



**St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal  
Montessori Church School**

**Student/Parent Handbook**

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# St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church and Montessori School

The Reverend Susan M. Bruttell, Rector and Head of School  
Leslie Lasseville, Principal

Dear Parents:

Welcome to our Church School and a year of fine education, growth and learning for your child. For many of you this means a new classroom, new teacher and new assignments, while for others everything is new for the first time! Whatever the case, we are delighted to have you as part of our School community.

St. Christopher's Montessori Church School is an Episcopal day school, an integral part of St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Inc., a Church in the Diocese of Southeast Florida and operates under the authority and direction of the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church. St. Christopher's Montessori Church School values excellence, esthetics and spirituality, which lead to health and growth.

We are dedicated to creating an atmosphere in which every student will feel important, successful and motivated to learn in order to reach her/his full potential. We see that occurring when parents, teachers and administrators work together in an atmosphere of caring, trust, cooperation and open communication. The faculty and administration are available to listen to your concerns as well as offer counsel and friendship.

Please take some time to read this Handbook with your child as it contains useful information and will help answer some questions regarding our procedures and expectations. This Handbook represents the spirit of the positive expectations of our community. We look forward to a wonderful year together!

Faithfully,

*Reverend Susan+*

The Reverend Susan M. Bruttell

*Leslie Lasseville*

Leslie Lasseville

## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This Handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that you and your parents may have during the School year. Because the Handbook contains information about student rights and responsibilities, parents and students are responsible for knowing its contents. Please take the time to become familiar with the following information and keep this Handbook available for your use. It can be a valuable reference during the School year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstandings when questions arise.

The School reserves the right to interpret the content of this Handbook, including the rules and regulations governing the academic and non-academic conduct of students. This Handbook is not a contract, nor is it intended to be so construed. Our School reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content of this Handbook at any time during the year. If any written modification or amendment is made to this Handbook, a copy of such modification or amendment will be distributed to students and parents.

If you have any questions about the Handbook or any of its policies, please contact the Head of School or the Principal.

## About Our School

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Episcopal Montessori Church School is to provide excellent and authentic Montessori education in a Christian setting which includes spiritual development, ethnic and cultural diversity, service to the community and respect for self and others.

### **History and Overview of the School**

This year, St. Christopher's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church's Montessori Church School is happily celebrating its 44<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The School was founded in 1968 by a dedicated group of St. Christopher's parishioners who saw the need for quality education on Key Biscayne and realized their dream with the opening of its preschool program. In subsequent years the School expanded to include elementary education for children in grades one through six. St. Christopher's first elementary student graduated in 2003. Today, St. Christopher's Montessori Church School offers an excellent educational experience within the diverse and international community of Key Biscayne.

The Montessori method of education sets the foundation for the first stage of fundamental learning – writing, reading and numbers. The organic, carefully designed classroom materials develop a child's visual, auditory, and tactile perception. The total learning environment is enriched with the study of art, music, foreign language, computers and physical education. Peace education is a focal point in the curriculum. The elementary program combines the finest textbook, technology, and other educational resources to complement the Montessori method. Most of the graduates of St. Christopher's Montessori Church School's elementary program achieve placement in the finest middle schools in Miami-Dade County.

The Montessori educational method utilizes mixed age grouping based on the belief that children learn best through observation and the role modeling of their peers. Consequently, PreK classes include three to five year old students in a mixed age group setting. St. Christopher's Montessori Church School has 3 PreK classrooms, which include Pre Kindergarten, Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten students. Each pre-school class is taught by two teachers and a teacher assistant.

The Elementary classes are also mixed age groups. The Lower Elementary classes include first, second, and third grade students. Upper Elementary includes fourth and fifth grade students. Elementary classes are staffed with two teachers.

At St. Christopher's by-the-Sea Episcopal Montessori Church School, we find that children who have been enriched by our Montessori education are superbly prepared for a lifetime of learning and can truly understand the world around them and their responsibility toward it. Indeed, as Maria Montessori stated, **“Within the child lies the fate of the future.”**

## **Our Vision**

- To awaken the spirit of God in every child
- To partner with parents in their child's moral, spiritual and learning development
- To nurture the students' growth so they become inner directed, responsible, graceful, respectful with good self-concept and integrity
- To stimulate life- long love for learning

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Church School is to develop mutual respect and interdependence in a diverse, creative Christian environment.

## **School Philosophy – Montessori System**

Maria Montessori, M.D. came to the study of education as a clinician. Her scientific interests were directed toward discovering how children learn best.

In the course of her observations of children, Dr. Montessori's medical background, her understanding of scientific method and her view that the environment is crucial in the learning process combined to produce a unique educational theory. According to her theory, children learn best not by dependence on a teacher, but rather by actual exploration of the world around them and by observing others.

As a result, Dr. Montessori developed didactic materials for children, which are designed to be experienced as a part of daily living, and these learning tools are the original concept behind today's teaching materials for young children. Designed to develop and refine the child's visual, auditory, and tactile perceptions, these materials contain within their structure controls for possible error. In essence, by using the teaching materials, the child educates her or himself and her or his intelligence is stimulated as the child gains increasing powers of observation, recognition, judgment and classification.

Today, the Montessori Method is accepted as an excellent form of preparation for the first stages of essential culture ... writing, reading and numbers. Through this marvelous method, knowledge is designed to come to the children as an easy, spontaneous and logical consequence of exploring the world around them.

## **Accreditation and Memberships**

St. Christopher's By-the-Sea Montessori Church School meets the standards of the National Association of Episcopal Schools, Florida Kindergarten Council, Florida Council of Independent Schools, the American Montessori Society, and the International Montessori Council. St. Christopher's is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The School admits students regardless of race, color, creed, ethnic, or national origin who possess the motivation, ability, and character which would enable them to succeed in our School community to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School and the School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, ethnic, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

### **Student Medical Needs and Accommodations Requests**

We understand that there may be circumstances when a parent may request that the School provide an adjustment or accommodation for a student's medical needs or physical, mental, or learning disability. As the range of requests have grown over the years, the School believes that it is appropriate at this time to outline the School's policy and general guidelines for addressing such requests.

**General Policy:** In general, it is our School's policy to provide accommodations or adjustments for a student's minor needs in circumstances in which the administration determines, in its sole discretion, that doing so is within the reasonable ability of the School and/or its staff and will not result in an unacceptable impairment to the rights of other students (or employees) or a fundamental change to our educational environment or mission. We also ask parents to realize that, given the size of our school and our available resources, we may not be able to provide all requested accommodations. To the extent we agree to provide accommodations, we may require a sharing of responsibility for the accommodation.

**Request and Documentation:** For any type of accommodation (including administration of medication at school), the parent must contact the Head of School of the need. The Head of School will then advise the parent of the type of medical documentation needed, which generally will state the student's diagnosis, how the condition limits the student, the recommended accommodations, and the length of time that the accommodation(s) will be needed.

**Release for Communications with Physician:** Sometimes, the documentation received from the physician may raise questions or be unclear as to the recommendations. For that reason, the parent(s) must sign a Release of Information form, permitting the School to contact the medical professional, when necessary. In addition, if there is any cost associated with the physician's cooperation (i.e., to answer a set of questions submitted, etc.), the parent must agree to bear the cost of such process.

**Assessment of Request:** Once the parent's request and medical documentation has been received by the School, appropriate persons within the administration will meet with the parents to clarify information and to discuss whether the School will be able to implement the accommodation requested. In some cases, the parent may be asked to provide (at the parent's cost) any special equipment needed, training for the school's

staff, or other associated matters. In addition, the School may advise the parent that the School will allow a particular accommodation, but the full responsibility for doing so will rest with the parent. For example, if the student needs to be tested or have certain types of medicines administered during the day that the School believes are beyond the scope of the School's responsibility, the School may allow the parent to make arrangements to visit the campus for the purpose of testing and administering.

**Limitations on Requests:** Please understand that the School is not a medical facility and does not have the personnel, training, or equipment to handle certain types of medical procedures best left to the student, parent, or physician. In addition, the School reserves the right to deny a request for accommodation or to modify any consent to previously granted accommodation requests.

**Responsibilities for Implementing Accommodations:** Depending on the nature of the request, the School may agree to provide the accommodation directly; may require the student to provide the accommodation (such as taking prescribed medications with observation by the Head of School or may require that the parent provide all aspects of the accommodation. In addition, to the extent that a student may need some type of adjustment or accommodation during off-campus activities, the School may condition the student's participation in such activities upon the parent agreeing to participate in the activity for purposes of monitoring and addressing the student's needs.

**Release and Waiver:** Depending on the nature of the request and the type of the accommodations, the School may require the parent to execute a release and waiver in favor of the School as a condition to providing the accommodations.

