



Geist Montessori Academy
Public Charter School

Creating a Love of Learning

Student/Parent Handbook
2011/2012

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Introduction (added March 10, 2011)

This document was developed by the GMA School Board (Mission/Vision) and the Head of School (Cornerstones) in December 2010. Geist Montessori Academy was at that time, and still is, in a period of rapid growth and staff development. Therefore, the Board, at its regular meeting on March 9, 2011, agreed by motion to attach an implementation date by which the school community can reasonably be expected to fully meet these

expectations. That date was established to be the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. In the meantime, all governance and operational decisions will be made with these guidelines in mind.

Mission

The Montessori Academy at Geist provides an academically and culturally rich educational environment that allows children to acquire knowledge in a non-competitive, individualized manner. We recognize that many environmental factors act upon the development of the child, and seek to prepare a school environment that encourages joyful learning, and greater exploration of the community and the world. Academics integrate with character building and community awareness to form a whole-child curriculum that prepares our students for life.

Vision

Geist Montessori Academy, guided by the educational philosophy and curriculum of Dr. Maria Montessori, promotes the development of each child in a safe, carefully prepared environment that fosters curiosity, creativity, cooperation, and critical thinking. At Geist Montessori Academy, all school community members demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the school environment.

At Geist Montessori Academy, our students will

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

Cornerstones

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

Preeminent Public Montessori

Provide a free Montessori education enhanced to ensure alignment with the Montessori Curriculum and the IDOE State Standards

Promote high levels of student achievement

Measure achievement in multiple ways and use assessment data to inform instruction

Promote a school wide culture of respect, open and honest communication, high expectations, and continuous growth through self-reflection

Continuously prepare to serve learners with great diversity in socio-economic backgrounds and in learning needs and styles.

Holistic Student Development

Give students meaningful and engaging work that excites and challenges

Engage students in activities that teach them how to be competent, caring contributors to our community

Model and promote Montessori values of grace, courtesy, respect, and responsibility
Teach cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and self-correction skills
Respect each student's unique learning style by individually tailoring learning supports
Allow students to experience the intrinsic reward that comes from selection of work and its mastery
Encourage students to take ownership for their academic and personal development
Encourage curiosity, creativity, and exploration

School-strengthening Collaboration

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

High Quality Staff

Require lead teachers to hold a Montessori diploma and to obtain highly qualified status
Educate all staff regarding Montessori philosophy and GMA curriculum, culture and processes
Maintain high standards for accomplished teaching and learning
Provide adequate compensation
Evaluate teaching staff regularly for achievement of GMA's vision for students.

Financial Stability and Sustainability

Ensure necessary financial oversight and protection policies are in place
Ensure expenses are matched by revenue
Prepare and examine financial forecasts to ensure long-term corporate viability

Principles of Montessori Education at GMA

The Montessori method of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori in Italy at the turn of the century. The method is structured for the developmental instincts of children and encourages his or her growth as a whole individual - intellectually, socially, spiritually, and physically. Montessori became Italy's first licensed female physician in 1896. She went on to obtain degrees in psychology and philosophy, and founded a school where she closely observed children's learning at different ages. Based on her findings, Montessori created a distinct system of learning unique to each stage of a child's development characterized by:

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

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

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

Educational Program: Adequate Yearly Progress

As a public charter school, we are expected to meet Annual Yearly Progress. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) designations for Indiana school corporations and schools are determined by student performance and participation rates on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) assessments in English/language arts and mathematics and student attendance rates (for elementary and middle schools). Schools must make AYP in every student group in order to meet AYP. Go to <http://www.doe.in.gov/ayp/docs/2008/2008-AYPFactSheet.pdf> for more information on AYP.

The merging of our public school status with our Montessori school status has been challenging at times. **Response to Intervention (RTI)** is one of the ways that we ensure we are meeting the requirements of the state. It is a school-wide system that involves screening or benchmarking of students, research-based interventions and curriculum (which is fully supported by the Montessori pedagogy and materials), progress monitoring, and data-based decision making. Benchmark assessments administered to all students in the fall, winter and spring allow teachers to look at student performance in relation to others of the same grade and/or the same classroom. Individualized interventions are created for students needing additional supports, and progress is monitored. If students fail to make progress, this system also serves as a means for identifying students who may need to proceed to the next step of evaluation for special services or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Educational Program: Special Education

Our goal is to meet the needs of every student at GMA. If a student fails to make progress, even with additional supports and interventions in the general education classroom (RTI-see above), the next step is a referral for evaluation. Sometimes the evaluation is conducted by the SLP if it is believed to be primarily a language or speech based difficulty. Other times the evaluation is conducted by a school psychologist. If a parent has questions regarding the process or would like to request an evaluation, please contact Sarah Green, our special needs teacher at (317) 335-1158. For a complete copy of Indiana's law governing special education services, go to: http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/docs/Art_7_Feb_2010.pdf

