



CORNERSTONE *Christian Montessori*

Parent Handbook
2021/2022

**23830 County Road 106
Elkhart, IN 46514**

Phone: 574-264-4444

Before Care Hours: 6:30 A.M. – 8:20 A.M.

School Hours: 8:20 A.M. – 3:15 P.M.

After Care Hours: 3:15 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

Office Hours: 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Website: www.CornerstoneChristianMontessori.org

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Mission Statement

To provide a Christ-centered and family-focused community that educates and nurtures the whole child based on the Montessori Method, preparing each one to become a leader with integrity who honors God and contributes to society.

Our Vision

By establishing an approach defined by our faith and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of spiritual, academic, and social growth, Cornerstone Christian Montessori seeks to empower children to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith, strive for academic excellence through the Montessori Method, and to serve the community as Christ has called us to do.

Statement of Faith/Doctrine

- We believe that there is one God eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- We believe that the Bible is the infallible, authoritative, and inspired Word of God.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful men, repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ result in regeneration by the Holy Spirit and that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. (Jn. 3:3-8, 16-18, 36; Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9; I Cor. 12:3).
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Jesus Christ.

Educational Philosophy

Cornerstone Christian Montessori, Inc. is a non-profit corporation which operates a school, providing a Montessori curriculum within a Christian atmosphere. The primary purpose of the school is to educate the whole child: academically, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. The activities of the school are designed to develop the whole individual and are intended to benefit not only the child but the family and the community as well.

We offer a Montessori education for children six weeks through 6th grade with before and aftercare. The Montessori curriculum includes the areas of Practical Life (learning the necessities of everyday living), Sensorial (education and refinement of the five senses), Language, Mathematics, Cultural (Botany,

Zoology, Environmental Science, and History), Music, Art, Bible, and Foreign Language. These take place within an approximate three-hour work cycle.

Cornerstone Christian Montessori School (“CCM”) offers children the opportunity to develop in a non-competitive, peaceful, and friendly environment. CCM provides both an academic benefit and a societal benefit. The classrooms, which contain a mixed age group of children, create within itself a positive “influence of society” for the children within the classroom. Children are given the freedom to move about and talk with each other when appropriate. The environment purposefully consists of only one set of each group of materials in the classroom. A child must wait until another has finished their work and put the material back in its place before he can take it himself. They then exercise patience and respect for others.

Incorporated into our wonderful environment is the Christian aspect of our approach to education. We teach the Bible, in Montessori style with Christian values, and encourage each child’s relationship with God on a daily basis. The combination of the Montessori philosophy within a Christian environment helps the child’s development of personality and social behavior, which is essential to our program. The children’s good manners, their gentleness with each other, their confidence and ease with those both younger and older than themselves (including adults), their care of the environment and their eagerness and energy for learning, make clear the value of a Christian Montessori education.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONCERNS

Not-for-Profit Status

The Internal Revenue Service has granted the school Not-for-Profit status as a 501c (3) Corporation. The Corporation, Cornerstone Christian Montessori, Inc. is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes. It is authorized to accept, hold, administer, invest, and disburse for charitable and educational purposes such funds as may be given to it by any person, persons or corporations. It is also authorized to receive gifts, assistance and make financial and other types of contributions to charitable and educational organizations. It is authorized to do all things that may appear necessary and useful in accomplishing the charitable and educational purposes set out in the Articles of Incorporation.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Cornerstone Christian Montessori, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its admissions policies, educational policies, scholarships and loan programs, athletics and other school-administered programs.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Curriculum

The Elementary Curriculum used at CCM begins with the Montessori curriculum as the framework, and then correlates with the Indiana State Standards and the Core Knowledge Foundation Curriculum. These three documents are referenced and cross-referenced to prevent repetitions or gaps in instruction. The curriculum begins with a solid foundation in basic knowledge (facts) and then encourages the students to apply this knowledge to new situations, analyze all parts, synthesize this information into something new, and finally evaluate or judge the value of the new situation using past experiences and newly forming criteria. This process provides a solid basis on which to build skills, instruction, and

understanding. The curriculum offers a coherent plan that builds year by year. The Montessori education is centered on a 3-year curriculum plan that allows children to develop leadership skills and self-confidence through the entire cycle.

Classroom Ratios

Following state standards, we adhere to the following ratios in our classrooms:

Infants (ages 6 weeks through 18 months) 4/1, Toddlers (18 months through 3 years) 6/1, Primary (3 through 6 years) 12/1 and Elementary 15/1. The levels typically found in a Montessori school correspond to the developmental stages of childhood.

Montessori classes are organized to encompass a multi-age span, which allows younger students to experience the daily stimulation of older role models, who in turn blossom in the responsibilities of leadership. Students not only learn “with” each other but “from” each other. By consciously bringing children together in a group that is large enough to allow for two-thirds of the children to return every year, the school environment promotes continuity and the development of a very different level of relationship between the children and their peers, as well as between children and their teachers. Classes tend to be fairly stable communities, with only the oldest third moving on to the next level each year.

Classroom Design

Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The children’s innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained teacher. Within a framework of order, the children learn concentration and joyful self-discipline. They progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their capabilities. This environment allows them the opportunity to become human beings able to function independently and interdependently.

Phonetic Approach to Reading

The school uses a phonetic approach to reading. Initially, the child is helped to identify sounds. Next, tactile and muscle memory is employed by having the child trace large sandpaper letters to learn the symbol of each consonant and short vowel. In a steady progression, the phonemes of our language are introduced, so the child can master each, thus building a solid foundation. This mastery ensures greater attack skills, confidence, and a love of reading. Names of the letters are introduced after the child is into long vowel work.