## **Academic Procedures and Guidelines**

### **Attendance Policies**

#### **Arrival and Dismissal Procedure**

St. Christopher's Montessori Church School facilities open at 7:30 a.m. Children arriving at this time must be enrolled in the **Early Care** program.

Elementary Classrooms open at 8:15 a.m. and **classroom routine begins promptly at 8:25 a.m. Monday through Friday.** Pre-School classrooms open at 8:20 a.m. and **classroom routine begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.**

All traffic is to enter St. Christopher's Episcopal Church property on Fernwood Road and exit on Harbor Drive. For the safety of the children it is imperative that all traffic travel slowly and in one direction only. Driveway and parking lot safety is everyone's responsibility. Please be patient and courteous.

Parents of children in the early childhood classes (PreK through SrK) must park, walk and sign children into their classrooms between 8:20 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Please say your good-byes on your way to the classroom door and encourage children to walk into the classroom alone. Do not wait outside the classroom doors after drop off as it can be distracting and unsettling to the children.

All Elementary children must be dropped off by the Main Office entrance between 8:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. A teacher and the Safety Patrol will receive students during the drop off time. This is a safety issue and requires your full cooperation.

**Elementary children who arrive after 8:25 a.m. must report to the office for a late slip before they go to their classrooms.**

**Dismissal times:**

**Toddler students** (18 months - 3 year olds) are dismissed at 11:30 a.m. or 2:00 p.m.

**PreK students** (3 year olds) are dismissed at 11:30 a.m.

**Lunch Bunch** at 1:00 p.m.

**JrK students** (4 year olds) are dismissed at 2:00 p.m.

**SrK – Fifth Grade students** (5-12 year olds) are dismissed at 3:00 p.m.

**AfterCare** 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. daily

All PreK through SrK students must be picked up at the classroom where parent/guardian will sign them out.

First through Fifth grade students will be dismissed from the Parish Hall. For car riders, cars will line up single file for dismissal. Teachers will open the driver side back door for students to enter the vehicle. For parents picking up their child without a vehicle, please go directly to your child's teacher outside the Parish Hall for pick up. Do not take your child out of line as they proceed to the Parish Hall Dismissal area.

If your child will be walking or riding their bike home, written parental permission must be on file in the office and with the classroom teacher.

**General**

Students are expected to be at School everyday and to report to their classes on time. Frequent absences and tardiness seriously affect academic progress and is disruptive to the teaching environment. The School requests that parents and students thoughtfully consider the impact of any absence other than one of a medical or family emergency. Families are discouraged from taking students out of School prior to a School break. Absences for vacations will be considered unexcused. Whenever possible, regularly scheduled medical appointments should be made after School hours. When a planned absence from School is unavoidable, requests for absence should be submitted in writing to the Head of School at least 5 days in advance. Students with excessive absences, excused or unexcused, may be denied re-enrollment or promotion.

**Excused Absences**

1. Illness validated by a parent or guardian. For an extensive illness involving several days of absence, the School may require a statement from a physician. When a student is unable to attend School because of health reasons or other emergencies, parents should call the School Office by 9:00 A.M.

2. School sponsored trips and activities.
3. Death in the immediate family.
4. Religious holidays, subject to prior approval from the appropriate division head.

Students excused from classes for field trips or for special reasons are required to obtain assignments and be prepared for class, including tests, the next day.

Any student not well enough to attend all of his or her classes during the School day may not participate in any co-curricular or extra-curricular activity that afternoon or evening, except with the specific approval of the School Office.

### **Student Illness**

Students who are ill or who are suspected of having a communicable disease must be removed from the classroom according to School policy. To prevent the spread of infection through direct contamination (coughing, sneezing, talking, sharing articles, etc.) students must be asymptomatic before returning to school. In other words, students must have no fever, vomiting, etc. for 24 hours prior to their return to School, or have a physician's note stating that the student is not contagious and/or is under treatment.

A student who is ill should be signed out in the Administration Office. A teacher or aid will bring the student to the Administration Office to be picked up.

### **Make Up Work for Excused Absences**

It is the responsibility of the individual student to see her/his teacher(s) to make up any graded work missed because of an excused absence. Students will have as many days to make up work, as they are consecutively absent. Make-up tests, if applicable, will be scheduled at a time designated by the teacher. If a student fails to make up a test and makes no other arrangement within the allotted time, at the discretion of the teacher, the student may not be given the test. Students or parents may request homework assignments for extended absences. For each day absent, the student will have the equivalent days to make up the work assigned during the absence. A student returning to School during the School day is required to locate the teacher of each class missed to get any assignment(s) and/or take any test(s) missed.

### **Unexcused Absences**

All other absences from School will be considered unexcused, subject however to the review and discretion of the appropriate division head. When an absence is considered unexcused, students are not permitted to make up tests, examinations, or quizzes that are missed. These guidelines apply to all School days including those immediately before and after vacations.

## **Excessive Absences**

Parents of students in grades SK-6 with more than 5 absences (whether excused or unexcused) will be required to have a conference with the Head of School and Lead Teacher to discuss the student's academic standing. Parents should be aware that students with excessive absences are at risk for not being promoted.

## **Tardies**

Elementary students are to be in class by 8:25 a.m. Anyone who arrives after 8:25 a.m. will be considered tardy. Students who arrive after 8:25 a.m. should report to the office for a pass. Elementary students who are late more than 3 times in a month will serve a 30 minute detention after school. All students in grades K-5 with excessive tardies will have a parent/teacher conference. **Please remember that punctuality is important. We are building the foundation for your child's future.**

## **Re-enrollment**

A pattern of low grades, poor work habits, poor conduct, excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or the parents' failure to meet financial obligations can jeopardize a student's continued enrollment. Entrance into the next grade will be based on the classroom performance of the student, observations of the teacher, and appropriate testing.

## **Sign-in and Sign-out Procedures**

There are specific procedures for signing a student in and out of School. Children who arrive late to School must have their parent sign them in School Office, and then receive a late pass to class.

Students who find it necessary to leave campus during the School day must notify the School Office. A parent must sign out the student when leaving, and sign in the student upon returning to the School campus. The School will not allow a student to leave School early with another person unless authorized by the parent to do so.

## **Dismissal**

No teacher or other employee may excuse a child to any adult before the regular dismissal time. If a situation arises which necessitates taking a child out of School, the parent/guardian is required to come to the office and sign the early release log. The office will notify the teacher to send the student to the office. This procedure is to safeguard children from unauthorized persons seeking to remove them from class. Students will not be allowed to leave the School grounds, except for an authorized School trip, or under the conditions described above. Students who remain after School for activities will not be allowed to leave the School grounds and then return for pick-up.

## **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are issued in January and June for all students. Students are evaluated using the scale below. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students are

evaluated based on their level of achievement in skill sets listed on the progress report. Teachers typically provide comments for all grade levels.

#### Grades PK - K

- N = New Lesson
- M = Mastered
- G = Good Progress
- D = Having Difficulty

#### Lower and Upper Elementary School

- 1 = New Presentation
- 2 = Having Difficulty
- 3 = Making Steady Progress
- 4 = Making Rapid Progress
- 5 = Has Mastered the Skill

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

All work that students complete for which they receive credit must be their own. A student who asks or allows another person to complete or submit the student's work is responsible for the actions of the other person.

*Plagiarism & Cheating.* Cheating and plagiarism are academic dishonesty. *Plagiarism* is the presentation of the words, ideas, concepts, images, or works of another as one's own. Material (in whole or paraphrased) taken from a primary or secondary source without following standards of conventional attribution, and/or without appropriate reference citation is considered to be plagiarized. *Cheating* is obtaining (or attempting to obtain) something by dishonest or deceptive means. A failing grade will be recorded for any work containing any information improperly submitted as one's own, or, completed by means of academic dishonestly, or, deception.

Situations involving cheating or plagiarism on School work (tests, quizzes, homework) will result in a zero, and further disciplinary action. Lending homework to a fellow student to copy is considered cheating by both participants. Discussing the items on a test before all students have taken the test is also considered cheating by all participants.

The concept of plagiarism is explained and discussed in all grades, and thus, the student should be well qualified to make the necessary judgment to avoid erroneously representing someone else's work as her/his own.

### **Homework**

Homework is an important part of the student's day as it is a time for the learner to review the day's lessons, practice skills taught, master additional material, enrich the classroom program, and prepare for class the following day. As both short and longer term assignments are given, it is necessary for students, with the assistance of faculty

and parents, to budget their time wisely. Students are expected to complete assigned homework as directed and in the spirit in which it is assigned; to return homework assignments to the teacher by the designated time; and to submit homework assignments that reflect careful attention to detail and quality of work. In addition, all student work must be School appropriate. When making videos, a power point presentation, or writing a report, students must refrain from making inappropriate sexual, drug, alcohol, violence, or cigarette references or innuendoes. Additionally, students must not ridicule others because of their disability, gender, religion, ethnic, or racial characteristics at any time.

