research only as supervised by the teacher.

Prohibited Uses of School Technology

- Personal use – no emailing, no social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube, or blogs, etc.
- Disclosing personal identifying information about themselves or others
- Using technology to access prohibited materials (i.e. vulgar, offense, inflammatory language, material, or images, including sexually explicit materials, language or pictures)
- Trying to access school files, or “hacking” into other systems and materials where authorization is not permitted
- Games/gaming is not allowed.
- Downloading software or attachments without prior authorization
- Using email, social media sites or other avenues to engage in “cyberbullying” activities

Resources for Parents

A resource parents may find valuable when talking to their children about internet safety may be found at www.onguardonline.gov. Under the section *Protect Kids Online*, families can discuss areas such as:

- Kids, Parents, and Video Games
- Child Identity Theft
- Kids’ Privacy
- Talk to Your Kids
- Kids and Socializing Online
- Cyberbullying
- Kids and Mobile Phones
- Kids: Texting and Sexting
- Kids and Computer Security
- Parental Controls

Media Exposure

Rising Sun Montessori School and its teachers respect the rights of parent to make decisions about what media (television, movies, books, websites, video games, etc.) their children are exposed to and consume. However, as educators and students of child development, we are concerned about the amount and quality of the media children in our country consume, and the affect this has on their development.

The average American child spends 53 hours weekly in front of a screen, according to a recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation. There is a growing amount of research-based evidence that all of this screen time has a negative effect on children’s health, attention-span, behavior, social skills, and sense of right and wrong. Furthermore, sitting in front of a screen for hours a day means children are spending much less time in other healthful, fun, and beneficial activities (playing, reading, sports, art, etc.).

Many child-development experts recommend that young children spend as little time in front of a screen as possible, with the ideal situation being no screen time at all. Of course, this does not mean that all movies, TV shows, and video games are negative and harmful, and we respect the comfort and togetherness that some families may find in their media consumption.

Some families find that it’s easier to limit media consumption if their student’s school creates the limits – in this way the school takes on the burden of being the “bad guy” if children resent having their screen time limited. The recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics for media consumption are as follows:

- Limit children’s screen time (computer, TV, video games, and movies) to 1 hour **or less** on school nights.
- The content of all media children consume should be age-appropriate.
- Students will not be permitted to discuss violent, frightening, or otherwise inappropriate TV shows, movies, or video games at school

Please be aware that when we (the Rising Sun Montessori staff) have to speak to students about inappropriate or unkind behavior or language at school, they often report that they learned it from movies or TV shows that are intended for children.

III. Health and Wellness

General Well-Being

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child comes to school each day ready to learn. Students are “ready to learn” if they:

- have received a good night’s sleep;
- have eaten a complete and nutritious breakfast;
- come to school dressed in clean, appropriate clothing;
- practice good hygiene (i.e. hair washed/combed, teeth brushed, etc.);
- come prepared to engage in the day’s learning activities.
- Bring appropriate food for the time the child will spend at school, including extended day.

Student Nutrition

○ Breakfast

If students do not have time to finish breakfast at home in the morning, they are welcome to bring their breakfasts to school with them to eat before they begin working. We offer this option because the importance of breakfast for children cannot be overemphasized. Our teachers have observed a decline in students’ behavior and learning abilities on days when they have not eaten breakfast.

○ Snacks

Rising Sun provides a snack time for each student in the morning and in the afternoon. Students are asked to bring their own snacks, and students with specific dietary needs are encouraged to do so. Students are discouraged from having sweets for snacks at school.

○ Lunch

Students must bring a lunch to school each day. A nutritionally balanced meal, which includes protein, fat, and fiber, will help your child succeed in the second half of the school day. Teachers encourage students to eat any dessert included in their lunch after eating their "entree" or other lunch foods. Other than this, we do not regulate or manage students' eating. We believe that attempting to exert excessive control over a child’s eating invites rebellion and power struggles, and we would be happy to discuss this philosophy with parents who are interested. We ask students to put left-overs back in their lunchbox, so that parents can be aware of what their child is or isn't eating.

Unacceptable Food Items at School (unless part of an IEP or 504 plan)

- Soda/Cola, other carbonated or caffeinated drinks
- Gum

We recommend against the following items:

- Candy/Sugary treats
- Fast food

IF YOUR CHILD IS ALLERGIC TO ANY FOODS, PLEASE BE SURE TO INDICATE THIS IN YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY INFORMATION.

Illness

If your child becomes ill, please call and inform the office. For your own child's protection, and for the protection of others, please do not send your child to school if they are sick. If your child complains of feeling sick at school, depending on the severity, you may be contacted to pick your child up from school.

24-Hour Fever-Free Rule

If your child has been running a fever, your child should not attend school. Your child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Additionally, if your child has been prescribed antibiotics, the student should have received a minimum of 24 hours' worth of treatment, and be fever free, before returning to school.

Immunization Information

California law requires that an immunization record be presented to the RSMS staff before a child can be enrolled in school. RSMS requires written verification from a doctor or immunization clinic of the following immunizations:

Students entering kindergarten who are not exempt will need the following immunization requirements:

Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus (DPT)	Five (5) doses
Polio	Four (4) doses
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)	Two (2) doses
Hepatitis B	Three (3) doses
Varicella (chickenpox)	Two (2) doses

NOTE: Four doses of DTP are allowed if one was given on or after the fourth birthday. Three doses of Polio are allowed if one was given on or after fourth birthday. MMR doses must be given on or after first birthday.

