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Maria Montessori Charter Academy (MMCA) Parent Orientation Packet

(For new and returning families of MMCA)

August 15, 2016

Included within this orientation packet you will find information on our back to school “basics”:

- Back to School “basics”:
 - Staff Email Directory
 - PTA
 - School Calendar
 - Bell Schedule
 - School – Home Communication
 - Teacher – Parent Communication
 - Before & After School Childcare
 - Drop-off / Pick-up Procedure
 - Volunteers
 - Carpools
 - Community Code of Conduct
 - Safe and Caring Schools Program
 - Uniform Policy & Enforcement
 - Field Trip Basics
 - Hot Lunch Program
 - Medication
 - Electronic Devices at School

- Supplemental Program Information
 - Watch DOGS
 - Athletics
 - Garden Docent Program & Outdoor Classroom
 - Art Docent Program
 - After School Enrichment Clubs
 - 4H Program

August 15, 2016

Dear MMCA Families,

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year! On behalf of MMCA, we are excited to get under way, and are looking forward to meeting all of our new families at our “Parent Information Night” on Monday, August 15th at 6:30p.m. in the MMCA Multi-purpose room.

As our program continues to grow, we have noticed that is very hard to get our new parents all of the information we would like them to have within the context of a one hour “Parent Information Night” meeting and still give them the opportunity to network with all of our staff, volunteer groups, other parents, etc. Thus, please consider this 2016-2017 Parent Orientation Packet as a chronology of most of the basics of MMCA.

Should you have any questions about the contents of this packet, please feel free to contact me at brent@mmcharter.org.

Back to school basics:

The following “back to school basics” is intended as a summary of the basic “nuts and bolts” of the operations of the school. While this should be quite informative for our new families, it should also serve as good reminders for our existing families as well (hey returning families: there’s some NEW information here – please read!)

Staff Contacts

Children’s House (pre-k)

Mrs. Julia Bass, jbass@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Stefanie Baldonade, sbaldonade@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Melissa McKinnon, mmckinnon@mmcharter.org

Yellow Room (K-1)

Mrs. Carol Royal, croyal@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Saisha Medeiros, smedeiros@mmcharter.org

Purple Room (K-1)

Mrs. Diane Bryant, dbryant@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Kristen Weiss, kweiss@mmcharter.org

Red Room (2-3)

Mrs. Adelita Bordelon, abordelon@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Michelle Kelley, mkelley@mmcharter.org

Blue Room (2-3)

Mrs. Darlene Harper, dharp@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Becky Schmich, bschmich@mmcharter.org

Aqua Room (4-5)

Mrs. Teresa Halbert, thalbert@mmcharter.org

Ms. Kristy Sherman, ksherman@mmcharter.org

Coral Room (4-5)

Mrs. Chrystee Boothby, chrystee@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Laura Crouch, lcrouch@mmcharter.org

Orange Room (6)

Mrs. Julie Cohodes, jcohodes@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Adrienne Garcia, agarcia@mmcharter.org

Green Room (7-8)

Mrs. Emily Jennings, ejennings@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Jill Wallace, jwallace@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Alison Watkins, awatkins@mmcharter.org

Ms. Codi Wibbenhorst, cwibbenhorst@mmcharter.org

School Support Staff

Business Manager

Mrs. Denise Thorman, dthorman@mmcharter.org

Secretary/Office Mgr.

Mrs. Cynthia Brown, cbrown@mmcharter.org

Webmaster

Mrs. Tamara Fernandes, tfernandes@mmcharter.org

School Custodians

Mr. Jason Mikels, jasonm@mmcharter.org

Mr. Jason Mitchell, jmitchell@mmcharter.org

Intervention Teacher

Mrs. Jennifer Solinsky, jsolinsky@mmcharter.org

RSP Teacher

Ms. Carrie Kurpershoek, ckurpershoek@mmcharter.org

**Before/After Care
Program**

Mr. Ray Baldonade, rbaldonade@mmcharter.org

Mrs. Shelley Houdesheldt, shoudesheldt@mmcharter.org

- ***MMCA's PTA:***
 - The PTA is the main organization at MMCA that plans our community events and fundraisers.
 - One of the main goals of the PTA is to bring the school community together to raise money for activities and programs not fully funded by the school and to increase and strengthen volunteer participation. For more information, please contact the PTA President Tracy Montez tracy_montez@yahoo.com and visit the PTA link of the MMCA website.

