



*Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders
Since 1968*

**SEA PINES
MONTESSORI
ACADEMY**

Student and Family Handbook

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***All policies that have an asterisk next to them is required by DSS**

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Section I - SPMA Overview

History

We are South Carolina's first and oldest Montessori school. Mary Stone Fraser, wife of Sea Pines community developer, founded Sea Pines Montessori Academy in 1968 as a (3-6 year old) one-room children's house. Today we celebrate classrooms for students ages 12 months to 6th grade, a library, a Suzuki piano and violin studio, a dedicated Music, Art, Fitness and Spanish language teacher, and a beautiful green space and playground for children to enjoy.

Our Vision

The vision of Sea Pines Montessori Academy is to inspire our students to build a better world.

Our Mission

Sea Pines Montessori Academy is committed to the flourishing of the whole child. We nurture each child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development, promote service to others and foster peace through an authentic Montessori environment.

Diversity & Inclusivity Statement

As a school community, SPMA strives to reflect the breadth and diversity of the island. By creating a safe environment, Sea Pines Montessori Academy welcomes and celebrates the race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, language, religion, gender identity, size, sexual orientation, and/or socio-economic position of all students, staff, and families. Students and families are encouraged to freely share their ideas and beliefs in this accepting environment, building a community of diversity and offering a safe place to learn and grow together.

Accreditation

In **2011** SPMA became an accredited member school of the Southern Associations of Independent Schools (SAIS). This year we are completing our re-accreditation and will have a visit by the SAIS team in March of 2024. In the Fall of 2024, we will start the process of accreditation with the American Montessori Society (AMS) with which we are a full member school.

Who Was Maria Montessori?

Maria Montessori, a woman of incredible insight, intellect, and genius, was born in 1870. She was one of the first women to receive a medical degree from the University of Rome. Her interest in human development led her to the work of Itard and Seguin and their discovery of sensory-based education. In 1907 she founded the first Montessori school, Casa dei Bambini, or "The Children's House". There she created an environment with child-sized furnishings to promote independence and carefully crafted materials to meet the developmental needs of a mixed age group of children from the most disadvantaged and unserved population in Rome. Dr. Montessori believed that the child learns best within a social environment, which supports an individual's unique development and she quickly saw this in the prepared environment she had created. Her knowledge and insights have resulted in an

international system of schools that provide children with an aesthetically pleasing, well ordered environment that promotes freedom of choice within structure and allows the child to work at his/her own developmental pace. Much of the educational equipment found today in the Montessori classroom was developed by Maria Montessori over 100 years ago.

Dr. Montessori wrote many books and gave many lectures on her educational theory and practice. Her constant emphasis was on the spiritual nature of the child. She believed in striving for world peace by educating children with respect for their dignity and the dignity for all life. Dr. Maria Montessori died in Holland in 1952 at the age of eighty-two. Since her death, the growth of Montessori Schools internationally has flourished.

The Core Components of a Montessori Environment

A Montessori education offers an enriched curriculum which incorporates and exceeds district, state and national standards. Scientific and mathematical aptitudes, appreciation for history and timelines, literacy across disciplines and research and development of community help students flourish in the Montessori classroom. Students are actively involved in their education, learning the habits and skills necessary for self-directed, independent, lifelong learning. The components which allow this to flourish are:

- **Trained Guides (Teachers)**
All lead guides (teachers) in each classroom are Montessori trained and certified by a MACTE accredited training programs at that level. They are educated in Montessori accreditation standards, national standards as well as human development.
- **Multi-Age Classrooms**
Multi-age groupings provide wide ranging academic and social growth. Younger children benefit from positive learning and behavior models provided by the older children. Leadership and social responsibility are developed by the older students.
- **Montessori Materials**
Montessori said, "The hands are the instruments of man's intelligence." Hands-on didactic materials encourage active learning in all subject areas. The materials are designed to teach, to test understanding, to correct errors, and to lead to the understanding of abstract concepts. Students have ready access to the materials which are arranged sequentially on the shelves according to subject areas.
- **Child Directed Work**
The Individual Learner is at the heart of the Montessori approach. Montessori guides individualize instruction so each child works at a level and pace which is comfortable and challenging. Learning occurs individually, in groups, and in cooperative peer learning situations.
- **Uninterrupted Work Periods**
Uninterrupted Work Periods enable students "free choice" to explore a topic or material thoroughly and to carry it through to completion without interruption. Whole-class instruction time is minimal.

Montessori Parenting Resources

Montessori Organizations

American Montessori Society: www.amsq.org

Association Montessori International: www.montessori-aim.org

Suggested Reading for Families

Montessori: The science behind the genius

By Angeline Stoll Lillard

Oxford Press, 2005

Montessori Madness

By Trevor Eissler

Sevenoff, LLC, 2009

Secret of Childhood

Maria Montessori

Ballantine, 1982

Section II - Tuition and Funding

Program Fee Descriptions

We are a non-profit organization which means that all received money goes back into the organization in order to cover the costs of operations and pay for our teachers salaries and health care benefits. We work hard to maintain reasonable tuition rates while being able to still cover all our operational costs which continue to rise significantly. You can feel good knowing that your financial contributions help keep our non-profit school's doors open. We appreciate every payment given since we understand that to send your child/ren to a quality private school requires sacrifices on your part.

- **Student Fee:** The student fee is based on each level and covers classroom materials, activities, and books as needed. These are things that are purchased or replenished for the classroom.
- **Textbook Fee:** The textbook fee covers textbooks and novels for the upper elementary curriculum.
- **Consumable Fee:** The consumable fee covers daily consumables that are used in the pre-primary classroom. Younger children require more consumables specifically for toilet training such as wipes, gloves, etc. requiring more consumables than the older children who may only have a few books that they use for the entire year
- **Infrastructure Fee:** All facilities need regular upkeep, maintenance and replacement in order to maintain a healthy and safe environment for students, teachers, and the community as a whole. This fee goes towards replacing, constructing, reconstructing, improving, planning, or equipping real or tangible personal property that directly benefits the school community. Examples of items that this fee is used towards include things like new HVAC units, replacing gutters, weather proofing, windows, bathrooms, fire sprinkler systems, flooring, painting, duct work, and deep cleaning. We thank you for contributing in this way to creating the best environment possible for our students. Our costs for maintaining the building actually far exceeds the fee we charge per student.

Fee Structure for CREW

Daily rates for drop-in: one-child-\$30.00, two-children-\$40.00, \$10 for each additional child.