Testing

CCM will administer a standardized test (NWEA and DIBELS) to all students ages five through 12 three times per year.

Homework Policy

CCM does not typically assign homework. However, Kindergarten and Elementary students may be asked to practice memorization skills at home, such as sight words and math facts. Students are taught Bible verses and asked to memorize them so they can store the Word in their hearts.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions

The school welcomes all students regardless of race, religion, national origin, or gender. Please see the Nondiscriminatory Policy.

Enrollment

All enrollment forms are due the first day of school unless the School grants a waiver period. This waiver period may not exceed 20 days. If the required forms are not received during that period, the student will be excluded from classes until the forms are furnished.

The required forms include:

- Enrollment Form
- Tuition Agreement
- Consent for Emergency Treatment Card
- Health History Report (Physician)
- Examination Record (Parent)
- Statement of Responsibility
- Trip Permission Form
- Authorization to Transport
- Birth Certificate (for all students)
- Immunization Record/Religious Objection
- Parent's Notice (Infant and Toddler)
- Signature Confirmation Page

A new Physician's Examination Record is needed for all returning Infants and Toddlers. Immunizations need to be up to date, and it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify the office of any updated vaccinations for their child during the year.

Financial Assistance Policy

An important aspect of Cornerstone Christian Montessori's community outreach effort is our desire to make Christ-centered Montessori education accessible to all families, regardless of their ability to pay. Cornerstone Christian Montessori seeks to support its families and provide a loving learning environment for all children who are part of our school community. Each year, through its budgeting process, the Cornerstone Christian Montessori Board of Directors determines an amount of money to be allocated for financial assistance. The fundraising efforts of our volunteers throughout the school community are our first source for these funds. Grantors, school families, alumni, and friends of the school provide additional support through their direct donations.

The amount of financial assistance offered to each family is determined by our income guidelines (below), by the amount of money available, and by the number of applications in a given school year. Additional factors taken into account include, but are not limited to: *family size; exceptional family stress (death, divorce, illness, loss of job); or physical, emotional, or educational special needs of a child*. Families may include a written statement of any personal circumstances they feel deserve additional consideration.

- All required enrollment forms and *registration fee (\$225) must be turned in with the financial aid application (FAST) to qualify. FAST requires a small non-refundable fee for application processing.
- **Each family must pay some tuition**, according to its means.

- Families are notified of their awards at the time of placement.
- Awards for new families and for families turning in applications after the deadline are subject to the limitation of the remaining funds available.
- Documentation to verify income, consisting of federal income **tax return** (1040/1040A/1040EZ, 1099, Example Schedule C, etc.), W2 or a recent **pay stub**, must be included with the FAST application.
- Families unable to provide a tax return or pay stub are asked to contact FAST about alternative income documentation.
- Decisions are made by the Financial Aid Committee through anonymous review (i.e. no identifying information).
- All requests for assistance and information provided are **strictly confidential** and will not be shared.
- Families receiving assistance are required to contribute volunteer hours to the school as part of their enrollment agreement. Details of this requirement will be outlined in the financial aid agreement to be signed by the family.

**Registration fee is refundable only if the financial aid offer is not accepted by the applicant family.*

New Student Probation Period

Each child enrolling in the school will do so under a 6-week probationary period. It generally takes 30 school days for a child to adjust to the routine of his/her class. During this six week time frame, if a student appears to have a behavioral, social or medical problem beyond the normal scope of the classroom, the teacher(s) will consult with each other as a team, to assess the situation. The teachers will then observe the child in the classroom. If it is determined that there is a serious problem that needs further intervention, the parent(s) will be contacted. If a child's behavior is disruptive to the program, the parent will be asked to participate in a conference with the teacher(s) to discuss the situation. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to leave the program. If a child withdraws from CCM at this time because of behavior, a prorated tuition amount will be charged to the family and all other tuition will be refunded within 14 business days. Registration fees will not be refunded.

Tuition and Billing

The tuition may be paid in full, with a discount offered for early annual payment (5%) due before the 15th of August. The other option for tuition payments is monthly installments. If the monthly installment plan is chosen, the annual payment is divided into equal installments over 10 months. Tuition is due by the 15th of every month with a \$25 late fee assessed on the 16th of the month, and then \$50 on the 25th of the month unless prior arrangements are made with the office.

Discount Policy:

For families with multiple children enrolled, there is a 5% discount for the second child and a 10% discount for the third child.

Parents agree, when enrolling their child, to be responsible in a variety of ways. Because the school is a non-profit organization and is funded solely by tuition, fundraisers, and donations, parents agree to pay tuition when due, pay all extra care bills promptly, contribute to the fundraisers and volunteer time throughout the year.

The school may/will remove a child if the tuition is delinquent for 60 days.

All registration fees are non-refundable-except as described in the Financial Aid Policy on page 8.*

Refund policy:

A prorated refund is given only if a child is withdrawn during the six-week “trial-period,” because of behavior issues, (see the parent Handbook above) and is refunded within 14-business days. Registration fees are not refunded. If a child is voluntarily withdrawn after the 6-week trial period, a parent is still responsible to fulfill the contract for the school year and as stated on the Tuition Agreement form. Ultimate decisions may be determined at the discretion of the Head of School.

Transfer Records

Student records will not be released if the account is not paid in full.

