



***Handbook -
Adolescent Community
Rules and Guidelines***

2023-2024

Mission Statement

Grounded in the tradition of Dr. Maria Montessori, Hershey Montessori School provides carefully prepared learning environments for children from birth to 18 years. Our community fosters personal and academic growth, independence, confidence, responsibility and joyful lifelong learning.

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Introduction

The Hershey Montessori Adolescent Community provides a unique educational opportunity for 12- to 18-year-old boarding and day students. The program provides a broad and deep range of experiences to meet a young person's needs for social development, intellectual stimulation, creative expression, independence, responsibility, and personal growth.

To meet these needs, a student's experience has three major components: study, work, and community life. A land-based community living environment allows the adolescent to explore human interdependency with the natural world as well as the human role as an individual in a social group — two key elements of adolescent development. In cooperation with the farm and its related activities, and through participation in the life and commerce of the local community, students experience first-hand the practical integration of knowledge and community contribution, building a greater connection to society and the world.

Dr. Maria Montessori also observed that adolescents develop "a sense of justice and sense of personal dignity" in preparation for social life. To support this development, community standards, rules, and guidelines are built on principles of fairness, choice, integrity, responsibility, respect, and engagement, and students are expected to behave according to these values. Every year in the fall, students and staff take part in community discussions to create a written Code of Civility that reflects these principles in language that everyone contributes to and understands.

STUDY

Academic Expectations, Assessments, and Advisors

Academic Expectations

Students are expected to maintain a healthy level of engagement in academic work. A student who is having difficulty with academic aspects of work can readily discuss and work out flexible options with teachers and their advisor. Staff members are prepared and willing to find helpful ways to support a student who needs assistance.

It is not acceptable, however, for a student to simply not do or not hand in academic work. A student who continues to avoid academic work or repeatedly fails to finish or hand in work, despite staff accommodations and support, will be put on academic probation.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own education and fulfill their academic requirements conscientiously. If a student is not meeting academic requirements, either by turning in inadequate work or none at all, the responsible teacher may place the student on academic notice. Students on academic notice must attend to overdue work during their open time after lunch and any other open time throughout the day, until the responsible teacher accepts the work. Boarding students will typically be restricted to the Studio during flex times to complete missing work. The student's advisor, or the relevant teacher, will contact the parents if there are continued academic issues to resolve. Appropriate consequences to unresolved academic issues will be determined by the Director in consultation with the Adolescent Community staff. In summary, students who repeatedly fail to complete work will expect the following:

- Academic notice with restrictions during open time
- Contact parents by Academic Advisor
- Conference with parents
- Student contract signed by parent

Assessments

In her description of the developmentally appropriate environment and program for adolescents ages 12-18, Dr. Montessori wrote about the negative impact that grades can have on a student, in treating adolescents like children, and failing to measure what is most important in human growth and maturity: independence, character, strength, courage, and adaptability.

It is not easy to reconcile such a purely developmental pedagogy with the trend in education that narrows assessment to testing of only cognitive or analytical performance in testing circumstances. However, there are a number of alternative approaches to assessment that make it possible to provide a variety of performance and assessment modes in a way that approaches both recognition of and support for the whole human being in learning circumstances. Incorporating these alternative forms of assessment also approaches a match to Montessori pedagogical principles.

Hershey Montessori School provides narratives of a student's work and engagement for all projects

and classes. ***Progress reports and assessments are sent home at the end of each quarter.*** In addition, grades are given when needed for high school courses. These grades and subsequent transcripts for departing students are available for schools that require them.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own education and fulfill their academic requirements conscientiously. If a student is not meeting academic requirements, either by turning in inadequate work or none at all, the responsible teacher may place the student on academic notice. Students on academic notice must attend to overdue work during their open time until the responsible teacher accepts the work. Boarding students may be restricted during open times to complete missing work. The student's advisor, or the relevant teacher, will contact the parents if there are continued academic issues to resolve. A student who continues to avoid academic work or repeatedly fails to finish or hand in work, despite staff accommodations and support, will be put on academic probation, which may result in a contract with the student requiring certain work with clearly stated consequences for failure to comply.

Advisors

Each student is assigned to a faculty advisor who guides and supports academic and social development. Teachers meet regularly with their advisees as a group and individually, advising, supporting, guiding academic choices, and overseeing students' general well-being.