To download a copy of Indiana's current Notice of Procedural Safeguards for parents, go to:

<http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/docs/2008-10-14-ProceduralSafeguards.pdf>

Educational Program: Assessments

At this time, the progress of an Indiana school is measured by student performance against the state benchmark on Indiana's state-standardized test, the Indiana Statewide Testing for educational Progress (ISTEP) which includes

an alternate assessment for students with disabilities called the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (I-STAR). Following the state requirements, our students will take the following tests during the school year:

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

As a Ball State University charter school, we are also required to administer the Northwest Evaluation Association Assessment (NWEA Assessment). By using the NWEA Assessment, a norm-referenced test, and teachers are able to track student progress against the national population in subjects including, but not limited to, reading, math, and language usage. This assessment is administered to all students in grades 2-8 and allows teachers and parents to look at student progress from the beginning to the end of the year as well as from year to year.

Our school also uses Acuity (3-8) and 3D reading/Math (K-2), which is a benchmarking and student progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent and continuous assessment. All students are assessed three times per year with the benchmark assessments. The results are used to support informal classroom assessments and supply valuable data for creating intervention groups and lessons with students who need them.

Educational Program: Classroom Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

School Governance: Nondiscriminatory Policy

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

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

School Governance: Grievance Procedure

It is the policy of the Board to ensure that any constituent complaint related to operational matters be first directed in writing to appropriate school staff (classroom teacher, support staff, Head of School, etc.) and that staff have the opportunity to respond. If that process has been exhausted and the matter remains unsettled or is considered unsatisfactory, the complaint may be directed in writing to the Board at the following address: board.gma@gmail.com. [Complaints with regard to student IEPs must be referred to the Case Conference Committee.](#)

School Governance: Accreditation

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

All lead teachers hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university, an Indiana state teaching license or emergency permit and are trained in Montessori pedagogy, either in house or at a MACTE training center. Each of our teachers has been selected for his or her love and understanding of children, a belief in the Montessori philosophy of education and a positive approach to the classroom environment.

School Governance: Our Board

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

School Governance: Admissions Policy

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

The school accepts applications for each academic year from March 1 through April 1. All applications received will be accepted providing the applicant is the appropriate age for the grade level to which they are applying.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

School Procedures/Information: Office Hours

Our office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Office staff will be available to speak with parents and answer questions throughout the day at (317) 335-1158. Voicemail will take your message after regular office hours. If you need to speak to your child's teacher, please allow a staff member to take your name and phone number, and your call will be returned during breaks or at the end of the school day. However, the best way to contact the teacher is email.

School Procedures/Information: Classroom Instructional Hours

AM Kindergarten

Monday-Friday 8:45 AM-11:45 AM

PM Kindergarten

Monday-Friday 12:45 PM-3:45 PM

Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary and Middle School

Monday through Friday

8:45AM – 3:45PM

School Procedures/Information: Kindergarten Entrance

Indiana Law requires anyone between the ages of seven and seventeen to attend school. Indiana Code 20-8.1-3-17 sets the age requirement for school enrollment as follows:

Kindergarten – age 5 on or before August 1

First Grade – age 6 on or before August 1

If your child will have turned of age during the month of August, you may request that they take a kindergarten entrance test. The test must be requested 30 days prior to the start of school. Acceptance will be to the discretion of the Head of School. We do not have an appeal process.

School Procedures/Information: Kindergarten Enrichment

Kindergarten Enrichment is offered through our Kindergarten Enrichment Program. The program will enhance what your child is learning in kindergarten as well as offer added experiences that will strengthen their academic and social skills. During the enrichment sessions, the children will have ample time each week to explore the advanced Montessori materials. Each child works according to his/her individual development, increasing knowledge, skills, concentration, independence, and love of learning. They will also participate in Language, Literacy, Art, Music, and movement activities.

Children will attend their regular kindergarten class for half of the day and the other half will be spent in the enrichment classroom. They will enjoy the opportunity to have lunch at school. The Kindergarten Enrichment Program hours will follow the same schedule of hours as grades 1-8. School hours are 8:45 AM- 3:45 PM, Monday-Friday. On days of NO SCHOOL, there will be no kindergarten enrichment program. Your child must first be signed up for kindergarten class before registering for the Kindergarten Enrichment Program. If you have any additional questions or need further information on registering your child for the Kindergarten Enrichment Program, please call (317) 335-1158. Space is limited and enrollment will be taken on a first come first serve basis.