Before and After Care

Now & Then is an option for students who occasionally need to use the Before and/or After Care program. For more frequent use, you may want to consider enrolling in our Full-Time Before and After-School Care Program. The full-time option allows you to include the payment with your regular monthly tuition payments. For more information about the full-time option, please contact the Office. Students who are registered in the *Now and Then* Program who are not picked up at their regular dismissal time will go to After Care and will be assessed the minimum charge.

Students must be pre-registered in the program before attending by annually completing and returning the attached registration form to the office along with the \$75 per student minimum fee. Funds should be added throughout the school year, as needed. You will be notified via email when balances become low or negative. Any money not used will be refunded and mailed to you at the end of the school year. There is a minimum 30-minute charge for students checking into Before or After Care. The fee for this service is \$6.00 per hour. Without on-going, sufficient pre-paid funds, your student will not be eligible to attend. Each family needs a four-digit pin to sign your child in and out of Before/After Care using the Bright Wheel app.

Before Care opens at 6:30 a.m. After Care closes at 6:00 p.m.

All times are local time. Please note that the office closes at 4:00 p.m. daily and minimum staff is on-site. Late pick up will result in a fee of \$10 for every 5 minutes. Parents are expected to have back up/emergency transportation for the child if ever unable to personally pick the child up by 6:00 p.m. Please be considerate that the After Care staff has family responsibilities and are not employed beyond 6:00 p.m. For any student still remaining at 6:30 p.m., local authorities will be called.

All Classes/Programs are closed and no Before/After Care is available on (unless the student is on options 2 or 3):

Labor Day Thanksgiving Break (Wed-Fri) Winter Break President’s Day

Spring Break Memorial Day

Childcare is available Winter Break & Spring Break for an extra pre-paid fee, based on enrollment. Please consult the current school year’s calendar for specific dates and additional

closings.

Please contact the office before 2:30 PM if your child will need to attend After Care. If you contact the office on the same day as care is needed, there might not be appropriate staffing to accommodate your request.

DISCIPLINE

Children to 18 months of age:

Students at this age require only redirection to change behavior. The goal of redirecting children is social learning, not punishment. Guidance techniques are age-appropriate and include giving children choices, redirection of the child to more acceptable activities, helping a child express feelings in appropriate ways, and assisting children with conflict resolution. Self-discipline begins with clearly presented ground rules, expectations, and procedures for self-management and respectful social behavior.

When an inappropriate behavior persists, the teacher monitors the child's activities by limiting:

- Freedom to socialize
- Working partnerships
- Selection of work area and choice of activity

The child regains independence and freedom when respectful and appropriate behavior is consistently exhibited.

When a child does not respond cooperatively to the above procedures or does not show consistent progress in demonstrating expected behavior, the child:

- Is removed and isolated from the group or activity or peers
- May be assigned a limited work area
- May be required to stay near a teacher or assistant
- If needed, the child will be isolated from the rest of the class.

The parents will be contacted by the child's teacher to discuss and establish a collective plan of action between home and school to achieve the expected self-management needed for success in a Montessori class. (If needed the Head of School may be involved.) If a child does not respond cooperatively to this second stage process, arrangements will be made with the parents for the child to be taken home when identified behavior patterns occur. This includes:

- The child bites another person
- The child's tantrum is uncontrollable and prolonged
- The child intentionally or seriously hurts another person
- The child is consistently aggressive with other children

For example: If a child bites another person the parent is contacted, the 2nd time the child is sent home, and subsequently, this will be done. A collective plan of action will need to take place for continued incidents as determined by the teacher, parent, and Head of School

Toddler Program:

Hitting, Kicking, pushing, and spitting:

1st Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher. The teacher and student will discuss what was inappropriate.

2nd Offense in a Day: Student will sit by himself/herself.

3rd Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school for the remainder of the day.

Biting:

1st Offense in a Day: Parents of both students will be called.

2nd Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school for the remainder of the day.

If a maximum number of offenses is reached by a student for five school days for any of the aggressive behaviors outlined above, the student will be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead teacher, the parents, and the Head of School. At this time, a behavioral action plan will be presented and discussed.

Behavioral Action Plan:

If a student has a documented history of reaching the maximum number of offenses (for either re-directable or aggressive behaviors) for five school days, it is the responsibility of the lead teacher to write and implement a behavioral action plan to share with parents before the student returns to class. The executive or educational director must also be present at this meeting. The goal of the behavioral action plan is to observe, explore, and document whether accommodations/modifications in the current classroom environment will be enough to help the student be a positive and contributing member of the class. Behavioral action plans will be given a four-week period of implementation. (During this period of implementation the normal behavioral consequences as outlined above will continue to be followed.) If at the conclusion of the four week period the teacher observes positive change being made, s/he may choose to adjust the current behavioral sanction plan and allow for another four-week period of implementation. If minimal or no positive change is being observed, the lead teacher and executive director will make a decision as to whether CCM is an appropriate environment for this student.

Primary and Elementary:

Discipline plan is comprised of five phases, or steps, that build in a hierarchical methodology. This disciplinary program is implemented in the Primary through Upper Elementary classrooms. The disciplinary approach is discussed with the children before implementation. Particularly in phases 2 through 5, the School will work with the family to develop a disciplinary action/program that is tailored to the specific needs of the student. The purpose of any disciplinary action is to teach the individual child and to preserve a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In this way, the family and School partner in a way that benefits the child and the class. There are three steps in the hierarchy of the warning phase of the Discipline Plan (please note the next paragraph):

Phase 1: Warning

The warning phase of the disciplinary plan is the most common and obvious to the student. Most students will receive a warning from time to time.

