



*making a difference ~ one student at a time*

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# Student & Family Handbook

75 Foundation Avenue  
Haverhill, MA 01835  
Phone: 978.521.2616 FAX: 978.521.2656

[www.hillviewmontessori.org](http://www.hillviewmontessori.org)

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## **MISSION & VISION STATEMENT**

### **Who We Are**

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVM) is a public-school serving students primarily from Haverhill, Massachusetts. HVM was established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) under the Educational Reform Act of 1993. The purpose of the organization is entirely educational, operating in full compliance with all laws and regulations governing charter schools.

### **Mission**

*The mission of Hill View Montessori Charter Public School is to provide a grade K-8 public education that promotes academic excellence using the Montessori philosophy. In partnership with teachers and parents, children will attain high levels of academic, personal and social achievement and so prepared, become constructive contributors to our community.*

As a Montessori school, HVM offers its students differentiated curriculum and instruction in multi-age classrooms. Learning is maximized by teaching to student's individual academic level and by accessing each child's unique learning style. Classrooms contain a complete complement of scientifically-designed Montessori manipulatives and resource materials to facilitate, inquiry and provide a concrete understanding of abstract concepts. HVM is also committed to character education and integrates this into the Montessori classroom with ongoing lessons in grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility.

Students enroll in HVM by means of a public lottery for Massachusetts residents with preference first given to siblings of currently attending students and second to residents of Haverhill. Finally, non-residents are offered admission if there are no siblings or residents on the waitlist and there is space available.

*For the school's Enrollment Policy, see the HVM website.*

### **Core Values**

The HVM core values are drawn from the mission statement and are used as guiding principles to direct the work of the school. The core values are organized into four overarching categories as listed below.

#### **Preeminent Public Montessori**

- Provide a free Montessori education enhanced to ensure alignment with the MA Curriculum Frameworks
- Promote high levels of student achievement
- Measure achievement in multiple ways and use assessment data to inform instruction
- Promote a school wide culture of respect, open and honest communication, high expectations, and continuous growth through self-reflection
- Welcome learners' representative of the diversity in Haverhill, including socio-economic, cultural, and learning needs and styles

#### **Holistic Student Development**

- Support students' personal, social, and academic development
- Engage students in activities that teach them how to be competent, caring contributors to our community
- Model and promote Montessori values of grace, courtesy, respect, and responsibility
- Teach cooperative learning and conflict resolution skills
- Respect each student's unique learning style by individually tailoring learning supports
- Foster students love for learning
- Encourage students to take ownership for their academic and personal development

#### **School-strengthening Collaboration**

- Create teacher-parent-student partnerships to support student learning

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

#### **High Quality Staff**

- Require lead teachers to hold Montessori certification and to obtain highly qualified status
- Educate all staff regarding Montessori philosophy and HVM curriculum, culture and processes
- Maintain high standards for accomplished teaching and learning, and provide adequate compensation

#### **Board of Trustees and Governance**

HVM is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the success of the school and is accountable directly to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE). The Board sets policy for the school and hires and supervises an Executive Director, who, in turn, hires the staff of the school. Working through the Executive Director, the Board ensures that all laws and regulations are being followed and that day-to-day operations are consistent with the mission of the school. In consultation with the Executive Director, the Board develops and approves the budget for the school

#### **Accountability**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education through charter school law, holds charter schools accountable for their mission and vision. During every year of a charter school's existence, it is monitored via an oversight and evaluation process that includes the establishment of an Accountability Plan, annual reporting on goals identified in the school's accountability plan, and site visits. In addition, every five years a charter school must undergo a more rigorous accountability process during which time is "reapplies" for its charter. If a charter school is determined to be underperforming, it can be closed. This high level of accountability is accepted by charter public schools in exchange for the "freedom" to structure, organize, and create their own mission and academic programs.

The annual accountability process requires the school to reflect and provide evidence on the following three questions:

1. Is the school academically successful?
2. Is the school a viable, stable organization?
3. Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?