- ***School calendar:***
 - The one page school calendar for the year is available on our website at this link:
http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_48504eecf15a494fbf0075dcce056dfb.pdf
 - Want to know what's happening at MMCA? Please check our Google-based "activities calendar" located at this link on our website:
<http://www.mmcharter.org/school-calendar>

- ***Bell schedule:***
 - School starts promptly at 8:30a.m.
 - On Minimum Days, K-8th grade bell schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
 - On Mondays, K-8th grade bell schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 - Non Minimum Day Tuesdays – Fridays:
 - Kindergarten: 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 - 1st – 8th grade: 8:30 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.
 - Lunch recess / Lunch schedule (note: no lunch on Minimum Days)
 - K-1st grade: 11:15 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.
 - 2nd-5th grade: 11:45 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.
 - 6th – 8th grade: 12:15 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.

- **School - Home Communications**
 - Office hours: The MMCA Front Office is open from 8:10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. every school day.
 - Friday Flyers: At the end of each school week, we will send home a weekly flyer about news and activities going on at the school.

- Newsletters: We will publish a more detailed bi-monthly newsletter with articles from each of our classrooms and parent groups.
- E-blasts: We will electronically distribute via mass email our *Flyers, Newsletters*, and any other announcements that we want to get out to all of our families via our Google Apps distribution list. Simultaneously, we will also post our electronic communications to both our website and our Facebook page. If you have not been receiving our electronic communications, please send an email to our mmca@mmcharter.org account with the subject line “subscribe” and we’ll get your address added. (Please check your spam folder/settings to make sure messages are delivered to your inbox)
- Google Activities Calendar: Our Google calendar on our website lists all of our upcoming and on-going activities. If you would like a school activity added to the school calendar, please email Mrs. Brown at cbrown@mmcharter.org.
- **MMCA Communications Pathway policy**
 - The MMCA Communications Pathway policy is available for viewing at this link: http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_52899ec3ebc94844ae80f4ce0b225c4a.pdf
 - **Teacher – Parent Communication**
 - Teacher – parent communication occurs on multiple levels, including:
 - Notes home;
 - Via e-mail;
 - Class websites; and
 - Teachers are also available to communicate with parents **after pick-up is finished** (approximately 15 minutes after the dismissal bell).
- **Before & After Care Update:**
 - For the 2016-2017 school year, Before / After Care will continue to be based in our Library, utilizing other facilities around campus as well.
 - B/A Care is available to K-8th grade students from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. For questions about our B/A program, please contact our B/A Care Director Ray Baldonade at rbaldonade@mmcharter.org. Updated registration paperwork for our B/A Care program is now available both on the website <http://www.mmcharter.org/blank-mw9kc> and in the front office.
- **Drop-off / Pick-up Procedure:**

Safety is our number one concern when it comes to drop off and pick up. For us to ensure your child’s safety, please follow these basic parking lot etiquette guidelines:

 - There is only **one** lane of traffic coming down the long driveway.
 - The Pre-school loop is not to be used to “cut” in front of other cars waiting.

- Pre-school parents: To ensure safety, NO LEFT TURNS from the preschool drop-off area; please proceed through the parking lot as you exit.
 - If you see a “hole” in the loading/unloading zone, this does not mean that you can go around cars in front of you to get that spot. Please use common courtesy and wait your turn.
 - The right hand lane (closest to the curb) is the only lane that we will allow kids to get into / out of cars from. This is the pick-up/drop-off lane. You are never to leave your car unattended when parked in this lane. PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK CROSSWALKS!
 - The left hand lane in the school parking lot is the drive-thru lane for parking purposes. For safety reasons, it is not the “hurry up and get in the car to bypass the long line” lane. Please use this lane if you are going to park your vehicle to drop-off / pick-up your child. Note: The church parking lot is available for MMCA parents during our school day or events at night.
 - There are two cross walks for a reason, and we require everyone to use them. It’s very important that the cross walk is used, and please hold the hands of the little ones, as they are hard to see over the hoods of cars. Please help us keep you and your family safe and use the cross walks at all times.
 - If at all possible, please have your child load and unload from the passenger side, so that there are no accidents.
 - We ask that you drive all the way up to the next car in the unloading/loading zone so that we can get more kids in and out of their cars. Teachers and parent volunteers will be on the sidewalk directing traffic during student pick-up, so please follow their lead.
 - FYI MMCA Families: We are going to be offering “two for one” on volunteer hours for families volunteering to help us with drop-off / pick-up this year.
- **Volunteers**
 - MMCA has a 40 hour per family volunteer policy. Volunteer hours can be contributed in several ways, including:
 - Helping out in the classrooms;
 - Driving on field trips;
 - Assisting one of our parent groups (PTA, After School Club Leader, Community Garden Committee, Art Docent, etc.) with one of their activities;
 - Helping one of our after school groups;
 - Doing clerical work for the teachers at home;
 - Assisting with drop-off / pick-up

Parent Information Night will be the first of many opportunities to sign up to volunteer for one of these (and several more) activities.