The advisor is the parents' primary contact for matters pertaining to a student's school experience. Parents can contact the advisor with questions, information to pass on, or anything to discuss, and the advisor will contact the parents with any relevant information or concerns. Twice a year, **each student leads a conference with the parents and the advisor** to discuss goals, strategies, self-evaluation, and any other issues that arise. Parents may also request a conference by phone, email, Zoom or in person, with any staff member at any time throughout the year.

WORK

The Adolescent Community, like any community, requires practical work (in addition to academics) of many kinds to function. Sharing this work is an essential element of adolescent development. Work in a social context allows adolescents to directly experience the value of their individual contributions to the well-being of the group.

Students have responsibility for work in many areas of the environment. Students are expected to arrive for their responsibilities on time and ready to work, and to work conscientiously until the job is done. Occasionally, absences will require trading or volunteers to cover chores. Students must have adult approval, obtained in the morning meeting, when trading jobs. Day students staying overnight are expected to assist with morning and evening chores.

Practical Work: Microeconomy, Farm, and Kitchen

Practical Work: Microeconomy, Farm and Kitchen Duty

All students take part in the Microeconomy, Farm and Kitchen rotation. Students may miss academic classes during these activities and are responsible for communicating with teachers about assignments and missed material.

Microeconomy and Farm Duty: Students take on whatever work the farm, woodshop or microeconomy requires that day, including garden and animal care, cleaning stalls, work in the woodshop and repair and maintenance, etc. Students are required to come prepared and dressed appropriately for these duties, especially in inclement weather.

Kitchen Duty: Every day in rotation, two students work in the kitchen to help prepare and serve lunch, prepare snacks, clean and maintain the kitchen. Two additional students assist with lunch during the mealtime, helping to facilitate clean-up.

Cleaning

The Adolescent Community does not employ janitorial staff. At the end of the school day, students and staff work together to clean and maintain the learning environments. Boarding students do additional cleaning of community spaces on the weekends. Boarding students are also responsible for cleaning their dormitory rooms twice a week and for keeping them orderly between cleanings.

Community Work

Once a week, students and staff are involved in practical tasks to meet the needs of the community and campus, such as garden work, splitting wood, cleaning the barn, physical work for Occupation projects, and off-site community service.

COMMUNITY LIFE

The work of the adolescent is the development of the adult in society. The prepared environment on the Huntsburg Campus supports this work by providing a safe, orderly community where students can build and refine social relationships and skills, share work and responsibilities, and learn to balance individual and community needs. Along with the physical environment, the daily and weekly schedule of community life, as well as community rules and guidelines, are structured to provide this support.

Health

Physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being are priorities for the Adolescent Community. Community members are expected to practice good health and hygiene in all areas, including eating well, exercising, getting adequate sleep, and preventing transmission of germs.

Medical Information

Parents must complete yearly physical, emergency contact, medical release, and medication permission forms, and inform the school of any medical conditions a student is experiencing. Medical information will be kept confidential.

Illness

Day students who show signs of communicable illness (such as fever, vomiting, or diarrhea) should remain home until 24 hours after symptoms are gone. Day students who develop symptoms during the school day will be given appropriate care. Parents will be contacted to pick up the student if necessary.

Boarding students who show signs of illness (fever, vomiting, or diarrhea) will be excused from classes and must stay in their rooms for rest and care or may be removed from their rooms for isolation and care if necessary. Staff and students will check on ill students throughout the day. Students who miss the entire school day are generally expected to stay in their rooms and rest for the remainder of the afternoon and evening.

Boarding students who are ill may be evaluated by staff for further medical treatment and may be taken off campus for medical care. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible, but the medical care will not be delayed if the situation warrants immediate response. Staff members will remain in contact with the parents about doctor visits, emergency room visits, prescribed treatments, and doctor recommendations.

Injuries

Students who are injured at school will receive appropriate first aid, and parents will be contacted if the situation warrants. Students may be taken off campus for medical treatment, and parents will be kept informed.