It is counterproductive if homework becomes a family nightmare. If a child experiences undo frustration with a particular assignment, we advise parents to terminate the homework session and notify the teacher by note the following morning. If the child has persistent problems with homework, the teacher should be consulted.

### **Show and Tell**

Pre-school children enjoy sharing and are encouraged to do so on their special day. They may bring books, music, or items of special interest. Pets and games need special permission from the class teacher. No matches, lighters, toy guns or toy weapons of any kind are permitted in school.

In the elementary classes, children do not have “show and tell.” They may bring books or items from nature. Sharing these items with the other children will become part of the child’s learning experience.

### **Standardized Testing**

Standardized tests are administered to students each year. Students are tested in several academic areas including English/language arts, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The purpose of the testing program is to monitor student achievement. The results of such tests are used to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses in academic areas, and may be used to determine eligibility for promotion to the next grade or the need for summer School. Also, test results are used to determine the effectiveness of educational programs and how programs can be improved.

### **Schedule and Teacher Changes**

Schedule and/or teacher changes will be initiated by the School when operational needs require or when the administration believes the change will be in the best interests of the student and/or institution. The School will not entertain requests for changes based on a parent or student’s dislike of a particular teacher or to accommodate friendships. Please understand that the School and administration often place students in particular classes to ensure a quality mix of students and to enhance everyone’s learning experiences.

## **School Communication**

At the beginning of the school year you will receive the school calendar. A newsletter will be our primary means of formal communication informing parents regarding current events, reminders, calendar changes, and other specialty articles. We may also communicate via email so it is important to check your email for school notices. In addition, our website is a source for information about school activities.

In Pre-School, children's work goes home in the Friday folder as well as the monthly Newsletter.

A class newsletter will be sent home each Friday with the elementary students. This newsletter is written by the child's teacher to keep you apprised of classroom work, activities, field trips and special notices.

Please check folders, backpacks and stapled work that goes home weekly for notes from teachers and the school's administrative office. Notes will also be posted from time to time around your child's classroom door and online.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled in the Fall and the Spring. Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time by making arrangements in advance with the teacher or School office. Likewise, teachers may request a conference with the child's parents at any time. In consideration of the great demands placed on teachers, the administration requests that you refrain from engaging teachers in a discussion at times when their attention needs to be on their class.

No member of the faculty will be interrupted during class for a telephone call. Parents may leave a message in the office and the teacher will return the call as soon as s/he is able. Please do not disturb a class in progress. Parents and students may not call teachers or the administrator at their home.

## **Pre-School Observations**

Beginning in late October, parents may schedule an appointment to observe in the classroom. The observations are followed by a parent/teacher conference. Please feel free to ask the teacher any questions about your child's progress during your conference. Please schedule appointments with teachers. Check in at the Church School office prior to each observation or class visit.

## **Summer Reading List**

Students in grades 1 through 5 receive Summer reading lists and assignments.

# Social Guidelines And Expectations

## Purpose and Goal

Our goal is to maintain a secure, challenging, and nurturing School environment in which students develop a strong sense of integrity and respect for others. In order to promote this goal, students are expected to be honest, use appropriate language and have appropriate interactions with others.

Another equally important goal is to help students mature and learn a sense of self-responsibility. For this reason, students are held to a high standard of integrity and are expected to appropriately seek help and report problems when circumstances arise. We encourage students to seek help and report problems on their own without parental involvement as much as possible.

The standards of student conduct are designed to provide students with guidance to help them meet the goals and expectations of our community. The list of rules and policies should be read carefully. Violations will result in serious consequences, up to and including suspension or dismissal from School. Students may also be held responsible for any damage or harm that they cause to individuals and/or the School community at large.

The policies and standards apply any time a student is enrolled in the School, including when a student is on campus, is participating in or attending a School-sponsored event on or off campus; is officially representing the School; is traveling on behalf of the School; and during school breaks, including summer break.

In addition, the School regards any behavior prejudicial to the best interests of the School, whether at School or elsewhere, as sufficient grounds for a disciplinary response.

Consistent application of disciplinary policies is sought, although each situation is judged on its merits, and every effort will be made to ensure that decisions are not arbitrary.

The policies and rules outlined in this Handbook should not be read as an all-inclusive description of the School's standards, which are based on **honesty, respect, trust, and safety**. Any behavior that constitutes a breach of these School values may be treated as a major School rule violation. Students are expected to comply with School standards and rules, and they are also encouraged to discuss with their fellow students, teachers or administration any issues or infractions of School standards and rules toward the purpose of caring for one another in a spirit of kindness and of what is best for each person in the School community.

## **Policies and Rules**

### **Pets**

As a part of the educational curriculum, each class maintains a pet in a carefully housed environment. Outside of the classroom pets, **no** animals are allowed on campus, or at school-related events (even if the animal remains in vehicle or on a leash).

An exception may be made if a child wishes to bring a pet to “Show and Tell” and has received prior permission from the teacher. “Blessing of the Animals” is also an exception.

### **Behavior in Class/Halls/Walkways**

Students are to refrain from talking in class or other required gatherings except as permitted, are to use a reasonable tone of voice, and should exhibit orderly behavior at all times. Students must walk from place to place on campus. Students must exercise good judgment in traveling from place to place, which includes watching for obstacles, not walking with items in the student’s mouth, not playing in the corridors, not blocking entrances or walkways, etc.

### **Cell Phones and Other Electronics**

To the extent that a student brings any electronic devices to school (smart/cell phones, iPads, Gameboys, etc.), the student does so at her/his own risk. The School will not be responsible for the theft, damage, or loss of such devices. Students who choose to bring such devices to school must comply with all rules and regulations regarding same.

All electronic devices must be turned off during class unless the teacher has specifically authorized the use of the device during that particular class for educational purposes. If the device is being used for educational purposes, students must comply with the guidelines relating to such use. Otherwise, students may use electronic devices only before School and after School hours. Whenever such use is permitted, students may not use electronic devices in any way that is harassing or disruptive to the educational environment, including making threats, using camera phones to take inappropriate pictures or to videotape classes, to send text messages to other students in class, or in ways that would otherwise violate a School rule.

Any student found to have an electronic device in her/his possession and turned on during a test or examination will be presumed to have used the device to cheat and will receive a zero for the test/examination.

Students who violate this policy will have their cell phones or electronics confiscated. In such case, the School reserves the right to inspect the device, including all contents. Students must provide any passwords to inspect the device upon request by a school administrator. Parents will be required to come to the School office to pick up confiscated items. Students will also be subject to disciplinary procedures for violation of this policy.

## **Computer and Systems Usage Policy**

All persons using the School's computers, the School's computer systems, or personal computers on School property or over the School's systems are required to abide by the following rules. This policy also applies to the use of any personal electronic devices (computers, cameras, **iPhones, iPods, Blackberries**, video cameras, PDA, etc.) on School property or at a School-related event. Failure to abide by these rules will result in appropriate disciplinary action determined by the School administration. All computers should be used in a responsible, ethical and legal manner. Violations of the following guidelines may result in the revocation of access privileges and possible disciplinary responses, including expulsion for serious offenses.

**Purpose:** The purpose of providing access to the Internet and the School's computer systems is to support research and provide unique educational opportunities. The use of such resources should be limited to those activities that support the School's educational objectives.

**Privilege:** The use of the School's systems is a privilege and not a right. Inappropriate or illegal use of the School's systems or of the Internet will result in loss of the privilege and disciplinary action.

**Internet Access:** The School community--students, faculty, administrators and staff--have the privilege of full access to the Internet. The School encourages students and teachers to use the Internet to expand their knowledge. The Internet allows users to send and receive e-mail, to log onto remote computers, and to browse databases of information. It also lets users send and receive files and programs contained on other computers. Files may be downloaded only to personal disks. Files are not to be downloaded to the Schools local or network hard drives.

**The School does not provide any type of filtering system.** Although doing so generally can eliminate access to offensive and pornographic materials, it also has the negative effect of filtering out genuine educational materials. In addition, no filtering system is foolproof. Therefore, we expect users to act responsibly in their searches and to immediately disengage from any materials that are inappropriate and to report the situation to the faculty member or administrator in charge of the activity. Although the School cannot effectively restrict the content of information obtained by students via the Internet, obtaining material that is explicitly labeled, as not intended for minors will be considered a violation of School rules. Furthermore, making public or passing on any material that is pornographic, violent in nature, or otherwise harassing is totally unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately by the appropriate administrator.