Students entering 7th grade who are not exempt from the immunization requirements must show proof of the following immunizations:

Immunization	Dosage
Tetanus, reduced Diphtheria, and acellular Pertussis (Tdap)	One (1) doses
(Booster must be added on or after 7 th Birthday)	One (1) booster
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)	Two (2) doses

NOTE: In order to begin 7th grade, students who had a valid personal belief exemption on file with a public or private elementary or secondary school in California before January 1, 2016 must meet all requirements for children

7-17 years old (i.e., polio, MMR, chickenpox and primary series for diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis), **in addition to** the 7th grade requirements for Tdap and two (2) doses of MMR.

All students must be fully immunized in accordance with the California Health and Safety Code and the California Code of Regulations with the following exceptions:

- Students who show proof of a medical exemption pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 120370;
- Students who, prior to January 1, 2016, submitted a letter or affidavit on file at a private or public elementary or secondary school in California stating beliefs opposed to immunization, and who provides said letter or affidavit to the RSMS, shall be allowed to enroll at RSMS without being fully immunized until the student enrolls in the next grade span pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 120335 (g);
 - “Grade span” means each of the following:
 - Preschool.
 - Kindergarten
 - Grades 7

This Policy does not prohibit a pupil who qualifies for an individualized education program, pursuant to federal law and Education Code § 56026, from accessing any special education and related services required by his or her individualized education program. However, parents or guardians must continue to provide immunization records for these students to their schools and schools must continue to maintain and report records of immunizations that have been received for these students.

Health and Medical Conditions

The school office and administrators must be notified if a student with a medical or health condition requires accommodations at school in order to participate in the educational program. The school administrator will arrange a meeting with the parent or guardian of the child to develop an accommodation plan for the student’s medical or health condition. Students with diabetes, severe asthma, severe allergies or any other medical need should have an accommodation plan on file at the school.

Treatment and School-Related Injuries

It is the policy of RSMS to treat minor injuries (scrapes, cuts, bruises, etc.) with a band-aid or ice. Parents will be notified of minor injuries at the discretion of the school administrator. When confronted with a more serious illness or injury, school staff will contact parents, and if required, transport the student to the nearest hospital or call 911.

Returning to School after an Illness or Prolonged Absence

A student returning to school after a serious or prolonged illness, injury, surgery, or other hospitalization, must have written permission by a health care provider to attend school, including any recommendations regarding physical activity and exertion.

A student returning to school with sutures, casts, crutches, a wheelchair, or orthopedic brace(s) must have a physician’s written permission to attend school and must comply with any safety procedures required by the school administration.

An excuse from a physical education activity may be granted for up to 10 weeks, if a student is unable to participate in regular or modified curriculum for a temporary period of time due to illness or injury. A parent’s written notice of excuse from physical education activity will be accepted for up to five days; thereafter, a written request is needed from the student’s health provider.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

The state requires that students undergo yearly vision & hearing screenings as follows:

- Hearing Grades 1, 2, 5, 8, Special Ed and referrals
- Vision* Grades TK, K, 2, 5, 8, Special Ed and referrals
- Color Vision* Grade 1 (males only)

RSMS will schedule a health care professional to administer the screenings.

*Vision Appraisal Waiver: The vision appraisal may be waived if the student can present a certificate from a physician or surgeon with the results of a vision test.

Oral Health Assessment

Students enrolled in kindergarten in a public school, or while enrolled in first grade if the pupil was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school, are required to have an oral health assessment completed by a dental professional. Please contact the main office if you have questions about this requirement.

Communicable Diseases

Communicable diseases can spread quickly through a school and dramatically affect the attendance and learning of children. Examples of common communicable disease are: conjunctivitis (pink eye), lice, strep throat, chicken pox, Fifth Disease (slap cheek) or ringworm. A student suspected of having a communicable disease will be excluded from school until guidelines for readmission are met. Families will receive notification when a communicable disease is evident in the classroom.

Medication at School

Pursuant to California Education Code 49423, any student required to take prescribed medication during school hours may be assisted by designated school personnel, or may carry a self-administer prescription auto-injectable epinephrine (EPI pen) if the school receives the appropriate written directions and medical authorization by the student's physician and permission from the student's parent or legal guardian. All medications must be in their original container, be kept up to date and stored in the school office.

The written consent will remain on file at the school, and must be renewed whenever the prescription changes, expires and at the beginning of a new school year.

Medications that are not allowed, include but are not limited to;

1. Cough drops (unless administered and stored by a teacher)
2. Pain relievers such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin
3. Sunscreen is allowed if stored by the teacher and self-administered by the student

Changes to Medications

Parents/Guardians must notify RSMS of any changes or modifications in their student's medication needs, such as:

- Changes in prescribed medications
- New or modified medical diagnosis

Type 2 Diabetes

Description

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes in adults. Until a few years ago, type 2 diabetes was rare in children, but it is becoming more common, especially for overweight teens. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), one in three American children born after 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime.