Phase 2: Service

On the rare occasion that a student reaches multiple warnings or does something that the student can make amends for, the second phase of the disciplinary program begins. He/she will receive “community service work” to be performed at the school. Administrators and teachers will convene for consultation. The parent(s) or guardians will be contacted by phone, and a conference will be scheduled or the parent will be notified via BrightWheel. At times, and at the discretion of the Head of School, parents or guardians may be required to monitor their child as he/she completes their assigned community service

work.

Phase 3: Probation

Should a child continue to display inappropriate behavior, after Phase 2 of the disciplinary program, the student will enter the third phase of the plan. At the discretion of the School administration, a student who continues to misbehave may be placed on probation. While disciplinary actions may eventually result in probation, there are additional circumstances wherein the student may be placed on probation. While probation is at the sole discretion of the School administration, the parents or guardians will always be consulted and notified as to the reason and duration of the probationary period. Among the possible circumstances that may result in probation (or phase 3 of the disciplinary program) are the following:

- Displaying behavior that interferes with the normal educational function of school
- Poses a threat to other persons, School property or themselves

Probation will begin with a period of exclusion from classroom activities for a set period.

Being on probation means that the parents and the teacher, or administrators, have already discussed the needs of the child, but no progress is being seen in the classroom. The probationary status also means that should the same behavior or problems continue the School will exercise its right to suspend the student.

Phase 4: Suspension

At the sole discretion of the administration, if disciplinary problems continue after a disciplinary period of probation, an in or out of school suspension will result. This is the fourth phase of the disciplinary program. During phase 4, the parents will meet with teachers and administrators to form a plan for directing the child to become more successful. Suspensions are for a period of one to three days and are the result of conduct that interferes with educational functions of the School. The suspension may be in-school or out-of-school, at the discretion of the administration. During the time the child is suspended from school, the parents must make an appointment to meet with the teacher and administrators, to make an individual plan for the future placement of the child. As necessary, the School may recommend (or require) that parents obtain suitable outside professional help for the student. Such recommendations are always made in the best interests of the student and to create an opportunity for the student to succeed in a functional and healthy classroom environment.

Phase 5: Expulsion

After phase 4 of the plan, and if disciplinary problems persist, a recommendation to expel the student for the remainder of the school year (or until correctional actions are complete) will be made. Inappropriate behavior such as harassment, bullying, sexual innuendos, and/or touching of another's body in inappropriate ways is deemed unacceptable and will warrant an immediate expulsion (phase 5 of the disciplinary program).

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Conferences

Formal Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice each school year (once in the fall and once in the spring). Conferences are designed to keep parents up-to-date on their child's activities and progress in the classroom. Sign-ups are available before the conferences. Special consultations can be arranged at other times by contacting the teacher. Please arrange these visits ahead of time. Any lengthy discussion about your child should be in a private conference, not in the classroom or hallway. Please refrain from

talking with other teachers about your child’s classroom—appropriate communication is with your child’s teacher or the Head of School. Please feel free to email your child’s teacher or call the main office if you need to speak with them on a more regular basis. **Please do not text teachers during class time hours**, they are working with your children at this time and not readily available to text. All e-mails and Brightwheel messages will be returned within 24 hours unless the message is sent on a Friday, at which time it will be responded to by Monday.

Newsletters/Blogs/Facebook

Monthly newsletters are posted on our blog on our website. Please read them carefully as they contain information on school events, classroom activities, field trips, parenting ideas, and general information.

Individual teachers may send classroom newsletters, notices, and emails relating information specific to their class.

The community Facebook page is available for all currently enrolled families at CCM. This page has school announcements as well as pictures of CCM’s daily activities.

Parent Involvement

As a small school with no outside funding, it is critical that each parent volunteer throughout the school year. Parents and grandparents are encouraged to come assist in various projects and programs. Help is always needed to make materials for the classroom, listen to children read, help with playground maintenance, coordinate and run the yearly events such as the Book Fair, the Auction, and many more projects, both big and small, as they arise.

Social Events

To promote a feeling of community, a variety of events will be scheduled throughout the year. Some of the events are also fundraising events, but some are just designed as get-togethers. Please see the yearly calendar.

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM BASICS

Accident Reports

An “Accident Report” form is used to communicate accidents or illnesses to parents. If an accident is severe, parents are notified by phone or Brightwheel. A “Consent for Emergency Treatment” card is kept on file in the school office. When an accident involving a major cut, broken bone, or an injury to the head, neck or spine occurs, 9-1-1 will be immediately called, followed by a call to parents. When a minor accident occurs, first-aid is administered.

Arrival and Dismissal Car Lines (Parking Lot Procedures)

To make the carpool line move smoothly and safely, we have established a few guidelines. As you approach the building, please form a line on the right-hand side of the drive. Pull up to the indicated area, where a staff member will come to your car, help your child out, so they can enter the building. Please have any backpacks, bags, and lunches ready to go and seat belts unbuckled. Please do not get out of your car to assist your children. Staff members will handle children entering and exiting cars. Please have your child located on the passenger side of the car whenever possible, to prevent individuals walking through traffic. Please do not use cell phones during arrival and dismissal. Smoking or vaping is not allowed on school property.

If you come into the building for any reason (visiting the office, observing, volunteering, bringing your child late or picking up your child early), please park in a designated parking space, enter through the east office door, and sign in at the office. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR IN THE TRAFFIC LANE!** Do not leave any unattended children in your vehicle while visiting inside the school. This is mandated by the state safety inspector.