**Internet Safety:** Students should never give out personal information (address, telephone number, name of School, address of School, date of birth, Social Security Number, credit card number, etc.) over the Internet. Students also should not meet with someone that they have contacted on-line without prior parental approval. Safety is the responsibility of the parent and student. The School is not liable in any way for irresponsible acts on the part of the student.

**Pirated Software:** The term “pirated software” refers to the use and transfer of stolen software. Commercial software is copyrighted, and each purchaser must abide by the licensing agreement published with the software. There is no justification for the use of illegally obtained software. The School will not, in any way, be held responsible for a student’s own software brought to School for personal use.

**Network Access/Passwords:** Accessing the accounts and files of others is prohibited. Attempting to impair the network, to bypass restrictions set by the network administrator, or to create links to the School’s web page is prohibited. Obtaining another’s password or rights to another’s directory or e-mail on the network is a violation of School rules as well as a form of theft. Taking advantage of a student who inadvertently leaves a computer without logging out is not appropriate. Using someone else’s password or posting a message using another’s log-in name is a form of dishonesty, just as is plagiarism or lying, and will be treated as a violation. **Guard your password. You will be responsible for any activity done on the school’s system under your password.**

**School’s Right To Inspect:** The School reserves the right to inspect user directories for inappropriate files and to remove them if found and to take other appropriate action if deemed necessary, including notification of parents. The school also reserves the right to inspect any personal electronic devices brought onto campus. In such case, students must provide any passwords to inspect the device upon request by a School administrator. Do not assume that any messages or materials on your computer or the School’s systems are private.

**E-mail:** E-mail may not be used to harass or threaten others. The School reserves the right to randomly check e-mail or text messages. E-mail messages must not include personal attacks and should follow the normal rules of appropriate public language. They should not contain any language or content, which the author would not be willing to share from the podium at a School meeting. Students should be made aware that deleted e-mails can be undeleted.

Any person who believes that they have been harassed or threatened by an email communication should immediately report the concern in accordance with the School’s No Harassment/No Bullying policy.

**Viruses:** Every effort is made by the School to keep our system virus-free. Even with the best techniques, however, computer viruses can be transmitted to and from any computer, including those in the computer center. The School is not responsible for the transmission of any virus or for damage suffered from a virus.

**Computer Care:** Members of the School community will not abuse, tamper with, or willfully damage any computer equipment, use the computer for other than appropriate work, or bring food or drink into any computer area. Any intentional acts of vandalism will result in discipline and students will be held responsible for replacement or repairs.

**Reporting Requirements/Discipline:** Any student who accesses inappropriate material on the Internet, receives harassing, threatening, or inappropriate materials via e-mail or on the Internet, must immediately report the concern to the teacher who is supervising the activity so that the situation can be investigated and addressed appropriately. Students who violate any aspect of this Computer and Systems Usage Policy will be subject to appropriate discipline and loss of computer or Internet privileges.

### **Child Abuse and Cooperation with Governmental Authorities**

We take our responsibilities to report suspected child abuse, neglect, and abandonment seriously and will cooperate with governmental authorities in connection with their investigations. If you have any questions regarding the School's mandatory reporting obligations, please consult with the Head of School.

### **Cooperation with School Staff**

Students are expected to be honest and cooperative with school staff at all times.

### **Destructive Acts**

Students should govern their actions by the values of respect for self, person, and property. Thus, any destructive actions, including setting fires, causing damage to property, stealing property, harming others, serious threats to harm others, or similar conduct is prohibited.

### **Displays of Affection & Other Forms of Inappropriate Student Interaction**

Students are prohibited from inappropriate displays of affection on campus or any school-related events. Any unwanted or offensive conduct occurring on school property or a school event must be immediately reported in accordance with the Harassment and Bullying Policy.

### **Dress Code**

St. Christopher's Montessori Church School has a dress code requiring our school uniform to be worn daily to school. Please check your child to ensure all codes are adhered to.

The uniform for girls is:

- Plaid jumper or skort (Preschool through Third)
- Plaid skirt or skort (Upper Elementary)
- Knit shirt w/collar & embroidered school logo in white or red (only for skort)
- White peter pan collar blouse (only for jumper)
- Navy blue sweater, fleece jacket, sweat pants
- White socks
- Black leather shoes with non-skid soles (safe for running and climbing)
- **No sandals or platforms shoes please!**
- **Small post earrings only**

The uniform for boys is:

- Navy blue short or navy blue slacks
- Knit shirt w/collar and embroidered school logo in white or red
- Navy blue sweater, fleece jacket, sweat pants
- Black leather shoes with non-skid soles (safe for running and climbing)
- **No sandals please!**

For all students the winter uniform is: Navy blue warm-up suits. Girls may wear white tights or navy blue sweat pants.

The uniform may be purchased through AAUniform Store which is located at 8807 S.W. 132 Street in Miami, phone (305) 254-0000, website: [aauniform.com](http://aauniform.com).

Physical Education Uniform:

Elementary Students must wear P.E. uniforms and white tennis shoes with white socks on P.E. days (Monday and Friday). The P.E. uniform for elementary students is available for purchase at the school office.

### **Fights or Horseplay**

Fights and physical horseplay of any kind are prohibited and may lead to disciplinary consequences for all of the individuals.

### **Food, Drink, Gum**

Food and beverages will be consumed only in designated areas and at designated times. There will be no chewing gum or candy in School.

### **General Conduct**

Students and parents should be considerate and show respect toward other students, faculty, all guests and visitors. Students should respect School property and the personal property of other people. Students and parents, whether as participants or spectators, are required to show good sportsmanship and courtesy at all School-sponsored events (on and off campus). Any person showing unsportsmanlike conduct may be asked to leave the event and may not be allowed to attend future events.

### **Student Conduct**

Student conduct should be of such high caliber as not to disrupt or distract from the instructional or other procedures of the school. The use of ethnic slurs, name calling and profanity are not permitted. The "Golden Rule" will be the foundation of all personal relationships.

## **Harassment/Bullying**

The School is dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes kindness, acceptance, and embraces differences among individuals. Therefore, the School will not tolerate any type of harassment or bullying. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, comments, teasing, and other offensive conduct relating to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, or disability. Harassment also includes unwanted, offensive sexual conduct. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal aggression (hitting, kicking, taunting, teasing, threatening, ridiculing, etc.), relational aggression (harming or threatening to harm relationships or acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion), emotional aggression (teasing, threatening, intimidating others).

Bullying or harassment can occur through any type of communications method, including face-to-face communications, phone, text, email, postings on social media (Facebook, MySpace, etc.), camera phones, or other forms of technology. The communications can be direct or indirect, such as through friends or others. Any type of offensive conduct, whether on or off campus, on a school bus, or at a school-related event, can create an uncomfortable School environment.

These words are not always meaningful to younger children. Therefore, in explaining these concepts to your child you should stress that the School needs to know whether anyone at School makes your child feel uncomfortable. In that regard, you should remind your child that it is inappropriate and unacceptable to call other students mean, unkind names or to tease them in ways that are hurtful. It is also inappropriate and unacceptable to grab or touch another child in ways that are hurtful or embarrassing. You should explain to your child that your child should not engage in any of these behaviors when your child talks, writes, draws or plays with other children.

All concerns relating to harassment or bullying should be reported immediately to the teacher. We also expect that anyone, whether student, faculty, staff or family member who witness, or has knowledge of an incident of bullying or harassment, will report the incident to administration immediately. When the School administration becomes aware of harassment or bullying, the situation will be promptly investigated. Any student found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal from school for serious violations. No adverse action will be taken against any person who makes a good faith report of harassment or bullying. Retaliation in any form against anyone for making a complaint under this policy or for participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any retaliation should also be reported pursuant to this policy and is itself a cause for disciplinary action.

## **Honesty and Dishonesty**

Dishonesty in any form, including stealing, lying, cheating, falsifying notes, and/or academic dishonesty, is inconsistent with School standards. Dishonesty is considered a fundamental breach of our community's expectations. A student's dishonesty in connection with an investigation of misconduct will compound the disciplinary response, regardless of the severity of the original violation.

## **Investigations**

Students are expected to cooperate in investigations. Students are expected to be honest, but honesty is not necessarily a mitigating factor and students' own statements may be used against them. Failure to cooperate with an investigation may be cause for disciplinary action.

If a student refuses to participate or cooperate at any stage of an investigation, or is unable to do so for whatever reason, including without limitation, pending criminal charges, the school reserves the right to take action, including proceeding without a statement from the student, or to require the student to withdraw from school.

## **Language**

Students and parents are prohibited from using profane, obscene, bigoted, or other type of offensive language or gestures on campus or at School-sponsored events.