#### **Administration of State Mandated Assessments**

As a public charter school, HVM is required to give the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests for all students in grades 3-8. We review the performance scores and track the results over time as one way of determining academic success. The results of the school's performance on MCAS tests are available on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu).

*See the HVM website for a copy of the school's Accountability Plan and its annual reports.*

#### **Funding**

HVM is funded by a yearly allotment from the State of Massachusetts that is based on per-pupil expenditures from the sending district where the student resides. For each child that enrolls at HVM, HVM receives a tuition amount from the State equal to the per-pupil amount that the child's sending district funds the local school. The State then deducts the same amount from the sending district's state aid account. Like other public schools, charter schools are eligible to receive federal and state grant funds including Special Education, Title 1, and Safe and Drug Free Schools funding.

While per pupil charter tuition covers basic operational expenses, it does not cover the school's facility costs nor the complete costs associated with an authentic Montessori program. As a result, the school is committed to ongoing annual fundraising and grant writing. Direct solicitations for support to both the parent body and the greater HVM community will include invitations to support the annual appeal and attend special events such as an auction, etc.

## **GOING TO SCHOOL AT HVM**

### **Time**

8:40 a.m. to 3:40 p.m.

### **Arrival**

School starts at 8:40 a.m. The staff is ready to receive children at 8:20 a.m.

The following procedures apply for students who are dropped off at school:

- Arrive at the school no earlier than 8:20 a.m.
- Upon arrival, pull to the rear of the school and follow traffic into the designated driving areas.
- **Do not park or drop off in the front of the school.** (This space is reserved for school buses.)
- If you have business in the school, pull around back into the designated travel areas and continue around the side of the building to park in visitor spaces or park in the designated parking area in the back of the school (heeding indication of the play area).

### **Dismissal**

School ends at 3:40 p.m. and the dismissal process ends by 4:00 p.m. **(12:00 p.m. on half days with the dismissal process ending at 12:30 p.m.)**

#### ***For Students Being Picked Up from School***

- Arrive no earlier than 3:30 p.m. to pick up your child. Drive to the designated pick-up area in the rear of the school. Staff will escort children out of the building and students will typically be waiting outside as you pull up.
- Staff will direct you and your child to ensure the swiftest dismissal possible.
- A family ID tag (provided by the school) with the student's last name should be made visible. If your child is being picked up by someone else, please transfer the ID tag to that vehicle. Alternatively, if you need additional ID tags, please contact the front office at 978.521.2616 extension 121.
- If someone other than the designated pick-up person picks up and does not have the ID tag in their possession, the school needs to be notified ahead of time and the person must show identification to staff.
- If you need to speak with a staff member, please do so at another time as doing otherwise drastically slows down the dismissal process.

#### ***For Students Using Bus Transportation***

- Bus transportation is available only to those students who reside in Haverhill. Families from outside of Haverhill must provide their own transportation. Bus routes and schedules can be obtained from the Coppola Bus Company 978.373.9891 or on the HVM web site.
- *School Bus Rules & Expectations: See Appendix E*

### **Emergency Contact Information**

Parents and Guardians are required to give Emergency Contact information to the school upon enrollment, yearly after admission, and whenever the information changes. It is **imperative** that school personnel be able to contact the parent/guardian in the event of an individual or school-wide emergency.

In the event that Emergency Medical Services (EMS/911) is called, EMS personnel will determine the best place for the child to be transported for medical care. The medical facilities in this area are Merrimack Valley Hospital (Haverhill), Holy Family Hospital (Methuen), and Lawrence General Hospital (Lawrence). You may alert the school of

your preferences and every effort will be made to honor your wishes but the final decision is made by the professionals that transport your child to the needed services.

### **School Closings or Delays**

The Haverhill Public School District provides transportation for HVM students. When the district schools are closed or have a delayed opening due to bad weather, HVM is also closed or has a delayed opening. School closings will be announced via phone message and email, local News Channels 4, 5, 7, and 25. It will also be posted on our Hill View Montessori Facebook Page. HVM, as our own district, can make the decision to open or close, even if HPS does differently.