Medication

Parents must deliver any medications (including vitamins, supplements, homeopathic remedies, etc.) to residential or office staff with instructions on how they are to be given and in the containers in which they were prescribed. Medications will be kept in a locked cabinet and will be administered only by adult staff. Students may not keep any medications in their rooms or personal spaces, such as backpacks or lockers.

If prescription medication must be given during school hours, an Administration of Prescription Medication by School Personnel form must be signed by the parent or guardian as well as the prescribing physician. Hershey staff will be responsible for the storage and administration of the medication which must be in the original prescription container listing the student's name, name of medication, dosage, and time of administration.

- One form is required for each prescription medication.
- An updated form is required to reflect any change in dosage, brand name, etc.
- Medicine must be in prescribed medication container from a pharmacy and must match the accompanying form.
- Students who prefer to keep rescue inhalers with them may do so by completing a Self-Medication for Asthma Inhalers form available in our offices.

Nutrition

School meals are planned with balanced nutrition in mind, and students are encouraged to make healthy, nutritious choices at meal and snack times. Boarding students may have limited personal food. Parents are welcome to send food to students, but are encouraged not to send candy or food that contradicts the nutrition policy. Specific guidelines for nutrition and quality will be sent out at the beginning of the school year. Parents should give direction to office and residential staff for any dietary needs or requests for students.

All of our products that are purchased DO NOT include:

- High fructose corn syrup
- Artificial flavorings, colorings, or preservatives (examples include red 40, MSG, etc.)
- Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils

We ask that students bring in snacks that conform to our approach to nutrition, seeking out fresh foods where possible and avoiding heavy processing.

Community Life

The work of adolescence is to develop as an individual in society. In the Adolescent Community, rules and guidelines for behavior are designed according to three principles: safety, order, and support for this social development.

Rules for physical and psychological safety help protect adolescents from risk-taking and occasional lapses in judgment that are normal for the age. Guidelines in every area of activity support safety.

Rules and guidelines also support moral and social development, which Dr. Montessori saw as intertwined. Adolescent Community rules support harmonious living in society, and adaptation to life with others.

Social Interaction and Communication

Social interaction and communication are of paramount importance to adolescents and make up an important part of their development. Rules and guidelines support safe, healthy, and productive communication between all members of the community.

The Importance of Face-to-Face Interactions

Adolescents are in the process of learning and developing social skills and behaviors. For this reason, the Adolescent Community values face-to-face communication and social interactions. Students are expected to interact with community members and guests with civility and respect. Hurtful teasing, harassment, and bullying are violations of this expectation. When conflicts arise, students and staff are expected to resolve them peacefully, with assistance as necessary, and to make use of the Community Conflict Resolution Procedure.

Relationships (Romantic or Otherwise)

Younger Adolescents: In the younger adolescent community, exclusive relationships (romantic or otherwise) which separate participants from the larger community can form an obstacle to other aspects of social development and are not permitted. The exploration of romantic and sexual interest is a normal part of adolescent development. However, sexual activity is not appropriate at this age or in this environment and is not permitted.

Sexual activity includes kissing, holding hands and touching as well as more explicitly sexual acts. Students will be held responsible for sexually compromising situations, as determined by an adult, even when the extent of the intimacy is not clearly established. In some cases, couples or potential romantic partners alone together will constitute a sexually compromising situation. Appropriate, public, non-romantic physical expressions of friendship (such as hugging) are acceptable as long as the behavior does not extend into romantic or sexual territory or does not unduly affect the comfort level of the community, as determined by adults.

Older Adolescents: For the older adolescents, ages of 15-18, romantic relationships are a healthy and normal part of adolescent life and development. Because of the small size of the community and because of the interactions between younger and older adolescents, guidelines and restrictions exist to guide this type of relationship among older students. These guidelines and restrictions were created to allow students to explore romantic relationships in a way which will allow for an open and non-exclusive community, and which helps students perform well, both academically and socially, at school.

The guidelines and restrictions of the older adolescent students regarding romantic relationships are respectful and conscious of the potential social consequences of the differences in developmental needs and the need for carefully considered differences in regulations between the two communities.

Public Displays of Affection (PDA)

Sexual activity of any kind (including kissing) is prohibited on campus.