## **Lockers and Cubbies**

Students are to keep their locker or cubby clean. Lockers are not to be shared. Personal items should be taken home each evening. If locks are available, the area must be locked (with the School's lock). Lockers may be inspected periodically without prior notice or consent. An unauthorized lock will be removed with no notice to the student. Each student must provide the locker combination to the homeroom teacher. If a change is made, the teacher must be notified. Lockers will be assigned by the teacher during the first week of school. Locks put on before then will be removed.

All lockers are to be emptied by the last day of school. Any items or books left after that time will be given away or discarded as appropriate.

It is the student's responsibility to keep the locker combination secure and locker locked. The school assumes no financial responsibility for items taken from lockers. Administration reserves the right, in its discretion, to open and/or search lockers.

## **Lost and Found**

Books, clothing and other personal items, which are left at the end of each day, will be placed in the Study Hall and may be claimed before or after school. Unclaimed items will be donated to charitable organizations or disposed of at regular intervals.

All personal items that your child brings to school such as lunchboxes, sweaters, shoes and other objects and books need to be clearly labeled with the child's first and last names. Labeling of all items helps prevent loss.

## **Messages**

In order to maintain an appropriate classroom environment, classroom interruptions should be limited to emergencies. Please do not ask the office to relay messages to your child. This should be done prior to School. Students are not permitted to call

home for homework, test papers, folders, etc. If a true emergency occurs then the office should be notified.

### **Off Campus Behaviors**

The School does not wish to unnecessarily involve itself in a student's off campus behaviors. However, the School's rules and regulations apply at all times a student is enrolled in School. In addition, the School reserves the right to take action to the extent that off campus behaviors impact the individual's ability to continue at school or impact other students' or employees' ability to be comfortable at school. We expect students to avoid all types of behaviors, including behaviors that may be harmful to one's body, self-esteem, or health. As examples, off campus Internet activity, criminal activity, sexual activity, use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, may result in a student receiving disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from school.

### **Playground**

Children must go home at their respective dismissal time. All playground areas are closed after dismissal. This is for the safety of the children and we ask that all parents adhere to this policy and inform the person picking up the children.

### **Property**

Students are responsible for the proper care of classrooms, restrooms, supplies and furniture. Students who disfigure property, or otherwise damage school property or equipment, will be required to pay for the damage done or replace the item. For the protection of furniture and carpet, gum chewing is prohibited at all times. Library books are furnished by the school and loaned to the students for the purpose of study or enjoyment. Students will be required to pay for any lost or damaged materials checked out to them.

### **Social Media and Social Networking Policies and Procedures**

Social media encompasses a broad array of online activity including social networks such as Facebook and MySpace, blogs, and other similar online or Internet communications. Because this form of communication is vast and growing, we feel it is important to communicate to you the School's position regarding a student's use of social media or networking.

**Use at School or a School-Related Event:** We do not permit students to access social media and/or social networking sites while School property or at a School-related event. We have taken steps to block many of the social media/networking sites on our network, but technology will undoubtedly work faster than our IT Department. Therefore, even if you are able to access such sites on School property or at a School-related event, you should understand that your activities are in violation of School policy and may result in disciplinary action.

**Use Away from School Property:** It is not our goal to regulate a student's personal online activities when not on School property or at a School-related event. Please

understand, however, that certain activities might impact a student's relationships with other students or school employees or School rights that we do reserve the right to regulate. All students should ensure that they are familiar with School's conduct policies to avoid any online communications that might violate those policies.

For example, you should ensure that your online activities do not violate a School policy regarding bullying or harassment, or other similar policies pertaining to how students interact with each other. If you post or say something online that makes another student feel uncomfortable, your activity may result in an investigation and possible discipline.

Students should also be aware that teachers and administrators periodically check such sites and may determine that off campus behavior violates the School conduct code by making disparaging or negative comments about the School, administration, or faculty members in a manner that is disruptive to the School's educational mission or activities.

Students should not be "friends" with any faculty member or other adult member of our community (other than the Student's parent) on any of these social networking sites. Any violation of this prohibition must be reported to the Administration immediately.

In addition, postings on social networking or other Internet sites of students engaging in inappropriate behavior (such as drinking, smoking, sexual actions, etc.) is prohibited.

Students are not permitted to use the School's name, logo, trademark, or service mark in online activities. Students are not permitted to post photographs of the School, its locations, activities, students, parents, or employee-related activities on line. Students are not permitted to create websites or social networking profiles to rate teachers, discuss aspects of the School, or otherwise disclose information online that the School would find offensive or inappropriate if posted in the School's newspaper. Finally, students are not permitted to disclose any confidential information of the School, employees, students, parents, or activities online.

**Your Identity Online:** You are responsible for any of your online activity conducted with a School email address, and/or which can be traced back to the School's domain, and/or which uses School assets.

What you publish on such personal online sites should never be attributed to the School and should not appear to be endorsed by or originated from the School.

**School's Right to Inspect:** The School reserves the right to inspect all electronic data and usage occurring over the School's network or on School property without prior notice. We also reserve the right to assess information in the public domain on the Internet and to discipline students for any violation of these guidelines.

## **Student/Adult Interaction and Communication**

Our students and adults (teachers, administrators, staff members, parents, and visitors) are expected to interact with each other in a professional and respectful manner. Although our adults can and should be friendly with the students, becoming too friendly with each other sometimes results in confusion and anxiety.

If a student or the student's parents become aware of any adult's communications or actions toward one or more students that seems unusual, overly friendly, or otherwise inappropriate, such information should immediately be reported to the guidance counselor or administrator of the division.

Some examples of behaviors that should not occur and which should be reported include school employees:

- Calling students at home for a non-school matter;
- Touching students or their clothing in non-professional ways or inappropriate places, or touching a student with aggression or in frustration;
- Making comments that are too personal (about a student's clothing, hair, personal habits, etc.)
- Sending e-mails, texts, or writing notes to students of a personal nature;
- Flirting or asking a student on a date;
- Visiting students to "hang out" in their hotel rooms when on field trips or sporting events or when the student's parents are not at home;
- Asking students to sit on a teacher's lap;
- Telling secrets or telling the student not to tell something that's a secret;
- Swearing, making inappropriate sexual, racial/or ethnic comments;
- Inviting students to visit the adult's social networking profile or become a "friend" on a social network;
- Telling off-color jokes; and
- Dating or engaging in consensual relationships with students.

Similarly, we expect that our parents will not take it upon themselves to address a situation with a student relating to a disagreement with the student or the student's parents. Loud, angry, or aggressive language or actions will not be tolerated. Any such interaction should be reported under this policy.

## **Telephone Use**

Parents may not contact a student through the office phone. Similarly, students are not permitted to use the office phone (except with special permission).

## **Tobacco Products**

The use or possession of tobacco products is not permitted on campus or at school-related events.

## **Truancy**

A student is truant if he/she is absent from School without the permission of a parent or guardian or leaves the School grounds once he/she has reported for classes without proper School personnel authorization. In case of truancy, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately and the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Visitors**

Outside visitors are not allowed to visit a student's class without prior permission from the student's teacher and administration.

## **Weapons and Threats**

The School takes all threats seriously, even when students make comments in jest, on the Internet, by text, or away from School toward or about another student, employee, or the School. Students are prohibited from bringing any type of weapon to School or School-sponsored events, including knives, guns (all types), fireworks, etc. Any such item may be confiscated and, if appropriate, turned over to law enforcement. Any pictorial depictions of weapons or verbal or written comments that the administration determines in its discretion appear to be threatening in nature will result in disciplinary consequences.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

The teacher of each class is in charge of the ordinary discipline in the classroom. The student is expected to comply with whatever regulations or disciplinary measures the teacher may impose. At St. Christopher's Montessori Church School we teach the importance of respecting the dignity of each person. Faculty and staff members should always be addressed in a polite and respectful manner. Confrontational behavior with the teacher is at variance with conduct expected from all students and parents. We endeavor to encourage and model ways for students to handle conflict appropriately amongst themselves that are designed to allow each student to be heard in a respectful way (such as the peace table). We use positive reinforcement whenever possible to encourage progress and acknowledge contributions. However, we know that students will violate our standards and rules and when that happens, each situation will be handled at the School's discretion in accordance with the School's rules, policies, and practices, as well as general common sense.

Disciplinary matters, or incidents in violation of School rules and regulations, will be handled initially at the most immediate level possible. Violations will subject the student to disciplinary consequences. The level of disciplinary response for any violation of School rules will depend on a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to:

- Whether any person was harmed;
- Whether there was property damage or other loss of property;
- The level of any class or School disruption caused by the student's behavior;
- The number, if any, of prior infractions of School rules and regulations;
- Whether the student has been previously disciplined;

- Whether there were illegal substances (for example, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, etc.).
- Whether the student had been earlier warned about the same or similar conduct;
- Whether there was a weapon or other dangerous item involved;
- Whether the conduct is of the kind also prohibited by criminal law; and/or
- Whether the student was honest and cooperative in connection with the investigation of the behavior.

