



# **Family/Student Handbook**

## **2020/2021**

**6058 W. 900 N.  
McCordsville, IN 46055**

**Telephone: (317) 813-4626 Fax: (317) 813-4665  
gmacademy.org**

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## **Introduction**

On behalf of the administration and staff, we welcome you to the school year. We have a commitment to building a strong community, and we urge you to positively contribute to the best of your ability.

The information and rules in this handbook are written for you. A careful review of these regulations will help you make your years at Geist Montessori Academy a pleasant and meaningful educational experience. Geist Montessori Academy was developed from an established, private Montessori school, which desired to offer affordable Montessori education. In 2006, the school became a public charter with Ball State University as the charter sponsor. As a public charter school, Geist Montessori Academy adheres to all IDOE state standards, regulations, and parameters, while staying true to the American Montessori Society's 5 key components of a high fidelity Montessori program.

Geist Montessori Academy provides an academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally rich educational environment that allows children to explore using their natural curiosity and become lifelong learners in the process. At GMA, academics are infused with character building and community awareness to form the whole-child and prepare our students for life. At Geist Montessori Academy, we firmly believe that as a charter school delivering Montessori education, we are better together and that all children can achieve at high levels.

The following pages describe many of the opportunities, privileges, and responsibilities available to you. Keep this guide, read through it, and refer to it. Best wishes in this new school year.

### **1. Mission**

Geist Montessori Academy, like Dr. Maria Montessori, believes in ALL children, and empowers them to be the best that they can be by maintaining a stimulating and prepared environment that fosters independence, concentration, curiosity, kindness, community, and the lifelong love of learning. We believe that we are better together: an inclusive school family that embraces peace, and respects self and others. Collectively, we aim to continually grow and are committed to challenging students to become collaborative problem solvers who are compassionate contributors to our wondrous world.

### **2. Vision**

Geist Montessori Academy, guided by the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, is a community of learners that awakens and discovers the wondrous spirit of the child. We believe that ALL children are innately curious and capable of high levels of learning. By attending to the whole child and providing an academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally rich educational environment, students experience the joy of learning and are able to maximize their potential and become the best that they can be.

At Geist Montessori Academy, our students are encouraged to:

- **love the process of learning**
- **achieve academic success at a natural pace**
- **develop strong social skills**
- **possess positive work habits**
- **find purpose and value in work**
- **solve problems and correct errors themselves**
- **be confident and joyful**
- **work well independently and collaboratively**
- **feel strong in mind, body and spirit**
- **respect and appreciate community**

- **be curious and creative problem solvers**

### **3. Montessori Foundations**

Geist Montessori Academy is charged to achieve its vision in the context of a grades K-8 public charter school. To do so, the board, administration, and staff commit to the following Montessori foundations:

#### **Public Montessori**

- Provide a free Montessori education enhanced to ensure alignment with the Montessori philosophy and the IDOE State Standards
- Promote high levels of student achievement
- Measure achievement and growth in multiple ways and use assessment data to inform instruction
- Promote a school wide culture of respect, open and honest communication, high expectations, and continuous growth through self-reflection
- Continuously prepare to serve learners with great diversity in cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, individual needs, and learning styles

#### **Holistic Student Development**

- Give students meaningful and engaging work that excites and challenges
- Engage students in activities that teach them how to be competent, caring contributors to our community
- Model and promote Montessori values of grace, courtesy, respect, and responsibility
- Teach cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and self-correction skills
- Respect each student's unique learning style by individually tailoring learning supports
- Allow students to experience the intrinsic reward that comes from selection of work and its mastery
- Encourage students to take ownership for their academic and personal development
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and exploration

#### **School-strengthening Collaboration**

- Create teacher-parent-student partnerships to support student learning
- Involve and vest parents, teachers, and students in the school's decision-making process and volunteer efforts
- Develop partnerships with local agencies, community service organizations, and businesses to enhance children's health and learning (e.g. internships, service learning, etc.)
- Share information and best practices with other educators and community members, particularly Montessori practitioners

#### **High Quality Staff**

- Educate all staff regarding Montessori philosophy in addition to GMA curriculum, culture, and processes
- Maintain high standards for accomplished teaching and learning
- Evaluate teaching staff regularly for achievement of GMA's vision for students

### **4. Principles at GMA**

The Montessori Method of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in Italy at the turn of the

century. The method is structured for the developmental instincts of children and encourages his or her growth as a whole individual - intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Maria Montessori became Italy's first licensed female physician in 1896. She went on to obtain degrees in psychology and philosophy, and founded a school where she closely observed children's learning at different ages.

Based on her findings, Montessori created a distinct system of learning unique to each stage of a child's development characterized by:

- a home-like environment geared to the child's perspective
- respect for each child as a unique learner
- a structured prepared classroom where children have freedom of choice within limits
- carefully crafted Montessori learning tools (sometimes called "works") that promote conceptual learning
- specially trained teachers
- a carefully integrated interdisciplinary curriculum
- multi-age classrooms
- ample work periods
- learning through mastery
- intrinsic vs. extrinsic rewards
- mutual respect with students, teachers, and the community

There are eight outcomes that we aim to see from children educated in a true Montessori setting. Such children are typically:

- academically prepared for higher education and lifelong learning
- intrinsically motivated to learn and engage in new activities
- guided by internalized ground rules - to behave appropriately in the absence of an authority figure
- socially responsible - sensitive to the needs of others
- autonomous - self-directed and comfortable with being morally independent
- confident and competent - not afraid of failure and willing to learn from mistakes
- creative and original in thought - often taking great satisfaction in self-expression
- aware of the natural world and the human condition

### **The Montessori Uninterrupted Work Period**

The uninterrupted work period is fundamental to the Montessori approach, which recognizes and respects individual variations in the learning process. Within the Montessori environment, the children need to have time to work through various tasks and responsibilities at their own pace. This uninterrupted work period is vitally important, as that is when the building of coordination, concentration, independence and order, and the assimilation of information are able to occur.

- At the **Early Childhood level**, a 3-hour uninterrupted work cycle, 5 days per week, is optimal. Schools provide large blocks of unscheduled time to ensure that individual children have the time to settle into a task that interests them and are not unnecessarily interrupted when they are engaged in a worthwhile activity.

During the work period, teachers observe the behaviors of the children and invite individuals and small groups to short lessons when they see opportunities to assist a child's progress. Optimally, the majority of each morning and afternoon is devoted to self-motivated work. This time may include individual- or self-selected small group activities and short lessons by the teacher for children who have accepted an invitation to the lesson.

The uninterrupted work period does not include whole-class lessons or other activities such as adult-led group circle meetings for which participation of all children is required. Outdoor play time, specials, and enrichment classes for the whole group should not interrupt and are not included in the work period.

- At the **Elementary level**, a 3-hour uninterrupted work cycle, 5 days per week, is optimal. During the uninterrupted work cycle, one should see students engaged in developmentally appropriate work. The work should include Montessori hands-on materials that are appropriate for the individual needs of each student. The teacher will be working with students individually and in small groups, in hands-on engaging Montessori lessons. Students will be collaborating as they work on a task or research project together. Students are also managing work expectations. A contract, work plan, or work journal may be used to help with organization and time management skills.

At the Elementary level, full-class lessons should not take place during the uninterrupted work cycle. Rather, they should be presented before or after the uninterrupted work cycle. Outdoor play time, specials, and enrichment classes for the whole group should not interrupt and are not included in the work period. Circle time should also be held before or after the uninterrupted work cycle.

- At the **Secondary level**, the length of the work cycle varies by setting. Small programs with a single Secondary-credentialed guide will look different than large programs, particularly at the Secondary II level when course requirements and credits needed for diplomas are considered. The critical aspect is encouraging flexibility within extended blocks of time. You may see the following lessons presented: mini-lessons, impressionistic lessons, procedural lessons, small-group lessons using flexible grouping based on needs, and individual lessons. Student work periods vary in length each day. It is important that this large block of time is not divided into daily, one-hour class periods. Students are taught to use a checklist and to plan their worktime to be able to meet deadlines. This includes independent work, small-group work, self-checking work with controls or other methods, and project work by individuals or groups. The teacher/guide is working with/among students. Many teachers have a space in their classrooms for students to request lessons on topics they identify.

Brief, student-focused large-group activities (including mini-lessons, group initiatives/community building, solo/reflection time, seminar/discourse, etc.) may occur during the work cycle. These activities include the active engagement of the teachers. Whole-group activities are scheduled at natural transition times (e.g., beginning of the block, before or after lunchtime, at the end of the block/day) so that the work cycle can be preserved.

At the Secondary level, during the work cycle, there should be no lectures or presentations that last longer than 20 minutes. Individuals should not be removed from the class for services or programs.

## **5. State Accountability**

Indiana, like all other states, is engaged in numerous, substantive changes to its education system that are likely to have significant impacts in the coming years. These changes, often precipitated by state and federal policy include: The development and implementation of an A-F school accountability system that is measured by student growth, the adoption of state specific college and career readiness standards, the development and implementation of an educator evaluation system, and the transition of the ILEARN state standardized assessment to one based on Indiana State Standards.

For more information on state accountability, please log on to the IDOE website at:  
<http://www.doe.in.gov/accountability>

## **6. Accreditation**

GMA is a publicly funded Ball State University charter school, and is fully accredited by the state of Indiana. For more information about Ball State Charter schools go to  
<http://www.bsu.edu/teachers/charter/>.

Lead teachers hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university, an Indiana state teaching license, an emergency permit, and/or they will be trained in Montessori pedagogy, through a certification program approved by administration. Each of our teachers has been selected for his or her love and understanding of children, a belief in the Montessori philosophy of education, and a positive approach to the classroom environment.

## **7. School Board**

Our school board members are a vital link between the community and the classroom. Its primary role is governance, and they bear responsibility for the annual budget, ensuring accurate reporting, and oversight of accountability plans, and much more. They are giving of themselves and care about every child in our school. They represent varying backgrounds in order to best represent and fulfill the needs of our school.

# **General Information**

## **8. Nondiscriminatory Policy**

Geist Montessori Academy is a non-profit, 501(c) (3) organization. We value, welcome, and celebrate a diverse population. The school treats all employees and applicants for employment without unlawful discrimination as to race, creed, color, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability in all employment decisions.

GMA is nondenominational and admits students of all races, religions, genders, and abilities. We welcome your child to the Montessori environment, where building a positive attitude toward learning is the first step in charting a course for life.

GMA will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified staff.

No words, acts or symbols of racial or gender discrimination will be allowed. Proven harassment because of an individual's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation or gender identification will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and

including termination or dismissal.

## **9. Admissions Policy**

GMA is a nondenominational, public education institution open to all children of all races, religions, genders and abilities.

The school accepts applications for the next academic year from the first Monday in December, through the first week of January. All applications received will be accepted providing the applicant is the appropriate age for the grade level to which they are applying.

In the event that applications exceed the number of spaces available at any grade level, a lottery process will be initiated for that grade level. The lottery is supervised and will adhere to current charter school admissions laws and precedents.

Applications subject to the lottery will be assigned a lottery number. A receipt for the application, the assigned lottery number and information regarding the date and time of the lottery will be given to the parent before the lottery takes place.

Regardless of an excess of applications at any level, the lottery will be conducted by grade level beginning with the highest grade. As the law provides for siblings of current or newly enrolled students, lottery slips of siblings will be pulled from the process and placed on the lottery board as older siblings are drawn.

Lottery slips will be pulled randomly and placed on the board until all available spaces are filled. Siblings of students on the board will be given preferential placement until all spaces are filled. **SIBLING PLACEMENT IS NOT GUARANTEED AT HIGHER GRADE LEVELS, AS THE LOTTERY BOARD WILL NOT BE ALTERED TO ACCOMMODATE THESE STUDENTS.**

**Example:** If all fifth-grade spaces are filled on the lottery board and the first-year student with a fifth-year sibling is drawn later, the first-year student will be included on the lottery board. However, there is no guarantee of automatic enrollment for the older sibling. This process will continue until all available spaces are filled. Afterwards, the remaining slips pulled will be placed in the order in which they are drawn onto a wait list for their respective grade level.

The results of the lottery, including information regarding student order on the wait list will be mailed to all participating families following the lottery. Families selected for enrollment will have a deadline to return enrollment forms, signifying their intent to enroll in the academy. After this period, available space will be offered to families on the wait list.

Lottery results may be altered to accommodate returning student retention or promotion.

- **Immunizations**

At the time of enrollment, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide proof of their child's proper immunizations status in accordance with current Indiana Law. It is the policy of Geist Montessori Academy that a complete immunization record is to be on file in the school nurse's office before your child may attend school. The immunization record needs to be legible and complete with the day, month, and year that they were given. All immunization records received during registration will be reviewed, and you will be contacted if your child's immunization status does not meet the requirements for school entry. State-required immunizations are entered by the school nurse into the school's database. This record will follow your child as he/she transition from school to school. Records can be

mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to the school. On the first day of school, any student who does not have a complete immunization record on file will not be allowed to attend. Indiana State Code provides the only acceptable criteria for immunization waivers are based on religious or medical reasons and must be renewed yearly. The school will maintain an immunization record of all students and will submit a required State Health Report to Ball State University on an annual basis.

(See Immunization Policy #80)

## **10. Homeless Students**

To the extent practical and as required by law, Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless and will be assigned to the school serving those non-homeless students residing in the area in which the homeless child is actually living. Safeguards shall be established that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and include students who meet any of the following criteria:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship, or similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Are abandoned in hospitals;
5. Having a primary night time residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings; or
7. Are migratory children living in conditions described above.

- **Liaison**

The Executive Director will designate an appropriate staff person to be GMA's liaison for homeless students and their families. The Liaison will participate in professional development and other technical assistance activities as determined appropriate by the State Coordinator. The Liaison will ensure that:

- A. Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- B. Homeless children and youth are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed within the corporation;
- C. School personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive sufficient professional development and other support;
- D. Homeless families and homeless children and youth receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
- E. Homeless families and youth have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible including through the Head Start Act, early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs.
- F. That school personnel, service providers, advocates working with homeless families, parents, guardians and homeless children and youths are informed of the duties of the liaison.
- G. Parents and guardians of homeless youth are informed of educational and related opportunities and are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- H. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act.

- I. Parents and guardians of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin and are assisted in accessing transportation services.
- J. Unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same state academic standards as established for other children and youths, are informed of the status of unaccompanied youths as independent students under section 40 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20U.S.C. 1087vv), and the rights of unaccompanied youths to receive verification of this status from the local liaison.

The homeless liaison will assist, to the extent feasible, the homeless students and their parent(s) or guardian(s) or unaccompanied homeless students in their efforts to provide documentation to meet State and local requirements for entry into school.

- **Enrollment**

GMA shall remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless students. Homeless students shall be enrolled immediately, even if they do not have the necessary enrollment documentation such as immunization and health records, proof of residency or guardianship, birth certificate, school records, and other documentation. No homeless student shall be denied enrollment due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences. Moreover, GMA shall ensure that homeless children who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities including summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, or online learning.

GMA shall work with the homeless student's parents or guardian (or unaccompanied youth) to determine which school the student will attend based on the best interest of the student. School of Origin is defined as the school that the child attended when permanently housed, the school in which the child was last enrolled, including a preschool, or the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools when the child has completed the final grade served by the school of origin. In determining the best interest of the student, it shall be presumed the School of Origin is in the homeless student's best interest except when contrary to the request of the parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth. Student centered factors shall also be considered consistent with federal law in determining the best interest of the student.

If the student is sent to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, will be provided to the homeless student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth. These rights and the dispute process must be communicated to the parent or guardian of the homeless student or unaccompanied youth.