Arrival time for infants, toddlers, primary, and elementary classes is from 8:20 to 8:35 a.m.

Half-day Toddler and half-day Primary dismissal time is 11:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Any child that is not picked up on time will be assessed a late fee of \$10 per every five minutes.

All Elementary and full-day Infant, Toddler, and Primary dismissal times are 3:15 to 3:30. Staff members will bring your child to your car during these times. If your child needs to be buckled into their carseat, please find a parking spot and buckle them before leaving the parking lot. Any child not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be taken to Aftercare, and the Now and Then rate will be charged.

Attendance

Daily attendance is expected, except in the case of illness, vacation, or special circumstances. A child quickly feels “out of sync” with the other children when they are not present at school regularly. The sense of community which forms between the children is adversely affected when a child is repeatedly absent. Elementary students are required to attend school unless the absence is approved. Please notify the teacher or the office of an anticipated prolonged absence. Tuition will not be refunded for days when a student is absent.

Tardy Policy

Arrival time for all students is 8:20 to 8:35 a.m. Students arriving to morning classes after 8:35 a.m. will be recorded tardy. Only those students bringing a note from a doctor, dentist, or orthodontist will be given an excused tardy.

Authority to Transport Children

For someone other than parents to pick up a child from school, the person must be listed as an approved pick-up in Brightwheel. Please send a note each day that your child will be going with someone else or message on Brightwheel before 2 p.m.. In this way, the staff knows that on that particular day, the child may be released to the specific authorized person. If the person is unfamiliar to staff members, he/she will be asked to show identification.

Custody

If there has been a divorce or legal separation, a copy of the agreement containing custody information and the signature of the judge must be on file in the school office. Without such documentation, children will be released to either parent.

Birthdays

Birthdays celebrations are held for all children who choose to do so. Those students born in the summer may celebrate their birthdays just before the end of the school year or on their half birthday (six months from their actual birth date). Parents need to contact their child’s teacher to schedule the birthday celebration. In the event of multiple birthdays in a given week, the teacher will help to coordinate the special birthday snacks amongst the participating families.

Students with a birthday each month will be invited to lunch with the Head of School on one special day.

Should you choose to send in birthday snacks, these snacks need to be healthy choices containing very low sugar. Suggested items include fresh fruit and dip, fruit kabobs, cheese and crackers, frozen yogurt or muffins. Please be conscious of classroom allergies. Birthday plates and napkins may also be sent. The birthday child may also bring pictures of him/herself as a baby. No balloon arrangements, gift bags, or videos may be sent.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, no invitations for outside birthday parties may be distributed at school unless the entire class or all girls or all boys are invited.

Classroom Etiquette for Parents

Parents should not come into the classroom during class time unless directed to do so by the teacher. For the sake of the children, the work time and environment is to be protected. Conversations between the teacher and parents can sometimes be disruptive to a class and should be held either at another location or at another time.

Parents who do come into the classrooms should do so quietly. Please remember the following rules of etiquette:

- Come into the classroom as quietly as possible.
- Be as unobtrusive as possible to help maintain the integrity of the class that is in progress.
- Please do not attempt to converse with your child's teacher before class starts in the morning. The teacher needs every moment to attend to the environment and the students, so that class will begin smoothly and on time. Each teacher has an established email account with the school. Parents are encouraged to utilize email or Brightwheel for non-urgent communications with their student's teacher.

Viewing windows are available for parents to have an unobstructed view of the classroom once the class is underway and the hallways are clear of children. Please notify the office that you would like to observe, and the lights will be turned off for better viewing.

Classroom placement

Appropriate classroom placement recommended by Montessori and the state of Indiana and followed by Cornerstone Christian Montessori School is as follows.

- 6 weeks to 18 months as determined by birth month, on the first day of school, with Head of School and teacher input.
- 18 months-on the first day of school, with Head of School and teacher input to 3 years of age by birth month.
- 3 years of age, by the first day of school, with Head of School and teacher input, to 6 years of age by birth month.
- Pre-k to kindergarten, 5 years of age by **October 1, 2021**, with Head of School and teacher input.
- 6-9 years of age by birth month with Head of School and teacher input.
- 9-12 years of age by birth month with Head of School and teacher input.

Movement from one classroom to another, MAY occur during a break in the school calendar, it is

determined that the child is age-appropriate, (movement from toddlers to primary also requires that children are potty-trained,) the staff, parents, and Head of School agrees with the move, and space is available in the other classrooms. For most cases, students are recommended to remain with their class for an entire school year.

Dress Code and Clothing Suggestions

As a Christian community, our school promotes proper dress and personal hygiene. Appropriate clothing which respects the dignity of the person is required. Students should dress with modesty and neatness. It is the direct responsibility of the parent to make sure all students are dressed to help maintain a quality Christian educational environment.

Students should come to school dressed in clothes that will not distract from the learning experience. They should be comfortable and allow for easy movement. Primary, toddler and infant students spend time polishing, painting, preparing food, creating art, and playing outdoors. Please know your child's clothes may come home dirty from these works.

For Primary, Toddler, and Infant students, an extra set of clothing should be labeled and sent to school in a large zipper-lock bag, labeled with the child's name. Please note: The bag and all clothing need to be labeled with the child's name.