- **Carpools**

- One of the “unique” characteristics of MMCA is that we have families that come from all over the area, ranging from Auburn to Sacramento. For any families looking for carpooling opportunities, we will publish your information in our flyers / newsletters / e-blasts to help assist you in finding a carpool. If you’re interested in having a carpool request published, please contact Mrs. Brown in the office at cbrown@mmcharter.org.

MMCA Community Code of Conduct

MMCA has a detailed Community Code of Conduct, available on our website here: <http://www.mmcharter.org/important-info-forms>.

The policies that you will find within our Community Code of Conduct include:

- 1) MMCA Communication Pathways Policy (est. 2005)
- 2) Student-related policies, including:
 - MMCA Student Discipline Policy;
 - Student use of Technology Policy, including Electronic Devices;
 - MMCA Extra Curricular Activities Student Code of Conduct;
 - Healthy Lunch & Food Policy
 - Playground Protocols
 - Student Uniform Policy
- 3) Parent-related policies, including:
 - Volunteer Commitment Policy;
 - Visitor & Classroom Observer Guidelines;
 - Parents as “spectators” at School-related events Policy;
 - Field Trip Agreement to Transport;
 - M.M.C.A. Events Policy (rev 2007)
 - After School Extra-curricular Activity Leader Policy

Safe and Caring Schools Program

MMCA uses the Safe and Caring Schools Program (<http://www.safeandcaringschools.com>). This is a character education-based program that emphasizes teaching student skills and traits that fit within our Montessori philosophy, including conflict resolution, the ‘golden rule’, and personal responsibility.

Uniform Policy & Enforcement

MMCA’s Uniform Policy has three primary purposes: behavior management, equality and convenience for parents. A copy of the *school uniform policy* is available here: http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_f8c2ffe62ee94ff3be48e88e101f9277.pdf

How will this uniform policy be enforced?

Students who violate the uniform policy will face an escalating set of consequences, including:

- 1) Having to wear clothes provided by staff from our Community Care clothes closet;
- 2) A uniform non-compliance note being sent home to parents;

3) Contacting parents to bring in uniform compliant clothes

I instruct my staff to focus primarily on the “base” tops and bottoms of what the kids are wearing (i.e., solid colored, non logo, blue, green or white tops and navy blue or khaki bottoms, regardless of style).

Free dress days, spirit days, etc.

We will have several “free dress” and spirit days (both school-wide and classroom-related) throughout the year. A calendar of the prescheduled “free dress” days will be published by Back to School Night, and the first scheduled “free dress day” will be August 24, 2016.

- ***Where to buy school uniform clothes?***

We are currently evaluating proposals from several possible new vendors to partner with as our new uniform shirt vendor this year. As soon as we have selected a new vendor, we will post the new order form.

- A couple times per year we will host a “used uniforms” clothing sale, whereby all items for sale are \$1. Parent Information Night and Open House are two regular dates for our used uniforms sale.

Field Trip Basics

As a “hands on” learning program that believes in experiential learning, our classroom field trips are an integral part of our program. In order to do our field trips, we rely on parental support for both chaperoning and transportation. Please read our Field trip policy below for information on how to become a field trip driver and the “field trip driver commitment policy.” Returning families: Before you can drive on a field trip, we need an updated copy of your DMV print out and current proof of insurance. Please contact Mrs. Brown in the office if you have any questions (cbrown@mmcharter.org).

An electronic copy of our Field Trip Driver policy is available here:

http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_1153eaf638dc48a0aae6b027c97b9c85.pdf. The key components of the policy are:

Field Trip Drivers

Check List and Reminders

1. I have signed and returned the Agreement to Transport Students.
2. I have turned in my DMV printout.
3. I have turned in a copy of my Driver’s License and Insurance.