In addition to notifying the parent or guardian of the homeless student or unaccompanied youth of the rights described above, the District shall post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each school, and at locations frequented by parents or guardians and unaccompanied youths, in a manner and form understandable to them.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student will be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will be informed of GMA's decision and their appeal rights in writing. GMA's liaison will carry out the dispute resolution as provided by state law.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school will immediately enroll the student pursuant to GMA policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student will be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the GMA liaison is directed to assist in this process. Records from the student's previous school will be requested from the previous school pursuant to GMA policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with GMA policies.

- **Services**

Homeless students will be provided services comparable to other students at GMA, including: education services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Title I, special education, bilingual education and programs for students with limited English proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs, and before-and-after care programs.

At the request of the parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local homeless liaison, transportation shall be provided for a homeless student to and from the school of origin as follows:

- A. If the homeless student continues to live in the corporation in which the school of origin is located, transportation will be provided in accordance with the corporation policy/administrative guidelines.
- B. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another corporation, though continuing his/her education at the school of origin, the district of origin and the corporation in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. If the corporations cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally.

All records for homeless students shall be maintained so that they are available in a timely fashion and can be transferred promptly as necessary. All records regarding a homeless student shall be treated as a student education record consistent with policy. Further, a homeless child's living situation shall not be deemed directory information.

Legal Ref:  
42 USC 11432

## **11. Kindergarten Entrance**

Indiana Law requires anyone between the ages of seven and seventeen to attend school. Indiana Law sets the age requirement that any kindergarten be age 5 on or before August 1<sup>st</sup> of that academic year. Geist Montessori is not currently accepting students that turn 5 after the August 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff date.

## **12. School Calendar**

Geist Montessori Academy follows a traditional calendar that begins in August and concludes in May. Our students attend for 180 days of school unless the state grants an appeal to schools for missed days. Our school day is 7 hours long, which allows for long periods of uninterrupted work time, an essential component of the Montessori pedagogy.

## **13. Office Hours**

Our office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Office staff will be available to speak with parents and answer questions throughout the day at (317) 813-4626. Voicemail will take your message after regular office hours. If you need to speak to your child's teacher, please allow a staff member to take your name and phone number, and your call will be returned during breaks, or at the end of the school day. However, the best way to contact the teacher is through email.

## **14. Classroom Instructional Hours**

- **Kindergarten:** Monday-Friday 8:30 AM-3:00 PM
- **Lower Elementary:** Monday-Friday 8:30 AM-3:30 PM
- **Upper Elementary and Middle School:** Monday through Friday 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

## **15. Transportation**

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parent and family.

## **16. Arrival/Dismissal Times**

Please help provide a safe and efficient carline for dropping off children and picking them up. Please arrive at your appointed time. Thank you in advance for staying true to our tight schedule! If you arrive after 8:30, you must park and accompany your child into the front office of the building and sign him/her in. **Children cannot sign themselves in late.** These students will be reported as tardy.

Likewise, students leaving before 2:45 p.m. must be signed out with a signature from the parent. The sign in/sign out form is located at the front desk. If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up a child, please contact the office and notify staff of the alternate person. They will need to present a valid driver's license or other valid picture ID, and sign the student out from the office.

Because of parking lot restrictions during afternoon carline, we ask that if you need to pick up early, please do it by 2:45pm. From 2:45-3:45pm the parking lot entrance is ENTER ONLY, you will have to join the carline to leave through the exit with everyone else.

## **17. Arrival/Dismissal Procedures**

Students should be dropped off each morning at the school entrances 5 & 6 at the designated time. Please have your child ready to exit the car independently when you pull up to the entrance (i.e., shoes and jacket on, lunch and backpack in hand). Students may only exit their vehicle once the appropriate staff member has signaled for them to do so. A staff member will greet them and assist them into the building.

At dismissal, your child will walk to your car when their number is called. Staff will be present to help ensure that all students are safely in their vehicle before the carline continues. Please refrain from lengthy discussions with teachers or staff, or from giving verbal messages at this time. We make every effort to provide a quick and efficient system of arrival and dismissal, and we appreciate your cooperation and assistance.

**EXTREME CAUTION IS ADVISED AT ALL TIMES! PLEASE WATCH FOR CHILDREN BEING ASSISTED TO OR FROM CARS. PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY AND NEVER PASS ANOTHER CAR IN LINE. WHEN EXITING THE PARKING LOT, TO AVOID ACCIDENT OR DELAY, PLEASE BE SURE TO FOLLOW STAFFS DIRECTIONS. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CAR IS IN PARK WHEN STATIONARY IN CARLINE. ALSO, DO NOT USE YOUR CELL PHONES DURING CARLINE.**

- **VEHICLE IDLING**

The purpose of this policy is to eliminate all unnecessary idling by any vehicle on Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) property.

Vehicle exhaust from idling vehicles poses health, environmental, and financial risks to the GMA community.

This policy applies to the operation of every vehicle on GMA property.

Drivers of all public and private vehicles are to turn off the engine if the vehicle is to be stopped more than five (5) minutes in locations where vehicle exhaust may be drawn into the building or while on school grounds.

### **18. Walking/Biking**

Any child traveling to or from school in any way other than riding in a motor vehicle will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. They will also need to sign the child in and out at the front desk at the time of arrival or dismissal.

### **19. Transportation Change During the School Day**

Occasionally, parents must make unplanned transportation changes during the school day. All telephone calls must be received by 2:00 PM. This is to allow enough time to accurately deliver messages to teachers, as well as time to confirm the change if necessary. Please do not call the school after 2:00PM to make a transportation change except in the case of extreme emergencies.

### **20. Late Pick Up**

All students must be picked up by 3:45pm. In the event of an emergency, please contact the office as soon as possible so arrangements can be made. Parents and/or Guardians must come into the building to sign out their student. Late pick-ups will be documented, signed by the Parent or Guardian, and initialed by the supervising staff member. If there are frequent late pick-ups that are deemed by administration to be non-emergency in nature, administration will take further steps to ensure timely pickups. First, administration will have a discussion with the family. If the problem persists, administration will hold a meeting with the family. Finally, if the problem does not improve and students are continually picked up after 4:00pm, administration will contact Department of Child Services.

### **21. Before and After School Care**

Before and after school care is available through the YMCA. For more information, contact the YMCA Youth Enrichment Branch at 317-484-9622, visit [www.indymca.org](http://www.indymca.org) (Before and After Care) or visit them at 615 N Alabama Street, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

For over 156 years, the YMCA movement has earned its reputation as a mission-driven organization that builds strong families. Over 20 million people across the nation belong or participate at a YMCA. The YMCA is one of the few integrating forces in our community today. Our YMCA is a place where people of all ages, abilities and economic circumstances can meet and find a program, service or experience that enhances their well-being. In response to the needs of the community, the YMCA is the

largest provider of school age programs in the Indianapolis area and surrounding communities. The YMCA is unique because your program fees are based on total household income.

Our program structure and hours are designed in order to meet the needs of the community. The YMCA currently offers programs from 6:30 AM until school begins; and upon dismissal until 6:00 PM. The YMCA provides care for all Professional Development Days, school delays, and holidays. Summer day camp, sports, and enrichment camps are also available at off site locations.

## **Parent/Family Information**

### **22. Parent and Family Expectations and Responsibilities**

A student's entire family plays a vital role in their success at Geist Montessori Academy. They need to support classroom and school expectations, and act as a unified team with school staff. They can also support their child and the school by reinforcing positive behavior that is encouraged at GMA.

The Parents and Families of Geist Montessori Academy are encouraged to:

- Understand and acknowledge school expectations.
- Support their student's teacher by reinforcing classroom guidelines.
- Model positive behaviors that coincide with GMA standards.
- Work as a team with school personnel to support student's best interests. Address questions and concerns with classroom teacher when necessary.

### **23. Parent and Guardian Role in Supporting Positive**

#### **Behavior Modeling**

- A parent is the most important teacher in a child's life. Children observe and imitate the behavioral
- Responses that are used by the significant adults in their environment. Parents who are respectful and kind to others, especially their own children, are likely to see that same behavior develop in their children.
- Demonstrating a variety of healthy responses to frustration and set-backs, as well as modeling effective problem-solving techniques and non-judgmental communication are especially valuable to young children who are still learning to establish their own self-control.
- Parents can practice Montessori at home, by using resources from websites.

#### **Discussion**

- While children absorb a great deal by observation, discussing ways to show respect, build trust, show empathy, manage anger, and practice forgiveness can help a child build successful relationships.

#### **Reinforcement**

- Montessori philosophy does not advocate external rewards for desired behavior, as this tends to reduce intrinsic motivation. However, acknowledging and praising positive behavior is always important and will help shape a child's behavior far better than criticism.

## **Teaching Values**

- GMA is built on the concept of COMMUNITY. A community shares common values. Its members seek to give as much as they are able for the good of the whole, and take only what they really need. The community seeks to raise the level of the lowest members while keeping the entire community progressing forward toward a shared vision. At GMA, we value:
  - Respect for ourselves, others, and the environment.
  - Honesty in all situations.
  - Courtesy and exceptional manners.
  - Empathy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures.
  - Accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions.
  - Working cooperatively with others, which includes; listening, sharing opinions, negotiating, compromising, helping the group reach consensus, and taking a stand.
  - Seeking one's share of the work load.
  - Creating a balance between the needs of individual students and families and the needs of the school population as a whole and pride in our school.

## **Home/School Communication**

- Changes in a child's home life may affect his/her behavior and performance at school. Please notify the office and your child's teacher if any significant changes occur, such as:
  - Extended vacations or business trips by a family member;
  - Child staying somewhere other than home (relative/friend's house) for more than a day or two;
  - Loss of family member, including pets;
  - Moving
  - Any legal changes of custody
  - Change in family environment (separation, divorce, new partner, new baby);
  - *This information will be strictly confidential.*

## **Parent Education**

- Acquiring the knowledge, skills, and patience to raise healthy, happy and well-adjusted children is an on-going process that requires a tremendous amount of effort, time, and diligence. Several resources are available and parents are encouraged to take proactive responsibility in this area.
- GMA provides a series of educational evenings that are designed to assist parents in building positive parenting practices, as well as increase awareness of Montessori philosophy.
- Parent/Teacher discussions may be scheduled at any time with your child's teacher to exchange ideas and strategies for specific behavioral issues that may be impacting the student or family. Our Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director are available to discuss educational and behavioral issues.

## **GMA is a SCHOOL OF CHOICE**

- Students who are unable to progress or become responsible, independent, and productive members of the Montessori Community have the option to return to the school offered by their local public school district. Traditionally, public schools offer a more structured group approach to instruction and classroom set-up and this approach may be more suitable for some children. Parent understanding and support of the expectations established by GMA is vital to each

child's behavior and successful performance. As mentioned in much of our literature, this is a COMMUNITY EFFORT. While children should not be denied access to educational opportunities based on their parent's unwillingness to follow the strategies outlined for success, these same children cannot be permitted to interrupt the learning environment and process for others.

#### **24. Persistent Complaint and Harassment Policy**

We welcome feedback from parents, and will always try to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible. However, sometimes parents pursuing complaints or issues treat staff in a way that is unacceptable. While we recognize that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, teachers and administration will not accept threatening or unreasonable behavior, which may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Actions which are out of proportion to the nature of the complaint.
- Personally harassing or unjustifiably repetitious complaints.
- An insistence on pursuing unjustified complaints with unrealistic outcomes
- An insistence on pursuing justifiable complaints in an unreasonable manner, such as; using abusive or threatening language, complaints in public...etc.

At Geist Montessori Academy we expect our parents and families to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect
- Respect the needs of the students and staff, and to avoid the use of violence or threatening behavior while on school property.
- Seek the help and guidance of school administration if any situations with a staff member have caused you to reach a point of frustration.
- Refrain from contacting staff to inquire about other students or staff members.

Geist Montessori Academy administration reserves the right to deem any parent actions as unreasonable, unjustifiable, or a form of harassment. They can and will take action as necessary to help protect their staff from threatening or harassing behavior.

#### **25. Grievance Procedure**

It is the policy of the Board to ensure that any constituent complaint related to operational matters be first directed in writing to appropriate school staff (classroom teacher, support staff, Executive Director, etc.) and that staff have the opportunity to respond. If that process has been exhausted and the matter remains unsettled or is considered

unsatisfactory, the complaint may be directed in writing to the Board at the following address: [GMA.schoolboard@gmail.com](mailto:GMA.schoolboard@gmail.com). Complaints with regard to a student's IEP must be referred to the Coordinator of Special Education.

#### **26. Right to Inspect Instructional Materials and Consent to Surveys**

The parent or guardian of a Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) student may inspect, upon request, any instructional materials which will be used in connection with a survey, a personal analysis, or an evaluation. Instructional materials include teachers' manuals, student texts, films, other video materials, or tapes.

The parent or guardian of a GMA student may inspect, upon request, a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to the student. Requests may be made to the school building principal and will be processed within a reasonable period of time.

- **Student Submission to Surveys, Personal Analysis, or Evaluations of School Curriculum.**

No student shall be required, without prior written consent of the student's parent or guardian, to submit to a survey, a personal analysis, or an evaluation not directly related to the academic instruction which reveals information concerning:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
- Religious affiliations, beliefs, or practices of the student or the student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or his/her family;
- Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous confidential relationships, such as a relationship with a lawyer, physician, or minister; or
- Income (except as required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under a program).

Any consent form used in compliance with this policy will state the content and nature of the personal analysis, survey, or evaluation. Any survey or questionnaire designed to collect data or information for personal use of teacher, school employee or outside agency personnel, or that seeks information from the list outlined above (1-8) must be reviewed by the principal and forwarded to the Executive Director for approval prior to administration of the survey.

The rights provided to parents and guardians under this policy transfer to the student when the student turns 18 years old or is an emancipated minor at any age.

Legal Ref:  
IC 20-30-5-17; 20 USC 1232h(b)

## **27. Student Promotion and Retention**

The Board delegates sole authority to Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) teachers and administrators to make determinations of academic grades and promotion or retention at a grade level, in the best interests of the children, ideally with parental consultation. The Board and/or Executive Directors shall to hear "appeals" or complains regarding a student's grades or promotion/retention. Students with an IEP will graduate high school and exit special education services in consultation with the student's case conference committee. A student will not be retained or promoted in a grade level for any purposes related to the student's participation in extra-curricular programs, including athletic programs.

Legal Ref:  
511I.A.C6.1-5-10: 34 C.F.R.300.102(a)(3)(iii)

## **28. Homework**

Working at home is an essential ingredient in the process of learning and therefore should be viewed as an integral extension of, rather than a substitute for, classroom instruction. Homework, to be an effective aspect of student learning, requires combined and cooperative partnership efforts and attention of

primarily parents and teachers. The partnership of teachers and parents working together in assigning and monitoring homework should help students to understand working at home expectations, to improve study habits and to assume ever increasing responsibility for the successful completion of assigned work.

Legal Ref:  
511 I.A.C. 6.1-5-9

### **29. Student Withdrawal**

GMA's admission procedure usually generates a "wait list" of students seeking admission for the upcoming school year. Should you decide to withdraw your child, please contact the school as soon as possible so that we may offer placement to a child on the wait list. This procedure is particularly important during the summer months, as families on the list have patiently waited throughout the spring and summer for placement.

Student withdrawal forms are available in the school office. Records will be transferred to the new school upon receipt of a transfer request from the new school.

- **WITHDRAWAL EXIT INTERVIEW**

Under Indiana law, students at least sixteen (16) years of age, but not yet eighteen (18) years of age, may withdraw from school prior to graduation only under specific circumstances. This can only be accomplished after an interview has been conducted by the Board's designee as outlined below.

The Board designates the Executive Director or his or her designee to conduct the exit interview of an enrolled student who wishes to withdraw from school. The exit interview should take place at the school the student would normally attend.

In addition to the exit interview, a student must complete all other statutory requirements before Geist Montessori Academy may permit the student's withdrawal.