Learning to dress oneself is a major developmental task for two and three-year-olds. The feeling of independence a child gets from dressing himself helps to build self-esteem. The self-confidence spreads to other areas as he tries more new things. Help your child learn to dress himself by supplying clothing that he can be successful at putting on and taking off. Such items that are easier to handle are pull-on pants instead of overalls, elastic waistbands instead of belts, dresses that do not tie, zip, or button in the back. Make sure that zippers, buttons, and buttonholes are easy to do.

Slippers or slip-on shoes, labeled with the child's name, should be sent to school. Please make sure that they are easy to put on and do not have large characters that may impede your child's ability to sit and move about the classroom.

Clothing must be in good repair, free of rips and tears.

- For girls, shorts need to be worn under dresses and skirts for modesty reasons.
- Shirts with inappropriate pictures, sayings, or suggestive messages are not allowed.
- No bare backs or midriffs.
- No visible underwear.
- Children must wear shoes that have backs.
- Parents will be called to bring proper clothing to comply if children are outside of comfortable dress code.

Field Trips

Field trips are taken by the Primary and Elementary classes to supplement the educational program and to familiarize the children and their families with the resources of their immediate community. A "Field Trip" permission form is signed at the beginning of the school year to cover all field trips. Parents are notified by the teacher before each trip. Transportation is provided by parent volunteers in private vehicles.

Seat belts are required for each child who is not required by law to be in a car/booster seat. All children under 8 years, or 80 pounds, must have an appropriate car/booster seat. Parents will need to provide a car seat for the trip, clearly labeled with the child's name. If a child does not have his/her car/booster seat, they will not be allowed to attend the field trip.

All field trips are considered to be educational and are still counted as part of the educational day for the school. Therefore, Cornerstone Christian Montessori cannot allow siblings who are not students at CCM to attend these functions. This restriction is primarily based upon insurance liability issues. Siblings who are currently attending CCM but are in a separate educational level will not be allowed to attend field trips unless their class is also scheduled for the same field trip.

Fire and Storm Drills

Regularly scheduled (monthly) fire, safety and storm drills are held in accordance with the guidelines set by the State. In the event of an actual fire or storm emergency, **No student will be allowed to leave the building with a parent/guardian until the threat has passed. This is for safety reasons.**

Illness Guidelines

To ensure the health of our community, it is CCM's policy that children stay at home if they exhibit the following symptoms or conditions. Children will be excluded from attending school for the following reasons (this list covers the most common illnesses, but it is not inclusive of all reasons for exclusion):

- Chicken Pox – until all blisters have dried and crusted.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) – until 24 hours after the beginning of antibiotics. If your health provider decides not to treat your child, a note is needed authorizing return to school.
- Coughing (severe, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, rapid or difficult breathing) – medical attention must be sought and a note authorizing a return to school.
- Croup – medical attention must be sought, and a doctor's authorization to return to school.
- Diarrhea – the child may return to school after 24 hours of a firm stool (children are sent home after two diarrhea incidents in the same day).
- Fevers-if a child becomes ill at school (is feverish 100.4 degrees or above, vomiting, diarrhea, or in obvious discomfort), we will contact the parents. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will call the emergency contact person listed on the enrollment form.
 - Fever – a child must be fever-free without the aids of medication for 24 hours before returning to school
- Head lice – until after treatment and all nits are removed.
- Impetigo – until 24 hours after treatment starts.
- Ringworm – may return after treatment starts and the affected area is covered for the first 48 hours.
- RSV – seek medical advice and must have a doctor's authorization to return to school.
- Strep Throat – until 24 hours after treatment and the child can participate in usual activities.
- Vaccine-Preventable Diseases – must have doctor's authorization to return to school.
- Vomiting – until 24 hours symptom-free or a health care provider approves return to school.
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease- this includes the following symptoms.
 - A fever, A poor appetite, A sore throat, A headache, Irritability, Painful-red blisters in the mouth, and/or A red rash on the hand and soles of the feet
 - If your child is diagnosed with Hand, Foot, and Mouth, please bring a doctor's note when your child returns to school.

Children who are being treated with antibiotics must complete a full 24 hours of treatment before they will be allowed to return to school. This means that if we send your child home at 11:00 a.m., but they do not get their first dose of antibiotics until 3:00 p.m, they cannot come back to school the next morning. **Please note:** If your child is not well enough to play outside, they are not well enough to come to school.

If a child complains of a headache or stomach ache, the school may wait before calling to see if the ailment might pass by itself. If the condition persists, the parents will be called to discuss the matter and determine if the child should remain at school or go home.

As soon as your child's doctor determines that your child has a communicable disease, please inform the school immediately. Notices of certain communicable diseases are sent home as soon as the school is notified. This notice contains information on the disease, the symptoms, and treatments.

Medication

Medication taken at school must have the "Medicine Request" form filled out by the parent. This includes all *prescription medication*. **Over the counter medications that may mask other possible symptoms* such as Tylenol, Motrin, or Benadryl will only be administered by the Head of School with implicit instructions by parents. (*Note that infant gas drops, saline nose drops, etc., will not mask other symptoms.)** New forms must be completed when medication is changed or when the time has elapsed. The medicine must be stored in the office. Please do not send medications to school in your child's lunch box or backpack.

All medication must be brought to school in the original container. CCM can only administer prescription medication that is prescribed for that particular child.

If parents administer OTC medication such as Tylenol, cough drops, cough syrup, etc., it must be administered before the child arrives for school. If an additional dose is required, ONLY parents or a designated responsible person may come to the school to administer an additional dose.

Parents are required to personally transfer all medication to and from school.