Yearly rate \$3300 for 4:30pm per child; \$3800 for 5:30pm per child

If a child has not been picked up by 5:30pm, a \$40 fee will be charged for the first 15 minutes and then \$5.00 per minute after that. **After 3 late pick-ups from the same family, children in the CREW program for that family will be suspended from staying after school for 1 week of after school care.**

Contract Refund Policy

Enrollment is on a school year basis. There will be no refunds or tuition credits offered for absences due to student illness; student vacation; emergency school closings due to bad weather, whether or not a formal evacuation order has been mandated by governing authorities; school closings due to the pandemic' and any other emergency closing that has been deemed appropriate or necessary to ensure the wellbeing and/or safety of the students and staff. As long as a place has been held for your child, full payment is required.

Change of Contract Processing Fee

In the event that you want to extend your child's day from half day to full day or full day to CREW, there will be a \$500 flat fee charged in addition to the prorated tuition.

Payment Options

Fees and tuition is due upon receipt and may be paid by check, bank transfer, or credit card. If you choose to pay by credit card, you will be charged a 3% processing fee. A returned check of \$35.00 will be charged if your check is returned to the school unpaid.

Financial Aid

When possible as a non-profit school, we try to provide financial assistance to families that require it within our community. Our auditors require us to use a third party to process all financial assistance applications to ensure a fair and equitable process has been followed for all applicants. All families wishing to apply for financial assistance must submit an application through the SSS (School and Student Services) portal which requires uploading tax documents such as 1040, W-2's and any business related documents as part of the application process. If all documents are not uploaded, the application cannot be processed and the family will be ineligible for financial assistance.

Financial assistance is only provided for the tuition for the regular school program. No financial assistance is available for additional activities, such as clubs or after school care (CREW).

Withdrawal Policy

Should you need to withdraw your child from the school, this should be communicated to the Head of School as soon as you know. You are responsible for the yearly tuition as outlined in the enrollment agreement.

Re-Enrollment Procedures

The Montessori program is a three-year cycle at all levels above Pre-Primary. All students are expected to complete this cycle and initial admission is based on this commitment. Each year in February, an enrollment agreement, with a return deadline, is sent to all families. This form should be returned to the office with the deposit per child to secure a spot for your child for the next school year. Once the deadline for current families passes the remaining openings will be filled from our new applicants. Students are granted continued enrollment if ALL of the following conditions are met:

1. Compliance with policies and procedures as stated in the SPMA Handbook
2. Regular attendance and punctuality as per the SPMA Attendance Policy
3. Age-equivalent or adequate academic progress
4. Conduct or influence which is consistent with the Montessori principles of grace and courtesy
5. Availability of programs and resources which meet the educational needs of the student
6. Account is in good standing and all fees/tuition has been paid

***** When one or more of the above mentioned conditions are not met, enrollment may be discontinued by the Head of School.***

Policy on Transfer of Child's Permanent Record

To transfer your child's record to another school the school must receive a "Transfer of Records" form from the new school which has a release signed by the parent. Again, no records from a child's file will be given to anyone outside the school without a request in writing from the parent.

Past Due Balances

Failure to comply with the payment terms by the 20th of the month may result in the suspension of the child's enrollment. No transfer of records will be granted until financial obligations to the School have been met. The school shall have the right to legal action for collection of school fees and the parents or guardians will be responsible for all costs of collection.

Tax ID Number

When completing tax forms, for example: the Dependent After Care form, which require the use of the Sea Pines Montessori Academy Tax Number our EIN: is 57-0618428.

Giving to SPMA

SPMA's financial health depends on the strong partnership between the school administration, the Board of Trustees, current families, alumni and friends. SPMA trusts in the generous financial support from this community to provide the margin of excellence that defines quality education. Our goal is to maintain an excellent educational program while keeping fees competitive. On average, tuition only covers a portion of the full cost to educate a child on the SPMA campus. There are many ways to give, the annual fund, our account at the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry, the Heritage Classic Foundation, and participate in fundraisers.

Section III - Program Information

Pre-Primary

This program is designed for our youngest students ages twelve months through three years of age.

Half-day - 8:00 am - 11:30 am

Extended Day 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Primary

Our primary program serves children ages three years old through age six. This three year program includes the kindergarten year.

Half-day - 8:00 am - 11:30 pm (Three year olds only)

Extended Day 11:30 - 3:00 pm (Three year olds only)

Full Day 8:00 am - 3:00 pm (Four and Five year olds)

Elementary

Our elementary classrooms are divided into two groupings. Lower Elementary serves students ages 6 years through 9 years old or grades 1 -3. Upper Elementary serves students ages 9 years old through age twelve or grades 4 - 6. The school day for these groups is 8:00 am - 3:00 pm.

Scheduled Half Days are 8:00-11:30am

Classroom Placement

By design, children remain in the **same** classroom for the full three years of a classroom cycle. Toddler students may remain in the Toddler/Pre-Primary classroom for either one or two years. Much consideration is given to classroom placements to maintain a consistent community in a mixed age classroom. Families typically are placed in the same classroom with siblings. When families choose to leave before completing the full cycle, it can be disruptive to the delicate balance we have worked hard to create within each classroom. Please give serious consideration to your commitment to a full Montessori education. **All children are expected to complete the full cycle as an integral member of the classroom community.**

After School Care (CREW)

SPMA offers a quality fee-based after-school care program called CREW from Monday- Friday from 3:15-5:25pm. Pick-up can be at 4:30pm or 5:25pm depending on which contract the family has chosen.

Yearly enrollment can be arranged as well as daily drop-ins if there is availability.

After-school clubs

In addition to CREW, SPMA offers 10 week enrichment programs that are available to students at 3:15pm, after the regular school day. Brochures and flyers are published in the Fall, and Spring informing parents of the available programs, the registration process and the cost. Information regarding sign-up is also posted on our website For more information please contact the office at office@spma.com.

Orientation to SPMA

All new students who enroll by the Spring are offered an opportunity to visit their new classroom in May. School begins in August with an orientation session for all new families prior to the first day of school.

New Toddler children will transition slowly according to a specific schedule. Parents are invited to come into the classroom during these transition times to support their child during this time. Returning children have a few days to re-acclimate before new children begin. From the first day, we suggest parents say good-bye to the child confidently and allow the guides to aid in your child's transition. Separation can be difficult for both children and parents.