Legal Ref:  
I.C. 20-33-2-9

### **30. Attendance Policy**

All students of Geist Montessori Academy are required to "attend" school for the 180 days of each school year.

Pursuant to IC 20---33---2---3.2, 'attend' means to be physically present: (1) in a school; or (2) at another location where the school's educational program in which a person is enrolled is being conducted; during regular school hours on a day in which the educational program in which the person is enrolled is being offered."

Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) students are bound by the requirements of Indiana's compulsory attendance law. Detailed procedures regarding student attendance, including habitual truancy, will be printed in each school handbook.

Consistent with Indiana law, the Board directs the Executive Director to authorize and excuse students absent from school who meet the statutory criteria for permissible reasons including: service as a page or

honoree of the general assembly; participation in an election; subpoena to appear in court; active duty with the Indiana National Guard; Civil Air Patrol participants, educationally related non-classroom activity; and State Fair Participation.

Legal Ref:

I.C. 20-33-2 *et seq.*

Students are permitted to miss school for excused absences only, until their number of absences reaches the level of chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is reached when a student is absent from school, for any reason, 10% (18 days) or more of the same school year.

Once a student reaches a level defined as chronic absenteeism, they will be considered for possible grade retention. All decisions concerning chronic absenteeism are investigated by administration. All cases are reviewed on an individual basis, and each determination is at the discretion of administration.

Excused absences are defined as but not limited to:

- Up to 5 days for family vacations
- Proper documentation must be signed by administration
- Illness verified by parent/guardian
- Illness verified by note from physician
- Family Funeral
- Absences related to military deployment and return.

Unexcused Absences

- An unexcused absence is any absence that is not covered under the list of excused absences.

### **31. Pre-Arranged Absences**

When a student is going to be out of school for a family trip, a parent/legal guardian must contact the school in advance of the absence. Under normal circumstances the contact must be at least two weeks in advance. Forms are available in the front office.

Final approval for the absence will be made by the Executive Director. Teachers will be notified of the absence and the student will be responsible for make-up assignments. These absences are excused with proper prior written notice and the fulfillment of all course work assigned during the absence.

**Administration reserves the right to deny pre-arranged absences at any time, and will not be granted during standardized testing, when a student has accumulated ten absences in a given year, or when the requested days would exceed this number. Pre-arranged absences may be used only once per academic calendar year.**

### **32. Visitor's Policy**

The Montessori classroom is a very special place. The environment has been carefully designed to meet the developmental needs of children. A very delicate balance occurs between the child, teacher, and the environment as they work together to support growth and learning. The presence of visitors moving freely through the room can be distracting and at times confusing for the children. It can interfere with the atmosphere of independence and concentration in the classroom.

We ask that all visitors respect the children's learning time and the classroom environment. The

teacher and/or designated staff member will guide visitors into appropriate areas to sit and observe. Visitors should remain seated and refrain from engaging in conversation or activity with the children.

In the case of parents, student teachers, and volunteers, the teachers will direct visitors to appropriate activities within the classroom where they can become involved such as sharing a special skill or cultural information during circle time, listening to children read, or directing a special project.

Geist Montessori Academy encourages parents and other citizens to visit GMA, and believes that there are many potential benefits that can result from increased interaction with the public. At the same time, Geist Montessori Academy has a legitimate interest in avoiding disruption to the educational process and protecting the safety and welfare of the children and staff. A balance must be achieved between the potential benefits and risks associated with the presence of visitors in our building.

Geist Montessori Academy administration shall have the authority to determine which visits are to be permitted as well as the discretion to set any appropriate conditions on the nature and extent of such visits. In exercising that discretion, administration shall consider the purpose of the visit, the impact of the visitor's presence and the relationship of any visitor to the students.

### **Rules for Visitors to School**

- General Requirements for Visitors to Schools:
- A visitor is defined as any person seeking to enter the school building who is not an employee of the school, or a student currently enrolled in that building.
- All visitors shall report to the school office when arriving and/or leaving the school premises with a government issued ID. All visitors shall be requested to wear an appropriate form of identification/ badge when on school premises.
- Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorization from administration in advance out of respect for the teacher and the learning environment. At the discretion of administration, such prior authorization may be required. Relatives or caretakers who are not the child's guardian will be allowed to visit the school if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian or if they have received permission in advance from the child's parent or guardian in the form of an email or letter. This form of communication must be given to the administration or the administrative assistants. If an individual is not listed on the emergency contacts and/or approved transportation list, the student(s) will not be released without consent from a legal guardian or parent.
- All school visitors must comply at all times with school policies, rules, and regulations.
- Exceptions to Visitor Requirements: Parents or citizens who have been invited to visit school as part of a scheduled open house, special event, scheduled performance by a class, during drop off and/or pick up procedures, or other adult participants in organized and school approved activities are exempt from requirements in A. 1-4 above.
- Visitors to Classrooms or Other Instructional Areas:
- Access to classrooms or other instructional areas of the school may be restricted upon the recommendation of the teacher in charge or as otherwise deemed necessary by the administration.
- Because classrooms and other instructional areas are the most vulnerable to disruption, specific conditions may be imposed upon visitors, including but not limited to:
  - requiring that the visitor be chaperoned
  - limiting the duration of the visit to particular times or length of time
  - limiting the activities of the visitor to a particular purpose(s)
- Designating particular routes of travel in the building or upon the school grounds.
- Visitors wishing to conference with teachers or director during the course of the school day are

encouraged to make arrangements in advance whenever possible.

- Supervision and Monitoring of Visitors to GMA: All visitors and parents/guardians (visitors), whether or not that visitor has been cleared for involvement with the children through the formal background check process shall be supervised and monitored by the staff, teachers, or administration during the extent of the visit to GMA. Supervision is defined as having general oversight over, direction of, and regulation of the visitor's activities and interaction with the children at GMA. Monitoring is defined as watching and observing the visitor's activities and interaction with the children at GMA. Each classroom instructor or assistant shall be responsible for supervising and/or monitoring visitors in their classroom. All staff is responsible for supervising and monitoring visitors in their general vicinity, including the visitor activities in route to the classrooms.
- Special Situations: Both parents and guardians of a student have rights to visit the child's school and have unlimited access to their child unless a court order exists restricting such contact or it becomes a disruption to the learning environment.
- Student Teachers: Student teachers are exempt from the aforementioned provisions because they are subject to record checks and background clearance from their supervising institute.
- Furthermore, the director has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.
- This visitor access policy shall be shared with parents, guardians, and custodians of all children who are enrolled at GMA in the Parent Handbook that is distributed each year.

### **33. School-Wide Volunteer Opportunities**

GMA believes in establishing and supporting parent partnerships. From student values and growth to school finances, families are the key in ensuring our future. To that end our school community supports the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO focuses on building the relationships that make us a community through fun events, fundraisers, and by supporting the teachers through teacher grants, material making, and volunteerism in their classrooms.

We are a small community, and ALL parents are automatically members. Every family has something unique to offer our community, and we ask that you share your talents and your time. Please be sure to attend PTO meetings and/or contact your student's teacher directly about volunteering in the classroom.

#### **Please Note:**

- **Volunteers are required to have a criminal background check on file with the office before volunteering. Each volunteer is also required to sign a confidentiality agreement if they are working with students.**
- **Any volunteer or visitor that is found to be disrupting student learning, classroom instruction, or the peacefulness of the school community can be asked to leave the property at the discretion of school administration.**

### **34. Required Forms**

The following forms must be on file in the office before your child may attend classes:

- Enrollment Form
- Home Language Survey

- Records Transfer Form
- Medical Information/Consent Form
- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Records or Waiver
- Proof of Residency
- Free/Reduced Lunch Application

These forms will be provided to families when you begin attending GMA and some are available in the school office.

Please also be sure to fill out and submit the following forms if applicable:

- Parent Volunteer Form
- Criminal Background Check

### **35. Student Records**

Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) shall follow all state and federal rules and regulations regarding the release or retention of education records. Education records consist of all official records, files, and data directly related to a student and maintained by the school. Such records encompass all the material kept in the student's cumulative folder and include general identifying data, records of attendance and of academic work completed, records of achievement, results of evaluative tests, health data, and disciplinary records. Education records are the property of GMA.

Student medical records resulting from participation in school-based treatment services or treatment services provided by an outside professional care provider contracted and paid for by the school are considered private. GMA must not share any reports or notes resulting from school-based treatment services with other school officials. Additionally, GMA will not maintain any reports, notes, diagnosis, or appointments resulting from a student's participation in outside treatment as described in this Policy in the student's permanent educational file.

The Board authorizes the Executive Director/designee to set forth guidelines for the implementation of this policy.

Legal Ref:

20 U.S.C. Section 1232g; IC 20-33-7; IC 20-34-9

#### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they

believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTO bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call 1-800-437-0833.

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of  
Education 400 Maryland  
Avenue, SW Washington,  
D.C. 20202-8520

### **36. Materials Fee**

The materials fee is a vital part of the GMA community. They are used to provide all of our students with supplies for the entire school year. This fee is due at the beginning of each school year, no later than September 1st. Fees that are not paid by the designated final due date will be sent to collections. If you need to set up payment arrangements, please contact the front office at 317-813-4626.

### **37. Returned Checks**

Checks written to GMA that are returned unpaid by your bank for any reason will be charged an additional \$25 fee. This fee, in addition to the amount of the original check(s) must be paid within seven business days, and must be paid by cash, money order or cashier's check.

### **38. Lost and Found**

A lost and found area is located in each classroom. If items are found outside the classroom or on the playground, students may take those around and ask other classrooms to find the owner. Unclaimed items are donated to charity at the end of each semester, December and May.

## **Classroom Information**

### **39. Teacher/Staff Expectations and Responsibilities**

There are certain rights and responsibilities that contribute to maintaining a positive school environment. Teachers at all age levels provide conduct strategies based on three key guidelines that are communicated in each room: Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for Environment. Teachers will model appropriate behavior in and out of classrooms to further enforce established classroom conduct.

Any issues that arise are handled individually with that person first. Out of respect for each student, these conversations are done privately, and it is not uncommon for one learner to be unaware of the consequences of another.

The staff at Geist Montessori Academy strives to develop students who make every effort to make good choices which can benefit the entire school. When discipline issues occur, students are given the tools to solve the problem and they are coached on ways to succeed in the future. When disputes arise, they are handled through peace table conversations, peer mediation, and conflict resolutions techniques that follow our Montessori philosophy.

### **40. The Geist Montessori Academy staff members are required to:**

- Develop reasonable classroom ground rules consistent with the mission and beliefs of Geist Montessori Academy.
- Post clearly established ground rules in each classroom that are developed with student input.
- Explain through group meetings, modeling, and dialogue what the values for behavior are for both the classroom and school.
- Maintain appropriate behavior in their classroom and the school through redirection and dialogue with the student and their family.
- Report and record school discipline situations to the required staff and family using the proper documentation.

### **41. Reporting Child Abuse**

It is a felony for school officials to fail to report suspected child abuse/neglect. Any school employee that suspects child abuse/neglect must report it to the proper authorities. School employees must notify administration immediately and complete the child abuse/neglect form located in the office of the Executive Director.

### **42. Classroom/School Discipline Procedures**

Following Montessori philosophy, our policy is to assist children in arriving at inner discipline through concentrated work. Natural or logical consequences are used as a means of helping the child to develop

inner limits. Classroom guidelines are as follows:

- If a child is disruptive, off-task or has trouble settling into the class, the teacher will remind the child of the classroom ground rules and may be redirected to an activity.
- If the child is still unable to settle down, the teacher may have the child remain beside them until they are able to calm down and make respectful choices, or may be asked to work in a different area of the class or school, or may be given a “community service” task to perform.
- If the child is still unable to settle down after a reminder of the ground rules, being redirected and working in a new location, the student will be asked to complete a “Think Sheet”, detailing what happened and the better choices that could have been made (to be read, signed and returned the following school day). The teacher may also have a one-on-one discussion with the child at this time.
- When a serious incident occurs, or when disruptive off-task behavior becomes chronic, the teacher or staff involved will submit a summary of the incident on a Discipline Referral Form. The teacher will also schedule a meeting with the parents at this time. Depending on the circumstances, administrators and/or appropriate staff members will join the meeting to discuss options to modify the behavior.
- If the child poses serious threat of endangering himself or others, staff will immediately intervene in as positive manner as possible.

#### **43. Classroom Management**

GMA believes that all children desire to be productive and in control of themselves. We also believe that discipline should include acknowledging the child’s contributions, respecting their achievements, and praising their progress.

GMA practices a disciplinary approach that can best be defined as “freedom with responsibility”. Equal responsibility is placed upon teachers and students alike. Conflict resolution is mediated by teachers. Through lessons of respect, responsibility, honesty, courage, compassion, and tolerance each child develops and refines their behavior through learning to be a responsible member of their classroom community.

Beginning with orientation and throughout the school year, the children are made aware of appropriate and considerate behavior, and why these are necessary for the enjoyment and harmony of the group. In addition, our students are expected to help develop and sign a “Peace Agreement” each school year.

GMA staff members believe it is important that children clearly understand the rules and possible consequences for inappropriate and offensive behavior. Our staff members understand the need to help children without rejecting them as persons. Children need to understand why their behavior is considered inappropriate. All discipline will be based on the individual child’s needs and stage of development. Natural consequences are an important part of life and help children to take responsibility for their actions and behaviors.

Our students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful towards people and property. They will be given positive verbal reminders as necessary to encourage good conduct. They will be dismissed from the general activity area to a quieter place in the room when verbal reminders are not sufficient to change conduct, they will return when good conduct and control are demonstrated.

If a child's actions put themselves, others, or other's property or person in jeopardy, he/she will be temporarily removed from the classroom, and parents will be expected to participate in a conference with the appropriate school personnel to determine effective consequences and solutions to the problem.

#### **44. School Counseling**

The school counselor is here to help students have a positive school experience. Our counselor talks with students individually or in small groups, as well as providing classroom guidance for all children. Consulting with teachers, parents, and other school specialists, our counselor helps facilitate and address children's needs as well as sponsoring school-wide programs that promote a positive school climate and support the school's character education goals. In addition, our counselor serves as a liaison between parents, the school, and community resources.

Often times, children face difficulties which may prevent them from working well in school. These could include upsetting events, such as divorce, job loss, a recent move, or a death in the family. Sometimes children have trouble adjusting to school or are having difficulty with their friendships. Please let our counselor know if there is a situation in which we can help your child.

#### **45. Communication**

Although phone calls are welcome, the use of email is preferred. Please do not send notes to school in your child's lunchbox. Lunch boxes are your child's personal possessions, and are not routinely checked for correspondence, unless arrangements are made between a parent and teacher.

#### **46. Progress Reports**

Progress reports will be provided to parents a minimum of four times per year, one time each quarter. The progress report will provide an overview of the student's progress through the Montessori curriculum as well as achievement of state standards. Please do not hesitate to contact your teacher(s) to ask questions about progress reports.

#### **47. Classroom Observation**

We are aware that many parents would like to observe their child's adjustment to the Montessori environment, and to see firsthand what Montessori is all about. Classroom observations are available for parents and legal guardians only and must be arranged 24 hours in advance with the school office and teacher. All visitors must check in with office personnel before proceeding into the school. We realize that a Montessori classroom may seem confusing at first glance. We ask that all visitors please maintain silence when observing. Observations are limited to 90 minutes.

#### **48. Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice during the school year, with the spring conference as a student led conference. These dates may be found on the school calendar. Sign-up information will also be sent home in advance of conference dates to allow parents a sufficient amount of time to sign-up for a convenient time slot. We encourage you to contact the school, at any time, should you have questions or concerns regarding this process.

#### **49. Class Change Policy**

At Geist Montessori Academy we believe the best way to achieve success in the classroom is through regular communication between the student, teacher, and parent. Therefore, the following steps are required if and when there are issues between a student and his/her teacher:

- Parent and teacher meet to identify and analyze the problem.
- Issues are clarified.
- Modifications are explored.
- A plan is developed and implemented.