School Day

Hand holding and hugging is accepted, but only during appropriate times and contexts. Class times, meals, meetings, riding the bus or in vans, or anytime during the academic or boarding day which has an academic or community-oriented expectation, are inappropriate times for PDA. During free times or after students have finished lunch are acceptable times for PDA, especially when couples are in an all-older adolescent community environment. Couples need to be respectful and aware of the younger adolescent community during these free times. Although this type of affection is permitted, the extent of affection is still up to the discretion of the adult or to other community members immediately present and affected by the circumstances.

Time Alone

Privacy is a natural and normal aspect of a romantic relationship; couples are allowed to be in all common spaces and academic spaces on campus alone. The only spaces which couples would not be able to go alone would be places which create the sense of needing to hide behavior. These places would include closets, the bodegas, bathrooms, attics, dorm rooms, etc. Appropriate times for being alone would be during free times or after school.

Relationships Between Older and Younger Adolescents

Relationships between older adolescents and younger adolescents are not forbidden. If a relationship forms between an older student and a younger student, the couple must abide by the rules of the younger adolescent community regarding PDA and time alone (see Younger Adolescent guidelines above).

Sexual Activity

All types of sexual activity are prohibited on campus. Although sexual activity is forbidden on campus, sexual activity is not an uncommon aspect of this developmental stage of adolescence.

Threats and Violence

Violence and threats of violence are not tolerated, whether physical, verbal, digital, or in gestures. Inappropriate discussions or gestures regarding these topics are also not accepted in this community. Unsolicited and unwanted sexual overtures, whether physical, verbal or digital, are considered sexual harassment and will be treated as a threat. Any threat to another member of the community should be reported immediately to an adult. It is expected that all community members agree to take on the important work of creating an environment in which individuals feel safe and nurtured. Every community member is expected to help model respectful behavior and to help monitor and report inappropriate behavior.

Conflicts and Conflict Resolution

Conflict is an inevitable element of community life and social development, and learning to manage conflict peacefully is part of the developmental work of adolescence. We have found

success implementing a conflict resolution procedure involving non-violent communication (NVC) processes that assist students in talking through emotionally difficult situations to reach a mutually agreed-upon solution.

Technology Use: Cell phones and Computers

Adolescents are naturally interested in technological forms of communications such as cell phones, email, Internet chat, etc. ***However, because virtual communication lacks the directness, nuance, and immediacy of face-to-face activity, and can tend to pull students away from community life, limits are set on these channels.***

Cell Phones

Middle school students are not allowed to use cellphones at any time during the school day at the Huntsburg Campus or on the bus. Cell phones can be brought to school but are submitted to the office to be locked away until the end of the day.

Upper School students may possess cell phones during the school day, but are required to keep them put away, particularly in class, unless specific need and permission is given. Phones can be checked during passing periods or after lunch.

Since students have access to computers for academic work and communication, there is minimal need for cell phone use during the day. In the event that a student needs to communicate with a parent, the student will ask permission from an adult to use the phone.

Social Media

Because of the Adolescent Community's emphasis on face-to-face communication, students may not access any social networks while at school. Even while away from school, students are discouraged from posting any information about the school, information about students or staff at the school, photographs of students, staff, or the school facility, or photographs produced at the school without explicit permission from the staff.

Email: Students may access their Hershey email for academic use. Personal emails are not to be accessed during the school day.

Messaging and Chat: Instant messaging is permitted only through a student's school provided platform (Microsoft TEAMS). Instant messaging and chatting with strangers is not permitted.

Photography: We request that all members of the community respect the privacy of others, and unless specific permission is provided, to refrain from posting any school pictures or videos online. Hershey Montessori School cannot be held responsible for material (photos or video) placed without its knowledge or permission online on personal websites, social media sites or other external media.

Computers: Computers and other digital devices are useful tools and an integral part of modern society. Because of their power and pervasive social impact, the Adolescent Community sets appropriate guidelines for safe and productive use.

The Community Center and Upper School Building desktop computers, laptops, and tablets are designated for academic use. Non-academic use is not permitted on these machines. Students sign a Computer Use Agreement at the beginning of the school year, agreeing to school technology standards. Violation of the agreement *will* result in full or partial loss of computer privileges.

School rules about inappropriate material and language apply to computer and phone use, including Internet content and both incoming and outgoing email. Failure to follow this rule *will* result in full or partial loss of computer privileges.

