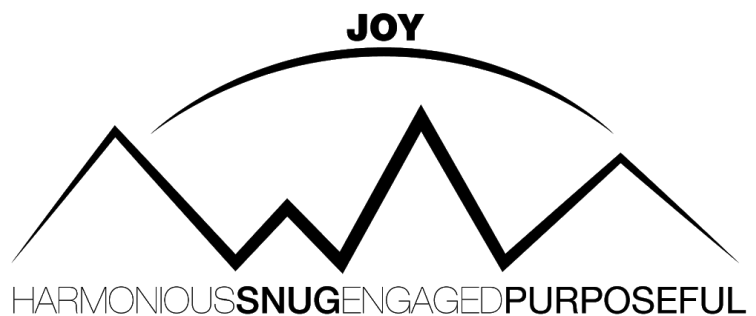




Family Handbook 2023-2024

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www.rmaschool.org
RENAISSANCE MONTESSORI ACADEMY



Our Vision

To be a community of learners that shape the future by cultivating compassion, empathy, initiative, self-confidence, perseverance, and curiosity in an authentic Montessori school.

Our Mission

The Renaissance Montessori Academy is a Montessori school that awakens the spirit of the child and kindles a lifelong curiosity and love of learning.

Our Philosophy

Renaissance Montessori Academy (RMA) offers a high-quality, Montessori preschool, and elementary program. We are determined and committed to:

- Encourage family involvement and maintain open and honest communication between families, teachers, and administration.
- Provide a nurturing atmosphere where children learn to respect themselves, others and the earth.
- Meet individual academic, social, and emotional needs while inspiring independence, self-care, and self-discipline.
- Facilitate curiosity by offering multiple, tiered level, engaging opportunities to discover and explore.
- Inspire children to utilize their unlimited potential and become enthusiastic, life-long learners.

Our History

Renaissance Montessori Academy was founded in 1995 by a group of parents interested in starting a high-quality non-profit, Montessori preschool to feed into the Renaissance Charter School of Douglas County. Both schools started off in trailers working side by side until the Charter School's building was finished. In 1998, the schools moved to the grounds of Renaissance Charter School, now the home of North Star Academy. Soon after, Renaissance Montessori Academy, previously known as Renaissance Child Development, Inc., became a stand-alone Montessori primary program and purchased the land where the school now resides. Working with the wonderful staff and families enrolled at the time, RMA was able to pay off the land and use it as collateral to build the beautiful building we now call home. In 2005 we completed construction. Since 2005, RMA has operated as an independent, non-profit traditional Montessori primary school. In 2019, RMA added Toddler and Me Montessori sessions which support our younger children who aren't yet able to join our primary program. RMA is exploring options for adding a full Montessori toddler program. In 2020, RMA made the decision to start an independent, Montessori elementary program that is now thriving. RMA is still exploring the option of becoming a Charter as well as the likelihood of adding a Montessori Middle School Program.

Welcome Letter

2023-2024 School Year

Dear RMA Families,

Thank you for choosing the Renaissance Montessori Academy (RMA). We are glad you are part of our community.

As part of your continued enrollment and to help answer most questions concerning the school and its programs, please read and use this Handbook as a reference. If you have any questions or concerns that aren't covered in this Handbook, speak with your child's lead teacher or other administrative staff.

At times, we may need to update, or add to our policies due to licensing changes or other requirements. When this happens, RMA will either send out a fully updated Handbook or an addendum to the Handbook.

Our regular business hours are 7:30 am to 5:45 pm, Monday through Friday. The administrative team works on different schedules to do their best to accommodate families. If you need to make an appointment with the administrative team and aren't available when we are, please let us know and we are happy to arrange to meet with you during your available times.

For ease of reading, this Handbook refers to the parent or parents of a student. The term parent includes biological, adoptive, foster, and all other adults who have legal guardianship of a student.

Thank you again for joining our community and supporting the Renaissance Montessori Academy by being aware of and following the required policies. We hope to see your child(ren) grow at our school for years to come.

Sincerely,

The Renaissance Montessori Academy Team

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I. BUSINESS

General Admissions

Our school is open to all children from 2 ½ years through Elementary. RMA does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, religion, disability, or family makeup in the administration of its enrollment and educational policies. Enrollment priority is given to current students and siblings of students, staff children, and children with Montessori experience.

Once an application is received and all fees or dues are paid, the child and family are put into a wait pool. Children are enrolled based on the needs of the school and to balance the enrollment structure of individual classrooms.

Enrollment Offer

When a family is contacted by the school and offered placement for their child, they are given a three (3) day decision window. If the family chooses to accept the offered placement, the program and operations fee of \$450 is due within three (3) business days to secure enrollment. Should the family proceed with enrollment, all other monies due will be invoiced and due prior to start date. Should the family later choose not to enroll, all paid monies are forfeited.

Student Files

We require the following forms to ensure a complete student file:

- Enrollment Contract
- Enrollment Acknowledgment
- Health Policy Agreement
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment
- Immunization Record
- Annual Health Appraisal Form (Physician signature required)
- Emergency Card
- Developmental and Social History
- Observation Guidelines and Confidentiality
- Sunscreen Permission
- Walking Permission

Updated forms are completed on an annual basis. We may need other forms on a case-by-case basis.

Calendar Year

The School Year Calendar is distributed prior to or with the enrollment packet. All enrollment contracts are continuous in conjunction with the school calendar. This means that families no longer need to re-enroll their child(ren) each academic year. Families are automatically enrolled until you exercise the opt out option that includes a 30-day disenrollment notice. The Calendar is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

By agreeing to the handbook, you acknowledged that you received RMA's school year calendar. It is recognized that RMA may not be open on all dates set forth in the school calendar for reasons including but not limited to weather, licensing requirements, health requirements, inability to use the facilities, or other unforeseen circumstances. There will be no deduction in tuition for holidays, in-service days, illness, absences, or unexpected closure days.

The Renaissance Montessori Academy operates on a 10-month academic of school year calendar and 12-month calendar that includes summer camp. RMA understands that COVID 19 or other unforeseen circumstances may change the calendar. If we need to physically close the school, RMA will make every effort to offer Virtual School and at home support for all families within 5 business days of the physical closure.

Summer Enrollment

The RMA school year typically ends in May. If you want to withdraw your child prior to May, you must provide RMA with 30-day written notice of withdrawal. If you are interested in joining RMA for summer camp, you may use a separate summer camp week-by-week contract agreement for the weeks of your choice. This contract is typically available in the spring.

School Hours during the months of August 2022 through May 2023:

Full Day	8:00 AM to 3:30 PM
Half Day (Primary only)	8:00 AM to 11:30 AM
Before School	7:30 AM to 8:00 AM

Enrichment 1	3:30 PM to 4:15 PM
Enrichment 2	3:30 PM to 5:45 PM

Four day per week schedules are Monday to Thursday or Tuesday to Friday only (Primary Only)

School Hours during the months of June and July 2022:

Full Day	8:30 AM to 3:00 PM
Before School	8:00 AM to 8:30 AM
Enrichment 1	3:30 PM to 4:15 PM
Enrichment 2	3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

RMA is only licensed to care for children Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:45 pm. We must close promptly at 5:45pm.

Drop-off and Pickup Times

RMA is open no earlier than 7:30 am and no later than 5:45 pm, Monday through Friday. Parents may not enter the building or attempt to drop off children prior to 7:30 am.

The morning work cycle is vital to the success of each student and supports the necessary continuity for learning. The work cycle is about 3 hours long and starts at the end of your child's designated drop off time. When your child arrives after 8:15 am it disrupts the other children who have already started their work cycle. Your child misses out on the centering that the other children experience before they start working. Please help us and your children by avoiding late drop offs. The drop off window is 8:00 to 8:15 a.m. Please let us know if you are running late. For licensing regulations and safety, the doors are locked after 8:15 a.m.

Pick up time is 3:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Program Hours

RMA's standard operating hours are Monday through Friday from 7:30 am through 5:45 pm in August through May and 8:00 am to 4:15 pm in June and July. I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by RMA's facility hours.

If my child is not picked up within 45 minutes of our regular pick-up time, and if there is no response from parents, guardians, or emergency contacts, we call Social Services.

School Closures

For program school closures, please see this year's school calendar available on the RMA website, at the front desk, or we can email it to you upon request. RMA follows Douglas County Public Schools (DCPS), Colorado licensing, Tri-County Health Department, and the Colorado Health Department for any weather-related closures like snow days as well as other unforeseen closures. There may be factors that force RMA to close without prior notice. RMA will communicate through texts, emails, and social media posts regarding what time RMA will open during delays, close during early dismissals, or be fully closed for a specific time frame. There is no deduction in tuition for holidays, in-service days, illness, absences, or unexpected closure days. Tuition is not prorated. Full and timely payments due are expected during closures.

Annual and Summer Tuition

RMA's tuition is voted on by the Renaissance Montessori Academy Board each year. Changes to tuition or other dues in the middle of a school year is rare, but still possible. RMA does reasonable tuition and fee increases on an annual basis. Please see this school year's tuition and dues information sheet available on the RMA website, at the front desk, or we can email to you upon request.

RMA may also offer discounts and scholarships. Please reach out to the Executive Director for information.

Program Changes

Parents can choose their child's program on their contract prior to enrollment and annually at reenrollment times. RMA allows for one program change during the re-enrollment period, free of charge. Any additional program change made during this contracted school year is subject to a \$50 program change fee. You must submit all program changes in writing at least 30 days prior to the change. The first day of the program change must happen on the first weekday of the month. Program changes are limited to availability in each community according to current RMA staffing and staff to student ratios. RMA reserves the right to deny a program change based on the above stated reasons.

Drop-in Care

We understand that on occasion, families need to add care hours to their child's day. For these times, we request a 24-hour notice. RMA reserves the right to refuse a drop-in due to staffing, ratios, or other restrictions. Drop-in only applies to children currently enrolled in RMA. We will provide drop-in rates to families depending on their needs.

Application Fee

The fee of \$50.00 is non-refundable and due upon acceptance of enrollment. This fee goes toward holding the wait pool space for your child.