During delays, breakfast will still be provided to students and parents will still be charged for the meal.

### **Attendance Guidelines**

It is commonly believed that student attendance rates impact student learning and affect a school's culture. The Department of Elementary and Secondary education believes attendance to be so important that it requires public schools to report on student attendance three times per year and in fact, there are regulations allowing schools to assess fines for student truancy and tardiness. Excused absences, as defined by the DESE, are only those that occur due to a death in the family, religious holidays, court appearances/subpoenas, family emergencies or documented illness. All others are considered truancy. At HVM, attendance is monitored.

Montessori philosophy requires that we respect the concentration and follow the level of development of each child. Teachers spend time and energy preparing curriculum and lessons for each day. Students are expected to attend school **on time** each day of the school year unless there is an emergency or a personal illness. Please help to ensure the development of your child's social and academic progress by avoiding unnecessary absences, tardiness and early dismissals.

### **Absence Procedures**

When a child is absent, the parent/caregiver must notify the school before 8:45 a.m. by calling **978.521.2616 ext. 200**. Upon returning to school from any absence, the child must bring a note written by the parent/caregiver explaining the absence. All absences must be of an "excused" nature (absence types are described below). Extended excused absences, those that are more than five days, may require a note from the doctor before the child can return to school.

- Unexcused absences include oversleeping, missing the bus, car problems, family trips/vacations (which are considered unexcused by state law) or absences for illness for which no note was sent to the school. Excessive unexcused absences are subject to reporting to the district court.
- Excessive absences from school can, in some cases, be considered child neglect. As mandated reporters for the State of Massachusetts, HVM is required to report excessive absences to the Massachusetts Department of Child and Family Services (DCF).
- In situations in which the office staff has not been notified of an absence, a notification will be sent to the parent/guardian via a phone call or email.

### **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

HVM considers all caregivers vital partners in the education of their children. Therefore, parents are welcome at HVM and are given many opportunities for participating in and setting the direction of school life. All parents and school volunteers are required by law to have a criminal records check (CORI) and be CORI-approved by the school.

*CORI forms are available on our website <https://www.hillviewmontessori.org/parentforms>*

### **Field Trips**

Teachers will periodically coordinate field trips to provide cultural, scientific, social or educational experiences. Notices will be sent home in advance describing the objectives of the field trip and requesting drivers, if needed.

Students who are unable to attend the overnight field trips will participate in equally fun and educational activities and projects at the school. Parents who volunteer to chaperone for field trips are expected to adhere to chaperoning guidelines and be CORI approved.

Families for whom the expense of a fieldtrip is a hardship are encouraged to speak to the school and financial assistance can be provided.

### **Food Allergies: Snacks & Lunch**

Some classrooms are peanut/tree nut free at HVM. Teachers and staff make their best efforts to monitor lunches, snacks, and foods brought in for celebrations but it is not feasible to say that no nuts will ever enter our building. We ask that parents check labels for nuts or nut ingredients.

We also have children with other food allergies in our school. When bringing food into the school (other than packing lunch), please be sure to check with the classroom teacher or school nurse to ensure an appropriate selection is made.

If your child has a food or other allergy, contact the school nurse for information on how an individualized plan can be developed for your child to keep him/her as safe as possible while at school. Any medications that your child's doctor has prescribed for the treatment of food allergies should be kept in the Health Office.

### **Breakfast and Lunches**

Breakfast is available to be ordered and is served from 8:20-8:40 am. For students who arrive later than 8:40, students will bring their breakfast and eat in the classroom.

For lunch, students can either bring their lunch or purchase it from the school's hot lunch vendor. Hot lunch must be ordered and prepaid monthly when the order is placed. HVM is committed to educating the whole child and as such has contracted with a food vendor that minimizes salt and sugar additives, offers whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables and utilizes recyclable food containers.

For current information about lunch and breakfast programs contact the front desk at ext. 121. Refunds for meals are only given for school cancellations and not for absences.