Personal Computers: Hershey Montessori School provides ample computers for student use. Middle School students may not bring their own computers to school (including laptops and tablets) without permission from the school specifically for special learning purposes. Upper School students will be assigned either a shared or individual computer (based on grade level). Only students in grades 11 and 12 are permitted to bring their personal computers to school for academic work.

Language

Profane and obscene words or phrases are not acceptable in any language. Students are expected to refrain from using inappropriate language or using language to demean another person.

Dress and Appearance

General Guidelines: Students are expected to dress appropriately for school, school activities, and boarding life. Clothing should fit and be functional for farm and school activities. Students should be mindful of their personal hygiene and grooming. The staff reserves the right to make decisions about the appropriateness of an individual's dress in a community context.

Clothing: Clothing should fully cover the torso. Shirts cannot promote or display any offensive or vulgar words or images in any language, or promote tobacco or alcohol. "Tank" tops must have straps that cover all undergarments. Shorts must have at least a 3-inch inseam. Exceptions in some areas may be made for special occasions.

Hats: Hats, bandanas, or scarves that cover/contain hair must be worn while working in the kitchen. Headgear (hats, bandanas, hoods) must be removed for formal meetings, meals, and during class time unless eyes are clearly visible and student's peripheral vision is not blocked. Headgear that fits the guidelines is permitted to be worn during outdoor meals.

Shoes: State health code requires that students wear shoes or socks in the buildings. Students are expected to wear "clean" indoor shoes in the Farmhouse, Upper School Building, Community Center, and La Casa, while using outdoor shoes outside. Closed-toed shoes are required when working in the kitchen and around the farm. It is a requirement that all students have indoor shoes in each building in which they have classes AND outdoor shoes/boots to walk between buildings.

Body Art: Piercing, tattooing, or other forms of permanent body art, including long-term hair-dyeing, may not be undertaken while on campus or on any school trip. Decisions and actions involving long-term aesthetic change to the body should be made under the supervision of parents. Over-use or dramatic use of cosmetics, make-up, and any markings on the skin (by pencil, pen, marker, etc.) is discouraged.

Using Tools and Materials

Tools: Students are free to use any tools and materials, with parental consent, and for which they have been shown the use of by a staff member. They are expected to ask permission, when appropriate, to use tools and materials safely and conscientiously, and to put things away and clean up after themselves when they are finished. This includes pocket knives which may not be brought to campus without the prior introduction and without ongoing safety updates.

Food and Beverages

Food, a basic human need and a form of self-expression, is also a subject close to the heart of every young adolescent. Rules and guidelines support healthy eating, social considerations such as manners, and the balance of individual and community needs and desires.

Meals: Students help plan, prepare, serve, and clean up after all meals. While preparing food for community consumption, students are expected to follow school and Board of Health procedures, including wearing hair covers, aprons, and closed-toed shoes. Students are expected to arrive at meals on time, be appropriately dressed, and use good manners. They are expected to eat the food that is served, take appropriately sized portions, and are encouraged to try new and different foods. Only the food prepared and served for the meal is available. Accommodations are made for any students who have food allergies or sensitivities.

Food and Drink in the Building: Food and drink may be consumed only in designated areas. Each student should have a refillable water bottle with a closed top. These rules are to prevent infestations of insects and rodents, spoilage, damage from accidental spills and breakage, and general disorder. No food or drink (with the exception of closed water bottles) is permitted near computers. To minimize mess and risk of rodents and ants, no food may be kept in lockers.

Transportation

Bus and Van Guidelines

The use of school vans and the bus is a privilege and a responsibility. Students are expected to act courteously and appropriately at all times in any vehicle and are expected to treat the physical property of these vehicles with care and a sense of responsibility to the community. Food and beverages, including gum and candy, are not to be consumed in any vehicle except in special cases when the timing of a school event requires a quick meal on the road. Staff members will make this decision at their discretion. All vehicles should be cleaned out immediately after use.

It is the recommendation of Hershey Montessori School that students refrain from cell phone use on the bus or vans.