TADS Fee

TADS is a company that processes our scholarship needs and awards. The fee of \$50.00 is non-refundable and due at the time scholarship inquiry.

Annual Program and Operations Dues

The annual \$450.00 fee is non-refundable and due upon acceptance of enrollment and annually by June 1 or the first business day in June. This fee goes toward the annual upkeep of the RMA building, classroom materials, and administrative tasks.

Credit Card Payment Fees

If paying by credit card, there is an additional 4% fee charged to cover bank usage fees.

Tuition Payment Schedule

Tuition is due by the 1st of each month proceeding the month of enrollment. Tuition payment on January 1 is for February enrollment. Tuition not received by the 15th of the month is assessed a late fee of \$35. If payments are not made, RMA has the right to refuse to admit the child(ren) to class. If any family is more than 60 days overdue on a tuition payment, with no attempt to make alternative arrangements with RMA Administration, RMA may disenroll the child(ren) from RMA with a 24-hour notice and will incur an additional 4% of owed funds. Any disenrolled family is still responsible for paying the past due fees and any additional fees pursuant to the disenrollment process. RMA may pursue all legal or equitable remedies available.

The first month of tuition for students enrolling mid-year may be pro-rated according to the student's transition start date in accordance with the above payment schedule.

There are no refunds or deductions if a child is ill or misses class due to vacations, holidays, weather, or other emergency related school closures.

Emergency Absence

If a student is absent for emergency reasons, the family may apply for an emergency tuition discount or early disenrollment. Emergency Absence provisions are at the sole discretion of the RMA Administration. The Administration in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors has the authority to grant an Emergency Absence discount off the regular monthly tuition for that child for up to two months, thereby retaining the child's position in the classroom.

Continuous Enrollment

Subsequent school year tuition, dues, and calendar announcements take place in the spring prior to the new school year. The continuous enrollment contract allows for family's automatic enrollment. Each year, RMA is required to complete the mandatory annual forms for your child including health appraisal and immunizations, Family Handbook acknowledgment, and emergency card. You can complete most of these through Early Learning Ventures. All monies associated with continuous enrollment are invoiced.

Termination of Enrollment

It is a goal of RMA to make the relationship between the school and each family and their child(ren) a positive and rewarding experience. We expect parents to uphold RMA standards for open, direct, and respectful communication

between parents and staff members of RMA. We make every effort to provide the best possible care and educational setting for each individual child. However, we also realize that problems may arise that are not solved satisfactorily by all parties. RMA reserves the right to terminate an enrollment if necessary. Reasons for termination may include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Payment of tuition or fees is more than 60 days overdue.
- B. Medical appraisals, immunizations, or other paperwork are not current as required by the State of Colorado.
- C. Violations of schedule contracts or center hours, including late pickups.
- D. Improper, including threatening or unprofessional, parent conduct with students, staff, or another parent.
- E. RMA is unable to meet the developmental, emotional, physical, or other needs of the student after making reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act or as identified in an IEP or IFSP.
- F. The student's behavior is harmful or threatening to other students or staff.
- G. Violations of this Parent Handbook or other agreements with RMA.

Contract Termination

We agree that tuition and dues charged for the school year reserve a place in a developmentally appropriate program level at RMA and not for a period of attendance. The absence of a child during the academic year does not materially reduce the expenses of RMA. The absence, academic failure, or withdrawal of the child during the academic year shall not excuse, alter, abate, or nullify my obligations for tuition and certain other monies through the academic year.

We agree that enrollment is specified within this enrolment contract. The parent or guardian may cancel, in writing, with at least 30 days written notice with the last day of child's scheduled attendance falling on the last weekday of the month of the request. Parents are responsible for the tuition for those 30 days regardless of child's attendance at RMA during that period. Should parents fail to give notice of contract termination, they are responsible for the full amount of tuition.

It is understood that if the parents opt-out after June 1 and before the first day of school, they agree to pay or not have refunded the annual program and operations fees of \$450 and all expenses in the collection of any outstanding balance. It is understood that if parents opt-out after the first day of school, they agree to pay or not have refunded the first month's tuition and all expenses incurred in the collection outstanding balance.

Non-Discrimination Against and Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities

RMA is committed to providing quality developmental education for each individual student. As part of that commitment, RMA complies with all applicable laws providing for nondiscrimination in enrollment and participation against students and parents with disabilities. RMA does not exclude any student or family from the full and equal enjoyment of its program based on the student's disability, or the disability of the student's parent or another individual associated with the student, unless the student, parent, or other individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of themselves or others at RMA, or unless the required modifications impose an undue burden on RMA or would fundamentally alter the nature of RMA's services. RMA also provides reasonable accommodations for students and parents as appropriate in accordance with applicable laws.

Families of a student with disabilities are encouraged to submit a request for reasonable accommodation as far in advance as possible to allow RMA adequate time to consider the request and to work with the family to obtain any medical or other documentation that is necessary to consider or provide the requested accommodation. Depending on the type of disability and the requested accommodation, such documentation may include:

- A Medical Management Plan detailing all necessary care for the student's medical and/or behavioral management and signed by the student's physician and parents.
- Any other health-related documents deemed relevant by the student's physician.
- A list of emergency contacts, which include the student's physician, available by phone each day that the student is attending RMA.
- Information regarding use and disposal all equipment, medicines, medical supplies, food, and other materials or supplies provided by the student's parents that are not otherwise regularly provided by RMA and are necessary to meet or comply with the student's Medical Management Plan and any other health-related documents provided by the student's physician.
- Written authorization to undertake steps indicated on the student's Medical Management Plan, such as administration of medication or performance of other medical tasks.

- A general release and waiver of liability for care in a form required of all students as a requirement of attendance, signed by the student's parents, which releases RMA and its agents from liability stemming from any action relating to the care of the student.

Parents are responsible for keeping documentation up-to-date and for informing RMA immediately of any change in the student's disabilities, needs, and/or health. Successful participation and accommodation of children with disabilities depends on an active, cooperative relationship and ongoing communication between the parents and RMA.

Tax Exempt Donations

RMA is an independent, nonprofit school and relies on philanthropic support from the community to continue being the best school possible for the children we serve. Donations to the school are tax-deductible, contribute directly to program improvement, and are greatly appreciated.

ENROLLMENT TERMS

1. **Acknowledgement of Risk:** It is understood that any child enrolled utilizes the traditional Montessori Method and materials. These materials include items made from wood, metal, glass, clay, and ceramics. The community also includes items that are small enough to swallow or inhale. These traditional Montessori materials include the Pink Tower, language objects, math beads and counters, rice for pouring, and beads for sorting. You accept that these materials are present in your child's environment and that your child may interact with these materials throughout the course of the day. Furthermore, you understand that each classroom and environment has a teacher who is trained on the proper use of these materials.

Elementary children enrolled utilize both traditional classroom Montessori Method instruction and community outings and field trips (going outs). You consent to your child's participation in outings and field trips with RMA and participation in certain neighborhood walks and optional activities in which your child wishes to participate. RMA will keep you fully informed of the scope of activities in which your student will participate and to any exposures that may happen. In connection with the field trips and activities, my child may experience hazardous conditions out in the community, such as changing weather conditions, disease, inadvertent contact with animals, contact with other adults and children, varied travel conditions, bodies of water, tall climbing structures, insects, food (i.e., unseen peanut residue left on a picnic table or swing at parks), and other hazards. By agreeing to the Family Handbook, you and your child can ask questions of RMA regarding the field trips and the activities you wish to have your child participate in. You and your child voluntarily assume the risks associated with the field trips, activities, and any hazardous conditions related thereto, to the full extent allowed by Colorado Revised Statute Section 13-22-107. In consideration for RMA permitting your child to engage in field trips and activities, your child and you hereby release and forever discharge RMA, and its owners, employees, volunteers, agents and representatives from all demands, claims, actions, causes, suits, proceedings, assessments, penalties, judgments, expenses (including attorneys' fees), losses, damages, liabilities and costs (collectively Claims) based on or arising from injury, loss, damage, or death to you and your child, or injury, loss or damage to any property owned by you and your child, which is caused by or sustained in connection with your child's participation in the field trips or activities including negligence in training, maintenance, care, supervision, conditions to which my child is exposed and/or supervision of the other participants. You and your child agree to abide by and follow any instructions given or rules established by RMA regarding the field trips and/or activities. You and your child shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the RMA releases for any such claims, as well as for any claims relating to the actions of students including, without limitation, any property damage or injury to a third person.

2. **Consent to Medical Care:** You hereby consent and grant to RMA, its teachers, and staff the authority to seek, obtain, approve, and provide any medical treatment for your child, which in their judgment is necessary for the health and well-being of the child while participating in an RMA program or activity. You give permission to secure emergency medical or surgical treatment for the child and to transport the child to appropriate medical facilities, if necessary, while attending and participating in an RMA program or activity. You further agree to release and hold harmless RMA, its teachers, and staff from any claims or damages which may arise from reasonable efforts by RMA personnel to protect the health and well-being of the child as authorized above.
3. **Policy Agreement:** You agree to comply with the rules, regulations, and policies specified in the Family Handbook or addenda issued by the school.

II. FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Communication

We value open communication with our parents. You are your child's first teacher, and you know them best. If a question or concern arises, please bring it to the person or persons who can accurately answer it or serve to resolve the problem. In most cases, your first line of communication is your child's lead teacher. While we encourage our parents to build relationships with all adults caring for their children, please go first to your child's lead teacher with all concerns and questions. Our lead teachers will return a response within one business day, unless on vacation, then someone else will return communication in a timely manner.

If the lead teacher is unable to answer your question or you are not satisfied with the response, please contact Administration. Regardless of the situation, please be mindful that open communication is the key to our success. We are professionals and will act as such, even in the face of conflict. In no way will we ever bring the children into a conflict that may occur concerning our policies, programs, or their implementation.

School Communication

RMA sends regular email updates covering issues of importance to all families within the school.