If a consensus is not reached, or the plan implemented is not successful, a request for class change should be directed to the Executive Director. All class changes are contingent on grade level availability, and if enrollment in the receiving class is appropriate.

All final decision on class changes and placements are determined by the Executive Director.

#### **50. Assessments**

At this time, the progress of an Indiana school is measured by student performance against the state benchmark on Indiana's state-standardized test, the ILEARN, which includes an alternate assessment for students with disabilities called the IAM. Following the state requirements, our students will take the following tests during the school year:

- Grade 3: English/Language Arts & Math
- Grade 4: English/Language Arts, Math and Science
- Grade 5: English/Language Arts, Math and SS
- Grade 6: English/Language Arts, Math, and Science
- Grade 7: English/Language Arts, and Math
- Grade 8: English/Language Arts, and Math

Students in 3rd Grade will participate in the state-standardized test, the IREAD, and all English Language Learners will participate in WIDA testing.

As a Ball State University charter school, we are also required to administer the Northwest Evaluation Association Assessment (NWEA). By using NWEA, a norm-referenced test, the teachers are able to track student progress against the national population in subjects including, but not limited to, reading, math, and language usage. This assessment is administered to all students in grades K-8 and allows teachers and parents to look at student progress from the beginning, middle, and end of the year.

#### **51. RTI**

The merging of our public school status with our Montessori school philosophy has been challenging at times. **Response to Instruction (RTI)** is one of the ways that we ensure we are meeting the requirements of the state. It is a school-wide system that involves screening or benchmarking of students, research-based interventions and curriculum (which is fully supported by the Montessori pedagogy and materials), progress monitoring, and data-based decision making. Benchmark assessments administered to all students in the fall, winter,

and spring allow teachers to look at student performance in relation to others of the same grade and/or the same classroom. Individualized interventions are created for students needing additional supports, and progress is monitored. If students fail to make progress, this system also serves as a means to help identifying students who may need to proceed to an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services.

## **52. Lunch & Snacks**

We do not have a hot lunch program; our students bring a packed lunch to school each day. If your child requires a plate or tableware, please be sure to pack these as needed. Students are also encouraged to bring bottled water and a healthy snack to eat each day.

In keeping with our studies of nutrition and health, we encourage you to pack nutritious lunches for your child. Canned pop, candy, or gum will **not** be permitted. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their children if it is pre-arranged with their classroom teacher and they have a background check on file with the office.

## **53. Birthday Celebrations in the Classroom**

As with many Montessori schools, in our Kindergarten and lower elementary classes we do celebrate birthdays with a "Birthday Rotation". Please check with your child's teacher to see what they have planned for birthday celebrations. With regards to treats, all families will also need to check with their child's teacher on what falls in line with the current allergies in the classroom.

All celebrations MUST be set up ahead of time with the teacher. Usually, celebrations take place no earlier than 2:30 and must end no later than 3:20.

## **54. Field Trips**

During field trips, students are subject to the same rules, regulations, and behavioral expectations that they have during a regular school day. The children will be transported by school-provided transportation. No child will be permitted to accompany his/her class on a field trip unless a permission slip has been signed, dated, and is on file at the school. **All students must accompany their class to and from a field trip, unless pre-approved by administration.**

All Teachers and Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. A First Aid Kit will be available during field trips. Parents who wish to attend field trips as chaperones must have a current, criminal background check on file. Sometimes chaperone positions are limited on field trips. In these cases, we make every attempt to allow different parents the opportunity to serve as chaperones.

## **55. Internet Use/ Cell Phone Use**

GMA integrates the use of technology into student instruction, and internet usage is permitted only in the presence and supervision of a teacher, or other designated staff member. While the school uses these resources to enhance our students' education, there are always potential risks of the student accessing other materials. We believe the benefits outweigh the risks, and while teachers are trained in the appropriate use of technology with students, parents and teachers share responsibility for conveying clear expectations regarding internet and technology use. Most classrooms have students and parents sign a technology agreement. This reinforces responsible behavior is used with technology in school.

Cell Phones belonging to students: Personal cell phone devices must be kept in lockers or backpacks in airplane mode. Students may NOT use cell phones during school hours. If a call needs to be made to parents, students should ask the teacher to use one of the building phones to call.

## **Student Information**

### **56. Student Expectations and Responsibilities**

The students at Geist Montessori Academy take an active role in implementing the conduct policy. They help develop the rules and expectations of their classroom which they will follow each school year. The children are given the opportunity to learn from their experiences to make positive decisions in the future. When students fail to meet expectations they are faced with natural consequences that are unique to each situation.

The students are given the opportunity to be leaders in the classroom, and by modeling class and school expectations they can have a positive impact on the entire community.

#### **The students at Geist Montessori Academy are required to:**

- take an active role in developing classroom expectations
- model appropriate behavior outlined in classroom and school expectations
- set a positive example for students of all ages
- be a leader whenever possible and contribute to the school community
- learn from their mistakes and grow as an individual

### **57. Conduct Goals/Discipline**

At Geist Montessori Academy our common goal is to help each student attain the independence and self-confidence needed to become self-disciplined. Behavior is based on cooperation, logical, natural consequences, personal fairness, consistency, and the belief that we all have the ability to change and grow. As a community, our common goal is to maintain a peaceful and safe learning environment for each student to reach their full potential.

It is the policy of Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) to balance the rights of student expression with that of all members of the school community, with the interests of an orderly and efficient educational process, and with the needs of a school environment suitable for the healthy growth and development of all students.

Students are expected to demonstrate proper behavior as defined in student handbooks and are subject to disciplinary action when the rules are not followed. Students do have the full protection of due process and appeal where applicable.

It is the intent of the administration and teachers of GMA to follow the disciplinary procedures as outlined in the student handbook of each building. In addition to the actions specifically provided in each student handbook, the Executive Director, principals, any administrative personnel, or any teacher of GMA shall be authorized to take any action in connection with student behavior which is reasonably desirable or necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference therewith, such action including but not limited to such matters as:

- Counseling with a student or group of students;
- Conferences with a parent/guardian or group of parents/guardians;
- Assigning students additional work;
- Rearranging class schedules or;
- Restriction of extracurricular activity.

Students with disabilities are afforded additional protections when they are removed from their current educational placement due to violating a code of student conduct. GMA abides by all legal obligations espoused in Indiana's special education code ("Article 7") and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Legal Ref:

IC 20-33-8-12; 511 I.A.C. § 7-44 et. seq.; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

### **58. Student Due Process**

The procedures for administering student discipline and due process are provided by Indiana law. The Geist Montessori Board adopts the Indiana Statutes as the official policy and administrative procedures of GMA unless applicable federal law requires otherwise (I.C.20-33-8). Indiana Legislature enacted PL224-1987. This statute requires school authorities to inform law enforcement agencies, in writing, when violations involving controlled substances occur within a school environment. Under Indiana law, a student bringing a firearm or destructive device to school or on school property or in possession of a firearm or destructive device on school property must be expelled from school for a period of at least one calendar year. (I.C.20-33-8-16(d)) Under Indiana law, a student bringing a deadly weapon, other than a firearm, to school or on school property or in possession of a deadly weapon on school property may be expelled for a period of not more than one calendar year. IC 20-33-8-16 (f)).

### **59. Repeated or Severe Actions of Misconduct**

At Geist Montessori Academy we work to develop students that look at the big picture to see how their choices affect the entire school. We want them to learn from their choices through natural consequences to help them make positive decisions in the future. However, in some instances further action must be taken in the best interest of all students and staff. At Geist Montessori Academy we put the children first, and we want to maintain a positive learning environment where they can thrive as individuals. When student actions threaten that peaceful environment the proper measures must be taken.

Disciplinary Action applies to a student enrolled at Geist Montessori Academy that is:

- On school grounds before, after or during school hours.
- Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event.
- Traveling to or from a school activity, function, or event.

The following are examples of situations that are considered grounds for Disciplinary Action; serious incidents are defined, but not limited to the following:

- Instructional disruptions
- Children showing disrespect for self, others or environment (misconduct or substantive disobedience)
- Any time misconduct results in physical injury to another person.

- A learner that brings a firearm, deadly weapon, or destructive device to school or on school property or is in possession of any of the above on school property.
- Drawing pictures of or performing and internet search of weapons or anything else deemed inappropriate by administration.
- Swearing, using abusive language or sarcasm directed at another student, staff member or parent.
- Intentional abuse and/or vandalism to school property.
- Bringing on campus any pornography, or explicit photography or written material.
- Physical harm to another person with the intent to do bodily injury, such as hitting, stabbing, poking, pushing, slapping, kicking.
- Bringing on campus any illegal substances or prescription medications for unauthorized use.
- Stealing, or attempting to steal someone else's property.
- Touching another person's private body parts or intentionally exposing one's self for the sole purpose of self-gratification or harming (emotionally or physically) another individual.

Depending on the frequency or severity of the misbehavior, the following actions may be taken at the discretion of administration:

- Spend time away from their classroom
- Call the parent/guardian immediately to discuss the issue with the child present.
- Place the child in an in-school or out of school suspension for specified period of time.
- Have the parent/guardian remove the child from school for a specified period of time and conditions will be set for the child's re-admittance.

#### **60. Unlawful Activity**

A student may be suspended or expelled if the student has engaged in unlawful activity on or off of school property if the activity may reasonably be considered to interfere with the school's purpose or education function or if the student's removal is necessary to restore order and/or protect others on the property. Indiana law prohibits students from bringing or possessing at school firearms, deadly weapons, or other destructive devices. The penalty under Indiana law is expulsion from school for at least one calendar year with the student's return at the beginning of the first semester after the one-year period.

#### **61. Suspensions**

In some cases, it becomes necessary to assign out-of-school- suspension. This is usually the result of a serious infraction, refusal to comply with lesser disciplinary penalty, or chronic misbehavior. Indiana law defines grounds for suspension or expulsion as "student misconduct or substantial disobedience". (I.C.20-33-8-14(a)). During such suspension, the student is in the care of parents. The student should not be present on school grounds without the permission of the school principal. Students are not to

attend any extra-curricular activities while they are suspended out of school.

## **62. Corporal Punishment**

Geist Montessori Academy will not use corporal punishment as a method to correct misbehavior.

## **63. Bullying Policy**

At Geist Montessori Academy we define "bullying" as overt, repeated acts or gestures, including: (1) verbal or written communications transmitted; (2) physical acts committed; or (3) any other behaviors committed; by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student.

Any reported cases of bullying are treated to each student and situation. They will be handled on an individual basis with no two cases being resolved in exactly the same way. All reported incidents of bullying are taken seriously and investigated by staff personnel. Any students found bullying are subject, but not limited to, disciplinary actions outlined in the (**Repeated or Severe Actions of Misconduct**) section of the school conduct policy.

The Geist Montessori "bullying" policy apply when a student is: (1) on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; (2) off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; (3) traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or (4) using property or equipment provided by the school. Bullying is taken very seriously at GMA and our policies are designed to created positive environment for all students to succeed.

## **64. Anti-Bullying Policy**

Bullying is **prohibited** by Geist Montessori Academy (GMA). Students who commit any acts of bullying are subject to discipline, including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, arrest, and/or prosecution.

### Definition:

"Bullying" is defined as overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically); physical acts committed; aggression; or any other behaviors committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student, creating for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment that:

- (1) places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property;
- (2) has a substantially detrimental effect on the targeted student's physical or mental health;
- (3) has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's academic performance; or
- (4) has the effect of substantially interfering with the targeted student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by GMA.

Bullying does **not** include, and should not be interpreted to impose any burden or sanction on, the following:

- A) participating in a religious event;
- B) acting in an emergency involving the protection of a person or property from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or substantial danger;
- C) participating in an activity consisting of the exercise of a student's freedom of speech rights;
- D) participating in an activity conducted by a nonprofit or governmental entity that provides recreation, education, training, or other care under the supervision of one (1) or more adults;

- E) participating in an activity undertaken at the prior written direction of the student's parent; or
- F) engaging in interstate or international travel from a location outside Indiana to another location outside Indiana.

- Applicability:

GMA prohibits bullying in all forms. This policy may be applied regardless of the physical location in which the bullying behavior occurred, whenever the individual committing the bullying behavior and any of the intended targets of the bullying behavior are students attending a school within GMA and disciplinary action is reasonably necessary to avoid substantial interference with school discipline or prevent an unreasonable threat to the rights of others to a safe and peaceful learning environment. GMA prohibits bullying through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through any computer, computer system, or computer network.

Bullying behaviors based on the targeted individual's race, color, national origin, sex, gender, religion, or disability may be investigated and processed according to the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

- Education:

GMA will provide training and/or instruction on anti-bullying prevention and policy to all students, as well as employees, in accordance with Indiana law.

- Reporting:

Anyone who believes that a student has possibly been or is the victim of bullying is encouraged to **immediately** report the situation to an appropriate employee such as a teacher, school counselor, or administrator (including the Executive Director). All employees, volunteers, and contracted service providers who observe or receive a report of suspected bullying shall notify a designated school administrator in charge of receiving reports of suspected bullying within the same day. If an employee does not know who to make a report to, he or she should report directly to the building principal or Executive Director. Bullying reports to the Department of Child Services and/or law enforcement must be made as required by law, such as when an employee believes that a student is the victim of abuse or neglect. Any person who makes a report of bullying and requests to remain anonymous will not be personally identified as the reporter or complainant to the extent permitted by law. GMA will act appropriately to discipline employees, volunteers, or contracted service providers who receive a report of bullying and fail to initiate or conduct an investigation of a bullying incident, and for persons who falsely report an incident of bullying. GMA will act appropriately to discipline students, employees, visitors, or volunteers who make false reports of bullying.

- Investigation:

Once a report of suspected bullying is received by the designated school administrator, an expedited investigation shall follow. The investigation should be facilitated by the designated school administrator or other appropriate school employees. Information relating to the investigation will be gathered using means including, but not limited to: witness interviews, request for written witness statements, record identification and review, and an assessment of whether bullying occurred. The investigation will be initiated within one (1) school day of the report to the designated school administrator and will ordinarily be completed within ten (10) school days.

- Intervention/Responses:

If a report of suspected bullying is substantiated through an investigation, then GMA shall take appropriate intervention and respond consistent with policy and procedure. GMA will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to stop the bullying, remedy the bullying, and prevent the bullying from recurring. Interventions and responses include, but are not limited to: separating the bully and the target; follow-up school counseling for the target; bullying education for the bully; and prompt disciplinary action against the bully. These steps should not penalize the target of the bullying. Disciplinary actions against the bully may include, but are not limited to: suspension and expulsion for students. Also, if the acts of bullying rise to the level of serious criminal offense the matter may be referred to law enforcement. GMA shall inform the parents of all students involved in alleged incidents, and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

- Parental Involvement:

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the process of minimizing bullying. Parents should report suspected acts of bullying to an appropriate school official. In addition, parents of students suspected of bullying will be notified with a phone call or through other appropriate means of communication. Conversely, parents of students suspected of being the target of acts of bullying will also be notified with a phone call or through other means of appropriate communication. Parent notifications will occur in an expedited manner within two (2) school days after the designated school administrator receives the report of suspected bullying. Parents of students who are disciplined for acts of bullying will be involved in the disciplinary process consistent with the law and GMA policy.

- Reporting to IDOE:

GMA will record and report to the Executive Director or his or her designee the frequency of bullying incidents in the following categories: verbal bullying, physical bullying, social/relational bullying, and electronic/written communication bullying (or a combination of two or more of the above categories). The Executive Director or his or her designee shall report the number of bullying incidents by category for each school for each school term to the Indiana Department of Education by July 1.