In addition, the following actions are NOT permitted on the bus or in the vans:

- Being on the bus when the bus driver is not present
- Unnecessarily loud voices which can distract the driver
- Using improper or unacceptable language or gestures

- Placing any part of the body or object out of the window
- Placing any part of the body in the aisle while the bus is in motion.
- Hanging on the outside of the vehicle either while the vehicle is parked or is moving
- Standing or walking while the vehicle is in motion
- Crossing too close in front of the vehicle
- Creating a hazard or distracting the driver's attention
- Using the emergency door of the bus unless instructed to do so by the driver
- Throwing objects on, at, in, or out of the vehicle
- Vandalizing any part of the bus or vans (i.e., writing on or making holes in seats)
- Departing the bus or vans at non-assigned location without the driver's permission
- When listening to music, individual earbuds are required.

Infractions on the bus or vans are cumulative for the duration of the student's attendance at the school and incur the following consequences:

- First offense: Conference with notice to parents
- Second offense: One-day bus suspension
- Third offense: Three-day bus suspension
- Additional offenses: Appropriate suspension conditions based on severity of violation and student's previous level of cooperation, or privilege of riding the bus revoked

Student Drivers

Students who hold an Ohio driver's license can receive permission to drive to and from school as long as they have:

1. registered their vehicle with the school
2. received notice that a parking space is available
3. follows the state laws for drivers 16-18 years of age (see Ohio BMV laws)

For students who hold out-of-state driver's licenses or international licenses, driving permission will be considered on a case-by-case basis and as laws permit.

In addition, the following restrictions apply to Hershey Montessori School students who drive:

- Students may only leave campus during the school day (8:50 am – 3:50 pm) if they have a pre-scheduled and parent/school-approved appointment, job shift, college class, internship, or professional or academic meeting or have an approved senior schedule with late arrival or early dismissal. Permission to leave for these reasons requires advance written communication from parents detailing the date(s) and times of the planned absence.
- Students may not transport other students in their cars on or off campus during the school day or during school events and trips. Driving Upper School boarding students off campus requires parent permission from both the driver's parents and the boarding student's parents. Students may only transport other students for morning school day arrival or for returning home from school.
- Permission for students to drive other students to and/or from school is the responsibility of the parents. The school will not monitor students driving other students to and from school.
- If a student who drives to school is frequently tardy, the Program Director may discuss revoking driving privileges with the student and parents as needed.

Senior Privileges*

- Seniors may leave campus early if classes are done for the day
- Seniors may leave campus mid-day if they are not missing or being late to class
* *Hershey Montessori School reserves the right to revoke Senior Privileges if a student is frequently tardy, missing class, or behind in completing assignments*

Parking Spaces

Students and parents must understand that parking is limited on the Huntsburg Campus. The school reserves the right to restrict student drivers based on parking availability.

Discipline

Students are expected to live up to the ethics and values of the Adolescent Community Rules and Guidelines, and to develop self-control and self-discipline during their time in the community. Students who demonstrate growing self-discipline will experience correspondingly greater independence and freedom. School discipline is intended to reinforce Community standards and to help shape behavior toward self-discipline.

Responses and Consequences

The first step in responding to a violation of the rules is a conversation between students and staff, and, in more serious cases, parents. For minor violations, this may be a sufficient response. More serious consequences are determined collectively by the staff and approved by the Program or Campus Director and, in serious cases, by the Head of School.

Minor Violations

Minor violations are incidental, accidental, or occasional violations which do not seriously compromise safety, order, or community functioning.

As much as possible, responses to minor violations are shaped to the character of the offense. For example, a student who misses an assigned chore may be expected to assist in another area. Minor offenses will be reported to parents in a general assessment of the student's level of work and engagement at parent-student conferences, in Progress Reports, and by telephone or in writing if offenses are repeated or are creating concern among the staff.

Damage to Possessions, Buildings, or Community Property

Students may be held responsible for damage to another student's possessions, or to buildings or community property. Students and parents may be held financially responsible for damages. Responsibility may be shared among students if individual responsibility cannot be determined.

Serious Violations

Serious violations are violations which significantly compromise physical or emotional safety of self or others, or seriously damage school materials or property. Repeated minor violations can add up

to a serious violation. Theft and vandalism, use of drugs or alcohol, or sustained academic disengagement are considered serious violations as well.