We encourage all parents to take a positive attitude and reassure the child when leaving. Children manage best when the parent truthfully lets the child know she/he is leaving and that they will return at the scheduled time. If the parent leaves confidently, the child learns that you trust the environment. Guides are well trained in helping children separate and acclimate them in the classroom.

Probationary Period

The first eight weeks of school is considered an adjustment period for all new children. Should a child have difficulty, the teacher will work closely with the parents during this trial period. If, after that time, it is felt that the child is not ready to continue, the parents will be notified, and the tuition will be refunded for the balance of the year. Throughout the school year, the School also reserves the right to deny, cancel or suspend a child's enrollment if deemed in the best interest of the child or the School. Written notification will be provided.

Summer Camp

SPMA offers an six-week summer program at all levels. Children can participate on a half-day or full-day basis. The camp offers arts and crafts, water fun, and free play. All children enrolled in the school (both incoming and outgoing) are eligible for a space in the summer camp. Registration forms are sent home in early March and require a deposit. All fees are due prior to attendance at the camp

Section IV - Important Family Information

Channels of Communication

At SPMA, we strive to foster clear and robust communication between home and school. On Thursday afternoons, we send out our weekly NAVI-Gator newsletter with important school information.

When you have questions/concerns about an issue, below are the appropriate people to contact:

- Concerns about students - Teacher or Guidance Counselor
- For all school related questions such pick-up/drop-off, absences, CREW, facilities, programming, please email office@spma.com
- Questions regarding curriculum – specific to classroom - Teacher or general - Head of School
- Operation of the school – Head of School
- Questions regarding enrollment - Admission Counselor
- Fundraising questions or ideas - PTO officers, Head of School, or Chairman of the Board
- School governance - Chairman of the Board chair@spma.com
- For all contracts, financial or billing related questions, please email Erika Morgan at erikamorgan@spma.com.
- To reach the Head of School for any reason, please email Nancy Fowler at nancyfowler@spma.com

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Times

*School bus service is not provided for school pick up and drop off. The school bus is only utilized for field trips or athletics.

- **Arrival** - Grades K through 6: School **begins at 8:15 a.m.** and students should be in their classrooms **by 8:15 a.m.** ***K through 6th grade students who arrive to their class after 8:20am are tardy. No student will be admitted after 10:00am without a Drs note.***

Pre-Primary students should arrive by 8:20 am each day. Late arrivals should come through the front door.

- **Tardies** - **Students who are tardy must be signed in by the adult who drops them off. Adults who do not follow this procedure will be called and asked to return to the school before the student can enter the classroom.**
- **Dismissal & *Release of Students-** **School ends at 3:00 p.m., Carpool will begin at 2:50 p.m. and end promptly at 3:15 p.m. NO CHILD WILL BE DISMISSED FROM SCHOOL TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON.** If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child, please notify the office in writing via email at office@spma.com or by

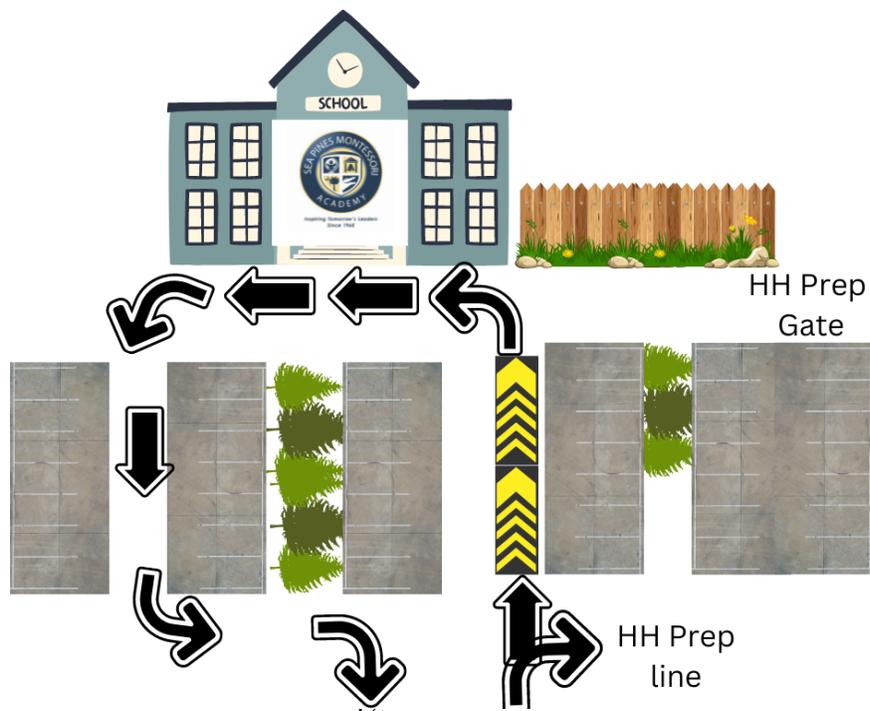
phone PRIOR to his/her release. If the person picking up a child is listed on the authorization form, the person will need to show identification. Messages and emails are checked throughout the day. When communicating pick-up changes to the office between 2:30 to 3:00 p.m., please call the office to share the info and make sure the person picking up is prepared to park in the event the carpool leaders have not received the message.

- **Early Pick-Up** - We ask that children are not routinely picked up early. This can interrupt the end of day routine. Students have enrichment classes, assigned tasks or important instructions they need to be present for in-person. Extenuating circumstances such as a doctor's appointment would be an acceptable reason to be picked up early instead of the regular carpool time, but it should not be habitual.

Carpool Line Procedures

Drivers are expected to abide by the following rules:

- Drivers must drive in the appropriate direction in the parking lot
- Car seats should be placed on the exiting side of the car
- Drivers must drive slowly and carefully at all times to ensure everyone's safety
- Drivers must wait in line for an SPMA staff member to assist in this process.
- Only drivers who are listed on the approved carpool document or have been given approval ahead of time will be allowed to pick up
- DO NOT ALLOW your child to enter or exit your vehicle before pulling up to the designated spot during drop off and pick-up
- Carpool drop-off is not the time to have lengthy discussions concerning your child's schoolwork or other issues. Please email your child's teacher to set up a time for these discussions to ensure that the line can keep flowing



Attendance And Punctuality

Children enrolled at Sea Pines Montessori Academy (SPMA) are expected to be present for the Montessori Work Cycle. **SPMA students should arrive between 8:00 and 8:15 am. There will be a 5 minute grace period until 8:20am before students will be officially marked tardy in our attendance system.** State law does require all children turning five in the calendar year must attend school. SPMA does keep permanent records on the attendance and tardiness of each child throughout the school year. We encourage parents to get children to school on time each day. This familiar routine is extremely beneficial to the child and helps to maximize the school experience. We ask parents to contact the school office either through School Cues or by phone, if your child will be absent from school. If we have not heard from you by 9:30am we will call to confirm your child's absence.