School Procedures/Information: Before School and After School Care

Before and after school care is available through the YMCA. For more information, contact the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis (317) 718-8553, or go to the school's website at www.gmacademy.org

For over 156 years, the YMCA movement has earned its reputation as a mission-driven organization that builds strong families. Over 20 million people across the nation belong or participate at a YMCA. The YMCA is one of the few integrating forces in our community today. Our YMCA is a place where people of all ages, abilities and economic circumstances can meet and find a program, service or experience that enhances their well-being. In response to the needs of the community, the YMCA is the largest provider of school age programs in the Indianapolis area and surrounding communities. In 2009, we provided care to over 9,591 children. The YMCA is unique because your program fees are based on total household income.

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

School Procedures/Information: School Calendar

Our students attend for 180 days per Indiana code 20-30-2. Our school day is 7 hours long. This is longer than most other public schools, allowing for longer periods of uninterrupted work time, an essential component of the Montessori pedagogy.

School Procedures/Information: Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Students should be dropped off at the school’s front entrance or rear door between 8:30 AM & 8:45 AM each morning. Please have your child ready to exit the car independently when you pull up to the entrance (i.e., shoes and jacket on, lunch and backpack in hand). A staff member will greet them and assist them into their classroom.

Drop-off and Pick-Up Times

Times are staggered to help provide a safe and efficient procedure for dropping off children and picking them up. Please arrive at your appointed time. Thank you in advance for staying true to our tight schedule! If you arrive after 8:45, you must accompany your child into the front of the building and sign them in. Children cannot sign themselves in late.

Drop-off and Pick-up is according to your last name.

Drop-off Time	Pick-up Time	Front	Back
8:30	3:45	A-B	K-M
8:35	3:50	C-E	N-S
8:40	3:55	F-J	T-Z

All students should be picked up by 4:00pm. Any child still at the school at 4:01 will be sent to the YMCA after care. The YMCA will set up registration and payment with you at the time of arrival. All staff members have set responsibilities daily that begin at 4:00pm. No staff members will be available to sit with your child. Thank you for understanding.

At dismissal, your child will walk to your car. Please refrain from lengthy discussions with teachers or staff concerning your child’s progress, or from giving verbal messages at this time. We make every effort to provide a quick and efficient system of arrival and dismissal. We appreciate your cooperation and assistance.

EXTREME CAUTION IS ADVISED AT ALL TIMES—WATCH FOR CHILDREN BEING ASSISTED TO OR FROM CARS. PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY AND NEVER PASS ANOTHER CAR IN THE DRIVE.

School Procedures/Information: Late Arrival/Early Pick-Up of Students

Parents bringing students after 8:45 AM will need to park in one of the parking spots in the south lot, walk the student into the school, and sign the student in at the front office. These students will be reported as tardy. Likewise, students leaving before 3:45 p.m. must be signed out with a signature from the parent. The sign in/sign out form is located at the front desk. If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up a child, please contact the office and notify staff of the alternate person. They will need to present a valid driver’s license or other valid picture ID, and sign the student out from the office.

School Procedures/Information: Late Pick-Up of Students

Parents are expected promptly at dismissal time. If an emergency occurs that necessitates a late pick-up, a prompt phone call to the school is expected and your student will be sent to the YMCA After Care program.

School Procedures/Information: Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is vital to a child’s learning process. Attendance at school is also a requirement under Indiana State Law (I.C. 20-8.1-3). Please phone the school before 9:00 AM if your child is going to be absent. Please also

send a note the following day, stating the reason for the absence. Valid reasons for school absence or tardy are as follows, all other cases of absence will be considered unexcused.

1. Illness of the child—doctor’s note required for an absence lasting more than 2 days
2. Death in the family
3. Court appointment
4. Required church observance
5. Doctor or dentist appointment—doctor’s note required
6. Quarantine
7. Exposure to contagious disease
8. Emergencies as interpreted by the Head of School
9. Pre-arranged absences for a family trip, maximum of 5 days per year

NOTE: If your child has accumulated ten absences, he or she must supply a doctor’s note for each subsequent absence due to illness. Students who accumulate more than 70 hours (10 days) of absences may be required to attend alternate class scheduling, including extended day learning and/or Saturday classes and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian during these sessions. Habitual absenteeism and/or tardiness (more than 10 late arrivals) will be reported to the Child Protection Service Center of Indiana, as required under the state’s Compulsory Attendance Law.

Pre-Arranged Absences:

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

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

No pre-arranged absences will be granted during the last five days of any semester, during standardized testing, when a student has accumulated ten absences in a given year, or when the requested days would exceed this number. Pre-arranged absences may be used only once per academic calendar year.