Type 2 diabetes affects the way the body is able to use sugar (glucose) for energy.

- The body turns the carbohydrates in food into glucose, the basic fuel for the body's cells.
- The pancreas makes insulin, a hormone that moves glucose from the blood to the cells.
- In type 2 diabetes, the body's cells resist the effects of insulin, and blood glucose levels rise.

- Over time, glucose reaches dangerously high levels in the blood, which is called hyperglycemia.
- Hyperglycemia can lead to health problems like heart disease, blindness, and kidney failure.

It is recommended that students displaying or possibly experiencing the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes be screened (tested) for the disease.

Risk Factors

Researchers do not completely understand why some people develop type 2 diabetes and others do not; however, the following risk factors are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in children:

- **Being overweight.** The single greatest risk factor for type 2 diabetes in children is excess weight. In the U.S., almost one out of every five children is overweight. The chances are more than double that an overweight child will develop diabetes.
- **Family history of diabetes.** Many affected children and youth have at least one parent with diabetes or have a significant family history of the disease.
- **Inactivity.** Being inactive further reduces the body's ability to respond to insulin.
- **Specific racial/ethnic groups.** Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, or Asian/Pacific Islanders are more prone than other ethnic groups to develop type 2 diabetes.
- **Puberty.** Young people in puberty are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than younger children, probably because of normal rises in hormone levels that can cause insulin resistance during this stage of rapid growth and physical development.

Warning Signs and Symptoms Associated with Type 2 Diabetes

Warning signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes in children develop slowly, and initially there may be no symptoms. However, not everyone with insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes develops these warning signs, and not everyone who has these symptoms necessarily has type 2 diabetes.

- Increased hunger, even after eating
- Unexplained weight loss
- Increased thirst, dry mouth, and frequent urination
- Feeling very tired
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing of sores or cuts
- Dark velvety or ridged patches of skin, especially on the back of the neck or under the arms
- Irregular periods, no periods, and/or excess facial and body hair growth in girls
- High blood pressure or abnormal blood fats levels

Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Methods and Treatments

Healthy lifestyle choices can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Even with a family history of diabetes, eating healthy foods in the correct amounts and exercising regularly can help children achieve or maintain a normal weight and normal blood glucose levels.

- **Eat healthy foods.** Make wise food choices. Eat foods low in fat and calories.

- **Get more physical activity.** Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes every day.
- **Take medication.** If diet and exercise are not enough to control the disease, it may be necessary to treat type 2 diabetes with medication.

The first step in treating type 2 diabetes is to visit a doctor. A doctor can determine if a child is overweight based on the child's age, weight, and height. A doctor can also request tests of a child's blood glucose to see if the child has diabetes or pre-diabetes (a condition which may lead to type 2 diabetes).

Types of Diabetes Screening Tests That Are Available

- **Glycated hemoglobin (A1C) test.** A blood test measures the average blood sugar level over two to three months. An A1C level of 6.5 percent or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Random (non-fasting) blood sugar test.** A blood sample is taken at a random time. A random blood sugar level of 200 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) or higher suggests diabetes. This test must be confirmed with a fasting blood glucose test.
- **Fasting blood sugar test.** A blood sample is taken after an overnight fast. A fasting blood sugar level less than 100 mg/dL is normal. A level of 100 to 125 mg/dL is considered pre-diabetes. A level of 126 mg/dL or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Oral glucose tolerance test.** A test measuring the fasting blood sugar level after an overnight fast with periodic testing for the next several hours after drinking a sugary liquid. A reading of more than 200 mg/dL after two hours indicates diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes in children is a preventable/treatable disease and the guidance provided in this information sheet is intended to raise awareness about this disease. Contact your student's school nurse, school administrator, or health care provider if you have questions.

IV. Student Emergency and Safety

Accident Procedure

RSMS teachers are certified in CPR and basic first aid.

We do everything possible to prevent accidents from happening, but sometimes they do occur. If your child is seriously injured you will be contacted immediately, and a report will be filled out, and a copy given to you.

If your child has a minor injury you may be contacted, a report may be filled out, and RSMS staff will discuss the nature of the minor injury.

Sometimes students ask for band-aids and other aids (ice packs) even when they are okay. These are our "TLC" injuries. Just remember to check with your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns.

Emergency Data

Every family needs to fill out a new emergency form, for each child, every school year before classes begin. These must be turned in to the RSMS office. If any of the following information changes during the school year, please notify the RSMS office.

- Home address
- Email address(es)
- Any telephone number – home, cell, workplace
- Primary Care Giver
- Doctor's phone number
- Names and phone numbers of people we are authorized to contact in case of emergency
- Names and phone numbers of people we are authorized to release your student to
- Any court ordered changes in custody or visitation rights

Emergency Release from School

In case of emergency and to designate someone other than a parent/guardian to pick up a child from school, the names and contact numbers of additional people must be provided on the student's Emergency form. If additional persons are added/removed throughout the year, parent/guardians must update the Emergency form.

As an added safety precaution, authorized persons may be asked to show their identification for verification purposes. Parents should inform the office when a new person will be picking up their child on a regular basis. Please be sure the office has the most up to date information in your child's file to avoid any delays in the dismissal of your child. The school reserves the right to call the parents of the child to confirm anyone who comes to pick up their child.