Our intention is not to complicate the routines of our families, but rather to help strengthen our classroom environments and ensure that children are given the best opportunities for learning. As a school, we believe on-time arrival and consistent attendance is in your child's best interest.

SPMA Attendance and Tardy Commonly Asked Questions

My child is younger than school age, why does he or she have to arrive by a certain time?

Even though non-school age children are not subject to compulsory attendance laws, on-time arrival is a significant factor in the success of your child's Montessori experience. If a child is not present for significant portions of the work cycle, then it is unrealistic to expect that your child will enjoy the full benefits that are characteristic of a Montessori education and the child's readiness for school age programs may be negatively impacted. Montessori education believes in developing the whole child in preparation for them to grow into citizens of the world and on time arrival is an important habit to establish early as it demonstrates respect for the classroom community to which your child belongs.

What happens if my school age child exceeds the number of allowable absences or tardies?

You will be notified when the number of absences or tardies become concerning. After 5 unexcused absences, SPMA will contact the student's parents to alert them of the situation. After 10 absences, the family will be given written notice and be required to attend a conference to review the attendance policy and develop an attendance improvement plan. After 15 absences, either excused or unexcused, the school will review the causes of absenteeism. If it is determined that failure to adhere to the attendance improvement plan is the result of the parents' inability to control the child's attendance or failure to comply with the state's compulsory attendance laws, a report will be made to the Department of Education's Student Services Division, which will determine further action. There are several limited exceptions to this compulsory attendance requirement. For exceptions, see S.C. Code Ann. §59-65-30. Please note that excess absenteeism and tardiness may result in your child being unable to pass to the next grade level. While this may not always affect classroom placement at SPMA due to our mixed age groupings, it would impact the child's placement at the time of matriculation to other schools.

Dismissal and School Closures

Parents will be notified through School Cues, email, and a phone call if needed should the school need to close due to inclement weather or other emergency.

Family Observations & Free and Full Access

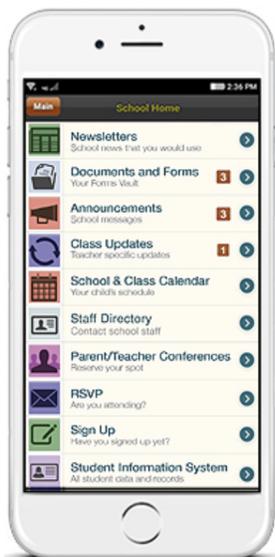
The first 6-8 weeks of school is known as the “normalization” period for our students as they adjust to their guides, peers and new environment. We suggest parents wait until the first Monday in October to schedule classroom observations. These observations should be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance by contacting the front office at office@spma.com or calling the school. However, in accordance with South Carolina Department of Social Services Regulations for Private and Public Child Care Centers Section 114-503(F1), we permit the parent of a child in our care, free and full access to their child without prior notice, while the child is in the care of Sea Pines Montessori Academy.

If there is a legal dispute between parents, Sea Pines Montessori Academy requires a copy of the court order to be given and placed in the student file. Student’s files and records are owned by SPMA and cannot be released if any account is delinquent and/or in collections.

All families will be asked to make an observation prior to the Fall conference.

School Cues

School Cues is the method through which we keep all data on students and families and communicate with families. It integrates many administrative aspects of the school in one place. It can be accessed online or through an app on your phone. We ask that parents/guardians please review their family’s personal and emergency information in the account to ensure that it is up to date and accurate. We will also use the portal to communicate via text for emergencies or important announcements.



GET THE APP!



The SchoolCues mobile app is automatically activated for you once you have registered and activated your account.

All registered users on SchoolCues (parents) can download and access the SchoolCues mobile app (Android or iPhone only), from the appropriate app store.

Using the SchoolCues mobile app, parents can receive and view Newsletters, Announcements, Class Updates, School & Class Calendars, Notifications & Reminders, Submit Permission Forms, Absentee Slips, Gold Forms, Tardy Slips, Schedule Parent Teacher Conferences, RSVP and Signup for events, Acknowledge Incident Reports, Access Staff and Student Directory and View Documents and Forms.



Download for
Apple iOS



Download for
Android

Progress Reports & Montessori Workspace

At SPMA, we use an online educational record-keeping and lesson planning software called Montessori Workspace. It allows for the teacher to record and follow the evolution of each child's learning. Through Montessori Workspace, guides will generate the progress reports that you will receive prior to each conference. Elementary students will receive a progress report at the end of each semester.

Family/Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be scheduled twice a year, once in the Fall and the Spring. At other times, please contact the teacher if you wish to discuss any matter regarding the classroom or your student. We do not talk about a student in his or her presence, so please call to make an appointment that is not immediately before or after school. We encourage you to ask for conferences whenever you feel a need. Classroom assistants and carpool assistants have been instructed not to speak with parents concerning students for consistency. Please talk to a teacher and/or an administrator when needed.

School Uniform Policy

School uniforms create a level playing field among students, reducing peer pressure and bullying. Wearing uniforms also enhances school pride, unity, and community spirit so we ask that you please help your child closely follow the uniform policy listed below. *Uniforms are required for primary, lower elementary and upper elementary students. Uniforms are optional for pre-primary children.*

School uniform policy for a Normal School Day:

- 1. Uniforms must be worn Monday through Thursdays**
- 2. Friday is a free dress day (no uniform required)**
- 3. Any collared shirt or blouse with the school logo**
- 4. Navy or khaki pants, shorts or a skirt (with tights or shorts underneath)**
- 5. Khaki, navy blue, or classic hunter plaid side pleat skirt, skort, jumpers or dress**
- 6. Appropriate footwear that students can run, play and work in (no Crocs/Boots/Light up sneakers/flip-flops allowed)**
- 7. Outerwear, such as winter jackets, does not have to have the school logo**
- 8. Hoodies and caps or hats may not be worn indoors**

***Students are not permitted to wear clothing that distracts from the learning environment which includes clothing with derogatory or inappropriate words or images. Students who wear this type of clothing will be asked to change into an outfit provided by the school or may be sent home when necessary.*

Special Activity School Uniform Policies:

- 1. SUZUKI PRIVATE LESSONS: Students are required to wear khaki bottoms and a navy polo shirt for all performances**
- 2. FITNESS: On fitness days, students may wear athletic shorts**

3. **FIELD TRIPS: Students are required to wear the regular school uniform as listed above**
4. **GOLF: Students are required to wear khaki bottoms and a collared logo t-shirt with appropriate footwear. Hats are also permitted on the green.**

The school does maintain a uniform closet and offers a bi-yearly swap day. Please ask in the office if you need to access the closet.