Pre-arranged absences for a family trip may not be used to extend Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break or Spring Break. Application forms for pre-arranged absences are available in the school office. For further clarification, please contact the office staff.

School Procedures/Information: Inclement Weather Policy

For 2011-2012, GMA will post any delays or cancelation due to weather. You can tune into Fox 59 or WRTV Channel 6 to see any closures. You may also visit our website at www.gmacademy.org, or call the voicemail at school for up-to-date information on closings. WE WILL NOT FOLLOW any other surrounding school closures.

We reserve the right to either cancel school or issue a two-hour delay.

School Procedures/Information: Lunch & Snacks

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

In keeping with our studies of nutrition and health, we encourage you to pack nutritious lunches for your child. Canned pop, candy, or gum will not be permitted. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their children.

School Procedures/Information: Birthday Celebrations in the Classroom

As with many Montessori schools, in our Kindergarten and lower elementary classes we do celebrate birthdays with “Birthday Rotation”. Please check with your child’s teacher to see what you need to bring in and any current allergies for the snack.

Upper Elementary classes sing “Happy Birthday”, share acknowledgements, and allow a snack. Please check with the teacher first on any current allergies.

Middle School does not allow birthday celebrations at school or snacks to be sent into school.

All celebrations MUST be set up ahead of time with the teacher. Usually, celebrations take place no earlier than 2:45 and no later than 3:30.

School Procedures/Information: Field Trips

During field trips, students are subject to the same rules, regulations, and behavioral expectations as observed at the school. The children will be transported by school-provided transportation. No child will be permitted to accompany his/her class on a field trip unless a permission slip has been signed, dated, and is on file at the school.

All students must accompany their class to and from a field trip.

During field trips, a person trained in First Aid will accompany the students on all trips. A First Aid kit will also be available. Parents who wish to attend field trips as chaperones must have a current, criminal background check on file. Sometimes chaperone positions are limited on field trips. In these cases, we make every attempt to allow different parents the opportunity to serve as chaperones.

School Procedures/Information: Student Withdrawal

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

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

School Procedures/Information: Returned Checks

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

School Procedures/Information: Textbook/Classroom Supply Rental

Textbook fees are due two weeks after you have received the bill. Fees that are not paid within 30 days will be sent to collections. If you need to set up payment arrangements, please contact Jennifer Thompson.

School Procedures/Information: Lost and Found

The lost and found is located in an area designated by the office. Inquire at the office about its location. Unclaimed items are donated to charity at the end of the school year.

School Procedures/Information: Tobacco Use

The school is a non-smoking facility. Smoking and/or tobacco use are prohibited anywhere on school property, inside or outside.

School Procedures/Information: Required Forms

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

- Enrollment Form
- Home Language Survey
- Records Transfer Form
- Medical Information/Consent Form
- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Records or Waiver
- Free/Reduced Lunch Application (If applicable)

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

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

- Parent Volunteer Form
- Criminal Background Check

Parent Partnerships: Parent/Teacher Conferences

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

Parent Partnerships: Communication

Although phone calls are welcomed, the use of email is preferred. Please do not send notes to school in your child's backpack. Backpacks are your child's personal possessions, and are not routinely checked for correspondence.

Parent Partnerships: Progress Reports

Progress reports will be provided to parents a minimum of four times per year, one time each quarter. The progress report will provide an overview of the student's progress through the Montessori curriculum as well as achievement of state standards.

Parent Partnerships: Classroom Observation

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

Parent Partnerships: Parent Education Programs

Parent Education Programs are scheduled throughout the school year. These programs are offered to parents monthly to provide the opportunity to learn more about the philosophy, method and materials used in the Montessori classroom. The gatherings are very informative and your attendance is highly encouraged. Please note that parents are required to attend a minimum of two programs annually. We also ask that you attend at least two PTO or school sponsored events annually, as well as volunteering at least twice. This is a mandatory requirement of all families with a student enrolled at the Academy.

Parent Partnerships: School-Wide Volunteer Opportunities

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

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

Please Note: Volunteers who work directly with students are required to have on file a criminal background check.

Parent Partnerships: Student Records

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

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

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

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

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

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

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

Student Information: Student Behavior Policy

We hold high expectations for students' behavior. We believe that all parents who choose to enroll their children in our school also hold these expectations and agree to support our faculty and staff to keep our students accountable for their behavior.

Our students shall respect building and grounds, participate in their upkeep and only act to beautify them.

Our students shall respect the learning environment, inside and outside the classroom, carefully move from one place to another, use quiet voices, and refrain from actions that may disrupt the work of others.