Family/Teacher Conferences

All families are invited to attend two conferences with their child's lead teacher during the school year. Conferences take place in October/November and April/May. During these conferences, parents can discuss progress, concerns, and review developmental reports prepared by the teachers. In Elementary, the children often lead their own conferences with their family, through the guidance of the teacher.

Please call our attention to any area of concern so that we may fully meet your child's needs. Please contact your child's lead teacher with any questions regarding your child's development and education. We will gladly meet with you by appointment.

Classroom Observations

You are always welcome to schedule a visit throughout the year. However, due to the health and safety concerns, RMA is limiting how parents may visit the school. To visit a room, please talk with the lead teacher and RMA Administrator and make an appointment.

During your observation time you are welcome to observe your child and other children in the classroom. If the teacher agrees, you may also interact with your child or other children in a purposeful and specific activity. The teacher may ask, or you may want to interact with your child out of the classroom. If so, RMA will help you find a safe space to interact with your child outside of the room as to not interfere with the rest of class.

Volunteer Hours

RMA requires every family to volunteer for a minimum of 20 hours per school year or 10 hours per semester. We offer families numerous opportunities to volunteer to work the required hours. If a family chooses not to volunteer, is unable to volunteer, or is short of volunteering hours at the end of the semester, you can give a \$15 per hour donation to RMA instead. Documentation of volunteer hours is the responsibility of each family in coordination with RMA Administration.

Volunteer Participation and Confidentiality

Anyone who volunteers at RMA must comply with all licensing, health regulations, and rules as well as any rules, procedures, and laws that are in place at RMA from other regulatory or law enforcement agencies, the RMA board, RMA administration, accrediting bodies, or other agencies. This includes volunteers.

RMA has a confidentiality policy to insure confidentiality and protect the privacy of children, families, and employees of RMA. We respect the individual dignity of children, families, volunteers, and employees and always protect them in accordance with all applicable laws.

Do not divulge any information about children, families, or employees to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive such information. This policy extends to both internal and external disclosure of information.

Volunteers' responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information learned about children, families, volunteers, and employees extends 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, regardless of how or where you obtained the information. Failure to maintain confidentiality and to protect the privacy of children, families, volunteers, and employees may result in job-related consequences as well as potential civil liability for RMA and the individual employee.

In the transaction of school business many volunteers and observers are entrusted with confidential information. Such information is for school use only and you must treat it as such. At no time can you discuss or give information gained in carrying out duties to any unauthorized person. Should you have a concern regarding RMA, you have the responsibility to use the appropriate venues for speaking about your concerns.

Montessori Curriculum Overview

Our curriculum in both the Montessori classroom and studio is based on authentic Montessori pedagogy with influences from Reggio Emilia pedagogy and best practices in education.

RMA designed the Primary Community to meet the needs of the 2.5 to 6-year-old and the Elementary Community to meet the needs of the 6 to 12-year-old. Classes are composed of mixed-age classrooms to allow for cognitive stimulation while also meeting each child's social needs. The purpose of our program is to enrich and promote the further development of each child's natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Each class has a wide variety of materials for hands-on exploration and trained staff that facilitate a child's trust in themselves through risk-taking, further questioning, and skill development.

Our curriculum provides basic knowledge as well as integration with real-life experiences and is implemented with respect to varying learning styles and natural human development. Our Primary curriculum is divided into six primary areas:

1. Practical life: Primary children develop order, concentration, coordination, and independence through work such as spooning, lacing, pouring, buttoning, polishing, washing, dusting, and sweeping. In elementary, practical life also emphasizes grace and courtesy in interactions with others.
2. Sensorial: Primary children enlarge their field of perception, develop fine motor skills, learn to reason, and think critically. In elementary sensorial area of the classroom helps children clarify, classify, and understand the world around them.
3. Language: Primary children develop language through key lessons in reading and writing, functions of words, and word study. In elementary, all students work on writing and reading.
4. Math: Primary children learn similarities, one to one correspondence, quantity, cardinal and ordinal numbers, counting, place value, decimal system, concrete concepts of all four math operations, and geometry. In the 3rd year of primary, children learn to memorize, especially math facts, and move to abstraction of math concepts. In elementary the children work on fractions and decimals, the four math operations into the millions, and abstraction of math concepts.
5. Cultural: Primary children learn political and physical geography and cultural awareness. In elementary, children delve deeper into the world around them. They explore customs, clothing, food, housing, and languages around the world.
6. Science: Primary children learn and explore our world through physical and life science. In elementary, children explore astronomy, motion, sound, and energy.

These areas each have defined expectations of competency. These expectations align with Montessori educational standards. Our curriculum follows the Montessori Philosophy while taking into consideration Colorado State Standards and Expectations. RMA assesses these standards yearly to maintain excellence and competitiveness within today's society.

Educational process: RMA's educational process is the greatest difference between Montessori and traditional education.

Educational Continuum: Following the individual needs of the child is the hallmark of Montessori education. Each child moves through the curriculum according to demonstrated competency within any given skill. The goal is to enhance a vibrant relationship with learning that fosters individuality in balance with competency of skills.

Integration: Learning is the act of making connections. Each student is exposed to a myriad of ideas and facts in life and in school. Our integrated curriculum builds a structure for organizing this information and provides connections that are applicable in real life. RMA teaches all the cultural, science, fine arts, and social-emotional skills in this manner. By giving students the structure of organization and guiding them through the concepts of categorization, logical thought, and basic

skills, we free them to make connections on their own. The making of these connections spark vitality and joy in learning. This is the building of life-long learning.

Assessment: RMA uses a variety of educational assessments. We use these assessments to develop and communicate individual education plans as well as to assist RMA in remaining thorough in our educational practices. Our assessment methods were chosen based on their alignment with Montessori pedagogy as well as their ability to empower the parents to engage in developmental support of their children. Assessments are conducted by teachers and administration with specialized training in observation and developmental milestones of young children.

Observations: We observe all students for demonstrated competency and understanding of specific cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills. We record this type of assessment via anecdotal notes that keep a running record of the teacher's observations of the child over time.

Developmental Evaluations: RMA only uses this evaluation when we require more information for the staff to meet the individual needs of a student. We use the assessment for identifying any special needs in the areas of physical, language, mathematical, reading, and social-emotional development. We do not administer tests without written permission from the parents. RMA may need outside professionals to perform these tests. Any extra fees for testing are the responsibility of the parent. Through partnership with the family, RMA works to refer parents to the best resources in the community for developmental evaluations or support. RMA does not use norm-referenced testing, standardized testing, or published instruments as a means of assessment.

RMA Assessment Policy

Observation and assessment are a necessary part of a strong educational setting and a requirement for accreditation. The purpose of assessments is to ensure that children are developing on an age-appropriate trajectory and, if a child is not, to identify information and resources to support the child and family. The procedures used for assessment at RMA are defined above. Any other procedures would be subject to written consent from the parent. Results of assessments will be shared with parents in order to make a cohesive plan for student support.

1. A child is only assessed by RMA staff who have an ongoing and established relationship with the child.
2. Observations occur while the child is working in their classroom or playground setting.
3. Confidentiality Procedures:
 - a. Assessment information is kept in the locked student files in the main office and only shared with the child's assigned teachers, administration, and parents, unless the parents expressly permit access to another individual.
 - b. Administration and teachers use this information to inform curriculum and inclusion.
 - c. Parents or legal guardians have access to any assessment document upon request.
4. Parent involvement is key to the assessment process. We encourage parents to:
 - a. Share their observations of their child with the teachers.
 - b. Share your thoughts regarding assessment methods that best meet your child's needs.
 - c. Inform the teacher/school on any important cultural or linguistic factors in the child's life.
 - d. Attend all conferences and meetings the teacher requests.
 - e. Request additional conferences or meetings when needed.
 - f. Ask questions about the teacher's assessments of their child.
 - g. Always follow up with a specialist when RMA recommends it.
5. All assessments and communication will:
 - a. Focus on the child's strengths and interests.
 - b. Focus on including the child in the learning environment with the least possible restrictions.
 - c. Be delivered to parents in a comfortable and confidential setting and in a manner that is sensitive to family culture and values.
 - d. Include information on the child's progress.
 - e. Inform teachers on curriculum planning for inclusion.
 - f. Inform RMA on potential program improvements.

Student Recommendation Letters

Please give your child's lead teacher adequate time and notice to complete letters of recommendation for your child to move on to another school. We ask that you are respectful of the teacher's time and limit the number of letters you request from the teacher. Teachers may be unable to honor last-minute requests for letters or other evaluations of your

child. Teachers are required to send recommendation letters or forms directly to the new school. These letters and forms are not available to parents.

Custodial and Noncustodial Parents in the Schools

Expectations of parents who are going through a separation or dissolution or have already completed the same:

- Parents must provide the school with any court order or legal process showing the rights of the natural parents or other individuals. You must provide the most current and complete court order or legal process and most recent court order concerning the child. Please provide updated and amended versions to the school as soon as possible. The school reserves the right to require certified copies or equivalents.
- Parents are expected to adhere to appropriate conduct and appropriate communication. The school and its employees will not play favorites with parents. Do not use the staff to harass or otherwise annoy or bully another parent or family member. Parents should not attempt to put their child's teacher or other school staff in the middle of their disputes in any way.
- Parents must not cause a disruption at school or with the school's administration or staff. RMA may ban individuals from the school or have other appropriate restrictions placed on their communications and interactions with the school and its personnel. School is not the place for parents to settle private disputes or to compensate for their inability to visit with their child off school grounds. Our obligation is to focus on the child and their educational experience.

Rights of All-Natural Parents:

- RMA presumes parents on a child's birth certificate are the natural guardians to their child. Appropriate legal orders or legal process may rebut or overcome this assumption.
- Parents are jointly and individually responsible for the support, care, nurturing, welfare, and education of their child.
- Neither natural parent is presumed to have a right to custody or decision making over the other parent, unless there is a court order, absent appropriate court orders, or legal process.
- Separation or divorce does not change the legal rights of the parents, unless there is a court order or legal process defining those legal rights. The school does not recognize and has no obligation to comply with less formal documentation such as notarized statements or informal agreements.