Legal Ref:

I.C. 20-33-8-13.5

#### **65. Non-Participation Policy**

**RECESS**— All students are expected to participate in recess each day. Recess will be held outdoors on all days in which weather permits. Therefore, students should dress appropriately on all days as they will be expected to go outside with their class. Students not participating may bring a note from home or their physician.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**— All students are required to participate in physical education. To be excused from participating, a student **MUST** have a doctor's note stating why he/she cannot participate and for how long the student will be excused. If a student is injured and is waiting to go to a doctor, a parental note may be used.

However, a parental note will only be good for one day. The student **MUST** have a doctor's note to continue to be excused from physical education class.

#### **66. Substance Abuse and Tobacco Use**

GMA is a smoke/tobacco free environment. The Board prohibits the use of tobacco in any form and the use of e-cigarettes or vaping in any building owned or leased by GMA; on GMA property or grounds (including parking lots, athletic facilities, etc.); in vehicles owned, leased, or operated by GMA; and during GMA events, even if held outside of GMA property (for example, field trips). This policy applies to all employees (including employees of services contracted by GMA), students, parents, patrons, vendors, visitors, and all third parties at all times.

The law prohibits smoking in any public place or place of employment, or within 8 feet of a public entrance to a public place in the state of Indiana.

Students are to refrain from the use, possession, transmission, or being under the influence of, harmful drugs, any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, herbal incense, K2, "Spice", synthetic marijuana, alcoholic beverage, non-alcoholic beer, stimulant, caffeine-based drug, or intoxicant of any kind, or items purported as such, on school property, at any school sponsored event or traveling to or from a school activity, function or event.

Students are forbidden from possessing anything resembling drug paraphernalia.

Students are to refrain from misuse of prescription medication. They are to refrain from possessing or using prescription medication for an unintended purpose or in an unintended manner.

Students are to refrain from use of inhalants. Students are forbidden to sniff, inhale, or otherwise ingest any substance when it is not the intended use of the substance.

Students are to refrain from the possession or use of tobacco or nicotine delivering devices such as electronic cigarettes and nicotine patches.

Students are to refrain from engaging in the selling of a controlled substance and/or look-alike substance, or engaging in an action that constitutes a danger to other students or constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

In any cases where illegal substances are observed or suspected, law enforcement will be notified immediately.

#### **67. Student Drug/Alcohol Testing Policy**

Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) recognizes that in the course of exploring new ideas and broadening their base of experiences, students may make poor choices and take unacceptable risks with a high probability of long-term negative consequences. When this happens, it is the responsibility of the Board and the staff it employs, to intervene. The use of illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are examples of poor choices that require interventions such as those implemented through this Policy.

##### Individualized Suspicion

All students, regardless of age, who exhibit behavior which leads GMA authorities to have reasonable suspicion to suspect the student is under the influence of a controlled substance, may be immediately required to submit to a drug/alcohol screen administered at GMA's expense. Furthermore, GMA may subject items in said student's possession to test to determine if those items contain drugs or alcohol. GMA may pay for such testing of items in the student's possession.

Factors which the administration will consider may include, but are not limited to:

1. Odor of alcohol/marijuana/smoke;
2. Glassy, dilated, bloodshot eyes, or dark circles under eyes;
3. Appears dazed, giddy;
4. Staggering walk;
5. Slurred or rapid speech;
6. Incoherent thought processes;
7. Disruptive, aggressive, physically threatening, out of control, or unusual behavior;
8. Bragging or talking to other students about alcohol or drug use;
9. Noticeable withdrawal from favorite activities and friends, or
10. Physical indicators from an objective assessment by the school nurse or health care representative.

If the test is positive, all future drug tests will be done at the parent's/guardian's or student's expense.

Refusal to submit to a drug test will be considered an admission of being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. This is a violation of school rules and will be dealt with according to the student discipline procedures outlined in the Parent Student Handbook.

The administration will make a reasonable attempt to apprise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the situation.

#### **68. Gun Free School**

No student shall possess any weapon, including a firearm, ammunition, or knife, in any building owned or leased by Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) on GMA property or grounds (including parking lots, athletic facilities, etc.); in vehicles owned, leased, or operated by GMA; and during GMA events, even if held outside of school property (for example, field trips). In addition to being subject to criminal charges, any student who violates this policy shall be subject to expulsion or suspension.

No student shall possess any object which is either intended, or may in fact be used as, or looks like a weapon or other instrumentality which could cause harm to any other person in any building owned or leased by GMA.

This includes during GMA events, even if held outside of school property (for example, field trips). Such objects include, but are not necessarily limited to, knives, batons, night sticks, brass knuckles, bombs, fireworks, electronic stun weapon, tasers, stun guns, or chemicals. In addition to being subject to criminal charges, any student who violates this policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Anyone who has reason to believe that any individual is violating the law or this Policy shall immediately report the alleged violation to an administrator or law enforcement officer. GMA administration will immediately report any suspected violation of the law to law enforcement. GMA may take any necessary steps to exclude an alleged offender from GMA property or events for safety concerns.

#### **69. Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment in employment violates the provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any employee who is aware of any instance of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to administration. All complaints will be investigated promptly, impartially and discreetly, and upon completion of the investigation, the appropriate parties will be notified immediately of the findings.

Geist Montessori Academy will not tolerate any forms of discrimination and harassment by anyone. No one in our school community, which includes, but is not limited to students, parents, faculty/staff (regular or contracted), maintenance workers, and custodian, shall engage in sexually harassing behavior towards another member of our school community. Any employee who harasses another will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### **70. Inappropriate Language:**

GMA defines inappropriate language as racial slurs, profanity, and any other language that is meant to degrade, taunt, or slander another individual. Should inappropriate language be used, the consequences outlined in the conduct/discipline policy shall be followed.

Depending on the circumstances, administration may determine that another consequence is appropriate that may include, but is not limited to, suspension from school.

### **71. Public Displays of Affection**

Inappropriate hugging, hand-holding, kissing, and other similar physical contact are not permitted. The consequences outlined in the conduct/discipline policy shall be followed should a student choose to not follow this guideline.

### **72. Dress Code**

Geist Montessori Academy has adopted the following policy regarding student dress. It is our intent to have students dress in a manner that shows good judgment and does not distract or interfere with the educational climate. School administration reserves the right to determine if a student is wearing something that distracts or interferes with the educational climate, and will make determinations as needed. Their decisions will be based on, but not limited to, the guidelines listed below.

#### **General**

- Clothing and accessories shall not be worn if they display or suggest:
  - Profanity or Vulgarity
  - Obscene or foul language
  - Symbols of violence or weapons
  - Discriminatory messages
  - Gang or gang-like symbols
  - Sexually suggested symbols
  - Alcohol, tobacco, or drug messages
  - Clothes with rips, tears, and/or holes cannot have the rips/tears/holes above the fingertip level and anything deemed inappropriate by administration.

#### **Accessories/Headwear**

- Head coverings, including but not limited to caps, hats, wigs, bandannas, hair curlers, picks, combs, hoods and scarves, may not be worn inside the building unless authorized by the school administration.
- Sunglasses shall not be worn inside unless prescribed by a physician or authorized by an administrator.

#### **Footwear**

- Shoes with laces are to be laced and tied.
- Shoes manufactured with wheels are not permitted.
- Slippers/house shoes need to have a hard sole for foot safety

#### **Pants/Slacks**

- Pants will be worn fitted to the waist with or without a belt, and they will not expose undergarments. If a student is “sagging”, the student will be asked to fasten the pants at his/her waist. A “tie” may be given to the student if he does not have a belt. If the student refuses to fix his/her pants the first time the request is made, the parent/guardian may be called to bring a proper pair of pants and/or a disciplinary referral may be written.

#### **Shirts and Tops**

- Clothing that exposes the back, torso, shoulders and/or cleavage, such as the following, is not allowed:
  - Tube tops/Halters

- Spaghetti straps type tank tops
- Bare back or midriff clothing
- Bathing suits
- Shirts with slits above the waist
- Basketball jerseys and similar tops (without another shirt on underneath)

The 'Hand Test' shall determine appropriate exposed skin on chest (index finger on collar bone with other three fingers resting on chest). Skin should not be exposed below the pinky finger. All shirts must have sleeves that cover the shoulders. Bra/undergarment straps should not show.

### **Leggings/Shorts/Dresses/Skirts**

- These items should meet the fingertip test, meaning, "When arms are held relaxed at student's sides, shorts/skirts/dresses should reach **below** the fingertips". Skin should not be visible above the fingertips.
- Leggings may be worn but tops still must reach **BELOW** the fingertips all the way around the body. Any type of tight pants will be considered leggings unless there are back pockets. This includes "jeggings".
- School officials have the right to make the decision on whether or not clothing is appropriate.

If there is a question as to whether or not any student's apparel is inappropriate for school, school officials will be the judges. We reserve the right to send a student home or ask the parent to bring a change of clothing if the student's clothing is not appropriate for the school setting. If an adult is not available to supply a change of clothing, the student may be given school clothing to wear.

### **73. Technology Use & Internet Safety Policy**

All use of computers, furnished or created data, software, and other technology resources as granted by GMA are the property of GMA and are intended for school business and educational use only. Students are to use the computer network responsibly. The student is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and using the GMA computer network and the school's technological resources.

#### **General Rules:**

- GMA reserves the right to monitor, retrieve and review any data composed, sent, received, or stored using the GMA network or Internet connections, including email.
- GMA prohibits cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying involves deliberate or hostile behavior intended to defame, harm, threaten, harass, or intimidate students, staff members, or the school through the use of information and communication technologies, including email, text messages, blogs, instant messages, personal websites, online social directories and communities such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Wikipedia, YouTube), video-posting sites, or other similar networking sites not listed.
- Cyber-bullying occurring during OR outside school hours, on or off the school premises, on school or personal devices is prohibited.
- Use of profane, pornographic, obscene, abusive, or impolite materials or language is not permitted.
- Intentional circumvention of web-filtering is prohibited. Accidental access should be reported to the teacher immediately.
- Installing or downloading hardware, software, shareware, or freeware onto any media or

network drives is prohibited.

- Copyright laws are to be respected, and copying of any person's work or intruding into others' files is prohibited.
- Users may not access the network without proper authorization.
- Users may not attempt to damage or destroy equipment or files. GMA makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the service it provides, and is not responsible for damage to any data.
- Users are to delete files and data no longer needed.

#### Student and Staff Use of Social Media and Personal Websites

- GMA employees and students use social media, networking websites, personal websites, blogs, and similar internet sites and applications on their personal time, but these activities may affect the educational environment. As such, GMA employees and students shall abide by the Acceptable Use of Technology administrative guidelines regarding social media use. Employees and students who violate the administrative guidelines may be subject to discipline.
- GMA employees, students, and visitors must remember that when using electronic technologies, including accessing GMA wireless internet, all communications can be reviewed at any time.
- If a User creates a password, code, or encryption device to restrict or inhibit access to electronic technologies, the User shall provide access to that information when requested by the User's supervisor, teacher, or designee. The Executive Director or a designee shall be authorized to override any password or encryption device to access the technology. A User shall never use another User's password, or account, even with the permission from the User.
- GMA has taken measures to ensure that some technology protection measure has been implemented to monitor and/or block obscene or pornographic materials. A certificate of such measure is required under CIPA.

#### **74. Personal Items**

GMA does not accept responsibility for the personal items of students. Any personal items judged to be unsafe or inappropriate for the school environment, or interferes with a student's education focus, will be confiscated and held in the office or with the retrieving staff member until a parent retrieves them. The school shall not be responsible for items lost or damaged while in its possession.

Students are not allowed to bring the following items to school:

- IPODS
- IPADS/TABLETS
- PSPs
- GAMEBOYS
- VIDEO GAMES
- MP3 PLAYERS
- LASER PENS
- OTHER GAMING SYSTEMS OR MUSICAL DEVICES

Exceptions to these rules may be made on an individual basis and must be accompanied by a written permission from the teacher.

Cell phones may be brought to school, and must remain in airplane mode in a backpack/locker. They may not be utilized during instructional hours without the verbal consent of a staff member. If the cell

phone is utilized by a student or viewed by a staff member during the instructional day, it will be confiscated and held until it is retrieved by the parent.

#### **75. Backpack Policy**

Our students do not use textbooks or have other items that require daily transportation to and from school; we want our students to refrain from bringing a backpack to school with them. They may still bring a traditional size lunch box.

Although we will encourage a backpack free environment, we understand that students sometimes have additional items they need to carry. Should your student need to carry items to and from school, they must be brought in an all-clear backpack (no mesh bags allowed). Any student purses or other opaque pouches must be no larger than a small clutch-approximately 5 x 8 inches in size to carry personal/feminine items.

### **Special Education**

#### **76. Special Education**

Our goal is to meet the needs of every student at GMA. If a student fails to make progress, even with additional supports and interventions in the general education classroom (RTI-see above), the next step may be a referral for evaluation. Sometimes the evaluation is conducted by the SLP if it is believed to be primarily a language or speech based difficulty.

Other times the evaluation is conducted by a school psychologist. If a parent has questions regarding the process or would like to request an evaluation, please contact our Special Education Director, (317) 813-4626. For a complete copy of Indiana's law governing special education services, go to:

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/T05110/A00070.PDF>

To download a copy of Indiana's current Notice of Procedural Safeguards for parents, go to: <http://www.doe.in.gov/specialed/laws-rules-and-interpretations>

#### **77. Students with Disabilities and Least Restrictive Environment**

A continuous appraisal shall be made in an attempt to determine the number of children who would benefit from special education. Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) shall provide special education as mandated by state and federal statute that are warranted by the needs of the school population. GMA is committed to educating students with disabilities consistent with applicable federal and state law.

#### **Least Restrictive Environment**

GMA shall ensure to the maximum extent appropriate that students with disabilities are educated with nondisabled students and that students are removed from the general education environment only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes using supplementary aids and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved. GMA shall ensure that a continuum

of services is provided in order to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities, including supplementary services to be provided in conjunction with general education placement. In selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration shall be given to any potential harmful effect on the student or quality of services needed.

The student's case conference committee shall determine the placement in which a student will receive services, to be delivered in the least restrictive environment regardless of the identified disability.

GMA shall take reasonable measures to see that students with disabilities are in classes and buildings with their chronological peers unless an alternative is determined appropriate by the student's case conference committee, as documented in the appropriate written notice. Students with disabilities shall not be removed from education in age-appropriate general education classes solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum.

In addition, GMA shall take reasonable measures to see that a student with a disability has an equal opportunity to participate with nondisabled students in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent possible.

### **Article 7**

Discipline for special education students is subject to the requirements of 20 U.S.C. 1415 *et seq.* and 511 I.A.C. 7-1-1 *et seq.*

Legal Ref:

511 IAC 7-42-10; 511 I.A.C. 7-43-2; 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et. seq.*; 20 U.S.C. 1415(d); 34 C.F.R. 300.504

### **78. Behavior Policy for Special Education Students**

As a public education institution, GMA strictly adheres to the guidelines of Article 7's Rule 29 (section 511 IAC 7-29-1 through 511 IAC 7-29-9) and Rule 30 (sections 511 IAC 7-30-1 through 511 IAC 7-30-6) as they relate to disciplinary procedures and mediation. GMA will assist families through the Division of Special Education with the facilitation of impartial advocates and mediators to address student/family complaints if necessary. The school may remove a student with a disability for up to ten (10) consecutive school days when the student breaks school rules as long as the same discipline would apply to a student without a disability who broke the same rule. The school may remove the student up to ten (10) consecutive school days each time the student breaks such rules. If the student is ever removed for only part of a day, it counts as a whole day of removal. After a student has been removed for more than ten (10) cumulative school days in the same school year:

- The administration or their designee must decide if this removal is a change of placement, and the school must provide special education services to the student during this and any future days of removal. The school does not have to provide any services to the student during the first ten (10) school days the student is removed.