Lost and Found

Students should assume responsibility for their belongings at all times. Items not related to classroom instruction should not be brought to school. Family and students should make periodic/weekly checks of the lost-and-found, located in the main office, to collect lost belongings. Uncollected items are donated to charity every semester.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special days, and your child may want to celebrate with his/her classmates. We will celebrate by inviting you to school to join us for the “Circling of the Sun” activity where your child will walk around the picture of the Earth as many times as he/she is years old. We recognize that food is a common way for many cultures to celebrate. Please choose from our list of low sugar, allergy safe foods to share at any celebration.

In order to support the feeling of community, kindness, sensitivity and inclusiveness of others we are building in each classroom, birthday party invitations should only be distributed at school if given to every child in the class.

Photo Permission

An acknowledgement will be required for photo permissions through our School Cues system. Each classroom is equipped with a digital camera and photos are used for record keeping, communications (newsletter & website) and media presentations at school events. We children participate in at least the record keeping portion. This allows guides to document your child’s growth and progress throughout the years.

Volunteering & Family Involvement

We deeply appreciate parents, guardians and family members sharing their valuable time with us by volunteering and supporting the school in various ways. Volunteer hours are a direct investment in your child’s education. There are many opportunities to volunteer during or after school hours, both in and out of school. We encourage you to contact your child’s teacher, the front office, the PTO, or the Room Parent to find ways you can make a difference by volunteering.

Positive School Climate

The Head of School at SPMA prides herself on an open door policy and values honest communication with the parents. Any recommendations that can help to strengthen and deepen the SPMA experience are greatly appreciated. We strongly urge parents to maintain a positive and constructive approach to communications. The faculty and staff at SPMA take great pride in creating a supportive environment for your children. We expect our parents/families to maintain a supportive campus climate as well.

Section V - Classroom and Curriculum Information

Multi-Year-Cycle

All classrooms are multi-aged learning communities and the final year in this environment is a special experience for the child. Having spent the first year (introduction) exploring and the second year (recognition) practicing, the oldest children finally achieve the year of mastery. These children hold a special place in their classroom as leaders and mentors. Third year children take on many important responsibilities in their classroom community as well as enjoying some special privileges. In addition to some of the amazing advanced materials used by these children, it is a real confidence building year and often the time when the child solidifies a deep love of work and the satisfaction of mastery and success.

Ground Rules

Every classroom reviews and creates ground rules as the new year begins. Ground rules are those few rules which everyone in the environment agrees upon to keep the classroom safe, aesthetically pleasing, and respectful for all who belong to the community. Ground rules are shared with parents at the New Parent Orientation/Back to School Night each year. Ground Rules give the children clear expectations for expected behavior for all members of the community.

Academic Assessment

SPMA is unique in that it must stay true to the Montessori philosophy, which measures progress, but does not grade in the traditional sense.

Pre-Primary (12-36 months), Primary (3-6 years), Lower (Grades 1-3) and Upper Elementary (Grades 4 - 6) classes do not use grades in the typical A-B-C-D-F format. Instead we use a developmental approach, which shows parents how students are progressing within the framework of the Montessori curriculum through mastery.

Homework

Homework is not a traditional component of the Montessori curriculum as it is difficult to recreate the Montessori materials or experience at home. Many parents are surprised to find that when their children enter a Montessori program, homework is rarely assigned.

If children are not on task and completing their work at school, they may be asked to complete their work at home. If needed, Montessori materials may be sent home with students. If this is the case, students will be responsible for returning the materials in the condition in which they were received by the student. If the material is damaged or lost, the student is responsible for paying to replace the material. We do encourage all families to read at home each night. Reading can be independent or as a family with a read aloud book.

Enrichment Classes & Suzuki Piano/Violin

Art, Music and Fitness are curriculum pieces which are naturally integrated into the classroom for all students at all levels. Beginning at the third year of primary (K) through Elementary, students receive classes with a specialist in that field. Physical education at the elementary level includes lessons in golf

and tennis and music at the Upper elementary level includes lesson with certain instruments, violin, recorder, and ukelele.

Spanish, is introduced as a second language through both immersion starting at first year primary, and through classes in the elementary classrooms.

Families may also choose to enroll their child for a weekly private music lesson within the school day. We offer private Suzuki piano or violin. Parents are encouraged to attend these private lessons.

Promotion and Retention

There are important factors to be considered by the guide before determining that a student will progress to the next grade or classroom. Student promotion or retention at SPMA is based upon an evaluation of each student's achievement in terms of appropriate instructional goals. The basis for making the determination should reflect guide and HOS judgment based on consideration of the following: progress reports, classroom assignments, daily observations, student portfolios, or IEP plans (where appropriate), attendance, and other data as appropriate or required. The primary responsibility for determining each pupil's level of performance and ability to function academically, socially and emotionally at the next grade level is that of the classroom guide and/or promotion/retention committee which may include a review by the Head of School.

Day Field Trips & *Transportation

Students benefit from experiences that make learning more relevant, memorable, and meaningful, therefore, SPMA supports and encourages the extension of learning through instructional field trips. Field trips may include walking tours, recycling trips, aquarium trips, and trips to various museums throughout the community. Field trip information will be sent out by the classroom along with a permission slip for parents to complete on School Cues. Attendance will be taken at every location that children are loaded and unloaded from the bus.

The SPMA staff is authorized to establish regulations and procedures to ensure that all reasonable and prudent steps are taken to safeguard the physical and educational welfare of the participating students and of students who do not participate; appropriate and adequate adult supervision is provided; and the highest standards for instructional field trips are established to ensure that student participation enhances achievement of state curriculum standards and Montessori principles.

Overnight Field Trips - Upper Elementary

Upper Elementary students are the only ones who will participate in an overnight trip. These include yearly trips to environmental sites and the Montessori Model United Nations in New York City.