Rights of Custodial Parents:

- The school will reasonably cooperate with parents in complying with court orders, such as recognizing the rights of the primary physical custodian. However, parental compliance with court orders is not generally the responsibility of the school and parents are expected to adhere to appropriate conduct and appropriate communication.
- The parent who has primary physical custody of a child during the school year is presumed to have the right to make day-to-day decisions for the child, such as emergency card information, who picks up the child from school, or whether the child can participate in a field trip. You may rebut or overcome that presumption by appropriate legal orders or legal process.
- The school is not responsible for enforcing or empowering police visitation or parenting time schedules. In the absence of an acceptable schedule and full cooperation and appropriate communication by parents, the school will expect that, upon the end of the school day, the child will return to the location where he or she came from that morning, and any visitation or other arrangements shall occur off school grounds. The school will assume that whichever parent or documented pick-up person is there to pick up the child they are allowed to do so.

Rights of Noncustodial Parents:

- Parents who do not have legal or physical custody still retain certain rights, unless a court order expressly states otherwise.
- Noncustodial parents may, upon appropriate notice and request, meet with their child's teacher and other school staff, may obtain a copy of school academic records, may chaperone on field trips at the school's discretion, and may arrange to receive parental communications from the school, unless there is a court order or appropriate legal process stating otherwise.
- The school retains the right, but is not obligated, to notify the custodial parent anytime the noncustodial parent requests information from or asks to meet with school employees or participate in school activities.
- Stepparents, grandparents and other individuals have no direct right to receive information about a student or discuss a student with school employees, unless they have legal guardianship or permission from the legal custodian. Additionally, they may not register or withdraw a student unless they have legal guardianship.

Staff Roles

RMA is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the bases of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

1. Lead Teacher
 - a. Primary communicator with parents
 - b. Forms partnerships with each family
 - c. Primary responsibility to assigned classroom including curriculum, assisting teacher management, and environmental preparation
 - d. Guides children's work
 - e. Montessori trained and certified
2. Assisting Teachers
 - a. Work in partnership with lead teachers to implement curriculum and schedule in classroom
 - b. Provide children with ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being
 - c. Secondary means of communication for parents
 - d. Have completed various levels of college education and training
3. Studio Teachers
 - a. Work with every child at RMA
 - b. Teach the studio curriculum while facilitating other support roles for the school
 - c. Communicate with parents via newsletters
4. Administration
 - a. Maintains oversight of the school
 - b. Provides support for teachers, students and parents
 - c. Implements the school's mission and vision
 - d. Handles all administrative and financial duties
 - e. Facilitates community partnerships to extend RMA into our neighborhood and city

The RMA Board

Our Board consists of parents, educators, and members of the business community who govern our school. The Board is seated in August of each year. We post the names and positions of the new Board Members at that time. The by-laws, meeting agendas, and minutes of each meeting are available for your inspection at any time. You are welcome to attend our Board meetings, which are held once a month. Please ask the office for the date of the next scheduled meeting.

III. GENERAL POLICES AND PROCEDURES

Security, Arrival and Departure

For the safety of all children and state licensing requirements, RMA requires a full signature or unique ELV code from an authorized adult when you drop off and pick up your child. We give you authorization when you complete your enrollment forms or by completing an Authorized Pick-Up Form at the front desk indicating the date and who is picking up your child.

RMA will not release a child to anyone who is not on the child's authorized pick-up list or does not have an Authorized Pick-Up Form from their parents or legal guardian to pick-up their child.

All persons authorized by a child's parent or legal guardian to pick up a child on the date specified on the Authorized Pick-up Form must present a valid photo ID to the front desk for verification.

Attendance

We take attendance in each classroom multiple times each day. Parents are required by Colorado State Law to provide drop-off and pick-up times with their personal electronic code check in on our electronic platform.

Attendance is taken and documented periodically throughout the day at times that include but are not limited to during morning work cycle, prior to recess, during recess, at lunch, before, during and after an outing, during afternoon work cycle, at the start of after school, and at 5:30.

Arrival Time: RMA school day begins at 8:00 am each morning. The drop off window is from 8:00 to 8:15 a.m. It is vital that children arrive on time and be ready for school each day. Tardiness disrupts the flow of the day as well as the classroom's work cycle. If you know in advance that your child will be late, please let your child's lead teacher know in advance.

Student Supervision

Teaching staff supervise children primarily by sight. Supervision by sound is permissible for short intervals, if teachers frequently check on children who are out of sight.

Student Health Policy

Agreement to abide by the terms of RMA's Health Policy is a condition of enrollment at RMA.

If a child exhibits any symptoms listed below, RMA will not admit them to school upon arrival, nor will we allow them to remain at the school should symptoms become evident during the school day. When we call a parent about a sick child, they or another authorized adult needs to pick up the child within 45 minutes of contact. Health checks are conducted upon arrival to the school and at least one other time during the school day with additional checks the longer the child is at school.

The child must be completely symptom free, without medication for at least 24 hours or have a signed note on letterhead from a physician other than the child's parent stating the cause of the symptoms and that they are not contagious and are well enough to participate in regular activity before they may return.

Students sent home from school with symptoms of illness outlined in this Health Policy Agreement after 10:00 am may not come to school the following day unless accompanied by a note from a physician that declares them completely contagious free and able to participate in regular school activity.

Fever: Any temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher is an indication of contagious illness. If a child has such a fever, they may not return until symptom free for 72 hours, without the use of medication. RMA may also send a child home with a low-grade temperature accompanied by other symptoms including but not limited to diarrhea, rash, and lethargy. The decrease in temperature noting a fever and increase of fever free time is due to COVID-19.

Diarrhea: If a child has two or more loose stools (unformed or watery) in a day, they must stay home until 24 hours after the diarrhea stops. RMA will only admit a child with diarrhea with a written statement from the doctor stating the cause of the diarrhea and that it is not contagious and if the diarrhea is contained in the toilet (the child is not having accidents). We will admit children with soft stools caused by antibiotic medication with a note from a doctor.

Vomiting: RMA will immediately send home any child who vomits during the school day or who vomited at home in the 24 hours prior to the school day.

Diarrhea and Vomiting: If it is determined that a child is diagnosed with an illness such as Norovirus or Rotavirus, that child and any child exhibiting symptoms of such illness, is required to stay home for 48 hours after the onset of the symptoms or for as long as the Tri-County Health Department determines necessary.

Rashes: If a child has a rash, it is up to the discretion of the classroom staff as to whether RMA can admit the child to school or remain at school. We will closely monitor a mild rash. Rashes that appear suddenly, spread quickly on a child's skin, open, pus, or bleed, or are accompanied by a fever or other symptoms require a doctor's note before the child can return to school. This note needs to dictate the cause of the rash, the treatment, and clarify that the child is not contagious and can return to school.

Coughing and Nasal Discharge: Students with continual nasal discharge or a cough must wear a mask to protect their peers and teachers. A current doctor's note stating that the student has allergies may be provided. Student's with colds must wear a mask as well.

Ocular Discharge: White, yellow, or green discharge from the eye is often an indication of a serious and contagious illness called conjunctivitis. This discharge is often accompanied by matted eyelids after sleep, eye pain, sensitivity to light, redness of the skin surrounding the eye, and redness in the white areas of the eye. Any child sent home with these symptoms must see a doctor. RMA requires children diagnosed with conjunctivitis to be on medication for a minimum of 24 hours prior to returning to school unless a physician's note indicates the child is no longer contagious.

Significant Behavior Changes: Children who are not feeling well enough to participate in the activities of the day, are eating poorly, lacking their normal energy, or are wanting to sleep may need individualized attention. If the staff is not able to provide this without compromising the health and safety of the other children, the child will need to go home.

Serious Illness: When a student enrolled at RMA is diagnosed with a serious illness, we require the parents to report the diagnosis to the school. The lead teacher in the student's classroom may post a sign on the classroom door that informs the parents and staff that there is a confirmed illness in that classroom, without compromising the confidentiality of the individual student. Serious illnesses include but are not limited to strep, conjunctivitis, RSV, impetigo, influenza, scarlet fever, chicken pox, head lice, and hand, foot, and mouth disease. Parents must report any diagnosed, communicable illness to RMA within 24 hours of diagnosis.

If a child becomes ill at school

Our main goal is to maintain the health and safety of every child enrolled at RMA. When a child becomes ill at school, we will consider the needs of the ill child as well as the health and safety of the other children and staff of RMA. You or an emergency contact must pick up your children within 45 minutes of receiving a call from the school.

While the ill child is still at the school, we will provide them a comfort area. The comfort area may include:

1. A cot with a disposable pillow and a clean, disinfected blanket
2. Dim lighting
3. Reduced noise and relaxing music, if child prefers
4. Tissue box
5. Fresh water

To ensure the health and safety of other children and staff, an ill child is isolated from other children as much as we can while in a comfort area. At all times, RMA will remain compliant with Colorado State Licensing as well as Colorado Department of Health Rules and Regulations. This includes but is not limited to, always maintaining ratio while children are present in the school and ensure no child is left unattended (7.702.45), as well as ensure the front desk and front door are staffed appropriately to allow for safe entry into RMA (7.701.33 F 8,9).

- When there is an extra staff member as well as an administrator, we will move the child to a room and provide a comfort area away from other children. An extra staff member or administrator will care for the child until a guardian or other emergency contact can pick up the child.
- When there is an administrator but no other extra staff member available, we will move the child to a comfort area behind the front desk with the administrator caring for the child until a guardian or other emergency contact can pick up the child.
- When there are no administrators or extra staff available, we will move the child to a location in the classroom away from other children, provide a comfort area, and a staff member will watch the child and maintain appropriate ratios for all the children in the classroom until a guardian or other emergency contact can pick up the child.

Once the ill child is picked up, the comfort area is disinfected and staff who were caring for the ill child will follow appropriate health maintenance practices in accordance with OSHA.