Serious violations are documented in writing and reported to parents and to the Head of School, and a conference with parents will be scheduled if necessary. Appropriate consequences will be determined by the Program or Campus Director and Head of School in consultation with the Adolescent Community staff, and may include any of the following:

- Restrictions placed on activities
- Community service
- Loss of after-school, overnight, or week-end privileges
- Loss of bus-riding privileges
- Behavioral contract
- A period of probation
- Suspension
- Dismissal from the school

Dismissal: A student who repeatedly demonstrates serious misbehavior will be removed from the school. A student will be given specific charges, in writing, with notice to the parents.

All students are provided a 6-week transition period at the start of the school year. If during this time, either the family or the school determines that the student is not able to successfully navigate the freedoms, responsibilities, and expectations of attending Hershey Montessori School's Adolescent Program, the student will be withdrawn from the school.

In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this Handbook and the Hershey Montessori School Policy Manual, the provisions of the Policy Manual shall control.

Community Organization and Governance

Students take an active role in the communication and organization essential to building and maintaining a healthy community, primarily by participating in community meetings. Students are encouraged to bring concerns about community rules and standards to the staff for discussion.

Handbook Appeal and Amendment

If a member or members of the Adolescent Community wishes to change or amend a policy established in the Handbook, they are welcome to move through the following process:

- Conduct a discussion with other students and staff members about the policy and its significance to the health and functioning of the community.
- Write a proposal for the change or amendment with explanations of the change as it would be implemented, reasons for the change, and expected outcome.
- Present the proposal to the staff for feedback.

- The collective staff will make a final decision about implementation.
- Student representatives are welcome to attend a faculty meeting by submitting a written request, in advance, to the Program Director.

Community Council

Students and staff gather together every Friday morning for Community Council to share successes, discuss issues, solve problems, offer thanks, and generally manage and organize community affairs.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Hershey Montessori School will not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, ethnic origin, age, veteran status, marital status, religion, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation or any other protected class status under federal, state or local law in the administration of policies and programs, including but not limited to the admission, rights and privileges of students as well as all employment-related decisions.

Statement of Position on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

Dr. Maria Montessori, and many other scientists, espoused an educational philosophy that removes the obstacles for healthy development and that allows the student's innate energies for good to develop in accordance with their natural capacity. She wrote and observed that such an education will reveal a "new child" who is intellectually independent and emotionally drawn to contribute to moral and social conditions of their environments.

Hershey Montessori School has centered intentional focus on social-emotional development that expands emotional intelligence, communication skills, social leadership capacities with special emphasis on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB).

We commit to continued exploration and discussion regarding unconscious bias, racism, LGBTQ+ community, and marginalized people. As a staff and school, we have had the opportunity to delve into advancing our awareness of how we create our identity, the difference between explicit and implicit bias, how to actively practice antiracism, the different types of racism, and restorative practices to name a few.

We are committed to creating practices and environments that strengthen community connection, self-awareness, and to growing in social emotional intelligence so that we can be, inclusive and create a place where all feel safe, represented, heard, and valued.

Montessori is a scientific approach to the considerations of conditions necessary for optimal human development and the social processes toward the advancement of humanity. We recognize that our current social systems are out of alignment with these values. We strive to restore this integrity by intercepting the perpetuation of traumas with our values of DEIB and care for humanity. We are holding to Montessori practices of observation and questioning to catalyze the change we need. We strive to design structures that equip us to respond to new information with a view to advancing empathy and advocacy for the voice and power of all people.

Gender Inclusivity Policy

Every adolescent has the right to learn in a safe and affirming school environment. Hershey Montessori School strives to be an inclusive environment, providing supportive spaces for adolescents who are exploring various aspects of their identity: gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. The goal is to empower all adolescents, not limit them.

Guiding principles:

- Gender-inclusive vocabulary (transgender, cisgender, etc.) and other inclusive education that values diversity and discourages adolescents from expressing judgments about others based on intersectional factors like race, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion.
- Every adolescent who explores gender identity or expression at school is entitled to a safe and supportive environment to be their authentic selves.
- A person's name and pronouns are an important part of their identity. Consistently using an adolescent's pronouns signals that the speaker is respecting and affirming the adolescent's gender identity.
- The person best situated to determine an adolescent's gender identity is the adolescent.