Independent Field Study

SPMA students are allowed to be counted as present for three (3) independent one-day field trips per year. Each independent field study must be pre-approved by the student's guide and the Head of School. The independent field study form may be obtained from the administration office and must be completed and submitted to the Head of School (or designee) no later than one week prior to the date

of the trip. Upon their return to school, the student is required to make a presentation to his/her teacher and class regarding the subject matter of the field trip.

Lunch / Snacks

All students who stay past 11:30 am should bring a healthy lunch to school each day. Half-day children need only bring a small snack unless one is provided by the classroom through a snack basket program.

Because **SPMA is an allergy safe school**, and some children in our school have life threatening nut and dairy allergies, children learn that one thing we do not share is food. Our school nurse provides education on allergies, nutrition, and good health. We ask that children **do not bring** any item with nuts (peanuts/tree nuts) into the school. All children are asked to wash their hands upon entering the classroom in the morning in addition to the after toileting and before eating.

Children should have some ownership of what is in their lunch box. By packing healthy food and snacks, good eating habits are encouraged. As with snack the child should be able to independently open and close their containers. Primary classrooms that utilize a snack basket program will give parents a suggested list similar to the one below.

Suggestions for snack: a piece of fruit, a few crackers & cheese, cut vegetables and dip

The child should be able to open and clean up any containers & utensils on their own.

Children are welcome to eat their snack at a designated snack table when they are hungry.

Suggestions for lunch: a protein (small pieces of meat or egg), fruit or vegetable (ex. cut fruit or slices of cucumbers with dip), cheese and crackers, finger sandwiches, and low sugar drink. Also left overs from dinner the night before is an easy lunch. Elementary students are encouraged to make their own lunch. Only Elementary Classrooms have access to a microwave to heat foods.

Tutoring Policy

A SPMA staff member may enter into an agreement with parents for tutoring children for a fee. This practice must be limited to children other than those for whom the employee is currently exercising teaching, administrative or direct supervisory responsibility. These restrictions are to assure all students receive reasonable assistance without charge from their own guide, as well as to avoid placing a guide or employee in a position where he/she may have a conflict of interest.

An employee **may not** tutor or babysit any student for pay during his/her regular working hours, use School communication channels such as the internet to advertise tutoring services and may provide tutoring services on school premises outside of working hours with approval from the Head of School.

Conflict Resolution & Behavior Expectations of Children

Children are expected to adhere to basic ground rules in each classroom and the school. Lessons are given in conflict resolution and are appropriate for the age of the child. Logical consequences for lack of adherence to these rules are pre-established and followed consistently throughout the SPMA community. **Unacceptable behavior includes but is not limited to**, hurting oneself or another child,

disrespect of the materials, using inappropriate language, showing lack of self control and showing disrespect.

All discipline and guidance is approached from the point of view of safety, positive redirection, and natural consequences. Guides show consistent respect for the child's dignity and lead the child toward growing self-control over his/her actions. Physical punishment and/or verbal humiliation may never be used. Children may not be denied food. A child is only isolated from the group when their behavior threatens the safety of others. If a guide encounters persistent behavioral issues, she/he consults with the Head of School and meets with the parents to work out methods to help the child modify his/her behavior. If a child bites another child, both children are escorted to the office and the school nurse is contacted. Parents will always be contacted when a child visit to the office warrants further support from the parent.

All adults in the SPMA community are expected to resolve any conflicts peacefully as well.

Although we may have the same goals for the children enrolled at times our paths may seem different. Open and honest communication is a must when working in the best interest of all. Please first contact the individual you have the conflict with. If a resolution is not reached then contact the Head of School for assistance in resolving the matter.

Child Development Concerns and Procedure for Referrals

The lead guide is the adult responsible for communicating information regarding your child's progress in the classroom. If you have issues or concerns, you may send an email, write a note to the lead guide or convey to the guidance counselor your desire to be contacted by the guide. If this first step of communicating with the guide does not resolve the problem, the parent can contact the Guidance Counselor and then the Head of School.

Through the daily observation and individual lesson time, the guides of the classroom come to know your child well. If guides have a concern regarding a child's typical development the following procedure will be used:

- Document behavior in area of concern
- Ask the Head of School and/or Guidance Counselor for an observation & consultation
- Make any suggested adjustments to lesson presentation or the environment
- Confer with the parents
- Ask for outside professional assessment

Any referral to outside professionals will be made in consultation with the Head of School and parents after all suggestions and modifications have been exhausted. Our goal is for each child to have a successful experience in the classroom. We believe with the appropriate support this is possible.

Contacting the Classroom

Each classroom and guide has an e-mail account directly through the www.spma.com website. Please give teachers 24-48 hours to respond to emails, as they are focused on instruction with students during the school day. Guides will communicate by sending monthly newsletters via School Cues.

Technology Usage Policy

Sea Pines Montessori Academy (SPMA) recognizes that access to technology in school gives students greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. We are committed to helping students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills. To that end, we provide access to technologies for student and staff use.

The Internet can provide a vast collection of educational resources for students and employees. It is a global network that makes it impossible to control all available information. Because information appears, disappears and changes constantly, it is not possible to predict or control what students may locate. The school makes no guarantees as to the accuracy of information received on the Internet. Although students will be under teacher supervision while on the network, it is not possible to constantly monitor individual students and what they are accessing on the network. Some students might encounter information that is not of educational value.

This *Acceptable Use Policy* outlines the guidelines and behaviors that users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices on the school campus.

- The SPMA network is intended for educational purposes.
- Student Internet activities will be monitored by an advanced filtering system to ensure students are not accessing inappropriate sites when possible.
- Access to online content via the network may be restricted in accordance with our policies and federal regulations, such as the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
- Users are expected to follow the same rules for good behavior and respectful conduct when they are online.
- Misuse of school resources can result in disciplinary action.
- SPMA makes a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from the use of school technologies.
- Users of the SPMA network or other technologies are expected to alert IT or other staff immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

Challenged Materials Process

Sea Pines Montessori Academy relies on the SPMA Leadership Committee and the Head of School to respond to challenged materials that may have offended a student, parent, or community member even after careful consideration.

SPMA carefully reviews all new materials and books that are bought or donated. Each staff member reviews reading materials prior to putting them out or sharing them with the classroom. Any challenge to materials and books would be brought to the attention of the teacher first in keeping with our practice of maintaining healthy communication. If the challenge is not resolved at that level, it would then progress to the leadership committee and Head of School. If still not resolved, it can then be brought up to the Board of Directors.