COVID-19 Protocol

What makes RMA a special place is our community of families, children, and staff. This community is built on mutual trust, communication, and respect. As members of this special community, we have an obligation to each other to mitigate the risks of the spread of COVID-19 and other potential and known illnesses and diseases to the best of our abilities. Our priority is maintaining a healthy school community. Families who choose to send children to RMA are expected to make a good-faith commitment to the following safe practices during the time of COVID-19:

- a. Avoid large gatherings – particularly gatherings where you do not know the majority of those around you and are unaware of their possibility of exposure including and not limited to parties, sporting events, and concerts.
- b. Continue observing all CDC guidelines when in the larger community, such as social distancing, vigilant

handwashing, using tissues to blow nose and disposing of properly, coughing into your elbow, and wearing masks when appropriate.

- c. Do not bring your children to school if they have a fever or other symptoms. Inform school staff of fever, and do not bring children back to school until they are fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 72 hours.
- d. Report any potential exposure of COVID-19 to school staff.
- e. Students must follow the most up-to-date recommendations by medical staff for isolation and masking.

In return, the RMA staff commits to the same safety practices listed above, as well as frequent disinfection of materials and classrooms.

RMA's goal is to stay open with logical and realistic expectations while continuing to be a part of the larger, cultural solution. As a community, we must all stay committed to one another and mindful of our responsibilities towards each other as good-faith community members. In making this commitment to one another, we are all working diligently to keep each other healthy.

Allergy Awareness Policy

Nuts and other high allergens like shellfish, eggs, and dairy are often present in the lunches, snacks, and food prep activities at schools. RMA has adopted an Allergy Awareness Policy to support the education and safety of all the children enrolled. The purpose of allergy awareness is to support children who may experience anaphylaxis due to food or other causes and to minimize the risk of exposure of allergens to these children. RMA makes every attempt to minimize risk of allergy contamination for children with food allergies. However, there is always a risk of contamination.

For any child who may have an allergy, RMA requires an Allergy Care Plan that is created for the school with the child's parents and health care professionals and that is approved by the school nurse.

Awareness:

The top eight food allergens are milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybean. Many foods contain allergens that you might not even realize. For example, Nutella contains hazelnuts, many breakfast bars, cereals, cookies, and crackers contain nuts or are created in facilities that could contain nuts. We will help children who bring in or eat high risk allergy foods wash their hands and face prior to working with other materials in the classroom. We thoroughly clean the area where the children eat. If your child eats foods with high allergens prior to coming to RMA, we ask that you help them or remind them to wash their hands and face before they get into the car.

We require parents to:

- Purchase shared snack foods that do not contain nuts and that are made in nut-free facilities
- Place a note on your child's lunch or verbally let the lead teacher know if your child's food contains nuts or other foods if there is an allergy in the classroom
- Inform the school if your child has or develops an allergy

We require staff to:

- Be aware of children with allergies in the classroom and the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction
- Be willing to support the children in an event of an allergy exposure
- Always have at least one trained staff member certified in giving emergency medication at RMA
- Keep children who bring in food that contain an allergen away from children who are allergic during mealtimes
- Stay vigilant during mealtimes
- Read snack and baking ingredients and provide children with allergies alternative choices if necessary
- Read ingredients of classroom supplies such as, soaps, lotions, oils, cleaning products, polishing products to make sure they are free of nuts and other allergens

Children will:

- Be reminded to not share food they bring from home
- Wash hands before and after mealtimes

Visitor Policy

RMA parents or guardians may visit the facility if the CDC allows. They must make an appointment and adhere to RMA's health and safety procedures. Other visitors are welcome to visit with an advance appointment, must sign-in and out at

the front desk, and adhere to RMA's health and safety procedures. When visiting, all guests to the school are required to provide a state issued photo ID and be under the direct supervision of staff and faculty.

RMA reserves the right to refuse entry to visitors that it deems inappropriate in its sole discretion.

During COVID, the school is not accepting visitors.

Confidentiality

Except as otherwise required by law or as provided in this Handbook, before sharing information about a student with other relevant providers, agencies, or other programs, RMA will obtain written consent from the student's parents.

All physical files for children are stored in a locked cabinet in the school. Any files uploaded on Early Learning Ventures (ELV) are password protected and secured by ELV. These uploaded documents are specifically meant for Colorado State Licensing to review as needed to ensure RMA stays compliant.

Observation Confidentiality

As a parent, you can observe your child's classroom when the CDC allows. RMA will provide a seat in an area of the room that gives you a good view but helps you remain as unobtrusive as possible. Please refrain from initiating any conversation with the staff and children during your observation. The Montessori work cycle is a time when our teachers are guiding the children to make choices about their work and giving the children lessons. They must be able to focus without interruptions. If the children try to carry out a conversation with you, please re-direct them by telling them that you are here to watch them work. Please do not encourage them with extra questions or comments.

In the transaction of school business and observation of a classroom, many observers are entrusted with confidential information. Such information is for school use only. After your observation, please bring questions, comments, or concerns directly to the lead teacher or administration. RMA values the safety and privacy of our children. Never post information gained from an observation to the public on any social media.

Television Viewing and Computers

RMA may occasionally show children an age-appropriate video associated with a scientific or cultural theme they are studying.

In elementary, RMA uses computers and other technology, from time to time, to enhance the educational opportunities for all students enrolled by learning keyboarding, software applications, internet research options, and various topics related to technology.

The use of any RMA computer is considered a privilege and not a right. Therefore, students must agree to the following policies in order to have the privilege to use them. Use of an RMA computer or the internet is governed by the policies in this Handbook, in addition to the guidelines presented in this section.

All internet use is strictly for academic purposes only. Academic purposes do not include chat rooms, Instant Messaging outside of RMA's closed Microsoft Teams, or any type of internet-based games that has participants unknown and unvetted. Additionally, students may not:

1. go to any chat rooms or related sites
2. download any programs, pictures, games, or music
3. look at or attempt to look at inappropriate web sites
4. go to music, game, or joke sites
5. manipulate or attempt to manipulate the network in any way
6. move hardware from one computer to another without teacher permission
7. horseplay around the computers
8. work on computers without staff supervision
9. consume food or beverages, or chew gum while on the computer.

From time to time, teachers may allow exceptions to these rules, with administrative approval.

REASONABLE SEARCHES - NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY

RMA reserves the right to conduct reasonable workplace searches consistent with applicable law. All students and families are hereby on notice they may be required, without further notice and upon request, to submit to a search of personal possessions and property, personal vehicles parked on School or client property, and work areas. This includes lockers, files, vehicles, desks, cabinets, workstations, packages, handbags, briefcases, lunch boxes, pockets, and other personal possessions, as well as personal mail sent to the school. All spaces on the school's property or under the control of the school remain subject to search even though a parent uses such spaces or considers the space to be private. Students and families are expected to cooperate in the conduct of any search or inspection. RMA considers refusal to cooperate with a reasonable search by the school as a voluntary withdrawal by the student.

CAMERAS/PHONES/RECORDING DEVICES

Due to the potential for issues such as theft, invasion of privacy, harassment, and loss of productivity and learning time, students may only bring or operate a camera, phone or recording device on the premises when the use is specifically school-related, and the device is known to the teacher. The teacher may hold the device in an open basket or ask the child to keep it in their backpack or cubby if needed. This will allow for emergency use, but also allow for fewer distractions when the device is not needed. Parents may not use cameras or recording devices on the premises unless approved in advance. Students may use the RMA office phone in emergencies and RMA will use ELV texting for emergency messages to parents.

Behavior and Care Policy

RMA's behavioral and care guidelines center on respect. In searching for ways to help each child's academic ability, social-emotional health, self-esteem, and ability to respect others, we strive for a calm and satisfying environment. Children learn from observing other children, adults, and through adult guidance. The adults to help foster healthy and happy interactions. In any circumstance of negative interaction, we strive to support the children in the most positive manner. This may include redirection, discussion, grace and courtesy lessons, and adult modeling. Each child is an individual, and every circumstance is regarded individually; however, anytime a circumstance creates unsafe conditions, due to, but not limited to persistent, challenging, or unacceptable behaviors with a student, RMA will take steps to ensure the child's behavior is addressed in a respectful and supportive manner. Any time a child needs instruction or support beyond the abilities of the teachers or RMA administration, we will take steps to ensure we address the challenge in a respectful and supportive manner.

1. The lead teacher will observe the child, have observation notes, and log any incidents that occur. Observations and logs could come in the form of reports, emails, Montessori Compass Notes, or other documentation.
2. The lead teacher will set up a meeting with the administration. The administration will observe and make any recommendations and modifications that RMA can accommodate.
3. The lead teacher will meet with parents to inform them about the observations and modifications. Teachers will seek partnering with parents. We request parental support to RMA by offering advice, sharing observations from the home environment, and setting up recommended modifications in the home.
4. The lead teacher will continue to observe the child and keep a log of these observations.
5. If the behavior or other challenge continues, we will set up a meeting with parents, lead teacher, and administration. The team will work together to implement a support plan that is strengths-based and aimed at ensuring the child's inclusion whenever possible. The plan may include:
 - a. Further classroom modifications
 - b. Classroom support
 - c. Action Plans for the child
 - d. Bringing in an early childhood Mental Health Consultant or other outside specialist
 - e. Finding an alternative school for the child

If any part of the support plan includes costs or modifications beyond RMA's ability to accommodate, the parents are required to incur the expense.

6. If a child is working with a specialist, during or outside of the RMA school day, parents are expected to inform the child's lead teacher and RMA administration. RMA requests partnering with the child's parents, specialist team, teacher, and administration to fully support the child. This may include team meetings, emails, or sharing of evaluations or observation notes.

Bullying and Typical Peer Conflict

RMA is committed to creating an open and respectful environment where all children feel comfortable and supported. During the Elementary years, children become more socially aware, and their interactions with others increase. Due to the navigation of this new awareness, conflict can arise. This conflict is part of the typical learning of self-control and developing a sense of personal space. When a conflict becomes serious, RMA will investigate and respond.

The RMA Elementary Program works with children to prevent bullying and other unacceptable conduct. Children are given lessons and teachers model emotional understanding especially toward negative feelings, conflict resolution, discussions to resolve differences, how to stand up for oneself without being aggressive, how to express oneself and show empathy, and how to have positive peer interaction even during disagreements.