Campus Safety

Rising Sun Montessori School regards the health, safety, and emotional well-being of its students to be of the highest priority. The following are ways we can ALL ensure high standards of safety are maintained:

1. Driveways and Parking Lot: Students are NEVER permitted to play in the vehicle area. When you are arriving or leaving with your child, please make sure they do not run out into the parking lot ahead of you—because of their size many vehicles cannot see them! When chatting with friends, please have your child stay in close proximity to you so you may provide direct supervision of them any time after the 15 minute dismissal time ends. (See #5 below)
2. Car Seat Law: If we see any child in a vehicle without a car seat, we are required to have the child stay at the school until a car seat is provided. Please be sure to provide the appropriate restraint system for your child based on the California State Car Seat Law.
3. Unattended Children in Cars: Children under 12 years old may not be left unattended in a vehicle at any time. If RSMS staff witness a child left unattended in a vehicle, the parent will be located immediately and asked to accompany the child. If the parent is not immediately reached, law enforcement will be notified.
4. Non-Passenger Vehicles: Children are prohibited from being transported on school property in non-passenger vehicles (ie: motorcycles).
5. Supervision of Children: Parents are responsible for providing direct, **visual** supervision of their own children and/or any children who are their guests at Rising Sun, at any time that those children are not officially in the care of staff or teachers. Children may not be on the playground, in the parking lot, or in a school building, without a parent/guardian. Rising Sun teachers and staff are not permitted to accept responsibility for the supervision of any children before 8:15am or after 3:15pm. At RSMS sponsored community events, on or off campus, even when teachers are present; parents are 100% responsible for the supervision of, and liable for the actions of, their children and/or guests.
6. Visitors: All visitors MUST report to the office to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass. Visitors must wear their pass easily visible to the staff. Teachers will stop people on campus that do not look familiar and ask if they have been to the office to gain permission to be on school grounds.

Please remember that we are a community at Rising Sun Montessori School, and it is the responsibility of each of us to keep the children safe.

Alcohol/Drug Free Campus

RSMS is an alcohol/drug free campus. Possession or operation under the influence of alcohol and drugs in any part of the school, or on the student or adult/guardian while on campus is prohibited.

Smoking or Use of other Tobacco Products

Possession of tobacco products in any part of the school (drug free zone 1000 feet radius) by an adult/guardian or on the student is prohibited.

Fire Drills & Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The Head of School will conduct fire drills on campus from time to time. The route of egress and alternate routes will be posted in each classroom and in each building. Students and staff will be instructed on the procedures to follow.

In the event that the school must be evacuated for an emergency, whether by natural disaster or otherwise, teachers and students will go to a temporary relocation site. Your child's teacher will call you to inform you of the evacuation and give you instructions on where to reunite with your child.

Image Use Permission

To honor the privacy and confidentiality of our students, and the personal preferences parents/guardians may have, we strongly recommend that parents do not post another child's picture on social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, or any other public sites.

Pets on Campus

Pets are not allowed on the school grounds, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school office for a special circumstance, such as being part of the student's project or class discussion. This includes animals running free or leashed.

Rising Sun Montessori is dedicated to providing an environment where students feel safe from harm. Many students may be allergic or afraid of animals and it is our top priority to uphold the rights of the students' safety.

In addition, if you have brought your pet with you to ride along in the car, you may NOT allow your pet out of the car for any reason. If animals in the car/parking lot create a problem (e.g. dogs barking at parents or students), you will be asked to remove the animal from the campus immediately. Service dogs supporting individuals with disabilities who have provided administration with prior proper paperwork will be permitted on campus and school related activities.

V. Family and the Community

Philosophy

Education research has proven that when parents or family members are involved at school in the education of their child, the child's success in school dramatically increases. In addition, we seek to create a school environment that invites family participation and involvement, working as a community united in a common purpose. In order to create a strong school community where every child can reach his or her fullest potential, each family must be involved at the school.

Just as we view each child as a unique individual, so we see each family as a unique partner in their child's education. Just as each child has his or her strengths and challenges, so does each family. With this belief, RSMS has several ways for families to be involved.

The school cannot succeed in its mission without commitment and effort from the parents who enroll their children. A strong partnership is essential. At RSMS, our vision of a partnering parent is a parent who:

- supports Rising Sun Montessori's mission.
- communicates with the school about their child.
- attends scheduled meetings and conferences.
- respects and supports the policies of the school.
- participates in school activities in whatever capacity work and other obligations permits.
- reads information received from the school and responds and/or takes action accordingly.
- treats RSMS staff and staff with compassion and respect.

Communication Procedures for Parents

If you have a message for your child's teacher, please send an email via Montessori Compass. Teachers will respond to your message as quickly as possible. Please send an email, stop in at the office, or use Montessori Compass to communicate messages to the office as well. Teachers will not take verbal messages from parents to relay to the office or other teachers.

School Communication to Parents

Rising Sun employs many ways in which to communicate important information and events about the school. The following are some of the ways information will be conveyed to families:

- Montessori Compass
- Teacher/school emails
- Newsletters
- School Website

RSMS office numbers are 916-936-2333 and 530-350-9500. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Teachers are not available to take calls during class time.