Section VI - Health & Wellness Policy

Sea Pines Montessori's goal is to reduce the spread of communicable illnesses by using safe and effective health practices through teaching personal hygiene, environmental cleaning, early detection of illnesses, and exclusion of school premises to ensure the best outcome for our community. To this end we employ a part-time nurse who is on campus twice a week but available to us as needed on other days. Children who feel ill should remain at home until he/she feels at their best to return. **We do not provide care to mildly ill children. Families of Sick children will be notified immediately to be picked up if they are exhibiting symptoms.**

This policy highlights the following:

- Children who present with contagious or spreadable illnesses will remain at home for at least 24 hours.
- A fever is considered a temperature over 100 degrees
- Positive COVID cases warrant 5 days of quarantine and may only return once the current protocol is followed.
- SPMA will not administer any prescription or over the counter medication (including sunscreen and bug spray) without a medication form.
- Any medication that is expired will not be administered if expired (including Epi-pens).
- All Epi-pens will be stored in the child's classroom.
- Head Lice and Biting Policy
- All injuries will be reported as per policy. Any head injuries will be notified via phone.
- In the event of an emergency, 911 will be called first then the parent to ensure treatment and recovery services are contacted as soon as possible.
- Children who are sent home due to illness will be excluded and **MUST** be picked up within a 30-minute time period.

Contagious illnesses that spread through contact require the individual to be absent from school.

Contagious viruses/illnesses include but are not limited to diarrhea, strep, conjunctivitis, chicken pox, influenza, HFM (hand, foot, and mouth), COVID, RSV, and lice. Individuals who are sent home may not return to school until monitored for 24 hours. To clarify, if a child is sent home from school during any time of the day, he/she will remain home for the remainder of the day as well as the following day. The student may return when symptoms are no longer present for at least 24 hours or the illness has been identified by a medical provider who grants medical clearance for their return.

Individuals who require antibiotics must receive 24 hours of treatment before returning to school. Please keep in mind that medications may only be administered at school when a Medication Administration form is completed and accepted by the Office or Wellness Studio (see Medication Policy).

The following is a list of common observable symptoms of contagious illnesses that may lead to their dismissal: diarrhea, vomiting, fever, frequent coughing, difficulty breathing, pinkeye, rashes/spots, sore throat,

infected skin patches, severe nasal excretions, and unusual crying. SPMA reserves the right to send a child home based on observations concerning their health and wellbeing.

In the event of an outbreak of a virus or other potential health risk, SPMA will update our Sick Policy in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It is our goal to provide the highest care for our students. Therefore, we will strive to be in compliance with the SCDHEC and CDC guidelines throughout the year. The Illness Policy is subject to change throughout the year as seen fit for the health and safety of all.

Fever

A fever of less than 100 degrees will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and your child activity level will be taken into account. However, any child with a fever of 100 degrees or greater shall be sent home and **must** be fever free (without the aid of Tylenol or any fever reducer) for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Therefore, if your child is sent home from school with a contagious illness, virus, a fever, and/or diarrhea, she/he may not return to school the following day.

Medication Policy

It is the policy of Sea Pines Montessori Academy that any medicine or medical procedures being administered to students at school must be accompanied by a written request, signed by the custodial parent/and or health care provider, giving the following information:

- The child's name and the name of the medication being sent in
- Must be in original packaging with doctor's name clearly written
- The purpose of the medication
- The date and time of the last dosage
- The date and time of the next dosage(s)
- Clear instructions for when and how to administer the medication.
- If it is given with a measuring spoon, the spoon must come from home in a bag.
- Prescription medication requires a Health Care Provider's Signature on the form
- Over-the-counter medication requires the parent's permission

Over the counter medications require the same information and must be sent from home in the original container with directions and authorization from the parent. Epi-pens will be stored in the classroom of the child. Expired medication of any kind will not be administered and it is the family's responsibility to account that life-saving medications are not expired (i.e. Epi-pen).

When administering medication, the date, name, medication, time, and dosage given will be recorded on a form. The illness log, kept in the Wellness Studio will record any symptoms, required treatment, and the time the parent was notified. **Children who are sent home due to illness will be excluded and MUST be picked up within a 30-minute time period.**

A Medication Administration form is needed for the treatment of a headache, bug bite or other minor health issue, needing over the counter medicines or topical ointments (such a Tylenol, Benadryl, etc.)

Head Lice Policy

If a child is found to have head lice, he/she will be sent home for treatment and will not be allowed to return to school until all live lice have been removed. The Sea Pines Montessori Academy Lice Policy is that the child must remain out of school for 24 hours and be inspected at school prior to admittance into the classroom following a lice finding. Parents must be notified if nits are found in the hair and encouraged to remove nits at home and retreat in 3-5 days. Returning students will be checked each morning until no nits are present.

If one child from your room has head lice, the School will check all heads in that classroom. The teachers and administration will be checking heads.

Biting Policy

Young children who are in the process of learning appropriate communication and social skills can bite on occasion. When a bite occurs the child who is bitten is immediately cared for and the biter is removed from the environment. The guide, nurse, and administration may evaluate the bite. Both families involved are notified of the incident. An accident/incident report is filled out by the guide who intervened immediately after the incident and given to the Nurse and Head of School.

If this behavior becomes repetitive, the parents of the child who bites in consultation with the Head of School, will be supported with communication goals for the child. The School may require an additional person to “shadow” the child who is biting until the child no longer bites if extra safeguards are warranted.

WE ARE AN ALLERGY SAFE SCHOOL

WE HAVE SEVERAL STUDENTS WITH VERY SENSITIVE NUT ISSUES. We ask all parents to refrain from packing and sending items containing peanuts or other nuts.

Allergy Safe School: In an attempt to secure a safe and healthy environment for **all of our children**, SPMA is a life threatening food allergy **safe** environment and has made the decision to become a mandatory “nut-safe” school. Since we are faced with a significant number of children with life threatening nut allergies, we prohibit any peanut, peanut butter or any nut-containing foods from entering our school. Such foods may include peanut oil or peanut protein as well. Please be aware that many products contain ground peanuts, if it is unsure whether or not a product contains a peanut ingredient, call the school nurse. This includes items manufactured in facilities labeled as such. Note however, there may be additional food restrictions determined on a classroom by classroom basis depending on the individual needs of each community. Faculty will return any food they believe to contain nuts in the lunch box. At the start of the school year all lunch boxes will be checked upon arrival.

If you have any questions please check with the nurse.

Please be aware that during all campus or “non” school day events parents are solely responsible for monitoring their child.