Our students only use language that is not offensive to others in our school community. We shall teach our students to always err on the side of caution when choosing language, being careful to respect all members of the school community.

Children who do not show respect for all living and non-living things at our school will be redirected. Parents will be asked for assistance, when necessary, in fostering this respect in their children. As we teach the children to take responsibility for their actions, we shall give appropriate, and whenever possible, natural consequences.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Maria Montessori developed the concept of "normalization" to describe the process by which each child acquires certain personality characteristics that lead to success in the classroom and throughout life. A "normalized" child will love learning, be kind to others, develop concentration and good work habits, and become independent. Our goal is to create and maintain an environment in which each child can successfully reach this level of normalization. Normalization of the classroom begins with the modeling of the appropriate behavior by the teacher combined with a high level of respect for each student. Many discipline problems can be avoided by the following proactive strategies practiced in every GMA classroom.

The teacher will:

1. Provide a structured Montessori environment in which a child feels secure and confident to choose his/her work;
2. Set behavioral expectations through classroom instruction, role modeling, and class meetings;
3. Post and discuss classroom rules and the Montessori Standards of Behavior;
4. Redirect a child and use conflict resolution techniques;
5. Teach and model the respect of other culture, religion, and/or beliefs;
6. Work one-on-one with children who need additional guidance; and
7. Refer child to RTI Team to discuss ways to help him/her succeed in the classroom

The behavioral expectations we have for the children are:

1. Respect yourself, others and our environment.
2. Demonstrate responsibility, respect, and self-restraint.
3. Treat all classroom materials with great respect and care.
4. Return all things to their proper place.
5. Keep the GMA environment clean and orderly.
6. Keep bathrooms neat and clean at all times.
7. When in the classroom, be "engaged" in an activity/job at all times.
8. Work quietly in the classroom.
9. Use walking feet at all times except when on the playground.
10. Be quiet when walking or working in the common area and around office.

**If a student is not meeting the standards of behavior expected in the Montessori classroom, a Montessori Standards Report will be sent home to notify the parent/guardian. We hope this notification will open a positive channel of communication between home and school.

A child's behavior becomes a problem when his/her negative actions disrupt the school environment and affect the positive values and culture defined in the GMA. For the safety and well being of all individuals in the GMA environment, the following are **unacceptable behaviors**:

1. Talking back and arguing;
2. Intentionally disrupting the learning environment;
3. Misuse of GMA materials or playground equipment;
4. Intentionally not following the directions of a teacher;
5. Encouraging others to misbehave;
6. Disrupting or impeding the work of others;
7. Showing rudeness or disrespect to others;
8. Littering; and
9. Bullying

If a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, the following **disciplinary actions** will be taken, according to the severity of the misbehavior.

The following classroom consequences shall be used for non-violent offenses:

- 1st offense: verbal warning
- 2nd offense: redirection from the teacher and modeling a more appropriate behavior
- 3rd offense: A discipline referral note home from the teacher and/or Head of School sent to parents/guardian to be signed and returned.
- 4th offense: The teacher shall call to elicit parent support in addressing the inappropriate behavior. The parent, child and teacher shall have a conference to discuss the inappropriate behavior and discuss strategies to correct the behavior (i.e., a behavior plan)

If the inappropriate behavior continues, the parent, child, teacher and administration shall meet to determine appropriate strategies to help the child successfully follow the behavior plan. The child's teacher, parent, and school administration shall execute and keep a copy of the plan developed at this conference.

** At any stage of the disciplinary action plan, a teacher may contact the parent/guardian by phone to discuss the student's behavior and work out a home/school plan for improvement.

The teacher or parent/guardian may request a conference at any time to discuss behavior issues.

GMA Suspension / Expulsion Policy

The GMA Discipline Policy is to be followed by all teachers, staff, and volunteers. Teachers, staff and volunteers are required to document on an Incident Report any behavior requiring disciplinary action. All witnesses are encouraged to document their concerns and all views will be respected and treated as valid.

Each child will be treated individually and with respect. Disciplinary action for a student with an Individual Education Plan with stated behavioral objectives will be handled in an appropriate manner.