Bullying is a willful, conscious desire to hurt, frighten, or threaten. **Typical Peer Conflict** is a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one.

RMA takes allegations of bullying seriously. Bullying is not only a serious offense but one in which a child is developmentally capable of carrying out the actions. RMA will investigate each allegation of bullying and respond appropriately. Responses may include, but are not limited to, dismissal of the child for the remainder of the day, creating an action or support plan, or expulsion.

Typical peer conflicts occur occasionally at RMA, and each incident is responded to depending on the circumstances. For most conflicts, children are encouraged to work together, with teacher interventions, to establish a resolution. If this conflict continues or a resolution is not established, further actions are required and may include administration or parent involvement, dismissal of the child(ren) for the remainder of the day or creating an action/support plan.

Bringing inappropriate items to school

Inappropriate items may include, but are not limited to:

1. Weapons or items that could be used as a weapon
2. Lookalike weapons
3. Alcohol
4. Drugs
5. Spray paint
6. Stolen items

RMA understands that often children are unaware of the seriousness or harmful nature of the item. RMA will investigate each allegation and take the appropriate action as necessary. Actions may include but are not limited to dismissal of the child for the remainder of the day, creating an action/support plan, expulsion, or contacting the police.

If a child uses any item in a manner that is seriously threatening or can cause injury to themselves or others, RMA reserves the right to take immediate action of contacting the police or social services, without prior parent knowledge.

Student Interaction in Elementary

As children age, monitoring their interactions for safe, age-appropriate play becomes even more important. This monitoring extends to all aspects of the RMA elementary experience, as described elsewhere in this handbook. RMA's obligation as a mandatory reporter extends to abuse perpetrated by children and is described elsewhere in this handbook. For these reasons, RMA encourages parents to be aware of the boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate play. If requested, RMA will provide a list of helpful developmental books and other resources to parents and will offer training as much as possible. In addition, RMA discourages one-on-one child unsupervised activities and strives to create interruptible interactions when one-on-one interactions are unavoidable.

Children's Clothing

RMA makes every attempt to help children manage their personal belongings. Please label all clothes, underwear, and bedding, your child brings to school. Please do not send any objects with your child that are considered a choking hazard (this includes coins). Choose clothing for school that is comfortable and promotes independence for your child. Please do not have children wear clothing with cartoon character designs or flowing pants or sleeves that can get caught on equipment. Please provide your child with weather appropriate clothing every day. If your child does not have the proper clothing, they cannot go outside. RMA will make every attempt to properly outfit your child for you so that they may play

outdoors. Colorado weather changes quickly. During chilly days, all children will wear coats outside. All children need to have hats for either sun or weather protection that remain at school.

Meals

Children fare best in school when their bodies are provided with a balanced breakfast before coming to school and a series of smaller nutritiously balanced meals during the day. Please help your child begin their day with a healthy breakfast before coming to school. Children enrolled in before school may bring breakfast to eat in the classroom. Teachers can only reheat food items, they cannot prepare them. We will save any breakfast item not eaten before 8:00 a.m. and give it to the child to supplement their morning snack or lunch if requested.

Please make sure any snacks and meals provide balanced nutrition for children, protein, carbohydrate, fruits, and vegetables. Each child's parent or guardian provides snacks and lunches, unless otherwise indicated by RMA. Celebrations, events, or fundraiser lunches are some examples.

A balanced diet of very small servings of food works best for most children. We are happy to reheat meals, if necessary. Please do not send juices, soft drinks, candy, or sugary desserts.

Naps

Social Services for the State of Colorado requires that all children under the age of 5 have a 30-minute rest period during the afternoon. Each child has a cot to keep them off the floor. The older children lay quietly and may listen to a chapter story or calming music. They may sleep if they desire, but it is not required.

Younger children who take a nap daily are given a quiet place with a simple short story during rest time. They are not required to sleep, but they are required to rest quietly for 30 minutes before getting up to work quietly in the room while others sleep. Please provide a small blanket and a crib sheet. If the parents are unable to provide these, the school will happily provide the items.

Cubby Bins, Pets and Personal Items

Each child has a cubby bin and hanger to store boots, coats, and outdoor gear. Please limit the number of personal items to the wearing apparel that your child brings from home. This must all fit in your child's cubby bin. Please do not bring backpacks. We do not have sufficient room once children start wearing winter apparel.

RMA requests that children wear clothing to school that is easily washable and wearable. During the normal day with handwashing, practical life, cooking, experiments, creating art, crafting, outdoor play and more, your child's clothing will get dirty and heavily used.

In Primary, children bring sound of the week items on show and tell days only. They need to demonstrate the sound of the week that the class is studying, not the letter the item starts with.

Please do not allow your child to bring unnecessary items from home. This includes jewelry, money, candy, and toys. Their presence is distracting to our classroom environment as well as a choking hazard. We ask that you respect our learning environment and teach your child to do the same. Student safety is of utmost concern to all RMA staff. RMA has specific toys and activities we use during the outside period. No personal toys are permitted on the school grounds. If a child brings a toy, the front office will hold it and return it to them at pick-up.

Parents may not bring pets into the school without prior permission.

Sunscreen

Parents must apply sunscreen to children before arriving at school. It takes a minimum of 30 minutes for sunscreen to become effective and it is vital in our climate to offer this protection to students. We will re-apply sunscreen to children or, for children 5 and over, we will observe your child applying their own sunscreen after every 6 hours and after naps or washing of the child's face. RMA uses SPF R/X sunscreen. You may provide a labeled bottle of sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 for your child that remains at school.

Holiday Parties

RMA is fortunate to have students of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. We consider this a special opportunity to provide valuable learning experiences. Families are welcome to arrange a seasonal celebration, cultural circle or book reading during gathering time with their child's lead teacher.

Please note, RMA does not subscribe to nor promote any specific religious belief. Instead, we encourage respect and the valuing of our wondrous diversity.

Birthday Parties

We love to recognize and celebrate life's milestones with each student, but we need to ensure that such celebrations do not disturb the regular structure and flow of the school day.

For birthdays at RMA, we only allow the following:

- We ask Families to provide baking or food-prep ingredients to the school.
 - The child can bring a cake mix and the ingredients the day of or day before their celebration. No frosting.
 - The child serves the treats to their friends during lunch or snack time.
- The classroom will hold a celebration of life during group time for the child honoring each year of their life and celebrating the year to come. We invite parents to bring one picture for each year of the child's life.
- The family may choose to donate one Montessori appropriate book or a plant to the classroom in honor of the child.
 - If the family chooses to donate a book, the teacher will read the book at group time.
 - If the family chooses to donate a plant, the child may choose where to put the plant in the classroom.

Walking Protocol for Primary

RMA is in a neighborhood that has multiple destinations including parks, businesses, organizations, and more within walking distance. RMA children, with the supervision of RMA Staff, may walk to these destinations without prior written notice to parents.

Outings, Going Outs, and Community Walks for Elementary

Elementary will include community walks as a part of their weekly curriculum, weather permitting.

1. Staff must maintain the 1:15 ratio (adults to children)
2. Child Safety:
 - a. Staff stop at every intersection to look for vehicles prior to crossing the street.
 - b. Staff act quickly in any situation to ensure the safety of all the children.
 - c. Staff notifies the administrative office when they are leaving and provide the following information:
 - i. What time they left
 - ii. What time they expect to return
 - iii. Names of all children and staff participating in the walk
3. Equipment:
 - a. First Aid Kit
 - b. Cell phone
 - c. Water
 - d. Classroom Emergency Folder or ELV access

Outings and community walks are an excellent opportunity for the children to get fresh air, learn about their community, develop knowledge of pedestrian safety, and enhance their vocabulary.

RMA is in a neighborhood that has multiple destinations including parks, businesses, organizations, and more within walking distance. RMA children, with the supervision of RMA Staff, may walk to these destinations without prior written notice to parents.

Field Trip Protocol

RMA often does field trips with children and needs family volunteers to help. We announce a field trip by either newsletter, email, family folder, or signage. If you want your child to participate in the field trip, you must complete a field trip permission form. That form states:

- child's name
- child's birthdate
- contact information in case of an emergency
- illness, allergy, or other care plans or concerns
- date and time of field trip
- location of field trip
- how children are transported to the location

If you sign up as a driver or a chaperone you must follow the following:

- All drivers must provide a current driver's license and insurance information with minimum personal insurance of \$100,000 Bodily Injury/\$300,000 per Accident/\$100,000 Property Damage. The volunteer's insurance is the primary insurance to respond in the event of an accident or loss
- All vehicles used in transportation of children must meet the following requirements:
 - fully enclosed
 - regular vehicle maintenance
 - full tank of gas
 - properly maintained tires
 - no cracked/broken windows
 - functional locks, seat belts, windows, and brakes
 - every adult attending the field trip must have a fully charged, functioning cell phone with them for the duration of the excursion
 - every car must have a first aid kit
 - all drivers must adhere to state law regarding speed limits and other safety measures set forth
 - every child must have a car seat or booster seat that is appropriately sized for them and meets all state and federal requirements for safety
 - no child may ride in the front seat of a vehicle
 - no child may ride in a car seat that is not properly installed
 - each student is assigned a designated car and will ride in that vehicle both to and from the excursion
 - changing of seat assignments is NOT permitted
 - RMA will notify any family not attending the trip which adult oversees their child and what vehicle the child is riding in as well as contact information for the chaperone/driver
 - drivers must follow the designated route to and from the event as directed by the lead teacher
 - no stops are permitted unless an emergency warrants it
- Safety Measures for Drivers and Chaperones
 - At the following intervals throughout the trip, we take attendance:
 - prior to leaving school
 - upon arriving at the designated site
 - at lunch or group snack time
 - prior to departing with the assigned drivers
 - upon arrival back at the school
 - Each student is assigned a specific adult who will monitor that child
 - Teachers will provide the drivers and chaperones with a map of the driving route, detailed descriptions of meeting places and times, and any other safety information.
 - For support during the field trip, one staff member is designated as the Safety Staff. This person takes attendance, carry an extra first aid kit, have access to emergency cards and medications, and be designated to support children in need
 - Each child must wear an RMA field trip t-shirt to so we can easily identify the RMA group
 - Prior to any child departing for the day, they must check in with their lead teacher and be signed out
- Children who are late to RMA and their class is out of the building on a walk or a field trip, are placed in the administration area, or with another age-appropriate class until their class returns. If no one is available, or if we cannot meet ratio or supervision, the child must return to the care of the family.