Student Accident Reports and Procedures

If a child has a serious injury at school, either on the playground or inside, the teacher will fill out a Student Accident Report form with all the details concerning the accident or injury and what types of actions were taken for first aid. If the accident is substantial, the parent will be notified right away. If the accident occurs right before dismissal, the teacher will communicate to the parent at dismissal. All head/facial injuries require a phone call no matter how minor.

For bumps, scrapes and minor injuries we use the following procedures:

1. Wash the wound with water and sterile spray only to clean it off. Let it dry.
2. Additional cream may be applied if the parent has provided consent.
3. Apply a bandage.
4. Pin on a note to send home to the parent informing about the injury and the care given. Be sure that the office receives a copy.

****ALL HEAD WOUNDS (no matter how minor it seems) WARRANT A PHONE CALL HOME.**

Emergency Medical Policy/Procedures

In the event that the injury or illness is considered a medical emergency, 911 will be called and then the parent. If the parent is not available, the emergency contact submitted by the family will be contacted. If ambulance transportation is required and a parent is not on campus an administrator will accompany the child in the ambulance. In the event that the parent is not immediately available, a staff member will remain with the child at all times until a parent arrives.

Section VII - Safety and Security

The safety of your child while at school is of utmost importance to us. We share the security officer with Hilton Head Preparatory School. We have taken great care to implement measures to secure the buildings and grounds and educate the staff on the possible harm to the children and develop plans for them to follow to keep children safe. We have also developed a crisis management plan which parents may view at any time.

Child Safety & *Tracking of all Students

School staff maintain visual lines of sight and communication with students at all times. Prior to leaving the classroom, each teacher must take roll and do a head-count against their check-in/check-out sheet. Throughout the activity, either in the classroom during work, on the playground, or on a fieldtrip, the teacher must continuously scan and count students. Upon lining up or transitioning, the teacher should again take roll and check the students against her list. Any dismissal must follow dismissal guidelines policy and that student should be marked as "dismissed" on the check-in / check-out sheet.

Visitors

We require that upon entering the property, all visitors must go directly to the main office for proper direction and to obtain a visitors pass. Access will be denied to disruptive visitors and parents.

First Aid Kits and Fire Extinguishers

First Aid Kits (located in bright green backpacks) and fire extinguishers are located in all the classrooms and checked regularly by the nurse, teachers, and Sea Island Fire Protection.

Drills

Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis in compliance with DHEC. Drills are usually unannounced. Fire drill routes for students are posted next to the exit nearest the fire extinguishers. Tornado and earthquake drills are practiced once a year. Lockdown drills (known as alligator drills for the students) are practiced twice a year.

Communication during an Emergency

If there is an emergency during school hours, SPMA will send updates via email or text to all parents immediately pending conditions. We ask that parents do not come to the school until the all clear has been given via email or text. Updates will most likely also be sent out by authorities depending on the nature of the situation. The directives from the authorities should always be followed.

Personal Safety

Search and Seizure

Pursuant to state and federal law, any person, student or adult, entering the school campus voluntarily suspends their rights and may be subject to a search and/or seizure by the appropriate authorities. Pursuant to S.C. Code Annotated Section 59-63-11 10 et seq. "any person entering the premises of a school in the State of South Carolina is deemed to consent to a reasonable search of its person and its property.

Suspected Child Abuse

If a staff member suspects that a child may have been abused, defined as the physical maltreatment, sexual molestation, and/or sever neglect of a child, he/she is required by the Code of South Carolina (63-7-310) to report the suspicion of abuse to the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

Reporting Abuse

The staff member is encouraged to speak with the Head of School as a first step in the process of reporting suspected abuse. However, it remains the responsibility of the reporting staff member to ensure that a report is made to Child Protective Service. A conversation between staff and the Head of School does not relieve the staff member from the responsibility of reporting suspected abuse to Child Protective Services.

SC DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Child Abuse Hotline 888-227-3487

Anti-Sexual Harrassment

SPMA has taken special steps to prevent students, visitors, and employees from being subjected to

inappropriate conduct in our school community. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, any inappropriate behavior, which, because of an individual's gender, has the effect of creating a hostile, intimidating, or otherwise unpleasant situation. The following, in no particular order, are some of the more obvious types of behavior that the SPMA considers to be highly inappropriate at school:

- Displays of sexually explicit pictures or objects.
- Demands or requests for sexual favors.
- Sexually oriented banter, jokes, or commentary.
- Repeated social invitations.
- Compliments of a sexual or suggestive nature.

If you feel that you or your child have been subjected to any of the above conduct or otherwise made to feel uncomfortable, you MUST IMMEDIATELY report this conduct to the Head of the School, or whomever is in charge in the event the Head is unavailable. Your complaint will be kept as confidential as possible, consistent with its effective investigation.

**In the event you believe that the Head of School is the alleged harasser, you MUST IMMEDIATELY contact the acting Board Chair by emailing chair@spma.com.*

Special Note: Listed above are general descriptions of some of the types of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment, or which can lead up to sexual harassment, depending upon the circumstances. Importantly, not all of the prohibited conduct listed above rises to the level of what would meet the legal definition of this term. SPMA, however, does not want you to have to worry about whether conduct that makes you feel uncomfortable meets, or does not meet, a particular legal definition. What the School wants, and insists upon, is that you notify the school immediately in the event someone else's conduct offends you or otherwise makes you feel uncomfortable.

Section VIII - After SPMA

Transferring Records & transcript requests

A completed request for records form from the transferring school must be completed and sent to the Guidance Counselor. All recommendation forms for potential schools must also be sent through the Guidance Counselor. She will then gather the recommendation from the appropriate guide and send out the official transcript after the Head of School has reviewed it.

All requests for recommendations and transcripts cannot be processed in less than 1 week. We will only send recommendations and transcripts directly to the school the child is applying to. These forms will not be given back to parents. All documents and information requested by the school will be sent to the requesting school. We do not pick and choose which information to send.

Confidentiality Policy

Parents/ Guardians may have access to the child's file by written request to the office at least 24 hours in advance.

- Student files are confidential and are to be kept secure in the main office.
- Files must be reviewed in the presence of a staff member.
- Items in the child's file may not be removed for any reason; if a parents disagrees with the contents of the file they may add a written note to the file with their concerns.
- Officials from the South Carolina Department of Social Services and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control may enter the child's record without parental permission and without notifying the school or student in advance.
- No records from the child's file will be given to anyone outside the school without a request in writing from the parent.
- The child's permanent record will be maintained in the school for 7 years after the child has attended.