Behaviors that may require immediate suspension or possible expulsion hearings are as follows:

1. Swearing or using abusive sarcasm, directed at another student, staff member, or parent;
2. Intentional abuse and/or vandalism to school property;
3. Bringing on campus any pornography, or explicit photography or written material;
4. Physical harm to another person with the intent to do bodily injury, exhibited by, but not limited to, hitting, stabbing, poking, pushing, slapping, kicking;
5. Bringing on campus any illegal substances or prescription medications for unauthorized use, sale or intent to disburse;
6. Stealing;
7. Touching another person's private body parts or intentionally exposing one's self for the sole purpose of self-gratification or harming (emotionally or physically) another individual; and
8. Bringing guns, knives or any type of weapon used to intimidate or threaten another person

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Modeling

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

Discussion

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

Reinforcement

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

Teaching Values

GMA is built on the concept of COMMUNITY. A community shares common values. Its members seek to give as much as they are able for the good of the whole, and take only what they really need. The community seeks to raise the level of the lowest members while keeping the entire community progressing forward toward a shared vision. At GMA, we value:

1. Respect for ourselves, others and the environment;
2. Honesty;
3. Courtesy and exceptional manners;
4. Empathy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures;
5. Accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
6. Working cooperatively with others, which includes listening, sharing opinions, negotiating, compromising, helping the group reach consensus, and taking a stand;
7. Seeking one's share of the work load;
8. Creating a balance between the needs of individual students and families and the needs of the school population as a whole; and
9. Pride in our school

Home/School Communication

Changes in a child's home life may affect his/her behavior and performance at school. Please notify the office and your child's teacher if any significant changes occur, such as:

1. Extended vacations or business trips by a family member;
2. Child staying somewhere other than home (relative/friend's house) for more than a day or two;
3. Loss of family member, including pets;
4. Moving; and
5. Change in family environment (separation, divorce, new partner, new baby);

** This information will be strictly confidential.*

Parent Education

Acquiring the knowledge, skills, and patience to raise healthy, happy and well-adjusted children is an on-going process that requires a tremendous amount of effort, time, and diligence. Several resources are available and parents are expected to take proactive responsibility in this area.

1. The school has a small library of helpful books and videos that can be checked out by parents. GMA can provide a recommended reading list that covers Montessori and other topics of education.
2. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent orientation night and other parent events.
3. GMA is developing a series of educational evenings that are designed to assist parents in building positive parenting practices, as well as increase the awareness of Montessori philosophy.
4. Parent/Teacher discussions may be scheduled at any time with your child's teacher to exchange ideas and strategies for specific behavioral issues that may be impacting the student or family. The Head of School is also available at to discuss educational and behavioral issues.

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

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

Student Behavior Policy--Inappropriate Language:

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

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

Student Behavior Policy: Public Displays of Affection

Inappropriate hugging, hand-holding, kissing, and other similar physical contact are not permitted. The consequences outlined in the Student Behavior Policy shall be followed should a student violate this policy.

Student Behavior Policy: Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment consists of behavior which includes any unwanted, unwelcome sexual advances or sexually oriented behavior made by a person who knows or who ought reasonably to know that such attention is unwanted.

No one in our school community, which includes, but is not limited to students, parents, faculty/staff (regular or contracted), maintenance workers, and custodian, shall engage in sexually harassing behavior towards another member of our school community.

Student Behavior Policy: Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

GMA prohibits Bullying, including cyber-bullying by any student on or off school property. We have a NO TOLLERANCE POLICY. Students should report bullying to a teacher or Administrator immediately. A single violation is subject to in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. The State of Indiana defines "bullying" as overt, repeated acts or gestures, including: 1) verbal or written communications transmitted, 2) physical acts committed; or 3) any other behaviors committed; by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the other student. (I.C. 20-33-8-0.2). Bullying is prohibited and is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Bullying is prohibited when a student is on school grounds, immediately before or during school hours; immediately after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; off grounds at a school activity, function, or event, traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event; or using school property or equipment provided by the school. (I.C.20-33-8-13.5)

Student Due Process

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

Student Information: Unlawful Activity

A student may be suspended or expelled if the student has engaged in unlawful activity on or off of school property if the activity may reasonably be considered to interfere with the school's purpose or education function or if the student's removal is necessary to restore order and/or protect others on the property.

Indiana law prohibits students from bringing or possessing at school firearms, deadly weapons, or other destructive devices. The penalty under Indiana law is expulsion from school for at least one calendar year with the student's return at the beginning of the first semester after the one year period.

Student Information: Behavior Policy for Special Education Students

As a public education institution, GMA strictly adheres to the guidelines of Article 7's Rule 29 (section 511 IAC 7-29-1 through 511 IAC 7-29-9) and Rule 30 (sections 511 IAC 7-30-1 through 511 IAC 7-30-6) as they relate to disciplinary procedures and mediation. Should a situation dictate GMA will assist families through the Division of Special Education in the facilitation of impartial advocates and mediators to address student/family complaints.

A special education student may be subjected to the same procedures as applied to all students, as long as the student is not removed from special education services, as specified in the student's IEP for more than 10 days per school year.