I must:

- Use car seats required for all students under 6 years of age and 60 pounds. (to be provided by parent)
- Follow all speed limits
- Drive directly to and from the destinations (no stops)

- Follow the path designated by the teacher staying between the lead and rear teacher
- Have my gas tank filled prior to leaving with students
- Not include siblings
- Under no circumstances buy/give the students snacks or beverages
- Not conduct personal or business cell phone calls
- Be flexible
- Make every effort to avoid cancelling the day of the trip

Hot Lunch Program Update

As has been mentioned in our Summer Communications, MMCA will **NOT** be offering Hot Lunch at the beginning of this school year. We are continuing to actively looking for a “National Schools Lunch Program compliant” hot lunch partner that can serve our kids appropriately. As we get more information about this, we will let you know.

Medication

If your child has a medical condition that requires either over-the-counter or prescription medication, the M.M.C.A. Office Team will be happy to dispense medication to your child. ALL Medication is stored in a locked cabinet in the MMCA office. **AT NO TIME ARE STUDENTS ALLOWED TO POSSESS THEIR OWN MEDICATION.** Before medication can be dispensed, parents need to give us a doctor’s note about the medication and fill out our Medication Dispensing form, included here

http://media.wix.com/ugd/4b8266_a5e6f288c15d471c9639b2522d364d68.pdf

Electronic devices at school:

MMCA has an electronic devices policy that basically says students are not allowed to use electronic devices like cell phones, MP3 players and gaming consoles when they are on school grounds.

How will this policy be enforced?

I recognize that a lot of our kids, regardless of age levels, will have these devices, in particular cell phones. As long as they stay in their backpacks, there will be no issue. Students who need to call their parents will be allowed to do so via school phones.

Parents: If you need to communicate with your child(ren), please do so by calling the school and not your child(ren)’s phone. If students are seen overtly violating this policy, it will be enforced. Enforcement may include parent phone calls, detention of the item, etc.

Supplemental Program Information included below:

- Watch DOGS
- 4H Program
- Athletics
- Community Garden & Outdoor Classroom
- Art Docent Program
- After School Enrichment Clubs

MMCA's Watch DOGS Program

This is our second year participating in the Watch DOGS Program (DOGS = “Dads of Great Students” – national program website: <http://www.fathers.com/watchdogs/>). Our goal this year is to have a volunteer dad on campus just about every school day after Labor Day. We're going to be having an Informational Meeting about the Program soon. For questions about Watch DOGS, please contact Denise Thorman at dthorman@mmcharter.org.

MMCA's 4H Program

MMCA is excited to announce that it is again partnering with the University of CA, Department of Cooperative Education and Placer County, to offer the 4-H program to our students (we are the first school in Rocklin to do so). For more information about the program please contact MMCA teacher, Chrystee Boothby at: chrystee@mmcharter.org

2016-17 After School Athletics (MMCA competes in the Sierra Foothill League for Middle Schools):

Fall Sports:

- Cross Country (4th- 8th grade boys & girls)
- Boys Volleyball (6th – 8th grade)
- Girls Basketball (6th – 8th grade)

Winter Sports:

- Girls Soccer (6th – 8th grade)
- Boys Basketball (6th – 8th grade)

Spring Sports:

- Girls Volleyball (6th – 8th grade)
- Boys Soccer (6th – 8th grade)

MMCA Community Garden and Outdoor Classroom

- Part of the core tenets of the Montessori Methodology is meaningful work within a hands-on, experiential learning process. Our outdoor classroom and garden is one of the unique ways we do this. Each grade level receives regular Garden Docent lessons each month. This year, one of our ‘big projects’ for the garden will be bringing in a canvas-based shade structure for our stage and amphitheatre. We will be recruiting parents to be Garden Docents within the first couple weeks of the school year. For more information, please visit the Garden's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/MMCAGarden>

MMCA Art Docent Program

- The Art Docent Program provides a sequential, interactive education in art history and artistic skills for school children. It is taught by volunteers called "docents" who are led by a coordinator or "head docent". This year, our head docent is Dana Loschiavo. Our goal is that every classroom has one or two art docents. If you are interested in becoming an art docent in your child's classroom, please contact Dana at d.t.loschiavo@gmail.com

After School Enrichment Clubs

- MMCA is pleased to announce that we're looking to enhance our after school student enrichment opportunities. First, our After School Enrichment Programs Coordinator will be Mr. Baldonade (rbaldonade@mmcharter.org). Second, in addition to past student clubs like Chess Club, Science Club, Choir Club, Arts & Crafts Club, Early Engineers Club, etc., we are looking to expand our club offerings, at minimum by adding drama and martial arts clubs. If you are interested in leading a club activity, please contact Mr. Baldonade.