A change of placement occurs when any of the following occurs:

- The student is removed for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a row.
- The student is moved to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for 45 school days for misconduct involving weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury.

Administration determines that a series of removals constitutes a pattern. This means that the

administration or designee must look at all the removals and decide if there is a pattern or connection between them that, if effect amounts to a change of placement for the student. Administration may also consider the student's disciplinary history, their ability to understand consequences, the supports provided to the student prior to the misconduct, and any relevant factors. If the removal results in a change of placement, the school must immediately notify the parent(s) of the change and provide the parents with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. Within ten (10) school days of the date of the change of placement for disciplinary reasons, the CCC must meet to decide if the student's behavior/misconduct is a manifestation of (caused by) the student's disability. Article 7 calls this a manifestation determination. If the CCC determines that the student's behavior/misconduct is a manifestation of the student's disability, the CCC must take further action and conduct a functional behavior assessment. If the CCC decides that the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may be removed or otherwise disciplined in accordance with the school's disciplinary policies for nondisabled students.

## **Health and Safety**

### **79. Safety Policy**

- No student shall ever be left alone or unsupervised.
- An adult will greet the student at the start of the day.
- Monthly fire and safety drills will be held for all staff and students.
- Fire and tornado safety information is posted in each classroom.
- Accident Reports will be completed should an accident or injury occur. The parent/legal guardian of the involved student(s) will receive one copy, and the office retains one copy.

All school staff is required by law to immediately notify the Department of Child Services if they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. GMA upholds this law.

### **80. Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Intervention**

In compliance with Indiana Code 6.1-2-2.5, GMA has developed and implemented a comprehensive Safety and Crisis Intervention Plan for dealing with a wide range of crises and emergency events.

Routine drills and practice sessions are intended to teach students proper behavior and appropriate responses in an emergency situation. Students are expected to listen closely to teachers and school staff and follow their directions quickly and efficiently during all emergency drills.

GMA shall conduct periodic emergency preparedness drills during the school year in compliance with state law and regulations. Each building level administrator shall file a certified statement that all drills have been conducted as required by state law

### **81. Emergency and Accident Policy**

If a student has an accident at school, school staff will contact the parent/legal guardian named on the registration form. If necessary, an Emergency Medical Technician will be called to give assistance. The student will be transported to the nearest hospital at their parent's expense. A staff member will accompany and stay with the child until a parent/legal guardian arrives. The student's Medical Consent Form will also accompany the child to the source of care. If you have questions about this policy, please contact our office staff.

## **82. Use of Seclusion and Restraint with Students**

It is the policy of the Board that all Geist Montessori Academy (GMA) students are to be treated with dignity and respect and to be free from abuse. The Board supports the promotion and training of appropriate student behavior as part of GMA's curriculum. It is the policy of the Board to use prevention, positive behavior intervention and support, and conflict de-escalation to eliminate or minimize the need for the use of seclusion or restraint with students. This policy applies to all students, regardless of the existence of a disability.

### General Guidelines

Any behavioral interventions must be consistent with a student's right to be treated with dignity and respect and to be free from abuse.

Any behavioral intervention used must be consistent with the student's most current individualized education program (IEP) and with the student's behavior intervention plan (BIP), if applicable.

Every effort must be made to eliminate or minimize the need for the use of seclusion or restraint with a student, including the use of prevention, positive behavior intervention and support, and conflict de-escalation prior to the use of seclusion or restraint, except in the case of an emergency, as defined below.

Seclusion and restraint are to be used only: 1) as a last resort safety procedure employed after another, less restrictive procedure has been implemented without success; and 2) when there is an imminent risk of injury to the student, other students, school employees, or visitors to the school.

Seclusion and restraint may be used only for a short period of time or until the imminent risk of injury has passed.

Any instance of seclusion or restraint must be documented as indicated below.

A student's parent must be notified as soon as possible when an incident involving the student that includes the use of seclusion or restraint occurs, and a copy of an incident report must be sent to the student's parent, as indicated below.

Regular training of appropriate school employees/staff members on the proper use of effective alternatives to seclusion and physical restraint and the safe use of seclusion and physical restraint in situations involving imminent danger or serious harm to the student, school employees or others is required, as indicated below.

Seclusion and restraint must not be used as a means of punishment or discipline, coercion or retaliation, or as a matter of convenience.

Seclusion and restraint must never be used in a manner that restricts a child's breathing.

The student must be monitored by a staff member at all times during the use of seclusion or restraint to ensure the appropriateness of its use and the safety of the student or others.

### Use of Seclusion

The use of seclusion with a student shall not be permitted except when the conditions described in this policy exist. The use of seclusion with a student with a disability also is subject to any conditions in the

student's IEP and any BIP established for the student in addition to the conditions established in this policy.

- A. Seclusion may be used only when a student is displaying behavior that presents an imminent risk of injury to the student or others.
- B. Seclusion may be used only as a last resort safety procedure after a less restrictive procedure has been implemented without success.
- C. Seclusion may be used only as long as necessary and must be discontinued when the student is no longer an imminent threat to others.
- D. Seclusion may be employed only by staff members who have received specific Corporation-approved crisis intervention training in the use of seclusion procedures.
- E. Seclusion may be used only when the student can be transported safely to the seclusion environment by trained staff members using appropriate techniques based on crisis intervention training.
- F. All seclusion environments must:
  - 1. be of reasonable size to accommodate the student and at least one (1) adult;
  - 2. be of reasonable size to permit students to lie or sit down;
  - 3. have adequate ventilation, including heat and air conditioning as appropriate;
  - 4. have adequate lighting;
  - 5. be free of any potential or predictable safety hazards such as electrical outlets, equipment, and breakable glass;
  - 6. permit direct continuous visual and auditory monitoring of the student;
  - 7. permit automatic release of any locking device if fire or other emergency in the school exists;
  - 8. if locked, be released automatically after five (5) minutes or with any building-wide alarm, such as a fire, tornado or code red alarm;
  - 9. meet current fire and safety codes.
- G. Seclusion may not be used when the student's known medical or physical condition would make the use of seclusion dangerous for that student.
- H. Seclusion must not be used unless a staff member can continuously monitor the student for visual or auditory signs of physiological distress and can communicate with the student.
- I. During the seclusion, students must be permitted to use the restroom upon request and be escorted to and from the restroom.
- J. During the seclusion, students must be provided water on request.
- K. Seclusion must never be used as a means of punishment or to force compliance with staff commands.
- L. Time-out procedures that do not constitute seclusion, as defined above, are permitted in school. A time-out must be both developmentally and behaviorally appropriate and must be short in duration.

- Use of Restraints

The use of restraint with a student shall not be permitted except when the conditions described in this policy exist. The use of restraint with a student with a disability also is subject to any conditions in the student's IEP and any BIP established for the student in addition to the conditions established in this policy.

- A. Restraint may be used only when a student is displaying behavior that presents an imminent risk of injury to the student or others.
- B. Restraint may be used only as a last resort safety procedure after a less restrictive procedure has been implemented without success.
- C. Restraint may be employed only by staff members who have received crisis intervention training by the school in the use of restraint procedures with the following exception: other school personnel may employ restraint procedures in an emergency, as defined below, when fully

trained school personnel are not immediately available. Untrained staff must request assistance from trained staff as soon as possible.

- D. Restraint may last only as long as is necessary for the student to regain behavioral stability and the risk of injury has ended, usually a matter of minutes.
- E. The degree of restriction employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident, the size and condition of the student, and the potential risks for injury to the student.
- F. Mechanical restraints and chemical restraints are not authorized in school.
- G. Prone (face down on a horizontal surface) physical restraints are not authorized and must be avoided.
- H. Restraint must never be used in a manner that restricts a child's breathing.
- I. Every instance in which restraint is used must be carefully, continuously and visually monitored to ensure the appropriateness of its use and safety of the student, other students, teachers, and other personnel.
- J. A verbal threat or verbally aggressive behavior does not itself constitute an imminent risk of injury and does not warrant the use of restraint.
- K. Destruction of or damage to property does not constitute an imminent risk of injury warranting the use of restraint unless in the course of such behavior a risk of injury to the student or others is created.
- L. Restraint may not be used when the student's known medical or physical condition would make the use of restraint dangerous for that student.
- M. Restraint must never be used as a means of punishment or to force compliance with staff commands.

- Documentation and Recording Requirements

The building administrator or designee verbally must notify the student's parent or guardian of the use of seclusion or restraint as soon as possible following the incident but no later than the end of the school day in which the seclusion or restraint occurred.

Immediately after the student has regained emotional and behavioral control following the use of seclusion or restraint, a staff member not involved with the incident must ascertain if the student has sustained any injury during the seclusion or restraint and document such injury or the lack thereof in the incident report referenced below. If the student has sustained an injury, the staff member must seek appropriate treatment of the student for the injury.

Staff will assist the student to process the event at the earliest appropriate time after the student has regained emotional and behavioral control.

Staff, including School Resource Officers (SROs), involved in the use of seclusion or restraint must complete a "Seclusion and Restraint Incident Report" as soon as practical after the use of seclusion or restraint. The following data should be included in the incident report if known:

- A. the student's name
- B. the date and time of the incident
- C. the duration of any seclusion or restraint; or the beginning and ending times of the seclusion or restraint
- D. a description of any relevant events leading up to the incident
- E. a description of any interventions used prior to the implementation of the seclusion or restraint
- F. a description of the student behavior that resulted in implementation of seclusion or restraint, including a description of the imminent risk of injury which resulted in use of the seclusion or restraint
- G. a log of the student's behavior during the seclusion or restraint, including a description of any restraint technique(s) used and any other interaction between the student and staff
- H. a description of any injuries (to the student, other students, staff, or others) or property damage

- I. a description of the approach planned for dealing with the student's behavior in the future
- J. a list of the school personnel who participated in the implementation, monitoring, and supervision of the seclusion or restraint and whether they had training related to seclusion or restraint
- K. the date and time on which the parent or guardian was notified of the seclusion or restraint
- L. if the student has a disability (IDEIA or Section 504), the type of disability

The building administrator or designee must send a copy of the incident report to the parent or guardian and place a copy of the report in the student's confidential file.

The building administrator or designee also must send a copy of the incident report to a GMA administrator designated by the Executive Director, who must maintain records of all such incident reports.

The building administrator or designee must provide support to staff members involved by determining if any staff member has suffered an injury, seeking appropriate treatment for that staff member, and determining when the staff member can return to his/her duties.

The building administrator or designee must ensure that each staff member involved in an incident engages in a de-briefing or processing session(s) in order to determine what could have been done to prevent the use of seclusion or restraint in this incident and how to avoid the need for use of seclusion or restraint in the future for this student specifically and for other students in similar situations. Ideally, this will occur immediately following the incident but may occur later if the needs of the student or other students take precedence or the staff member has suffered an injury requiring treatment. The building administrator must complete a "Staff Process of Seclusion or Restraint Form" that summarizes the de-briefing process and file it with the GMA administrator designated by the Executive Director, who must maintain records of all such forms.

- Notification of Parents

Student handbooks must include a statement similar to the following: "a student will not be subject to seclusion or restraint unless the student's behavior poses an imminent risk of injury to the student or others. However, significant violations of the law, including assaults on students and staff, will be reported to the police. As soon as possible after any use of seclusion or restraint, the student's parent or guardian will be informed and provided with a detailed account of the incident, including the circumstances that led to the use of seclusion or restraint."

When a seclusion or restraint is used with a student, the student's parent or guardian must be notified verbally as soon as possible.

A copy of the incident report prepared by staff following the use of seclusion or restraint with a student must be sent to the student's parent or guardian.

- Training of Staff

GMA will provide all staff members with basic training about conflict de-escalation procedures, the dangers of seclusion and restraint, and procedures for contacting fully trained and certified staff when behavioral crises occur.

This training will be recurrent and will be provided to new staff.

GMA will determine a specific curriculum and method of providing training related to seclusion and restraint.

A core group of appropriate personnel will be trained in each building in crisis intervention techniques which will include the use of seclusion and restraint procedures.

Recurrent training will be provided on a regular basis (at least annually).

- Annual Review, Planning Process and Oversight

The Executive Director is directed to designate a GMA administrator to serve as the coordinator of data, planning and oversight of the use of seclusion or restraint procedures. The coordinator must maintain records of the use of seclusion or restraint at GMA and serve as chair of the committee referenced below or, if a standing committee is used, as co-chair along with the chair of the standing committee.

The Executive Director is directed to establish a committee or use a standing committee to conduct an annual review of all individual and program-wide data associated with this policy. The committee must review the following components related to the use of seclusion or restraint:

- A. incident reports
- B. procedures used during restraint, including the proper administration of specific Corporation-approved restraint techniques
- C. preventative measures or alternatives tried and techniques or accommodations used to avoid or eliminate the need for future use of restraint
- D. documentation and follow up of procedural adjustments made to eliminate the need for future use of restraint
- E. injuries incurred during a restraint
- F. notification procedures
- G. staff training needs
- H. specific patterns related to staff or student incidents
- I. any environmental considerations, including physical space, student seating arrangements, and noise levels

Upon review of the data, the committee must identify any issues or practices that require further attention and provide written recommendations to the Executive Director for changes in Corporation policies or practices.

The committee can recommend review of the training program to ensure the most current knowledge and techniques are reflected in the Corporation's training program.

- Definition of Terms

The following definitions apply in this policy regardless of the term(s) used to describe the conduct when it occurs.

- A. "Behavioral intervention plan" or "BIP" has the meaning given it in the rules of the Indiana State Board of Education. (511 IAC 7-32-10)
- B. "Case conference committee" has the meaning given it in the rules of the Indiana State Board of Education. (511 IAC 7-32-12)
- C. "Chemical restraint" means the administration of a drug or medication to manage a student's behavior or restrict a student's freedom of movement that is not a standard treatment and dosage for the student's medical or psychiatric condition. The term does not include the administration of prescription medication pursuant to the orders of a student's physician that is a standard treatment and dosage for the student's medical or psychiatric condition.
- D. "Emergency" means a situation in which immediate intervention is necessary to protect the safety of a student or others from an imminent threat of physical injury to the student or others and staff trained in crisis intervention are not present to assist.

- E. "Individualized education program" or "IEP" has the meaning given to it in the rules of the Indiana State Board of Education. (511 IAC 7-32-48)
- F. "Mechanical restraint" means the use of a mechanical device, material or equipment attached or adjacent to a student's body that the student cannot remove and that restricts the freedom of movement of all or a part of the student's body or restricts normal access to the student's body. The term does not include mechanical devices, a material or equipment used as prescribed by a physician.
- G. "Physical restraint" means physical contact between a school employee and a student in which the student unwillingly participates and that involves the use of a manual hold to restrict freedom of movement of all or a part of a student's body or to restrict normal access to the student's body. The term does not include: 1) briefly holding a student without undue force in order to calm or comfort the student or to prevent unsafe behavior, such as running into traffic or engaging in a physical altercation; 2) physical escort; or (3) physical contact intended to gently assist or prompt a student in performing a task or to guide or assist a student from one (1) area to another.
- H. "Physician" means a person holding an unlimited license to practice medicine in Indiana, and includes an M.D. (medical doctor) and a D.O. (osteopathic physician).
- I. "Positive behavior intervention and support" means a systematic approach that uses evidence based practices and data driven decision making to improve school climate and culture and includes a range of systematic and individualized strategies to reinforce desired behavior and diminish reoccurrence of problem behavior to achieve improved academic and social outcomes and increase learning for all students.
- J. "Seclusion" means the confinement of a student alone or in a room or area from which the student physically is prevented from leaving. The term does not include a supervised time-out or scheduled break, as described in a student's individualized education program, in which an adult is continuously present in the room with the student.
- K. "Time-out" means a behavior reduction procedure in which access to reinforcement is withdrawn for a certain period of time. Time-out occurs when the ability of a student to receive normal reinforcement in the school environment is restricted.