Observations/Visitors

Parents are encouraged to observe in their child's classroom. In order to preserve the peaceful atmosphere and daily routine of the classroom, we respectfully request that no more than one parent is present in the classroom at any time. You must arrange an observation time in advance by leaving a message for your teacher. Your teacher will schedule a time for you to observe. Parents observing and/or volunteering in the classroom must be fully cleared (clear TB test and clear Livescan) and are required to sign-in at the office and wear their visitor badge in accordance with our campus safety policies. Please be aware that teachers are required to give 100% of their attention to their students during school hours, and will not be able to converse with parents during observations. Please do not bring any siblings to the classroom during observation. Drop in visits are not allowed.

Volunteering

Volunteering at school is an excellent way to be involved in the education of your child in a way that also benefits the operation of the school. In order to keep all children safe and in the best interest of the school, the school requires volunteers to be tested for tuberculosis and to be fingerprinted and cleared through the Department of Justice. Please refer to the Volunteer Guidelines for more information on volunteering and driving on field trips.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Refer to the School Academic Calendar for conference dates. Students in K- upper elementary are not permitted to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences. Students in the Taurus classroom will be responsible for leading their parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first trimester. Your teacher will schedule your conference with you. If you desire a conference before the date indicated on the calendar, please contact your teacher.

Parent Education Night

Rising Sun Montessori may host parent nights from time to time throughout the school year to present topics of interest in the realm of education. We strongly encourage at least one parent per family be present. Parent nights provide you the opportunity to discover new information pertinent to your child's educational experience.

Parent Participation

We enjoy and welcome parent participation because the success of our school community depends on the continued involvement of families. We believe schools should be an inviting learning environment for students, as well as adults. Classroom and school-wide events provide many opportunities to support the school, to learn together, make new friends and have fun. Parents are invited to participate as an officer or member of the Parent Association. We always welcome your ideas on ways you would like to contribute to the RSMS community.

Ways for you to be involved include:

- As an officer or member of the Parent Association
- Driving or chaperoning on field trips (fully cleared)
- Participating on a Special Event Committee

- Participating on a Board of Directors Committee (by invitation)
- Helping with the cleaning and maintenance of the school buildings and grounds
- Intel employees: participation in the Intel Grant-Matching and PC-Pals programs

Confidential Information/Volunteer Confidentiality

It is our school policy to keep all information about your family and child confidential as specified in the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Parent volunteers must respect these laws when they participate in school activities.

If a parent shares information they learned about a student, even with that student’s own parent, they can be held personally liable by the parents of the student, as well as in violation of the above laws. In the event a situation occurs which involves your child and another student, we may need to give that child’s family an explanation, and in this circumstance you will be notified, and/or we may set up a meeting to discuss the situation.

Conflicts of Interest: Contact Outside of School

Rising Sun teachers and staff are not permitted to provide care for the students outside of their working relationships at school. Oftentimes this can result in a conflict of interest and pose confidentiality issues and risk of violation of FERPA and IDEA laws. Please respect our wishes to keep the confidential nature of the students and families of Rising Sun Montessori secure. Please refrain from asking Rising Sun staff to provide care for your children.

This policy has been extended to include social network sites such as *Facebook*. Rising Sun teachers and staff are not permitted to “friend,” blog, or communicate with parents or students via social network sites. Please honor our policy to keep communications between staff and parents within professional boundaries by refraining from contacting our staff using these popular social media.

Rising Sun is a close-knit school community in which many people develop close friendships. We acknowledge the need to nurture these positive relationships with our students and families by hosting school-wide events that provide staff, parents, students and members of the greater community to come together to further develop these bonds.

Family Custody Obligations

Please inform the school at the time of enrollment, your preferred arrangements for communication for parents who are divorced or separated. RSMS follows child custody decisions made by the courts. In order to do this, the family must provide copies of all relative documents to the school. It is not RSMS’ responsibility to obtain these documents. School staff cannot modify or make exception to any judge’s ruling regarding the custody of a child.

If a child’s custody arrangement has changed, a parent or guardian must provide copies of the applicable legal documents to the school. If any dispute arises at school regarding visitation or child custody, RSMS will call the local authorities to resolve the situation. RSMS wishes to support families as much as possible in achieving the parent’s goal of keeping the child’s best interests as their number one consideration.

Birthdays

We encourage you to celebrate your child’s birthday with their class. Your child’s teacher will have a special Montessori birthday lesson in your child’s honor. Under no circumstances will Rising Sun Montessori staff distribute invitations, make phone calls, or monitor R.S.V.P.’s for your child’s personal birthday.

Celebration of Holiday Traditions and Cultures

At Rising Sun we embrace and celebrate the diversity of our community by providing children opportunities to learn about the backgrounds and cultures of the students in their classrooms. We encourage families to teach us where they are from, what traditions they practice, foods they eat and any other information they would like to share. This practice helps the children and staff learn to understand each other. The sharing is meant to be informational only; Rising Sun Montessori faculty, administration or staff does not promote or impose any personal beliefs on the children or parents.

Parent Committee

The Parent Committee and other parent volunteers serve a valuable purpose to the RSMS community. The Board of Directors supports these organizations and expects and encourages cooperation from the whole school community, including students and parents.