In some instances, an adolescent may feel comfortable and safe enough to begin exploring their gender identity or expression at school. If an adolescent comes to a staff member with a request for gender, pronoun, or name change, Hershey will ask the adolescent how much of their process they have shared with their family.

1. Ask the adolescent how much of their process they have shared with their family.

Gender Identity or Expression with family awareness:

2. The staff member will guide the adolescent to clarify their needs by inviting them to write them down or offering to scribe for them.
3. A *Student Assistant Plan* will be drafted to review with the adolescent and parent or guardian present. When agreement with this plan is reached, it will be shared only with the relevant staff. This plan is not shared with other schools unless specifically requested by the parents/guardians.
4. Together, the family and school can then identify and commit to appropriate steps that support the adolescent.

- a. Needs (such as name/pronoun change) will be communicated to staff and adolescents. How the adolescent would like to share the information with their peers.
- b. The family's and adolescent's plan for formal record on name or pronouns.

Hershey Montessori School will honor the adolescent's identity. Hershey Montessori School will listen to and provide resources to the adolescent as they determine the next steps.

Gender Identity or Expression without family awareness:

2. Adolescent will then fill out a *Self-Reflection of Identity: Gender/Pronoun/Name Statement* which states that they are not comfortable sharing with family.
3. Hershey Montessori School will honor the adolescent's identity.
4. Hershey Montessori School will listen to and provide resources to the adolescent as they determine the next steps forward.
 - a. How the adolescent would like to share the information with their peers.
5. Case-by-case decisions regarding parent and guardian notification should be made in consultation with the adolescent and should reflect all factors that affect the adolescent's well-being.

Definitions

These definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy and not for the purpose of labeling adolescents. Adolescents may or may not use these terms depending on their lives and experiences with their gender and/or sexual orientation. For a full list of definitions, read through the [Human Rights Campaign's Glossary of Terms](#), [Welcoming Schools LGBTQ+ Definitions](#), or [GLSEN's Pronoun Guide](#).

- **Assigned Sex:** The biological, genetic, and anatomical makeup of a body. In the United States, individuals are typically categorized as male, female, or intersex (i.e., atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish biological male from female) at birth based on physical attributes, and an individual's assigned sex is then used to assign a gender.
- **Cisgender:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **Gender:** The socially defined "rules" and roles for men and women in a society. The attitudes, customs and values associated with gender are socially constructed; however, individuals develop their gender identities in two primary ways: through an innate sense of their own identity and through their life experiences and interactions with others. Dominant western society generally defines gender as a binary system—men and women—but many cultures define gender as more fluid and existing along a continuum.

- **Gender Expression:** External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
- **Gender-Expansive:** A person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.
- **Gender Identity:** One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender Non-conforming (Also known as Gender Expansive, Gender Variant or Gender Creative):** A term that refers to individuals whose gender expression does not follow stereotypical social expectations based on their sex and gender assigned at birth, such as “feminine” boys, “masculine” girls, and those who are perceived as androgynous. Gender non-conforming people are not necessarily transgender or gender non-binary. Cisgender boys and girls whose appearance, style, interests, or behavior deviate from stereotypical social expectations may be considered gender non-conforming.
- **Non-binary:** An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.
- **Transgender:** an umbrella term that incorporates differences in gender identity wherein one's assigned biological sex does not match their felt identity. This umbrella term includes persons who do not feel they fit into a dichotomous sex structure through which they are identified as male or female. Individuals in this category may feel as if they are in the wrong gender, but this perception may or may not correlate with a desire for surgical or hormonal reassignment (Meier & Labuski, 2013). Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
- **Transitioning:** A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may

include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents.

Resources

For questions about this policy, please contact Head of School Paula Leigh-Doyle.

Additional Resources

- [Geauga Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(SOGI\) Support Network](#)
- [Gender Understanding, Identity and Expression \(GUIDE\) Team at Cleveland Clinic](#)
- [LGBTQ+ & Gender Care Services at University Hospital](#)
- [Trans Adolescent Educational Resources – Transforming Education](#)
- [National Center for Transgender Equality](#)
- [GLSEN | Championing LGBT Issues in K-12 Education](#)
- [LGBT Community Center Greater Cleveland Adolescent/Youth Support](#)