School personnel will not assume responsibility for any medication brought to school without proper notification or in noncompliance with any of these regulations.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found bin is located in the office entryway. Parents are asked to label all items their child brings to school, including coats, hats, gloves, boots, and other clothing items. All items brought for Show and Tell should be labeled or in a container/ Ziploc bag that is labeled with a name. If items are not claimed by the end of the school year, they will be given to charity.

Lunch Program

Children who stay all day need to bring sack lunches each day. Please include silverware and napkins.

The teacher is only able to heat each students' lunch for one minute in a microwave. You are encouraged to pack items that do not require heating.

General practices and procedures for children eating lunch at CCM include:

- Nutritional lunches are encouraged.
- Bento style lunch boxes are encouraged.
- Children will be encouraged to begin with their protein or main course, veggies, fruit and dairy products first before eating snacks or dessert.
- Leftovers will be placed back into either the original container or a zip lock bag to take home except students in the infant or toddler classrooms.
- Parents should try to heat food at home and pack in insulated containers whenever possible.
- Difficult to open containers should be opened at home and repackaged into containers that the child can open himself, to foster independence.
- Items not allowed are candy, pop, and gum.
- Bottles for infants must be capped and have the name of child, date, and time prepared. Bottle contents cannot be mixed with other ingredients. Bottles must be returned to parents at the end of the day. We can only accept unopened baby food jars (seal is not broken). If we feed a child directly from a jar, we must discard the contents after feeding. If we remove contents from a jar, we may keep the remaining contents up to 24 hours in a stored sealed in a refrigerator with the name of the child, date/time opened. Any food items left in serving dishes will be discarded.

Outdoor Play

Children love to be outdoors and enjoy outdoor activity whenever possible. Your child should come to school dressed according to the outdoor weather conditions. Sharp changes in temperature occur in fall and spring. Temperatures may be cool, and the ground may be damp early in the day.

In the winter, we will not go outside if either temperature or wind-chill is below 20 degrees.

School Closings

Because CCM does not have walkers or bus service, the Head of School ultimately decides delays or closing. These decisions are relayed to parents via WNDU, WSBT, Facebook, and/or Brightwheel no later than 5 am. Please note, in the event of a 2-hour delay, school will open at its normal time of 8:20-8:35, **WITH NO BEFORE CARE AVAILABLE.**

In the event of a power outage, the school will be canceled or delayed. We will post closings on our Facebook page and notify parents via Brightwheel.

School Property

Students are expected to respect all school property. Parents will be notified if damages are caused by their child. The cost of repairs will be billed to the parents, and the child may be suspended.

Snacks

Snacks are a necessary part of a basic diet rather than a special treat. Children's stomachs are small, and it is difficult for them to get enough at a single meal to last four or five hours until the next meal. Snacks are a good way for children to obtain the variety of nutrients they need.

In the Primary and Toddler classes, we ask that parents provide a week's worth of snack items one to

three times a year, depending upon class size. We have found it easier to do a week at a time rather than try to remember individual days scattered throughout the year. Snacks can be sent daily or all at once on the first day of the week.

Snacks should include a variety of food groups. Fruit and vegetable trays, cheese, yogurt, pretzels and crackers are all examples of appropriate snacks. Check with your child's teacher for special recommendations/requests.

Elementary students bring in their own snacks on an individual basis. All snacks must be healthy. Please see your child's teacher for more specific directions. We ask that you provide a reusable water bottle for snack/lunch time at school. This will be sent home each day and expected to return the next day cleaned.

BULLYING

Unfortunately, bullying behaviors can occur at any time during school. At Cornerstone Christian Montessori, bullying behaviors are not accepted or tolerated. Bullying which goes unchecked can have a negative impact on teaching and learning in a school. We have a responsibility to all members of the school community to take action against bullying.

CCM will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student.

A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

The terms bully and victim are shorthand terms that we use, because most people understand, through the use of those terms, the dynamic that Cornerstone Christian Montessori is addressing. We do not seek to negatively label individuals who are involved in bullying. We acknowledge that individuals who bully others are not bullies in every situation. We similarly acknowledge that victims of bullying are not victims in every situation.

Definition of Terms

Bullying occurs when a person is exposed, repeatedly, and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying may be defined as:

- Repeated violence, physical or psychological, against a victim unable to defend herself/himself.
- It can take several forms: e.g., teasing, threats, assault, exclusion, property theft and damage, and gestures.
- The term bullying also includes sexual, racist, or disability harassment. It can also refer to a pattern of victimizing behavior on the part of an individual.
- Bullying can occur between adults, between students as well as between students and adults in the setting of a school.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate,

repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. "Cyberbullying" is when a child, preteen or teen, is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to have a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. Once adults become involved, it is plain and simple cyber-harassment or cyberstalking. Adult cyber-harassment or cyberstalking is never called cyberbullying.

Values and Beliefs

At Cornerstone Christian Montessori, we believe that:

- Students have a right to learn in a safe environment. Where students are not safe, their capacity to learn is affected.
- Adults, in the setting of the school, have a right to teach and work in safety. Where adults do not feel safe, they cannot teach and work effectively.
- All members of the school community have a right to respectful, fair, and decent treatment.
- We value diversity and tolerance. Despite our differences, (ability, gender, race, appearance, or background) we can learn and work together in a productive way.
- We believe that individuals who have been harmed by bullying need to be believed and protected from further harm.
- We believe that the harm done by bullying can be repaired, in general, through taking educative, non-punitive responses, which aim at restoring the balance in relationships, which have been affected by bullying.
- We also believe that in the case of repeat offences, firm and unequivocal action needs to be taken.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to signal to all members of the school community that CCM takes bullying seriously, and that we will intervene in a way to deal with incidents of bullying in the school in a timely and consistent fashion. The policy outlines a basic approach and strategy that will be used when dealing with bullying if it occurs. The Anti-Bullying Policy supports the overall Christian beliefs of the school.