IV. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergencies – In General

In the event of an emergency RMA's plan is as follows:

1. Emergency identified
2. Secure the building
3. Call 911
4. Establish COMMAND Center
5. Give emergency assignments (Crisis Manager, Communication, Attendance)

In the case of an emergency school staff members stay with all children until a parent or guardian can pick them up. We have exit plans located in every room.

Tornado: In the event of a tornado warning, all children are escorted to an assigned area. We practice drills during tornado season to ensure safe procedures.

Fire or Major Disaster: We practice monthly fire, disaster and evacuation drills at the school to ensure safety in the event of a real emergency.

Injured Child: After staff gives emergency first aid or we call emergency specialists, all efforts are made to reach parents first, then your emergency contacts. It is imperative that your child's Emergency Card is updated regularly to reflect any changes. Please note that with-in 6 months of full-time employment, all staff is trained in advanced first aid, infant & child CPR, and standard precautions. Emergency kits are available in every classroom.

Lost Child: If a child becomes separated from their group, either on school grounds or while on an excursion, parents and the police are notified immediately. At least one staff member is assigned to search and assist the police, while other staff remain with the group to ensure their safety.

Minor Accident Policy: In the event of a minor accident, staff members complete an accident/illness report form. A copy of this is sent home with the parents and the original is signed by the parent upon release of their child. This parent signature represents receipt of information regarding the accident.

Emergency Requiring Evacuation: In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation, including but not limited to fire, environmental danger such as a chemical spill, water main break, or other similar incidents, students are evacuated to the end of the driveway on the North side of the property. In the event this is a long-lasting evacuation, parents will receive an emergency call or text message and a notice placed on the door of the school on where and how to find children for pick-up. The current evacuation place is Fire Department 45, 16801 Northgate Dr.

Lockdown/Lockout: In the event of an emergency that requires that we secure the building and or secure the children inside of the building, including but not limited to tornado, emergency or safety situation outside of the RMA building, or emergency or safety situation inside of the RMA building, we keep students are with their teachers in designated safe spaces until we are cleared for reunification protocol.

Reunification Protocol: In the event of an emergency, where we need to reunite children with their parents or guardians, RMA follows a specific reunification protocol. RMA will notify parents when and where we will start the controlled release. Only parents and previously identified emergency contacts may pick up a child during reunification. Everyone must present ID and fill out any required paperwork at the reunification station. Children are then brought from their classroom or designated safe place to the parent. You must return the paperwork prior to a child leaving the premises with the parent. RMA staff will stay with the children in safe areas until all the children are picked up by a parent or identified emergency contact. No child may leave on their own without a parent, even if they have permission to sign themselves out.

Children with Disabilities: In the case where a child has a disability that limits the child's ability to safely follow any of the previous emergency plans, RMA will create an individual plan for this child. We will inform any adults working with this child of the plan.

Children with Emergency Medications: During emergency situations, children who require emergency medications will have an adult with them who will carry and be available to administer all emergency medications as necessary.

Medication Policy

As per directed by Colorado medication standards, RMA will only accept medication, both prescription and over the counter, for emergencies and short-term treatment purposes. Your child's doctor must sign a Medication Administration at RMA form. This is in addition to the doctor's prescription.

1. No medication of any kind is dispensed without doctor's permission, and the Medication Administration at RMA form completed by the doctor. This includes OTC (over the counter) medication for treatment or prevention that is administered orally or topically. Please check with your child's health care provider to see you can arrange a dosage schedule outside of school hours.
2. Parents or guardians must deliver all medications to the administration area, where they are stored in locked cabinets; emergency medications (Epi-Pen, Inhalers, etc.) are safely stored with the class for immediate use. Please notify your child's lead teacher when you deliver the medications to the Administration area.
3. Parents or guardians must provide all student medications in the original container with all packaging, inserts, and include an Rx Label for prescription medication.
4. Nebulized medications, inhalers, and emergency injections (EpiPen) require an Individualized Health Care Plan, Asthma, and/or Allergy Plan. Please check with Administration for access to these documents.
5. All medication must remain in the original container bearing the original label that shows:
 - a. Child's name
 - b. Physician's name, telephone number and signature
 - c. Date authorized
 - d. Name of medication and dosage
 - e. Time of day to give medications
 - f. Route of medication
 - g. Length of time to give the medication
 - h. Reason for medication
 - i. Side effects or reactions to watch for
6. Special instructions
 - a. Children may not transport medication to and from school. This includes medication left in a backpack or lunchbox.
 - b. Any medication error is documented on a Medical Error Report and reported to the child's parents, nurse consultant, Director, and health care provider (as appropriate). Poison Control is notified if any medication is given to the wrong child or there is an overdose of medication.

Weather

RMA aligns with Douglas County Public Schools regarding changes in programming due to weather. This includes school closures, late starts, and early departures. Check Channel 9 News, RMA's Facebook Page, and/or your email concerning the school's closure status.

Winter weather event: In the event of a winter weather event that becomes a state/county emergency during school hours, parents are called at their workplace or their home to come and pick up their children.

Excessively Hot Weather: The school will remain open if air conditioning in the building remains functional. If keeping the building at a comfortable temperature becomes impossible, parents are contacted to pick up their children.

Inclement Weather and Outdoor Time: Children participate in outdoor time twice a day unless excessively hot or inclement weather prevents it. Children will play outside in snow if they have weather appropriate clothing, and the temperature is at or above 20 degrees. Children will play outside in the summer in the mornings and late afternoons if the weather is at or below 90 degrees. Please see the main office for a detailed schedule of the permitted lengths of outside time in accordance with the temperature. Children will never go outside if there is lightning or a tornado watch.

We believe that children need fresh air, sunshine, and gross motor movement activities out of doors. During inclement weather we uphold a policy of maintaining physical comfort as well as physical safety from the elements. This includes ensuring that children are dressed appropriately for the outdoors and watched diligently for any signs of negative effects of the weather (from overheating to frostbite and excessive sun exposure). RMA will take children outside every day regardless of weather, temperature, or other factors, if children are dressed appropriately, and the weather is not deemed a safety risk. In unstable weather which includes lightning and high air pollution, children do not go outside.

V. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

Reporting of Abuse and Neglect

Under the Student Protection Act of 1987 (C.R.S. § 19-3-301) in the Colorado Children's Code, RMA is required by law to report any suspicion of abuse and neglect. If at any time a staff member reasonably suspects that student abuse has occurred at RMA, it is the responsibility of that staff member to immediately report or to make a report of this suspicion to the local county department of social or human services or the police department. If at any time a staff member reasonably suspects that student abuse occurred away from RMA, it is the responsibility of that staff member to report or make a report of this suspicion to the county department of social or human services or the police department where they believe the incident occurred. Below is a general description of the procedures taken in the event of suspected abuse by the family, a staff member, or another person.

1. Staff will document unusual cuts or bruises. If there is a question, another staff member is asked to give their opinion. All comments relating to cuts, bruises, abuse, or neglect are documented, as well as unusual behavior and comments made by the student.
2. If staff has a reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred, it is reported as described above. Due to this mandated state policy, we suggest you tell us of any accidents or unusual cuts or bruises.
3. Upon receiving a report that an employee, parent, student, or other third party associated with RMA is suspected of student abuse, RMA may, but has no obligation to, take any or all the following actions in its sole discretion:
 - a. Alerting the alleged victim or victim's parents of the accusation; provided, however, in the event the parent is the suspected perpetrator, RMA may choose not to notify the parent.
 - b. Removing the suspected individual from the premises.
 - i. In the case of an employee, by terminating the employee or by placing the employee on administrative leave either with or without pay, at RMA's sole discretion.
 - ii. In the case of a student, by expelling the student or suspending the student from school and refunding any tuition paid by the parent for such period of suspension.
 - c. In the case of a parent or other third party, by prohibiting such person from entering the premises, to the extent possible.
 - i. Investigating (or designating a third party to investigate) the allegation at a time and in a manner deemed appropriate by RMA.
 - ii. RMA may investigate the allegation regardless of whether the local county department of social or human services or any other authorities or regulatory agencies investigate the allegation. RMA may, during its own investigation, consider the outcome of any investigation by the local county department of social or human services or any other authorities or regulatory agencies, but the results of such third-party investigation are not considered conclusive. RMA will advise the alleged victim, or their parent, if the victim is a student, and the individual accused of perpetrating the abuse, of the conclusion of the investigation conducted by RMA, to the extent appropriate. At the conclusion of the investigation, RMA will take appropriate action.

Except as otherwise stated in this policy, all information regarding any alleged or actual incidents of abuse, including without limitation, the names of the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and the person who made the complaint, are kept as confidential as possible, conveyed only to those people with a who need to know. In the event the investigation concludes that the allegation is founded, RMA may disclose the name of the perpetrator to the staff members, the parents, and other third parties, as required or advised.

All staff members of this school are fingerprinted, and their backgrounds are checked by the state or FBI (if not living in Colorado for more than 2 years). RMA requires this before employment.

Reporting Child Abuse: Under the Child Protection Act of 1987 (C.R.S. § 19-3-301) in the Colorado Children's Code, RMA employees are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The law at C.R.S. § 19-3-304 states that if a childcare worker has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department or local law enforcement agency.

The Child Protection Act defines abuse, child abuse, or neglect as an act or omission in one of the following categories which threatens the health or welfare of a child: skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, failure to thrive, burns, fractures, subdural hematoma, tissue swelling, or death; any case in which a child is subjected to unlawful sexual behavior; any case in which a child is in need of services because the child's parents, legal guardian, or custodian fails to take the same

actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision that a prudent parent would take; or any case in which a child is subject to emotional abuse.