The Board of Directors shall approve all organizations affiliated with the School. The Board of Directors, or by delegation, the Head of School, may establish additional rules governing such organizations. The Head of School or his/her designee shall be an *ex officio* member of any such organization.

Each parent committee affiliated with the School must establish bylaws setting forth the purpose of the organization and the rules and procedures by which it shall operate. A copy of the bylaws, and any subsequent revisions, shall be given to the Head of School and a copy shall be kept on file in the School office.

Parent committees shall secure the advice and approval of the Head of School prior to planning any function or activity in which students are to participate while under supervision of RSMS.

Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, any item purchased by a parent organization for the school or a school activity becomes the property of RSMS.

Fundraising

Participating in the school's fundraising events is never required; it is strictly voluntary. Many of these events are parent-sponsored. Fundraising is a great way for the school community to work together toward a common goal, such as new playground equipment, materials for the classrooms, etc.

Lost and Found

Rising Sun has a Lost and Found basket for clothing and items that are left behind at recess/lunch. If any of your child's items turn up missing, please check the Lost and Found basket in the office. Please label all items.

Mysterious Objects

Many of the materials at the school contain small important pieces. If you find anything that doesn't look like one of your child's toys, please bring it to the office. More than likely, it belongs in the classroom.

Parent Interactions with Other Children

It is natural for children who are very young to vocally express what they see without reservation. This may include making comments to adults or children which seem hurtful, but are more often than not, just innocent observations from a child's point of view.

In any instance where you observe a child making a comment either to you, your child, or another child, please refrain from correcting the child and either allow the teacher to intervene or inform a staff member and explain the situation. It is very frightening for children to have an adult other than their teacher or parent correct them.

Respect for Property

In addition to being attractive, Montessori materials are very expensive. We invest a lot of money in our classroom materials, as well as the equipment on the school grounds. Parents will be held financially responsible for any damages to the school, whether it be materials or equipment, as well as another child's personal property as a result of your child's actions, whether purposeful or accidental.

Picture Day

Fall Picture Day is scheduled at the beginning of the school year. You are not required to purchase any of these pictures, but we would like it if all the students are present on picture day so they can be included in their class and school composite pictures.

VI. Student Conduct and Discipline

RSMS Positive Discipline Philosophy

“The discipline which reveals itself in the Montessori class is something which comes from within rather than from without.” –Dr. Maria Montessori

In the Montessori environment, love and respect are the foundation upon which good discipline is based. Children learn to accept authority because it comes through genuine respect and affection for the child. Our staff strives to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between themselves and the child. We use logical consequences to deal with situations.

When problems arise, staff and students work together to solve the problem; the consequence must be related, respectful and reasonable. Students participate in class meetings to collaborate on logical consequences for not keeping within the rules; for minor discipline problems we use redirection.

Montessori philosophy believes that a child will feel more secure if s/he knows where the boundaries of behavior are, and if s/he is aware that there is follow-through and consistency in the enforcement of basic rules.

“Thoughtfulness and politeness mark the way staff treat the children in a discipline situation. Consistency in application of the rules tends to leave the child’s initiative intact.” (Jane Nelson, author *Positive Discipline*)

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL A CHILD BE MISTREATED OR MISHANDLED. If discipline problems become a regular routine and solutions appear to be ineffective, a parent/teacher conference will be held to discuss the situation.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OR HUMILIATION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED ON THE PART OF ANY STAFF MEMBER.

School-wide Culture of Respect and Compassion

Rising Sun Montessori School has adopted the following standards for students, to promote consistency and provide an environment that will support their successful learning.

- Effective classroom management
- Uniform, school-wide and clear expectations for behavior
- Positive, warm interactive involvement between staff and students with emphasis on modeling of respectful behavior by staff
- Acknowledgement of positive behavior
- Clear, school-wide definitions of unacceptable behavior
- Consistently enforced, inevitable, predictable, escalating consequences for actions that are hurtful to others
- Structured opportunities for aggressive youth to reflect on, and learn from their behavior
- Classroom instruction in emotional literacy, problem-solving, and conflict resolution
- Students participate in frequent “round-table” talks on conflict resolution, use peace curriculum and the Montessori process

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICIES

Proper behavior is expected at Rising Sun Montessori School, and each student is held accountable for his/her own behavior. Students whose behavior is considered inappropriate and/or disruptive will be subject to the disciplinary policies outlined in this section of the handbook.

Rising Sun Montessori School’s Doctrine of Respect

Rising Sun Montessori School believes that RESPECT is not only a right of each individual member of the community, but is the foundation of all our interactions and behaviors. It is the intent of Rising Sun Montessori School to provide a safe environment in which everyone—students and staff—can work, learn, and play together comfortably and productively.