- Administrative Guidelines and Forms

The Executive Director is authorized to issue administrative guidelines, directives, and forms, including but not limited to, the Seclusion and Restraint Incident Report and the Staff Processing of Seclusion or Restraint Form, as needed to fully implement this policy and document compliance.

Legal Ref:

I.C. 20-20-40 et seq.; I.C. 20-26-18.2-4

### **83. Suicide/Self Harm Policy**

#### **IN-SCHOOL SUICIDE ATTEMPTS**

In the case of an in-school suicide attempt, the health and safety of the student is paramount. In these situations:

1. The authorities and first responders will be notified, and first aid will be rendered until professional medical treatment and/or transportation can be received, following district emergency medical procedures.
2. School staff will supervise the student to ensure their safety, and they will escort them to a designated safe area.
3. Staff will move all other students out of the immediate area as soon as possible.
4. Staff will immediately notify administration or school safety team regarding in-school suicide attempts.
4. An administrator will contact the student's parent or guardian.
5. The school will engage and assess whether additional steps will be taken to ensure student safety

and well-being.

- **RE-ENTRY PROCEDURE**

For students returning to school after a mental health crisis (e.g., suicide attempt or psychiatric hospitalization), administration or designee will meet with the student's parent or guardian, and if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and appropriate next steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school.

1. The school counselor or other designee will be identified to coordinate with the student, their parent or guardian, and any outside mental health care providers.
2. The parent or guardian will provide documentation from a mental health care provider that the student has undergone examination and that they are no longer a danger to themselves or others.
3. The designated staff person will periodically check in with student to help the student readjust to the school community and address any ongoing concerns.

#### **84. Inclement Weather Policy**

Geist Montessori Academy will announce all closing and delays on the major local news stations. During severe weather check WTTV 4, RTV 6, WISH TV 8, WTHR 13, FOX 59 for the all the latest updates on GMA closing and delays. GMA will also use the school's webpage, Facebook page, and email/text service to contact parents with school delays and closings.

We reserve the right to either cancel school or issue a delay whenever we feel it is necessary for the safety of the students and staff.

All outdoor activities will be postponed if lightning is witnessed anywhere in the sky, and/or if thunder is heard. Once there has been an absence of lightning for a period of 20 minutes, outdoor activities can resume at the discretion of administration.

#### **85. Student Illness Policy**

The following illness policy will be strictly enforced, for the health, well-being and safety of all concerned. Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to school, if the child shows any signs of illness as defined below, or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular day school day.

In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up. In the event a child complains about not feeling well during the school day, the parent will be contacted. Parents are the most knowledgeable about their child's health and the school nurse depends on their rapport and information to best care for the child; therefore, the school nurse may contact the parents to help guide he or she in the best way to care for the child.

#### Symptoms requiring removal of child from school:

- Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100.5°F taken orally (a child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school, that means the child is fever free without the aid of Tylenol®, or any other fever reducing substance.)
- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.

- Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours. A child should not be brought to school if they have had diarrhea for any reason within the last 24 hours
- Vomiting: 2 or more times in a 24-hour period. A child should not be brought to school if they have vomited for any reason within the last 24 hours
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm, or a contagious eye infection.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care.

## **86. Health Screenings**

Vision screenings will be conducted for all students in grades K, 1, 3, 5, 8, and for any student suspected of having a visual defect. An MCT (Modified Clinical Technique) vision screening will be performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist for students in Kindergarten. Hearing screenings will be conducted for all students in grades 1, 4, 7, and all new students. If a parent is concerned about a student's hearing at any time throughout the school year, he/she may request a screening by filling out a permission form obtained by our speech language pathologist.

## **87. Immunization Policy**

At the time of enrollment, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide proof of their child's proper immunizations status in accordance with current Indiana Law. It is the policy of Geist Montessori Academy that a complete immunization record is to be on file in the school nurse's office before your child may attend school. The immunization record needs to be legible and complete with the day, month, and year that they were given. All immunization records received during registration will be reviewed, and you will be contacted if your child's immunization status does not meet the requirements for school entry. State-required immunizations are entered by the school nurse into the school's database. This record will follow your child as he/she transition from school to school. Records can be mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to the school. On the first day of school, any student who does not have a complete immunization record on file will not be allowed to attend. Indiana State Code provides the only acceptable criteria for immunization waivers are based on religious or medical reasons and must be renewed yearly.

### Medical Exemption or Religious Objection

- Student must have the Indiana Vaccine Medical Exemption form 54648 (4-11) completed and signed by his/her physician and returned prior to the start of school
- Student must have the Vaccination Exemption Pursuant to Indiana Code 20-34-3-2 Religious Objection form completed and signed by his/her parents and returned prior to the start of school
- Medical exemptions or religious objections must be reviewed and filed annually.

### Immunization Waiver

Indiana Law Regarding Immunization Status:

IC 20-34-4-5 Statement of immunization history; waiver; rules Sec. 5.

(a) Each school shall require the parent of a student who has enrolled in the school to furnish, not later than the first day of school attendance, proof of the student's immunization status, either as a written document from the health care provider who administered the immunization or documentation provided from the state immunization data registry.

(b) The statement must show, except for a student to whom IC 20-34-3-2 or IC 20-34-3-3 applies, that the student has been immunized as required under section 2 of this chapter. The statement must include the student's date of birth and the date of each immunization.

(c) A student may not be permitted to attend school beyond the first day of school without furnishing the documentation described in subsections (a) and (b) unless:

(1) the school gives the parent of the student a waiver; or

(2) the local health department or a health care provider determines that the student's immunization schedule has been delayed due to extreme circumstances and that the required immunizations will not be completed before the first day of school.

The waiver referred to in subdivision may not be granted for a period that exceeds twenty (20) school days. If subdivision (2) applies, the parent of the student shall furnish the written statement and a schedule, approved by a health care provider who is authorized to administer the immunizations or the local health department, for the completion of the remainder of the immunizations.

(d) The state department of health may commence an action against a school under IC 4-21.5-3-6 or IC 4-21.5-4 for the issuance of an order of compliance for failure to enforce this section.

#### Geist Montessori Academy Specific Guidelines:

- Geist Montessori Academy can provide a one-time waiver of 20 days for a student who is in non-compliance with his or her immunization status.
- This can include a medical exemption or religious objection, but other circumstances will be examined on a case by case basis.
- An Immunization Waiver form provided by Geist Montessori Academy must be filled out by the parent and the school nurse must be aware and kept up to date on the child's progress towards meeting the requirements.
- If the 20-day waiver expires and the child's immunizations are not completed, he or she will be unable to attend school, unless a valid medical exemption or religious objection is in place.

#### Children and Hoosier Immunization Registry Program (CHIRP)

This program is used as a resource for school nurses, educators, and healthcare professionals to document and track immunization status. Geist Montessori Academy will obtain consent from each parent, which allows the designated school nurse to submit or retrieve information to the CHIRP database.

### **88. Medication Administration**

Only necessary medications that must be given during school hours will be administered. All Over the Counter (OTC) medications will be supplied by the school and stored in the school nurse clinic. If a child has a signed permission form (orange medication sheet) on file, with initials corresponding to the medications the parent has consented for them to receive, then those medications can be administered. Medications will only be administered if the school nurse or other trained personnel determines a need for the medication after assessment. The school nurse or trained personnel will contact the parent prior to giving any OTC medication to ensure it is safe for the child to have it, and to ensure that the child has not already received a medication prior to coming to school.

For prescription medications, inhalers, epinephrine injectors, and self-administration of medications, a physician's signature is required on the orange medication sheet in order for these medications to be given. The medication needs to be in the original pharmacy container with the label visible and intact. Parents must hand deliver all medications to the school to the school nurse clinic, unless prior arrangements have been made. Medications of any sort are not to be sent to school in the child's backpack to maintain safety for all students. Any medication not picked up at the end of the year will be discarded. On a case by case basis, the school nurse will accept other medications as mentioned above as we understand that certain illnesses/injuries require an intermittent need for medication to be given.

#### Field Trips and Medication Administration

We encourage parents of those children with emergency medications and action plans to attend all field

trips. If a parent is accompanying his/her child on a field trip, the parent will be required to administer his/her child's medication. All allergies need to be reported on the green Health Information Card. If there is a change during the school year, please notify accordingly. Your child's teacher and assistant are made aware of reported allergies and any special needs that he/she may have and will do their best to ensure safety for every student. The school nurse or designated trained personnel will gather all medications that need to be transported on the field trip and will provide instructions for staff who may need to administer these medications.

#### Medication Storage

All medications should be locked and stored in drawers or cabinets for that purpose. These designated locked areas should be accessible to only those persons authorized to administer medications.

- The person(s) responsible for administering medication and the school administrator should have access to the keys and be the only people with knowledge of the keys' location. The keys shall be in a monitored area at all times where school personnel can ensure the security of the keys. At the end of each school day, the keys will be secured to provide assurance that they will not fall into unauthorized hands.
- Emergency medications should be stored in a secure area inaccessible to children. The medication must be unlocked and immediately available to school personnel at all times students are present. Geist Montessori Academy will house all Epi Pens and other emergency medications in the school nurse clinic, in the black cabinet on the top shelf in red baskets alphabetized by last name. This cabinet will be unlocked during school hours, and locked at the end of every school day.
- In the case of controlled substances, they are to be stored separately from other medications in a secure, substantially constructed, locked metal or wood cabinet or drawer. A list of controlled substances can be found at the following link:  
<http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/schedules/#define>
- Controlled substances are to be kept under single lock (locked cabinet) when students are present and under double lock (locked office and locked cabinet) at all other times.
- If medications are found to be missing or if there is suspicion of tampering, local law enforcement should be contacted to assist with an investigation.

#### Medication Administration

- All medications that are given will be documented on the Medication Administration Record and/or in the computer.
- The school nurse and trained personnel will follow the five rights of medication administration, which include the right student, right time, right medication, right dose and right route, when giving any medication to a student.
- All medications received from home must be in the original container with the pharmacy label intact. The school nurse or trained personnel will only dose and administer according to the label, written physician order or OTC dosage instructions for age and weight. A scale will be available in the nurse's clinic to ensure accurate weight knowledge for dosing.
- The school nurse or trained personnel will contact the parent prior to giving any OTC medication to ensure it is safe for the child to have it, and to ensure that the child has not already received a medication prior to coming to school. Parents will be notified by phone or note sent home with the student if an OTC drug is administered.

### **89. Sunscreen Administration**

Sunscreen may be applied at school only if a parent or guardian has filled out a Medication Permit form

that can be obtained at the front desk. Students may carry and apply themselves, non-aerosol sunscreen.

## **90. Asthma Care Policy**

An asthma action plan is a self-management tool that is used to help a person diagnosed with asthma better control his or her condition. It is completed by a physician or healthcare provider and includes information on a student's medications and dosing requirements, asthma triggers, how to handle worsening symptoms and what to do during a breathing emergency. It is a critical element in a school's overall wellness plan that can help school nurses identify and track those students that are most at risk for having an asthma emergency.

In order to protect all students with asthma, each student at Geist Montessori Academy identified as having asthma must have an asthma action plan on file that is signed by a physician or healthcare provider. Geist Montessori Academy is willing to accept any of the standardized asthma action plans provided by the American Lung Association, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, state asthma coalitions or the student's pediatrician's office, as long as it is filled out correctly and signed by a healthcare provider. The school nurse can provide this plan for the student if the parent needs assistance in obtaining the form. The form can be written based on symptoms, peak flow meter readings or both.

Asthma action plan protocols include:

- Provide individual asthma action plan forms in annual enrollment materials as requested by parent or physician.
- Create and support procedures to obtain, maintain, and utilize written asthma action plans, signed by the child's physician, for every student with asthma. The school nurse will write an Individual Health Plan for each student that has asthma needs and medications housed at school to assist in an asthmatic event.
- Collect and/or review asthma action plans on an annual basis or when there is a change in the severity classification of a student's asthma.
- Follow a standard emergency protocol for students in respiratory distress that do not have a written asthma action plan on site. Copies of the asthma action plan should be filed in the following:
  - The original form should be available in an unlocked location within the school health clinic that is accessible to anyone who may need to administer medication.
  - A copy should be provided to any teachers or designated staff as needed.

## **91. Allergy and Anaphylaxis Care Policy**

Food allergy is a potentially serious immune response to eating or otherwise coming into contact with certain foods or food additives. A food allergy occurs when the immune system:

- 1) identifies a food protein as dangerous and creates antibodies against it;
- 2) tries to protect the body against the danger by releasing substances, such as histamine, tryptase, and other mediators, into our blood when that food is eaten.

The reaction to a food allergy can be mild to life-threatening. Some of the symptoms or signs that might occur include: a tingling sensation in the mouth, swelling of the tongue and the throat, difficulty breathing, itchy skin, hives, drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness, and such complications that can lead to death (Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network, [FAAN], n.d.).

Eight types of food are responsible for more than ninety percent of allergic reactions. These foods are: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat. Non-food items, such as arts and craft materials, may contain trace amounts of these foods. There is no cure for food allergy, and strict avoidance is the only way to prevent a reaction. Other allergic reactions are known to occur from insect venom (e.g., bee stings), medications, the environment and latex. An allergic reaction can occur within

minutes or up to hours upon exposure.

In order to protect all students with allergies and anaphylaxis, each student at Geist Montessori Academy identified as having a potential allergic reaction must have an allergy action plan on file that is signed by a physician or healthcare provider. Geist Montessori Academy is willing to accept any of the standardized allergy action plans provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or the student's pediatrician's office, as long as it is filled out correctly and signed by a healthcare provider. The school nurse can provide this plan for the student if the parent needs assistance in obtaining the form. The form should be written according to the individual student's unique needs, including symptoms, triggers, treatments, etc.

Allergy and Anaphylaxis action plan protocols include:

- Provide individual allergy action plan forms in annual enrollment materials as requested by parent or physician.
- Create and support procedures to obtain, maintain, and utilize written allergy action plans, signed by the child's physician, for every student with a potential allergy/anaphylactic condition. The school nurse will write an Individual Health Plan for each student that has needs and medications housed at school to assist in an anaphylactic event.
- Collect and/or review allergy action plans on an annual basis or when there is a change in the severity classification of a student's allergy status.
- Follow a standard emergency protocol for students during an anaphylactic event that do not have a written action plan on site. Copies of the anaphylactic/allergy action plan should be filed in the following:
  - The original form should be available in an unlocked location within the school health clinic that is accessible to anyone who may need to administer medication.
  - A copy should be provided to any teachers or designated staff as needed.
  - Education and training for all staff who have interaction with identified students with an anaphylactic/allergy diagnosis and review annually.
  - Provide a safe classroom and nurse clinic environment in the event anaphylaxis should occur.

## **92. Epilepsy and Seizure Care Policy**

Epilepsy is clinically defined as two or more unprovoked seizures occurring more than 24 hours apart in someone older than one month of age. A seizure is the clinical manifestation of an abnormal and excessive synchronized discharge of cerebral neurons. It is sudden and transient and can include a wide variety of motor, psychic and sensory symptoms. There may or may not be an alteration in consciousness or awareness. A seizure can include jerking movements of the limbs, falling down, staring, automatisms (purposeless repetitive actions) such as lip smacking or hand wringing or even strange feelings in one's stomach. Seizures are usually unprovoked and unpredictable. The child can't control his or her behavior during a seizure.

In order to protect all students with epilepsy, each student at Geist Montessori Academy identified as having epilepsy/seizures must have a seizure action plan on file that is signed by a physician or healthcare provider. Geist Montessori Academy is willing to accept any of the standardized seizure action plans provided by the Epilepsy Foundation, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or the student's pediatrician's office, as long as it is filled out correctly and signed by a healthcare provider. The school nurse can provide this plan for the student if the parent needs assistance in obtaining the form. The form should be written according to the individual student's unique needs, including symptoms, triggers, treatments, etc.