The range of possible disciplinary consequences include one or more of the following:

**Regulation Infraction Notice:** Written notice of the infraction. This document is to be signed by the parent and returned to the School the next day. A second regulation infraction notice requires a parent-teacher conference. A third regulation infraction notice requires a conference with the parent, teacher, and principal, and may result in suspension. A fourth regulation infraction notice may result in expulsion.

**Detention:** The student must spend a period of time (typically 30-45 minutes) in the School's library media center or other designated area. During detentions, students are required to read specific essays or stories and report or respond to them in writing. If the student is late or absent from detention, an additional detention will be assigned.

**Disciplinary Warning Status:** Students who have serious or repeat infractions will be placed on disciplinary warning status, which means that further infractions will result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.

**Probation:** A student on probation is in jeopardy of being expelled if found guilty of a major offense. Probation lasts for a full semester. Students on probation lose privileges (such as participating in extracurricular activities, holding office, participating in student council, etc.).

**In School Suspension:** Students required to be on campus at a designated area but are not allowed to attend class or events. Students still have the responsibility to complete and timely submit all class work and to arrange to make up examinations. Suspension becomes a permanent part of a student's record.

**Out of School Suspension:** Students are banned from all School activities, including classes, and are to remain at home. Students still have the responsibility to complete and timely submit all class work and to arrange to make up examinations. Suspension becomes a permanent part of a student's record.

**Expulsion:** Students may be expelled for serious first offenses; repeat infractions (even if not related); conduct resulting in harm, damage, or disruption to the educational environment; parent or family member causing disruption to the School or the School's educational mission; non-payment of tuition or fees; not meeting academic requirements; or not meeting attendance requirements. Any matter taken under consideration directly by the Administration may be grounds for expulsion.

In addition, the School may report to the appropriate governmental authorities any actions that appear to violate law.

### **Pre-School Discipline**

The Florida Department of Children and Families require that we inform parents of our Preschool discipline policy, specific authority 402.301-F.S. A separate sheet is attached for you to read and sign. Our disciplinary practice, which we believe appropriate to our age group is outlined as follows:

At St. Christopher's Montessori Church School we teach the importance of respecting the dignity of each person. Faculty and staff members should always be addressed in a polite and respectful manner. Confrontational behavior with the teacher is at variance with conduct expected from all students and parents. We endeavor to encourage and model ways for students to handle conflict appropriately amongst themselves that are designed to allow each student to be heard in a respectful way. We use positive reinforcement whenever possible to encourage progress and acknowledge contributions. However, we know that students will violate our standards and rules and when that happens, each situation will be handled at the School's discretion in accordance with the School's rules, policies, and practices, as well as general common sense.

1. For minor unacceptable behavior: We use the thinking chair in order for children to take a step back and look around and think of more appropriate and cooperative behavior. The child is asked to sit in a thinking chair (any classroom chair) until s/he feels ready to cooperate with school rules. The duration of sitting time is no more than five minutes.
1. For more serious infractions (biting or hitting other students) children are managed by withholding playground privileges on that particular day.
2. For students who hit, kick, use bad language or strike a teacher: the child may be dismissed from school for the day or for succeeding days.
3. For repeated and continued undesirable behavior at school: A conference with the teacher, parent and Head of School will be mandatory and expulsion may result.

The School reserves the right at all times to take any one or more of the possible disciplinary consequences as set forth in our Disciplinary Procedures above, up to and including expulsion.

## **Student Services, Activities and Resources**

### **Lunch Bunch**

We are offering preschool students dismissed at 11:30 a.m. the opportunity to participate in a special "Lunch Bunch" program. "Lunch Bunch" takes place from 11:30

a.m. to 1: 00 p.m. From 11:30 a.m. until 12 noon, students will remain with their class to eat lunch. At noon the “Lunch Bunch” coordinator will escort the children to the parish hall where they will make a craft and enjoy story-time. At 12:30 p.m. they will go to the playground. Students will be ready for pick-up at 1:00 p.m. Parents must sign up in advance or by the day. Children may bring their own healthy lunch. Lunch Bunch pick-up will be at the pre-school playground and parents must sign out the children. Lunch Bunch will be invoiced on a monthly basis. A fee will be incurred for late pick up beginning at 1:10 pm.

## Early Care

Before school care is available beginning at 7:45 a.m. All children are welcome to attend and may sign up by the day. A parent or caregiver must escort the child to the designated early care classroom and sign in. A teacher will walk the children to their grade level classrooms at 8:20 a.m.

## After School Programs

St. Christopher’s Montessori Church School offers both an After School Care and Enrichment Program. As a convenience to our families, **Aftercare/Homework Club** is available from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Sign up sheets will be posted outside each classroom and sign up must be done in advance.

If you are unable to pick up your child by 2:10 p.m. (Jr. Kindergarten), and 3:10 p.m. (Sr. Kindergarten through Fifth grade) your child will automatically be placed in After Care. Parents must come to After Care to sign out their children. Aftercare will commence on the first day of school. Aftercare will be invoiced on a monthly basis.

A schedule of School Enrichment Courses is sent home in August and again in December for the Spring Semester and may be viewed on our website: [www.stchriskb.org](http://www.stchriskb.org). A full array of courses is offered. Enrichment classes are optional, must be paid in advance and sign-up is on a semester basis. Parents have one session to withdraw their children. **After one session, the Enrichment Course fee is non-refundable.** Parents must sign out their child from each Enrichment course. Students not picked up on time will automatically be placed in Aftercare and the standard Aftercare fee will be charged. Note: Enrichment Class offerings are based on adequate student enrollment. Should there not be a sufficient number of students per class, the class may be cancelled.

## Health Information Sharing

Parents and student agree, as a condition of continued enrollment, to consent to the release of any of the student’s health related information, including information relating to drug treatment, testing, medical and mental health records, to employees or agents of the school, as determined by the Head of School or his or her designee, to meet the medical or safety needs of the student and the community or the legal responsibilities of the school.

The school will maintain appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the security of all health-related information within its care or custody. While it is the obligation of the school to safeguard student medical information, we must also balance matters of privacy and confidentiality with safeguarding the interests and well being of our students and our community. Thus, parents/guardians and students consent to allow employees and agents of the school, who have a need to know, to receive and/or share medical and/or psychological information necessary to serve the best interests of the student and/or community. In the event of a disclosure required by law, every effort will be made to notify the student and/or parents/guardians in advance.

## **Library Media Center**

The Library Media Center is designated as a quiet zone used for studying, reading, research, and checking out books. Library Media Center privileges may be denied to students who do not comply. All books, periodicals, or other cataloged materials which are checked out by students, must be returned and cleared by the Librarian prior to taking final exams or having files forwarded to any other institution or released to any individual.

During weekly visits to our Library Media Center, students learn library skills and research techniques. They are encouraged to read for pleasure and research through special programs, book talks, story telling, reading aloud, and times for silent reading. The circulation of books is computerized in conjunction with our on-line catalog.

Students may use library materials after school hours only with parent supervision or with prior permission from the Librarian. We welcome after school visits to the Library Media Center. Library hours are posted outside the library.

The accelerated Reader Program offers students the opportunity to enhance their active reading skills. Students may take assessments in the library as well as the classroom.

Books are checked out for two weeks and can be renewed for additional time. Some reference materials can circulate overnight to students in Grade 3 through Grade 5. We expect students to be responsible and consider the needs of others in their use of library materials.

- There is to be no food, drinks etc. in the library.
- Talking or socializing is not allowed in the library.
- Students must sign out all materials at the main desk prior to leaving the library.
- Students are responsible for taking care of and returning any book checked out to them. If a book is lost or damaged while checked out to a student, that student will be expected to pay for it.

## **Chapel**

All St. Christopher's Church School students attend chapel once each week. The Chapel Service starts promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesdays in the Church.\* Students are active participants in the Chapel Service. This is a joyous time where our full school community joins together. Parents are invited to attend all Chapel Services and are

welcome to be seated in the rear of the sanctuary prior to the commencement of the service. If a child is late, the parent must sit with the child at the back of the church or stay outside until chapel ends. Please do not drop off your child to the teacher during chapel service.

\*Note: The Church is God's House. Being in God's House demands a higher standard of deportment because it is a Holy Place where Sacred Rituals take place. Proper decorum, for example, means that food and drink are not permitted inside the Sanctuary. Photography is limited. Unnecessary and loud conversations, before, during or after the Service is disrespectful to the people who come to find a quiet place to sit in God's presence and pray. Faculty, parents and visitors who attend are asked to help set an example of proper decorum for our children.