If at any time a staff member reasonably suspects that child abuse has occurred at RMA, it is the responsibility of that staff member to immediately report or make report of this suspicion to the local county department of social or human services or the police department. If at any time a staff member reasonable suspects that child abuse has occurred away from the RMA, it is the responsibility of that staff member to report or make a report of this suspicion to the county department of social or human services or the police department where they believe the incident occurred.

It is not staff's role to investigate suspected abuse – only to report it. Persons who make a good faith report are immune from civil and criminal liability. Additionally, the law provides for the protection of the identity of the reporting party.

A childcare worker who fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect commits a class 3 misdemeanor and is punished as provided in C.R.S. § 18-1-106. The staff person could also be liable for damages proximately caused thereby.

If at any time a staff member makes a report of child abuse or neglect, the staff member must also immediately report the suspected child abuse or neglect to the Head of School. However, reporting to the Head of School does not relieve the employee of their legal obligation to report the suspected child abuse to the appropriate county department or police department.

1. Investigating Child Abuse: Upon receiving a report that an employee, parent, student, or other third party associated with RMA is suspected of child abuse, RMA may, but has no obligation to, take any or all the following actions in its sole discretion:
 - a. Alerting the alleged victim or victim's parents of the accusation; provided, however, in the event the parent is the alleged perpetrator, RMA may choose not to notify the parent until after completing its investigation, if at all.
 - b. Removing the accused individual from the premises.
 - i. In the case of an employee, by terminating the employee or by placing the employee on administrative leave either with or without pay, at RMA's sole discretion.
 - ii. In the case of a student, by suspending the child from school and refunding any tuition the parent has paid for such period of suspension.
 - iii. In the case of a parent or other third party, by prohibiting such person from entering the premises, to the extent possible.
 - c. Investigating (or designating a third party to investigate) the allegation at a time and in a manner deemed appropriate by RMA.
 - i. RMA may investigate the allegation regardless of whether the local county department of social or human services or any other authorities or regulatory agencies investigate the allegation. RMA may, during its own investigation, consider the outcome of any investigation by the local county department of social or human services or any other authorities or regulatory agencies, but the results of such third-party investigation are not conclusive.
 - ii. RMA will advise the alleged victim, or their parent, if the victim is a child, and the individual accused of perpetrating the abuse, of the conclusion of the investigation conducted by RMA, to the appropriate extent. At the conclusion of the investigation, RMA will take appropriate action.

In the event a staff member learns of the possible abuse of a child, the staff member will not attempt to investigate the incident, but rather will report the incident as required by RMA's policies. The staff member may ask open ended questions of the child (such as "and then what happened?" "What next?"). Staff is specifically discouraged from asking any questions other than those that keep a child talking until they are ready to stop talking.

The staff member's role is to:

1. report the reasonable suspicion of the occurrence of abuse
2. Thank the child for talking about the abuse
3. inform the child that a staff member will notify people who are experts in helping children
4. tell the child that the staff member believes them

The staff members' role is not to:

1. investigate
2. make a judgment call about whether to report or if it is in the child's best interest to report - staff must report

3. make promises that the staff member can't keep
4. promise the child that the staff member will keep the report a secret

Except as otherwise stated in this policy, all information regarding any alleged or actual incidents of abuse, including without limitation, the names of the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and the person who made the complaint, are kept as confidential as possible, conveyed only to those people who need to know. In the event the investigation concludes that the allegation is founded, RMA may disclose the name of the perpetrator to the staff members, the parents, and other third parties, as required or advisable.

To report abuse and neglect, please contact Douglas County Child Protective Services at 303-663-6270.

Harassment

Report any unwelcome behavior an employee, parent, or other third party considers to be unlawful harassment, sexual or otherwise, or which an employee, parent or other third party believes constitutes unlawful discrimination or retaliation, immediately to the Head of School. If the complaint involves the Head of School, the employee, parent, or other third party must report the harassment or discrimination to the Board President.

An employee must report any behavior believed to constitute unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation experienced by the employee, or that the employee witnessed, was told about, or otherwise has reasonable cause to believe occurred, regardless of whether the behavior was committed by, or directed at, another employee, a parent, or another third party.

If the report concerns sexual harassment, the individual making the report may request that a person of the same gender be designated to receive the report from the individual. Information concerning any complaint of harassment or discrimination is treated as confidentially as possible under the specific circumstances. No employee is subjected to retaliatory action as a result of reporting conduct the employee believes to be unlawful harassment or discrimination or for cooperating with or participating in any investigation of illegal harassment or discrimination.

A complaint of illegal harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or retaliation, whether by an employee, a parent, or any other third party, is promptly investigated by RMA, or other persons designated by RMA. If the person accused of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation is an employee, RMA may terminate or suspend the employee while the investigation is pending, either with or without pay, at RMA's sole discretion. We will advise the individual who made the complaint, and the individual accused of illegal harassment or discrimination, of the results of the investigation. If the investigation substantiates the complaint, RMA will take appropriate action.

The following constitutes a procedure for conducting internal investigations. Prior to commencing an investigation, consult with legal counsel to determine whether such counsel should conduct the investigation in order to take advantage of the attorney-client privilege.

When investigating, RMA takes the following steps:

1. Scope of the investigation: First, the scope of the investigation must be determined - the "what". To identify the scope, the allegations must be considered and specific questions to be investigated will be identified.

In evaluating the scope of the investigation, consider relevant policies, handbooks, and notices for relevant procedures, rules allegedly violated or other important information.

Different investigations require different teams - the "who". Consider who should conduct interviews, whether an internal team is best or a third party, and who should be in the "know" on this investigation. At times, individuals have real or perceived conflicts of interest and those should be considered.

Identify a timeline for the investigation - the "when". Do you have deadlines? Do you have time to conduct a detailed investigation, or do you need to reach preliminary findings quickly?

And, finally, agree upon a goal for the investigation - the "why". Is the investigation a fact-finding one or is it for another purpose? What is the ultimate product - a report, a conclusion, a meeting, etc.

2. Identify relevant evidence:

- i. Documents: Consider which documents are relevant. Are there employee evaluations, emails or other information that should be collected and considered for the investigation? Ask witnesses, during interviews, for copies of relevant documents. Document efforts taken to identify relevant documents (i.e., "Bob's email was reviewed for emails sent to Jane from January - December 2013").
 - ii. Witnesses: Consider who should be interviewed. Are certain employees in possession of information or documents that are relevant to the questions identified? Continue evaluating your list of witnesses, as the investigation unfolds. In witness documentation, include objective impressions about witness demeanor (i.e., "witness answered questions with a calm tone; witness was red-faced and crying; witness was fidgeting; not, "witness was lying.").
3. **Findings:** Following the conclusion of the investigation, a written report containing the findings of the investigation and any recommendations should be prepared.

Comments and Complaints

Any questions or complaints regarding RMA or its policies and practices should be directed to the Executive Director or the President of the Board of Directors. It is your right to file a complaint with Douglas County Human Services (contact information below) if RMA does not follow state and federal regulations. Licensing ratios are kept in accordance with current childcare licensing requirements.

Douglas County Department of Human Services
4400 Castleton Court
Castle Rock, CO 80109
303-688-4825

Also, for your reference, below is the contact information for the Colorado Office of Early Childhood.

Colorado Office of Early Childhood
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203
800-799-5876

VI. Waivers

It is understood that Renaissance Montessori Academy, a Colorado nonprofit corporation (RMA) is a fully licensed childcare center as well as a private school and may operate according to state licensing, health regulations and the orders set forth by the government officials, the RMA Board, and other agencies.

The License requires RMA to comply with the health and safety rules and procedures outlined in the Colorado Rules and Regulations, The Colorado Health Department Child Care Rules, as well as any and all amendments, special statements, orders, and emergency protocols. It is understood that RMA is only responsible to maintain compliance with such Regulations, and that no statement has been made by RMA which may be construed as a guarantee regarding the health or safety of children, families, volunteers, or staff, including, without limitation, exposure to or transmission of COVID-19 and/or any other illness or disease.

It is understood and acknowledged that any child's, family member's, volunteer's, staff member's participation in the childcare and schooling provided by RMA is for a benefit and convenience, and based on sole, voluntary, and unbiased discretion. It is further understood that RMA may from time to time offer activities, crafts, exercise, educational, or other similar activities (collectively, "Activities") in which children, families, volunteers, staff members, may participate. It is understood that it is not a requirement to participate in these Activities.

It is also understood that RMA and/or its agents and employees shall not be liable for any claim or potential claim for damages or other benefits in connection with any injury or illness suffered or contracted by my Child in connection with participation in the childcare services, schooling services, or Activities provided by RMA. It is agreed to indemnify and hold RMA and its parents, subsidiaries, divisions, past and current affiliated entities and successors, insurance carriers, partners, officers, agents, managers, employees, representatives, board members, attorneys, and assigns, in their official

and individual capacities, harmless for any injuries sustained and any illnesses contracted by me, my family, or my Child in connection with RMA's provision of childcare services or Activities.

It is agreed that a child's parent and family are in the best position to assess and understand the health and physical condition of the Child and of themselves, and it is the parent/family's responsibility to consult with a physician prior to and regarding participation. By signing the contract, agreeing to the Handbook, and submitting a health appraisal, participants at RMA affirm that they and/or their child(ren) are fit and healthy enough to participate in any Activity and will refrain from engaging in such Activities if they are not physically fit enough to participate. By agreeing to the Handbook, one further waives any claims for personal injuries arising out of participation in these Activities. The family and participant assume all liability and take full responsibility for their actions, safety and welfare, and for their Child's/Children's action, safety and welfare.

By entering this Full Release and Waiver, the parent has not relied on any oral or written representation or statement made by RMA or its agents and employees, other than what is set forth in this Full Release and Waiver. Any revocation of this Full Release and Waiver must be in writing and delivered to RMA prior to participation in a specified Activity.