**Seizure action plan protocols include:**

- Provide individual seizure action plan forms in annual enrollment materials as requested by parent or physician.

- Create and support procedures to obtain, maintain, and utilize written seizure action plans, signed by the child's physician, for every student with epilepsy. The school nurse will write an Individual Health Plan for each student that has needs and medications housed at school to assist in an epileptic event.
- Collect and/or review seizure action plans on an annual basis or when there is a change in the severity classification of a student's epilepsy.
- Follow a standard emergency protocol for students during a seizure event that do not have a written action plan on site. Copies of the seizure action plan should be filed in the following:
- The original form should be available in an unlocked location within the school health clinic that is accessible to anyone who may need to administer medication.
- A copy should be provided to any teachers or designated staff as needed.
- Education and training for all staff who have interaction with identified students with an epilepsy diagnosis and review annually.
- Provide a safe classroom and nurse clinic environment in the event a seizure should occur.

### 93. Head Lice

White nits, or eggs of the louse insect, attach to the hair shaft most frequently at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. The eggs cement to the hair shaft close to the scalp. A shampoo treatment with an insecticide shampoo will generally kill most head lice. A second treatment is necessary ten (10) days later with some brands of insecticide shampoo. Manual nit removal and environmental cleanup of the home by the parent is necessary to a successful head lice treatment. While head lice are a nuisance, **they do not spread disease and are not a health issue**. Should a case of head lice be brought to the school's attention, the administrator or designee will maintain confidentiality of the student's identity, verify the presence of an active infestation, and bring it to the attention of the child's parent/guardian.

A GMA representative will assess students for head lice who present with symptoms, notify the child's parents of a confirmed case, assist staff and parents with educational material, reassess a student with a confirmed case to monitor the effectiveness of treatment, and refer to a health care provider as needed. ***Students should not be excluded from school for having nits, as the management of the condition should not disrupt the educational process of the child.*** The need to send a student home from school will be determined on a case by case basis to protect the student's privacy. This protocol is supported by the National Pediculosis Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses. Please contact your school nurse if further information or resources are needed.

### 94. Pest Control Policy

The school corporation is committed to providing students a safe environment. It seeks to prevent children from being exposed to pests and pesticides. While pesticides protect children from pests that may be found in the school and its surrounding grounds, under some circumstances they may pose a hazard to children. Therefore, pest control practices may involve a variety of chemical and non-chemical methods that are designed to control pests effectively while minimizing potential pesticide exposure to children.

This policy does not apply to the use of the following pesticides:

- 1) When used in normal cleaning activities: germ killers, disinfectants, sanitizing agents, water purifiers.
- 2) Personal insect repellents when self-applied;

3) gel baits or manufactured enclosed insecticides when used where students and staff members do not have access to the insecticides.

Pesticides will be applied by certified pesticide applicators and when students and staff members are not present, such as during non-instructional time or school vacation periods.

The corporation will:

1. Inform annually parents and staff members of the corporation's pest control policy at the time of student registration [beginning of the school year or semester] by a separate memorandum or as a provision in the student handbook.
2. Provide the name and phone number of the person to contact for information regarding pest control.
3. Establish a registry of parents and staff members who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use and provide such notice.
4. Provide notice of planned pesticide applications to parents and employees who have requested advanced notice.
5. Maintain written record for at least 90 days of any pesticide applications. A copy of the records of each pesticide application at a school shall be maintained for at least 90 days. The records will contain the following information:

- Date and time of the inspection and pesticide application;
- Pests found during inspection;
- Brand name and active ingredient of pesticide(s);
- EPA registration number of pesticide(s);
- Areas treated;
- Name of applicator; and
- Source for obtaining information on the pesticide label(s), material safety data sheet(s), and/or fact sheet(s) for end use concentrations.

Should a pesticide application need to occur during the school year, Geist Montessori Academy will provide notice at least two [school] days prior to the date and time the pesticide application is to occur. The notice will include the date and time of the pesticide application, the general area where the pesticide is to be applied and the telephone number to contact the school for more information.

In case of emergency:

- Pesticide applications because of immediate threat to the public health, the school shall give written notice as soon as possible.
- If an emergency application is necessary to eliminate an immediate threat to human health, no person may enter the area of such application until it is safe to do so according to the provisions on the pesticide label.
- In cases of an emergency application, prior notice is not required. Notice will be given to those persons who have previously requested notice of pesticide applications as soon as possible after such application.

### **Regulations**

In an attempt to assure proper control of any pesticides that might be used on corporation premises, these procedures are established. "Pesticide" for application of these regulations only is defined as a fungicide used on plants, an insecticide, an herbicide, or a rodenticide.

1. Pesticides will be applied only by certified pesticide applicators or individuals operating under their supervision in school buildings or on school grounds.

The training must include:

- A review of the corporation's pest control policy;
- A review of the label instructions for the pesticides to be used;
- Methods to determine when an application of a pesticide is necessary;
- How to minimize potential pesticide exposure to students, teachers and staff;
- What activities are prohibited; and
- Written documentation of the training.

2. When inspections are conducted by an independent contractor, the contractor shall [should] contact the building administrator no later than 48 hours prior to the scheduled inspection to discuss any problems with pests so that the contractor may inform the building administrator what pesticides will be applied on the date of the scheduled inspection. The building administrator will then implement the notification requirements of the pest control policy and its regulations.

3. An emergency application of pesticides is defined as when an application of pesticides is necessary to eliminate an immediate threat to human health and where it is impractical to obtain the services of a certified pesticide applicator provided such emergency application does not involve a restricted use pesticide. Restricted use pesticides may be used only by certified applicators or under their direct supervision.

4. At the beginning of each school year or semester, the Board shall provide the staff members of each school and the parents of each child enrolled in each school with a written copy of the Board's policy on pesticide applications, the name and telephone number of the school contact person for pest control information, and a request form to be placed on a list for advanced notice. This information may be given in the form of a memorandum or as a provision in the student and/or staff handbook. This information shall also be provided to the parents of any child who transfers into a school during the school day year.

5. The aforementioned notice shall include the (1) name of the active ingredient of the pesticides anticipated to be applied if part of a routine scheduled service, (2) location of the application, (3) date of application, (4) approximate time and length of the application and (5) name and telephone number of the school administrator or his/her designee who may be contacted for further information.

6. Any pesticide application is prohibited when children are in the room or on school grounds in or near the area to be treated.

7. Whenever practical, non-chemical controls shall be used. The least toxic formulations and safest methods of application will be selected when there is a choice of pesticide products with comparable effectiveness.

8. Storage of pesticides will be kept to a minimum. All pesticide label storage instructions will be followed explicitly. All such products and the application equipment will be stored away from food products or occupied rooms in a locked area clearly marked as containing pesticides.

9. All pesticide products will have complete label instructions, will remain in the original container be readily available to any employee who must handle such materials or who may have been exposed to the product. This information shall also be available to any member of the public upon

request. All applications of pesticides will be made in strict compliance with label instructions.

10. School corporation employees responsible for handling and applying pesticides shall follow the application directions that are provided.

11. Administration or their designee shall be the contact person for providing information regarding pesticide application activities at the school site, including but not limited to giving oral and written notification, supervising the sending of notifications as required by school policy and regulations and maintaining records of pesticide applications.

## **95. E-Learning**

- **Introduction**

Geist Montessori Academy (“GMA”) may provide an alternative means for uninterrupted instruction during school cancellations, early release days when professional development is completed by staff in the afternoon, or when there may be a situation with facilities being uninhabitable. Per IC 20-30-2-1, e-learning days provide school districts with an option for continuing an instructional day away from traditional time limits and brick and mortar setting.

- **Internet Access**

Students will have four school days to complete the assigned work for each e-learning day. By establishing a four-day e-learning window for each day of unplanned school cancellations, students will have adequate time to complete their assigned lessons. Students do not have assigned devices for school-related work while at school or at home while following established policies and procedures. Any questions about technology or suitable devices for e-Learning please contact Logan Bonar, assistant director. Free public wi-fi locations include: McDonalds, Starbucks, Panera, Public Libraries, Lincoln Pancake House, and Meijer among others.

- **Teacher Access**

Teachers will be directly reachable for students and parents to facilitate and support instruction. During e-Learning days, teachers will be accessible during regular school hours. Teachers will inform students of their preferred means of communication on an e-Learning day.

- **Attendance**

Teachers are responsible for reviewing attendance of students and reporting any absences to administration by the end of each e-learning window. Attendance should be based off completion of work as stated within the internet access portion. A portion of the students will not have the access to do a check off for attendance. Attendance is collected at the end of the 4-day e-learning window. It is based off 80% of work being completed; this is based on the current attendance requirements.

- **Assignments**

In the event of a scheduled cancellation of classes, students will be informed at least forty-eight hours in advance, and teachers will give out materials/assignments ahead of the scheduled e-learning day. In the event of an unscheduled cancellation of classes, teachers shall inform students of assignments for the day by 9am. In the event of a two-hour delay that becomes a cancellation, students will be informed by 11 a.m.

- **Work Continuity**

Each lesson will cover content that would have been addressed if school were in session in a traditional setting or an equivalent lesson.

- **Accommodation Support**

Special education students will receive accommodations outlined in their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). English Learners will also receive accommodations according to their Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Students with Section 504 Plans will receive appropriate accommodations as outlined in their 504 Plan.

- Conferences will be held for students, as needed, to address any unique circumstances regarding each student's learning needs to support them on e-Learning days. In some cases, an addendum to the established learning plan may be sufficient.

- **Offline Support**

For students with disabilities who do not use an online platform for learning or for whom an online platform is not appropriate, teachers will provide parents/caregivers with appropriate educational materials and learning activities for student use.

- Alternative plans will be developed for students as appropriate. Such alternative plans may include prepared activities focused on the student's individual learning plan.

- **Individual Needs**

For limited English proficient students, teachers will provide parents/caregivers appropriate educational materials and learning activities for student use per the Individual Learning Plan.

### **Technology Assistance**

During e-learning days, technology staff will be answering technology-related issues through email, [Jerry@wits4you.com](mailto:Jerry@wits4you.com). This option is only available during e-learning day specifically for e-learning support.

- **Additional Information**

In the event of a widespread technology issue, GMA will communicate the problem and any solution to students and parents as soon as practicable. If the problem is not determined to be a district issue, staff will work with the student/parent to address the concern on a case-by-case basis when students return to school. For more information regarding eLearning Days from the Department of Education - click here <https://www.doe.in.gov/elearning/elearning-day-program>.

## **96. Continuous Learning Plan**

Continuous Learning Plan: In case of an emergency school shut down, for an extended period, GMA directors may implement a continuous learning plan for students at home. Being a Montessori school, we all already view school as an extension of the home, where learning is seamless and all around us.

We realize that each family is so different, with different circumstances, challenges and strengths, and **we are here to support you all along the way!** Please be assured that your child's teacher and teaching assistant will be supporting your child on a daily basis. The learning continues as we engage children with experiences that complement the planned learning program and help them stay connected with teachers

and classmates. These learning experiences offer authentic opportunities to focus on key concepts, knowledge, and skills. They emphasize interaction and creativity and involve a balance of traditional and digital tasks that help connect to previous learning and the current curriculum.

## **Guidelines**

- Teachers will send their individualized work plans in the format they have been communicating all year. Plans will be focusing on the high priority standards, where students will be communicating and sharing work through their familiar learning platforms, such as Seesaw and Google Classroom.
- Weekly assignments, projects, video check-ins, and projects are all ways that teachers will be assessing learning.
- As always, students will be given choice and voice.
- Hard copies of lessons are available, if needed, in the tote outside of the school. (Please sterilize it after each use.)
- Communication is available in a variety of modes: emails, text, phone calls, live chats, WebEx, recordings, social media, and weekly class and school newsletters
- Weekly community circle time or lessons will be provided via modes such as Zoom or Google Meet.
- Weekly strategies and tips from the special education and high ability team will be provided via the Better Together Newsletters.
- Social emotional learning, fitness, and healthy habits will be weekly distributed by Nurse Joy and Michael Skiles, school counselor, via the Better Together Newsletter.
- Teachers, teaching assistants, therapists, our EL teacher, and all special education staff members will be holding consistent, scheduled office hours to better support your student's individualized needs.
- Teachers will post announcements via email, Google classroom, Jupiter, or Seesaw including an explanation of activities, clarification of when assignments should be completed and/or submitted, and directions on how to find helpful resources.
- Elementary students will be engaged in learning activities daily for approximately 60-80, plus an additional 10-15 minutes for weekly special area classes.
- Middle School students will log into Jupiter to find their daily assignments, as well as resources that will help guide and support their learning. They should be engaged in continuous learning for at least 30 minutes per subject area.
- We recommend chunking this time into smaller segments throughout the day in order to provide age-appropriate learning conditions.
- Teachers will communicate office hours to students/families via email.
- During office hours, teachers will be available for real-time email inbox conversations or through integrated video conferencing tools. Teachers will be monitoring their inbox throughout the day to answer questions and provide support for students.
- All staff will respond within 24 hours to your calls or emails.

## **Attendance**

Teachers are responsible for reviewing attendance of students and reporting any absences to administration by the end of each e-learning window. Students will have four school days to complete the assigned work for each e-learning day. By establishing a four-day e-learning window for each day of unplanned school cancellations, students will have adequate time to complete their assigned lessons. Some students have assigned devices for school-related work while at school or at home while following established policies and procedures.

Attendance is collected at the end of the 4-day e-learning window. It is based off 80% of work being completed; this is based on the current attendance requirements.

### **Assignments**

In the event of a scheduled cancellation of classes, students will be informed at least forty-eight hours in advance, and teachers will give out materials/assignments ahead of the scheduled e-learning day. In the event of an unscheduled cancellation of classes, teachers shall inform students of assignments for the day by 9 a.m. . In the event of a two-hour delay that becomes a cancellation, students will be informed by 11 a.m.

### **Work Continuity**

Each lesson will cover priority competencies that would have been addressed if school were in session in a traditional setting or an equivalent lesson.

### **Accommodation Support**

Special education students will receive accommodations outlined in their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). English Learners will also receive accommodations according to their Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Students with Section 504 Plans will receive appropriate accommodations as outlined in their 504 Plan.

Conferences will be held for students, as needed, to address any unique circumstances regarding each student's learning needs to support them on e-Learning days. In some cases, an addendum to the established learning plan may be sufficient.

### **Offline Support**

For students with disabilities who do not use an online platform for learning or for whom an online platform is not appropriate, teachers will provide parents/caregivers with appropriate educational materials and learning activities for student use. Alternative plans will be developed for students as appropriate. Such alternative plans may include prepared activities focused on the student's individual learning plan, and they will be shared in the tote outside by the front office.

### **Individual Needs**

For limited English proficient students, teachers will provide parents/caregivers appropriate educational materials and learning activities for student use per the Individual Learning Plan.

### **Technology Assistance**

During continuous learning days, technology staff will be answering technology-related issues through email, If you have questions regarding technology or the use of suitable devices please contact Jerry Wits at [jerry@wits4you.com](mailto:jerry@wits4you.com).

### **Additional Information**

In the event of a widespread technology issue, GMA will communicate the problem and any solution to

students and parents as soon as practicable. If the problem is not determined to be a district issue, staff will work with the student/parent to address the concern on a case-by-case basis when students return to school.

For more information regarding eLearning Days from the Department of Education - click here: <https://www.doe.in.gov/elearning/elearning-day-program>.

- During continuous learning days, technology staff will be answering technology-related issues through email, [jerry@wits4you.com](mailto:jerry@wits4you.com).
- Cindy Schuler, Executive Director, will be available during regular school hours via email, [cschuler@gma.k12.in.us](mailto:cschuler@gma.k12.in.us)

**97. Reopening Plan: Found on home page: <http://gmacademy.org/>**