## **Field Trips**

Day and overnight field trips are part of the educational process. It must be stressed, however, that only those students who, in the administration's sole discretion, have demonstrated good conduct during their classes will be permitted to attend.

Proper behavior during the trip continues to be of utmost importance. Parents of any student unable to follow the given guidelines will be notified. In severe cases, the parent will be requested to come and/or provide transportation home for the student.

A condition of a student's or parent's participation in any field trip is the execution of the School's standard Participation Release. For any students whose parents have not executed the release, the student will have the option of attending an alternative class for the period of the field trip or remaining at home.

Because we must conform to traffic safety and seat belt laws, preschool age children do not go on field trips. However, special enrichment programs are brought to the School.

**Children are not allowed to sit in the front seat on any field trip.**

**Siblings who do not attend the school and are not in the same classroom are not allowed on field trips.**

## **Chaperone Guidelines/Field Trips**

Parents who are interested in volunteering to assist on field trips must have been cleared through the School's criminal background process, as well as complete the Safeguarding God's Children course provided on-line through the Diocese of Southeast Florida. To sign up for the course, please see the Office Administrator. Drivers must have a valid Florida driver's license and appropriate insurance on file with the School. This process is for the protection of all students and is not intended to hinder volunteerism or embarrass any family. We sincerely hope that you understand our concern for student safety and will willingly cooperate in this process.

Chaperones' undivided attention is required at all times. Parents need to be aware that they are in a supervisory capacity when serving as a chaperone on a field trip. To this

end, all cell phones must be silenced AT ALL TIMES and conversation with other parents must be kept at a minimum. Drivers are **prohibited** from using cell phones while driving. All traffic rules and speed limits must be observed and chaperones must refrain from smoking. Each child must be buckled in his or her own seat belt – no “double-buckling” is permitted. Drivers may not make stops along the way and all chaperones must follow the schedule and direction of the teachers in charge of the field trip. Parents who are unable to fulfill their responsibilities as chaperones will not be permitted to serve as chaperones on future field trips.

## **Birthdays and Holidays**

If you wish your child to celebrate her or his birthday at school, teachers will be happy to assist you with your plans. Elaborate celebrations and gift exchanges are considered inappropriate. Your child’s teacher will distribute invitations for parties at your home **only when the whole class is invited** - this eliminates hurt feelings.

There will be special activities on holidays that are planned by the teachers. St. Christopher’s Church School appreciates parent help and hopes that you will be able to assist. Sign up sheets for parent participation are available in the classrooms on Orientation Day and during the first week of school. Room parents assist in coordination of these parties.

We follow the Miami-Dade County Public School calendar regarding the observation of some holidays and vacations. The Florida Council of Independent Schools determines the school days and hours. Teacher workdays will be scheduled mostly on the first Monday of every month (see Calendar). These workdays are used for teachers to confer, update children’s records and prepare lessons for the classrooms.

## **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

Parents play a vital role in the development of St. Christopher’s Church School community. Now in its fourth year, St. Christopher’s PTO offers parents the opportunity to work together with the Church School in projects that benefit our students.

The purpose of the Parent Teacher Organization is as follows:

1. To nurture the spirit of community among parents, faculty, staff and alumni. The PTO promotes social interaction among our school, the families of students, neighbors and the community at large.
2. To raise funds for the support and benefit of St. Christopher’s Montessori Church School.
3. To sponsor events and activities that complement and enrich educational programs at St. Christopher’s Montessori Church School.

The Parent Teacher Organization Board meets once a month. There are PTO General Meetings in September and May. We encourage all parents to attend meetings and

volunteer to participate in Church School activities. The "PTO Planner" newsletter is sent home monthly updating parents on all PTO initiatives.

## **Lunch and Snacks**

Parents may provide their child's own lunch and drink. Children need nutritious lunches that they can easily feed themselves. A microwave oven is available in every classroom and in the parish hall kitchen.

Children are asked to eat their sandwich or warm meal before their dessert. Candy, soda and gum are not allowed in school.

The parents also provide the mid-morning snack for the Pre-School classes. Sign-up sheets are posted on the classroom doors at the beginning of the month.

Children in the elementary classes bring their individual snacks in their lunchboxes.

## **Flowers**

We ask each family to occasionally supply fresh flowers to add to the beauty of each environment and allow students to enjoy the process of flower arranging. Flowers from your yard are acceptable.

## **Garden**

Our school's organic garden, with a dedicated area for each classroom, serves as a living laboratory and hands-on area for instruction. Students, teachers and parent volunteers work together to cultivate and care for the garden.

## **Recycling**

St. Christopher's Church School recycling initiative is a school-wide program. Recycling takes place within each classroom. Students are responsible for disposing recycled materials in central deposit containers for weekly pick-up. Our ongoing recycling programs instill a respect and reverence for our environment.

A recycled uniform exchange is located by the library.

## **Transportation**

### **Transportation -- Private/Carpools**

Parent(s) are expected to provide transportation for their son(s) and daughter(s). The School will be glad to help identify neighboring families; however, School personnel cannot be responsible for the formation of carpools. Students must go home with their own driver or carpool unless prior arrangements have been made, and the School has been notified. A note to the classroom teacher, a fax to the office or, in an emergency, a telephone call to the office will serve as notification.

## **Bicycles**

Elementary students may bicycle to school. Students must wear helmets and enter school at the Fernwood entrance. Students must dismount and walk their bicycles to the designated bicycle racks. A parental permission slip must be signed and submitted to the school office authorizing a student's transport by bicycle. A bicycle lock is recommended.

## **Evacuation**

A map can be found in each room showing the quickest and safest route for leaving the building. Please familiarize yourself with these maps. Students will be appointed to turn off lights and air conditioners and to close the windows and doors during fire drills or an evacuation.

Emergency drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. Students, faculty, and parents on campus at the time of a fire drill are all required to participate. Everyone should move quickly and quietly to designated area. Movement and noise during fire drills should be kept to a minimum. Talking is prohibited.

## **Emergencies other than Fire**

In the event of a national or local emergency, when possible, parents will be contacted to pick up their children in an orderly fashion. If a special circumstance were to arise in which the administration implements a School-wide lockdown, students will remain inside their classrooms with their teachers until an "All Clear," is given at which time parents will be contacted to pick up their children.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

School closing or delays due to inclement weather will follow the decisions made by the public school system of Miami-Dade County. Students should, however, tune into local radio or TV stations for additional information and a recorded message will be left on the school answering system.

School closings will also be posted on the school's website; [www.stchriskb.org](http://www.stchriskb.org).

## **Immunizations, Medications, and Clinic**

Prior to the beginning of School, a physical examination must be completed or transferred for each student entering the School. Immunization or a certificate of waiver is required for all students. Immunizations must be kept current, and a Certificate of Immunization, signed by a physician, or an immunization waiver must be kept on file in the School office. Students may not attend School without an appropriate immunization record.

Many students must have medication available at School for certain illnesses and conditions. School personnel cannot administer medication, including pain relievers, without explicit written parental/guardian permission. A permission form completed by

the parent/guardian is required in the event a student must receive medicine at School. The medicine, in its original container, labeled with the student's name, name of medicine, dose and time to be given, doctor's name (if prescribed) and possible side effects, must be given to the Head of School together with the signed permission form.

If a student is not feeling well, s/he should inform the classroom teacher. If the teacher believes your child needs to go home, you will be notified to pick up your child immediately. In such an event your child will stay in the Administration office until you arrive. Students will be released for medical reasons only with permission from the parent/guardian or from the person designated on the student's emergency card. In case of a medical emergency when a parent or those you have authorized cannot be reached, the doctor named on your emergency form will be called. Please be sure to keep the office informed of any changes in contact information.

Although regular attendance is important, it is even more important that children who are ill or recovering remain at home. A child who does not feel well accomplishes little at school. Please do not send your child to school until he/she has been free from fever for 24 hours. Children must be well enough to go outdoors.

The Florida Department of Children and Families has given us the guidelines to follow for the exclusion of ill children.