Preventative Action

It is important that the school community address the underlying causes of bullying relating to school organizational issues, learning and teaching issues, and relationship issues. Staff who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.

Conflict resolution procedures shall not supplant the authority of staff to act to prevent violence, ensure campus safety, maintain order, and discipline students.

Preventative Strategies

- Education and promotion of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy through continued education and open communication with everyone involved at CCM.
- Productive and respectful working relationships established between all members of the school community.
- Classroom ground rules, routines, and processes negotiated and applied consistently.
- Adequate supervision of students during breaks, on the playground, etc.
- Modeling of appropriate problem-solving, non-aggressive behaviors by adults in the school.

- Active intervention when bullying occurs.
- Education of students and staff in conflict resolution strategies, including peer mediation.
- Intervention Pathways for Dealing with Reported Incidents.
- All cases of bullying, which are reported, will be followed up. Members of the School community are encouraged to report bullying and can do so through many people:
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Head of School
- Reported cases can be dealt with in several ways. It is recognized, however, that each case is different and may require a special approach. In all cases, it is important to ensure:
 - That victims are believed and made safe
 - That the principles of natural justice and due process are followed regarding students reported for bullying.

TECHNOLOGY

Acceptable Internet Use, Terms, Conditions, and Regulations

It is the policy of Cornerstone Christian Montessori School to require the ethical use of the Internet and related technologies by all employees, volunteers, students, and parents as set forth below. Access privileges may be revoked; school disciplinary action may be taken, and appropriate legal action taken for any violations that are unethical and that may constitute a criminal offense.

- **Acceptable Use** -The use of the Internet and related technologies must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational (and religious) objectives of CCM. (Electronic communications of CCM should reflect the Christian principles and educational goals of the school.) Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for these networks.
- **Unacceptable Use** -Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to copyrighted material, threatening, violent, or obscene material, or material protected by trade secrets. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement, political lobbying, game playing, unauthorized "chat," or chain letter communication is also prohibited. Other examples of unacceptable information are pornography, information on bombs, inappropriate language, and communications, flame letters, etc. Acts of vandalism are prohibited. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or to damage hardware or software. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Unauthorized use of another's computer, access accounts, and files is prohibited.
- **Privileges** -The use of the Internet and related technologies is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges. Each employee, student, volunteer, and the parent who is provided access to the Internet and related technologies will participate in a training session with an assigned staff person(s) concerning the proper use of the network. The faculty, staff, or parent/guardian may request the administrator or designee to deny, revoke, or suspend a specific user's access to the Internet and related technologies due to unacceptable use.

Online Social Media

Due to the special, privileged, and powerful relationship between a Christian school and its parents and

students, sections of this policy are more restrictive. The first legal duty of a Christian school is to keep those entrusted to them safe. CCM acknowledges the right of employees, staff, students, and parents to use personal websites, social networks, wikis, weblogs, and other emerging technologies not only as a form of self-expression, and, in their capacity, as a means to further the work of the Christian faith. Additionally, the same rules that apply to school employee's messaging, and communications in traditional media apply in the online social media space. This specifically means that teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents associated with CCM are never to use social media to communicate directly, interact or respond directly to students unless that social media is operated, controlled and directed by the school itself. Simply because the development and implementation of an online social media program can be fast, easy, and inexpensive, does not mean that different rules apply. Bear in mind that posting of certain comments, photos, links or references to third-party websites and information on websites, social networks, wikis, and weblogs may have a harmful effect on the school, their reputation, and their employees.

In light of this possibility, CCM is requesting everyone to adhere to the following policy regarding the use of personal and professional websites, social networks, blogs and other emerging technologies. This policy supports other related school policies, including Acceptable Technology Use and the Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for all CCM Employees, students, and families:

- If you identify yourself as a member of the CCM family on a personal website, weblog or social network, you must make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone, and that your views do not necessarily reflect the views of the school. In the event that you identify yourself as a member of the CCM family on a personal website, blog or social network, to help reduce the potential for confusion, you are required to put the following notice in a reasonable prominent place on your site (e.g., at the bottom of your personal profile page) in at least a size 12 font bolded: **“The views expressed on this website/blog/social network are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of CCM.”**
- Parents are prohibited from providing a link or otherwise referring to the school website on their personal website, social networks, or blogs without consulting with and obtaining the approval of the Executive Board.
- Parents shall not allow any obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory or defamatory comments and images which reflects/discredits or causes embarrassment to the school, its employees, patrons, vendors, partners, affiliates, agencies, students, and others on personal, the school's and professional websites, any other social networks or blogs. The school reserves the right to regularly monitor any school based computers. Also, it is the policy of CCM that every portable information/data storage device used by a student may be examined at any time because it may contain something dangerous.
- Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you "remove/delete" it later or attempt to make it anonymous.



Signature Confirmation Page

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please sign and return this page to the office. Your signature below confirms that you have received the Cornerstone Christian Montessori Parent Handbook. Each parent will receive a handbook upon enrollment or if revisions are made.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 574-264-4444.

Please sign and return this page to the office. Please keep the handbook for future reference.

Thank you.

By signing below, I acknowledge receipt of the Cornerstone Christian Montessori Handbook.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____