To that end, any demonstration of disrespect toward the Rising Sun School community (e.g. staff, students, or school) when on Rising Sun grounds, or when away from the Rising Sun Montessori grounds as part of a RSMS event, will result in consequences that match the nature and severity of the infraction. Note that during off-campus events the

Rising Sun Montessori School community is considered to include the context within which the Rising Sun Montessori group is functioning and those individuals with whom Rising Sun Montessori's students are interacting during the course of that event. The consequences of disrespectful behavior could range from a disciplinary note, to attending recess detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

Typical Disciplinary Actions

When behavior that is unacceptable occurs, the following actions will be taken:

- For minor incidents and with younger students, staff will provide opportunities for re-direction and a chance to "try again."
- Repeated offenses will initiate a progressive system of meetings starting with a conference between the parents/guardians and teachers.
- Should the behavior(s) continue, a Student Success Team (SST) meeting will be scheduled with a campus administrator, the teacher(s) and the parents/guardians. Other school staff and family members may also be included if deemed appropriate. In the SST process, the team identifies concerns, works together on solutions, and creates a behavior plan. It is customary for follow-up meetings to take place to discuss progress or the need for additional interventions.
- Serious incidents will lead to an immediate referral to a campus administrator. Parents/guardians will be notified by phone or in writing, and a suspension warning may be issued.

Corporal punishment will never be used as a disciplinary measure. Corporal punishment does not include the use of reasonable force to protect students, staff, or school property.

Suspension and Expulsion

Certain offenses may result in immediate suspension (up to 5 days) or expulsion from Rising Sun, at the recommendation of the Head of School. The Head of School's suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary action is final, and not appealable. on the procedures for suspension and expulsion may be found in the RSMS Charter and are available in the front office upon request.

. Students may be suspended or expelled for violating any one of the enumerated offenses found in the RSMS Charter:

1. **Discretionary Suspension Offenses.** Students may be suspended for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
 - a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
 - b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
 - c) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
 - d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
 - e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
 - f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
 - g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
 - h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
 - i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
 - j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
 - k) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors,

teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

- l) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- m) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- n) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.
- o) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- p) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- q) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, "hazing" means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- r) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property. For purposes of this section, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.
- s) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- t) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- u) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- v) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.
 - 1) "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
 - ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.

- iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
 - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.
- 2) “Electronic Act” means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
- i. A message, text, sound, or image.
 - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A “burn page” means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
 - (b) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “Credible impersonation” means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
 - (c) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. “False profile” means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
 - iii. Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.
- w) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).
- x) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee’s concurrence.
2. **Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses:** Students must be suspended and recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee’s concurrence.
3. **Discretionary Expellable Offenses:** Students may be recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:
- a) Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
 - b) Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
 - c) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
 - d) Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.

- e) Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- f) Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- g) Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- h) Possessed or used tobacco or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
- i) Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j) Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5.
- k) Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
- l) Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- m) Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- n) Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code Sections 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code Section 243.4.
- o) Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- p) Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- q) Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing. For the purposes of this subdivision, "hazing" means a method of initiation or preinitiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current, or prospective pupil. For purposes of this section, "hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- r) Made terroristic threats against school officials and/or school property. For purposes of this section, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of school property, or the personal property of the person threatened or his or her immediate family.
- s) Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5. For the purposes of this section, the conduct described in Section 212.5 must be considered by a reasonable person of the same gender as the victim to be sufficiently severe or pervasive to have a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- t) Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause or participated in an act of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233 of the Education Code. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- u) Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. This section shall apply to pupils in any of grades 4 to 12, inclusive.
- v) Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act.

- 1) "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a student or group of students which would be deemed hate violence or harassment, threats, or intimidation, which are directed toward one or more students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:
 - i. Placing a reasonable student (defined as a student, including, but is not limited to, a student with exceptional needs, who exercises average care, skill, and judgment in conduct for a person of his or her age, or for a person of his or her age with exceptional needs) or students in fear of harm to that student's or those students' person or property.
 - ii. Causing a reasonable student to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
 - iii. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.
 - iv. Causing a reasonable student to experience substantial interference with his or her ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the Charter School.

- 2) "Electronic Act" means the creation or transmission originated on or off the school site by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - i. A message, text, sound, or image.
 - ii. A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Posting to or creating a burn page. A "burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects as listed in subparagraph (1) above.
 - (b) Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
 - (c) Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed in subparagraph (1) above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
 - iii. Notwithstanding subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.

- w) A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury shall be subject to discipline pursuant to subdivision (1).
- x) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee's concurrence.

4. **Non-Discretionary Expellable Offenses:** Students must be recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts when it is determined pursuant to the procedures below that the pupil:

- a) Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, explosive, or other dangerous object unless,

in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee's concurrence.

If it is determined by the Administrative Panel and/or Board of Directors that a student has brought a fire arm or destructive device, as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, on to campus or to have possessed a firearm or dangerous device on campus, the student shall be expelled for one year, pursuant to the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994. In such instances, the pupil shall be provided due process rights of notice and a hearing as required in this policy.

The term "firearm" means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such term does not include an antique firearm.

The term "destructive device" means (A) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, including but not limited to: (i) bomb, (ii) grenade, (iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (v) mine, or (vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clause.

Parents/guardians will be notified consistent with the Charter Procedures when their child is suspended and/or recommended for expulsion.

Weapons and Dangerous Substances:

No weapons of any kind may be brought to the school; real or imaginary. This includes the parking lots and surrounding areas of the school. We are required by law to take immediate and strong action should a student bring weapons to school. This consists of, but is not limited to, all knives, including pocket knives, daggers, martial art weapons, guns, air guns, replica guns, ammunition, incendiary devices and fireworks.