Repeat or violent offenses may require a consideration of change in placement for the student. In an effort to keep all of our student's safe, GMA administration with the input of our special education staff reserve the right to make the decision to call a case conference committee (CCC) meeting to address a student's offensive behavior.

Any consideration of change in placement for special education services (i.e., suspension from school for a period longer than 10 days, a more restrictive program at school, a reduced school day, placement in IAES (Interim Alternative Education Setting) or expulsion MUST FIRST be addressed within a case conference committee meeting that includes parents/guardians. The only exception to this rule is when a student's offense falls under any of the following categories:

- Drugs brought to school
- Weapons brought to school
- ANY dangerous behavior that causes serious bodily injury to students or staff members

In all other situations, the CCC meeting CANNOT be held without a parent/guardian present. Parents/guardians of the special education student MUST be notified of the CCC meeting in writing and presented with "Parental Rights" and "Procedural Safeguards".

Student Information: Student Attire Policy

Please send your child to school in appropriate school attire. Our students are expected to dress in clean, neat clothes worn in a manner that will not distract from the learning experience.

Students are not permitted to wear hats in the building. During warm weather months, appropriate length shorts, dresses and skirts may be worn to school. We believe it is reasonable that the bottom hem of these clothing articles be at least as long as the student's fingertips when standing up straight. Tank tops are acceptable, as long

as they are not revealing and cover your child appropriately for their age. If the teacher feels that it is inappropriate, they will be asked to put on another shirt.

The following is a list of guidelines for student dress:

- Clothing with objectionable, offensive, obscene, or indecent language or drawings may not be worn.
- Clothing that advertises or promotes alcohol, sex, violence, drugs, tobacco, or any other inappropriate message for school, may not be worn.
- Clothing of abbreviated and/or revealing style should not be worn (i.e., bare midriff, strapless tops, sagging pants).
- Apparel that is degrading, discriminatory and/or disrespectful toward any individual or group is prohibited.
- No "Heelies".
- Appropriate athletic footwear must be worn to participate in Physical Education activities.

Parents will be contacted and asked to bring appropriate clothing for those students who choose not to follow these guidelines. Students will not be permitted to remain at school if they cannot change into suitable clothing.

Please mark all backpacks, coats, jackets, sweaters and boots with your child's name to avoid mix-ups at dismissal. Students should dress appropriately for outdoor play. Layers are best for changeable autumn or spring weather. We have outdoor time each day that the weather is clear and the temperature is above 32 degrees, and all children are expected to participate.

PLEASE SEND A PAIR OF SLIPPERS WITH RUBBERIZED, NON-SKID SOLES TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. These are worn during classroom time for comfort, to cut down on the noise level, and to keep the carpets clean, as many of the activities in the Montessori classroom are performed on rugs on the floor.

Student Information: Personal Items

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

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

- IPODS
- PSPs
- PAGERS
- CD PLAYERS
- GAMEBOYS
- VIDEO GAMES
- MP3 PLAYERS
- LASER PENS
- OTHER GAMING SYSTEMS

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

Cell phones may be brought to school, but they may not be utilized during instructional hours without the verbal consent of a staff member. If the cell phone is utilized by a student or viewed by a staff member during the instructional day, it will be confiscated and held until it is retrieved by the parent.

Student Information: Technology Use & Internet Safety Policy

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

General Rules:

1. GMA reserves the right to monitor, retrieve and review any data composed, sent, received, or stored using the GMA network or Internet connections, including email.
2. GMA prohibits cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying involves deliberate or hostile behavior intended to defame, harm, threaten, harass, or intimidate students, staff members, or the school through the use of information and communication technologies, including email, text messages, blogs, instant messages, personal websites, online social directories and communities such as Facebook, MySpace, Wikipedia, YouTube), video-posting sites, or others not listed. Cyber-bullying occurring during OR outside school hours, on or off the school premises is prohibited.
3. Use of profane, pornographic, obscene, abusive, or impolite materials or language is not permitted.
4. Intentional circumvention of web-filtering is prohibited. Accidental access should be reported to the teacher immediately.
5. Installing or downloading hardware, software, shareware, or freeware onto any media or network drives is prohibited. Downloading of non-work related files is permitted only with a teacher's permission.
6. Copyright laws are to be respected, and copying of any person's work or intruding into others' files is prohibited.
7. Users may not access the network without proper authorization.
8. Users may not attempt to damage or destroy equipment or files. GMA makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the service it provides, and is not responsible for damage to any data.
9. Users are to delete files and data no longer needed.
10. Paper and toner are costly. Please print responsibly.

Internet Use:

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

Safety/Health Policies: Safety Policy

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

School staff is required by law to immediately notify the local public children's services agency if they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. GMA upholds this law.