- Fever            Axillary temperature over 99 degrees F. or has had one in the past 24 hours.
- Behavior        If a child looks or acts differently, unusually tired, pale, or irritable.
- Respiratory    Breathing difficulties – e.g. wheezing, onset of a cold, Nasal discharge, watery eyes
- Vomiting
- Constant coughing
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- Sore throat
- Communicable disease

Re-admittance to school for the following communicable diseases shall be:

1. Chickenpox -all lesions are dry and crusted
2. Impetigo - (blisters covered with honey colored crusts) - at least 24 hours after the start of medication. If there is no improvement in 48 hours, the child should be reassessed by the physician.
3. Conjunctivitis- (“pink eye”- redness of the eye with burning and thick purulent discharge) at least 24 hours after the start of medication and no drainage present.
4. Lice and Scabies- following medical treatment
5. Pin worms- no restrictions following the start of treatment

6. Hepatitis- Physicians statement required for re-admittance
7. Strep throat- no sooner than 48 hours after the start of oral medication or 24 hours after injection

Students who are absent from School for the following reasons require a physician's statement confirming the student's ability to return to School and any necessary limitations or restriction:

- Measles, mumps, chicken pox, ringworm, scarlet fever,
- Strep infection, mononucleosis, hepatitis, pink eye
- Absence due to an extended illness or surgery
- Students who may not participate in sports or gym classes following an extended illness or surgery

## **Other Important Information and Policies**

### **Inspection Policy**

The School reserves the right to inspect and conduct a search of any place or item on School campus or at a School-related event including, but not limited to, a student's locker, book bag, backpack, vehicle, computer, or personal electronic devices. Inspections and searches may be conducted on a routine or random basis or as deemed necessary. Students must provide any passwords or other access required to inspect such places or items upon request by a school administrator. Inspection of electronic devices includes laptops, phones, cameras, and any other electronics, including the contents of same (texts, emails, photos, images, address books, etc. whether such message or information was sent over the school's system or any personal account such as Yahoo, AOL, Gmail, etc.). Further, the School has the right to seize and permanently retain property disclosed by an inspection or search which is considered potentially harmful, dangerous, illegal, or inappropriate, the possession of which is a violation of the School's rules, community standards, and/or local and state law.

### **Posters and Announcements**

All posters must be approved at the office before they are displayed in School. If a student wishes to put up a poster, he/she should bring it to the office first. General announcements are made in the morning. An advisor must sign club or class announcements. Any announcement originating from a student must be cleared by administration.

### **Payment of Tuition and Fees**

The School strives to provide the highest quality education while maintaining affordable fees. We depend on the timely payment of tuition and registration fees to cover our obligations. Enrolling your child requires a financial commitment much like any other major purchase. Please make School tuition a budget priority. Failure to make

tuition/fee payments by the contractual dates may result in a child being removed from School or not being allowed to take examinations. Transcripts and student records cannot be forwarded to another School if there is an outstanding balance in his/her account, or if there are other outstanding debts.

## **Student Records and Information**

Requests for student records and transcripts must be directed in writing to the School Office. The School reserves the right to withhold student transcripts and records for non-payment of tuition or fees. The School will also require the parent to sign a consent form before a student's transcript or other records/information will be released.

The School makes reasonable efforts to ensure that both natural parents (or legal guardians) receive substantially the same information (transcripts, records, appointments, etc.). The School must rely upon the correctness and completeness of parental information when the student is enrolled. In situations of divorced or separated parents, if one parent believes that the other parent is not entitled to receive certain information, the parent wishing to restrict information provided by the School must provide the School with a court order that is still in effect that specifically restricts the other parent from receiving such information.

## **Principles and Expectations Relating to the Parent/School Relationship**

We have ten expectations that we believe will help us to have a positive and cooperative relationship throughout the entire school year:

- (1) As a part of our joint role to help students grow and mature, parents are expected to encourage their student to address perceived inequities appropriately and independently, including reporting if necessary.
- (2) Parents must cut the constant phone ties from their students. Let your student make decisions on their own without the constant need for parental reinforcement. Sometimes they will make a decision that is different from the one you would have encouraged. That's fine too.
- (3) Students must learn to seek assistance from an adult on campus for academic, athletic, or other assistance. We have resources for your student for this purpose, including the student's advisor, mentor, or other person installed on campus.
- (4) When parents contact the school without the student's knowledge ("John doesn't know I'm calling, but . . ."), the school will need to address the issue directly with the student. We cannot promise you that we will maintain confidentiality over your phone call. Refer to expectation number one.
- (5) The school will typically investigate issues and question students without the parent's presence. This helps us move quickly to resolve issues.

- (6) Although your student's issue is important, concerns take time to address. Please be patient and do not call repeatedly for an update.
- (7) Please do not ask us to tell you about discipline imposed on other students. We would not disclose discipline of your student to others and expect that you understand the same principle applies to other students.
- (8) The school will not communicate everything that occurs in the student's daily life to a parent. We have a lot of students under our care (including your student) that we need to ensure are safe, secure, and happy. We expect that you would like our attention to be focused there.
- (9) Neither the teachers nor the school will provide a daily email, text, or call regarding the student's progress or difficulties. We will communicate with you through appropriate school channels if we believe there is a concern that you should address with your student.
- (10) All communications between the parents and any person at the school must be professional, cooperative, and appropriate. If we cannot have this type of relationship, this may not be the right school for your child.

### **Parent/Family Cooperation**

As stated elsewhere, the School believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the School and parent is essential to the fulfillment of the School's educational purpose and responsibilities to its students. If the parent's or other family member's behavior, communications, or interactions on or off campus (including during school-sponsored events) is disruptive, intimidating, or overly aggressive, or reflects a loss of confidence or serious disagreement with the school's policies, methods of instruction, or discipline, or otherwise seriously interferes with the School's safety procedures, responsibilities, or accomplishment of its educational purpose or program, the School reserves the right to dismiss the family from the community. In addition, the School reserves the right to place restrictions on parents' or other family members' involvement or activity at School, on School property, or at School-related events if the parent or other family member engages in behavior or has a status (such as a criminal conviction) that would reasonably suggest that such restrictions may be appropriate for the community.

### **Child Safety from Sexual Offenders and Predators**

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), sexual perpetrators are commonly people the parents/guardians or children know, and these people may be in a position of trust or responsibility to a child and family.

Because of our concern for student safety, all employees, and those parents who volunteer for overnight field trips, are screened through the School's criminal background process.

To keep their children safer, parents should talk openly to their children about safety issues. Parents should know their children's friends and be clear with their children about the places and homes that their children visit. Children should be taught that they have the right to say no to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touching or actions by others and to get out of those situations as quickly as possible.

Parents should regularly visit the public registry to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Information concerning registered sex offenders and predators in Florida may be obtained by visiting: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us>, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offenders database. Information may also be obtained by contacting the FDLE's toll free telephone number: 1-888-FL-PREDATOR (1-888-357-7332). To view a map of registered sex offenders living within a five mile radius of any given address, parents should visit: <http://www.familywatchdog.us>. To learn about additional child safety tips and links to child and internet safety sites and searches, parents should visit the Florida Attorney General website at <http://myfloridalegal.com>.

## **Fund Raising**

No class, individual, or organization is to begin any money raising activity without permission from the School. No class, individual or organization may request money from any other class, individual, or organization within or outside the School without permission from the School administration office. All extracurricular organizations should strive to be self-sufficient, raising money through approved concessions and approved service-type projects.

## **School Business Office Hours**

The School's Business Office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## **Web Site**

Our site [www.stchriskb.org](http://www.stchriskb.org) contains pertinent information about the Church School, our philosophy, calendar, photos and activities.

## **Visitors**

Parents or guardians who need to visit campus during School hours are asked to follow these guidelines:

1. **Make an Appointment:** If you are coming to see an administrator or a faculty member, please call to make an appointment in advance.
2. **Check-in in the main office:** When you arrive on campus, please report directly to the main office for authorization. If you need to proceed from there to any other part of the campus you will be issued a visitor badge.

3. **I.D. Check:** If you are asking to see your son or daughter, please do not be offended if you are asked to show identification. This is a safety measure intended to protect your children.

**Please Note:** For the safety and security of our students, anyone seen on campus during School hours without a visitor badge will be reminded to obtain one or asked to leave campus.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT OF STUDENT HANDBOOK

St. Christopher's Montessori School is an Episcopal Day School that adheres to the polity of the Episcopal Church.

The registration of a student is considered an acceptance, on her/his part and on the part of her/his parents or guardians, of all rules and regulations of our School, including the School's prerogative to assign students her/his teacher(s) and how classroom space will be used, as well as the judgment of School authorities on academic and disciplinary sanctions, suspension, or expulsion of a student.

The rules and regulations contained in this Handbook are not meant to be all comprehensive. Rather, they presuppose the good will and judgment of a student in all circumstances in which he/she may find himself/herself.

Parents/guardians are asked to familiarize themselves and to ensure that their child understands all of the information contained in this Student/Parent Handbook. Parents/guardians and students over age 8 must sign the form below

We have read and understood all statements and provisions set forth in the Student/Parent Handbook.

_____	_____	_____
Student	Age	Date
_____	_____	_____
Parent or Guardian	Relationship	Date