Parents are asked to discuss this with their children in an age-appropriate manner to help them understand the seriousness of these items. Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for the child bringing such items to school and will be called immediately to pick up their child should he/she be discovered to have a dangerous object. School officials have the right to search student backpacks, or other containers if the possession of a weapon or dangerous substance is suspected.

VII. Grievance Rights and Procedures

Grievance/Complaint Procedures

In the event of a dispute involving a family or student, and after a good faith effort with the person or people involved to thoroughly resolve the dispute, parents and/or students may submit their complaint using the process outlined below. The good faith effort will include problem identification, possible solutions, selection of resolution, timeline for implementation, and follow-up. A written summary of the good faith effort will be included in the student's file.

Grievance Filing Process

1. Parent or student will submit their grievance in writing to the Head of School five days after a failed good faith effort to resolve the dispute.
2. Within ten working days of receipt of the written complaint, the Head of School will schedule a hearing at a mutually convenient time and place for discussion of the complaint with all parties involved, but in no event later than 20 days after receipt of the written complaint and after notification to the parent and/or student.

A decision is established by a majority vote of the members of the committee hearing the grievance shall be rendered within five working days of the completion of the hearing. Any such proceedings shall be conducted in closed session, unless requested otherwise by the parent or student. In the event that additional information, investigation, or hearings are necessary after the initial hearing, the hearing may be continued and the final decision shall be made within five working days of the last committee hearing, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. Any additional proceedings shall be completed as soon as circumstances allow.

The decision of the committee shall be final unless appealed by the parent or student to the Board of Directors, which may refer it to a board committee and review and modify the decision of the committee if it finds that the committee failed to properly follow the grievance process described above. A request for an appeal may be submitted to the Chair of the Board within five days of the decision of the committee. After receiving an appeal request, the Chair shall schedule a meeting to consider such an appeal as soon as circumstances allow. Board members who are interested parties, as defined in the Bylaws, shall recuse themselves from reviews of student/Family Committee decisions to the extent permitted under law. Any such proceedings shall be conducted in closed session, unless requested otherwise by the parent and/or student.

Uniform Complaint Procedures

RSMS has the primary responsibility to insure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations and has established procedures to address allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, and complaints alleging violation of state or federal laws governing educational programs and the charging of unlawful pupil fees.

RSMS shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints using policies and procedures known as the UCP adopted by our local board. Unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaints may be based on actual or perceived characteristics of age, ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, gender expression, gender identity, gender, genetic information, disability, marital status, nationality, national origin, race or ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or on a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any RSMS program or activity that receives or benefits from state financial assistance.

The UCP shall also be used when addressing complaints alleging failure to comply with state and/or federal laws in:

- Adult Education
- After School Education and Safety Programs
- Agricultural Vocational Education Programs
- American Indian Education Centers and Early Child Education Program Assessments
- Foster and Homeless Youth Services
- Consolidated Categorical Aid Programs
- Migrant Education
- Career Technical and Technical Education and Training Programs
- Child Care and Developmental Programs
- Child Nutrition Programs
- Regional Occupational Centers and Special Education Programs
- Safety Planning Requirements

A complaint of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees may be filed pursuant to the local UCP. A pupil enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.
- A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, clothes, or other materials or equipment.
- A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment, or clothes associated with an educational activity.

A pupil fee complaint shall not be filed later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred. Complaints of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees are filed with the Head of School of a school. A complaint regarding pupil fees may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information to support an allegation of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees. Complaints other than complaints relating to pupil fees must be filed in writing with the following compliance officer:

Karl Zierhut, Head of School
Rising Sun Montessori School
4940 Robert J. Mathews Pkwy.
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
916-936-2333 or 530-350-9500

Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, must be filed within six (6) months from the date the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, occurred or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, unless the time for filing is extended by the superintendent or his or her designee.

Complaints will be investigated, and a written Decision or report will be sent to the complainant within sixty (60) days from the receipt of the complaint. This sixty (60) day time period may be extended by written agreement of the complainant. The RSMS person responsible for investigating the complaint shall conduct and complete the investigation in accordance with California regulations and in accordance with RSMS's procedures.

The complainant has a right to appeal RSMS's Decision to the California Department of Education ("CDE") by filing a written appeal within 15 days of receiving the Decision. The appeal must include a copy of the complaint filed with RSMS and a copy of RSMS's Decision.

Civil law remedies may be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying laws, if applicable. In appropriate cases, an appeal may be filed pursuant to Education Code Section 262.3. A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of [the LEA]'s complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders.

A copy of the UCP policy and complaint procedures shall be available free of charge in the Main Office. For further information on any part of the complaint procedures, including filing a complaint or requesting a copy of the complaint procedures, please contact the Head of School.

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RSMS FAMILY HANDBOOK

Family Acknowledgement

Student Name: _____

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Please sign and return to the office to acknowledge you have read and reviewed the Rising Sun Montessori School Family Handbook.

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I pledge to comply with said policies as stated in the Rising Sun Montessori School Family Handbook. I also understand that if I have any questions about any school policy or procedure, it is my responsibility to seek clarification from the school administration.

My signature verifies that I have received and read the Rising Sun Montessori School Family Handbook.

Parent/Guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Please print

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Signature

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Date

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Please print

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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Student(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Please Print or Sign Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Please Print or Sign Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Please Print or Sign Name