Safety/Health Policies: Health Screenings

In the fall, vision screenings will be conducted for all students in grades K, 1, 3, & 8 and all new students, and hearing screenings will be conducted for all students in grades 1, 4, & 7 and all new students. If a parent is concerned about a student's hearing at any time throughout the school year, he/she may request a screening by filling out a permission form obtained by our speech language pathologist.

Safety/Health Policies: Immunization Records

Immunization Records: No student shall be permitted to remain in school for longer than twenty (20) days unless the student presents a written immunization record containing a method of immunization approved by the Department of Health. Parents may request in writing a medical or religious exemption from immunization requirements (form available in the office).

For the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, within twenty (20) days after school starts, the state of Indiana requires that parents of female, sixth grade students provide the school a written statement on a prescribed form providing evidence that:

- a) The student has received or is receiving the immunization
- b) A decision has been made not to have the immunization
- c) The parent has decided not provide the information indicating whether the student was immunized.

Safety/Health Policies: Health Policy

We believe the following health policies are essential to the successful operation of our school and to the welfare of our children. A child may not be brought to school if he or she is sick. For the sake of the other children, the staff, and themselves, any child exhibiting any of the following symptoms must be kept at home:

- Temperature of 100 or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Contagious skin infection
- Contagious eye infection
- Hacking or continuous cough
- Excessively runny nose
- Sore throat

Safety/Health Policies: Communicable Disease Policy

If the school determines that a child is ill, the parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. Symptoms for which a child shall be discharged from school include:

- Diarrhea
- Sever coughing which causes a whooping sound
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Labored or rapid breathing
- Conjunctivitis
- Temperature of 100 or more
- Untreated skin infection
- Stiff neck
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
- Unusual spots or rash
- Evidence of lice infestation, scabies or other parasitic infestation
- Vomiting

If we cannot reach you by phone, we will attempt to contact the adult indicated on your emergency contact form. Every possible means will be taken to reach one of the designated adults so that the child can be taken home and made comfortable as soon as possible.

If your child has been sent home from school due to an illness, they may not return to school until:

- They are fever-free for 24 hours
- They have not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have taken a prescribed course of antibiotics for 24-48 hours.

Please be considerate of other students and staff when your child is ill.

Safety/Health Policies: Head Lice

Head Lice Policy

Symptoms: *itching, especially of the scalp.*

White nits, or eggs of the louse insect, attach to the hair shaft most frequently at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. The eggs cement to the hair shaft close to the scalp. A shampoo treatment with an insecticide shampoo will generally kill most head lice. A second treatment is necessary ten (10) days later with some brands of insecticide shampoo. Manual nit removal and environmental cleanup of the home by the parent is the key to successful head lice treatment. While head lice are a nuisance, **they do not spread disease and are not a health issue.** Should a case of head lice be brought to the school's attention, the school nurse or Administrator will maintain confidentiality of the student's identity, verify the presence of an active infestation, and bring it to the attention of the child's parent/guardian. A GMA representative will assess students for head lice who present with symptoms, notify the child's parents of a confirmed case, assist staff and parents with educational material, reassess a student with a confirmed case to monitor the effectiveness of treatment, and refer to a health care provider as needed.

Students should not be excluded from school for having nits, as the management of the condition should not disrupt the educational process of the child.

The need to send a student home from school will be determined on a case by case basis to protect the student's privacy. This protocol is supported by the National Pediculosis Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses. Please contact your school nurse if further information or resources are needed.

Safety/Health Policies: Medication Administration

Only necessary medications that must be given during school hours will be administered. If your child requires medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, during the school day, written permission from a legal guardian /custodial parent is required (forms available in office). The form must be renewed each year and/or upon any change in dosage. One of our trained staff members will handle the distribution.

For prescription medications, inhalers, epinephrine injectors, and self-administration of medication, a physician's signature is required, and a Prescription Authorization Form needs to accompany the medication. The medication also needs to be in the original pharmacy container labeled with the exact dosage. Parents, please hand the medication directly to a staff member. An emergency care plan is required from the physician for asthma and/or epinephrine medications. Medication must come in the exact dosage prescribed so the person administering is not responsible for splitting pills. Any medication not picked up at the end of the year will be discarded.

If a parent is accompanying his/her child on a field trip, the parent will be required to administer his/her child's medication. All allergies need to be reported on your child's Medical Information Card. If there is any change during the school year, please notify us accordingly. Your child's teacher and assistant are made aware of reported allergies and any special needs that he/she may have.

Safety/Health Policies: Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Intervention

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

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

Safety/Health Policies: Emergency and Accident Policy

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