### **Celebrations**

We discourage traditional classroom celebrations of birthdays, holidays, etc. where, for example, Valentine or "Secret Santa" notes and gifts are exchanged, students dress-up for Halloween, sweets are sent in to be shared, etc. We do this for a number of reasons; some students have differing religious beliefs that prohibit celebratory activities; we seek to minimize the consumption of sweets and encourage healthy eating habits; and we are committed to educating students about mass marketing/consumerism.

As an alternative, we advocate for celebrations that teach tolerance, peace and an understanding of multicultural differences. Please contact your child's classroom teacher to determine the individual classroom policy around celebratory activities.

## **HVM SCHOOL CULTURE**

Our scholars are with us during their most developmental years, trusting us to build their character, knowledge, and relationship towards their own learning. We are focused on helping each scholar strive towards independence by strengthening confidence, skill, leadership, and respect for others and their environment.

### **Dress Code**

*See Appendix A*

### **Cell Phone Policy**

*See Appendix B*

## **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

*See Appendix C*

## **Recess Expectations**

*See Appendix D*

## **Grievance Procedures**

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School places tremendous value on grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility. As such we encourage parents/guardians and staff to develop open lines of communication with each other for the benefit of the children attending the school. We acknowledge however, that from time to time, situations may arise that are upsetting. If a parent/guardian, student, staff member or other individuals or groups are not satisfied with a school decision, policy or act; or believes that HVM has violated or is violating any provision of Massachusetts General Law they should contact the Executive Director who will gather information and bring together the appropriate administrative members who will work together with the parents/guardians to remedy the grievance.

If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint may be submitted in writing to the Commissioner of Education.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **District Curriculum Accommodation Plan**

Massachusetts Special Education Law requires that all school districts develop a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). *Available upon request*

### **Special Education Service**

In accordance with state and federal regulations, students are ensured the right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the least restrictive environment. The Montessori educational model is well-suited to the inclusion model because it assumes that all students have different needs and learning styles. Within a Montessori classroom there is an emphasis for all children to work at their own pace, using an individualized program and multi-sensory materials.

HVM provides instruction according to the inclusion model unless determined otherwise by the Special Education Team. Students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) receive extra assistance in the classroom and when necessary, direct services in the form of a “pullout” from class.

### **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Dean of Students a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the Dean of Students, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is



disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

*Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

### **Student Success Team (SST)**

The SST is a group comprised of the Executive Director, Special Education Director, Title I math and reading teachers, and school counselor who meet on a bi-weekly basis. They collaborate with staff members who need assistance problem-solving and generating ideas to address student(s) needs in their classrooms. They work with teachers to develop strategies, modifications, and accommodations to ensure that by all means possible the child's needs are being met. They assess whether the developed action plan is successful. If no further progress is made with the given supports, the student may be referred to special education for further evaluation. This assistance team is a mandatory component of the school's special education pre-referral process.

The SST process for a student is generated by the classroom teacher if a student presents with either a learning or behavioral problem(s) in school. The teacher requests assistance in written form and submits it to the Executive Director. The SST makes recommendations about the types of accommodations that the teachers can try within the classroom for a specific length of time. After the length of time decided, follow-ups are discussed at which time additional accommodation recommendations may be made.

If accommodations are working, someone from the SST will check in on an ongoing basis with the teacher to see if any further assistance is needed. If it is determined that the accommodations are not working and is supported by data, a request for evaluation will be completed.

### **504 Plans**

The requirements of American's with Disabilities, Section 504 define an individual with a disability as one whom: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that *substantially* limits one or more life activities; or (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such impairment. A 504 plan will be developed, as needed, to create specific reasonable accommodations to assist the student in the classroom.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

HVM employs a full time Registered Nurse to provide care to students and staff who become acutely ill or injured. Parents are notified of treatment by letter, form, or phone call if needed. The School Nurse develops comprehensive medical and emergency plans with input from parents, the child's physician, and the classroom teachers in order to accommodate learning and promote optimal levels of health for those children with chronic health conditions. Upon registration, every family meets with the RN for a review of the students' health history, immunization status, early childhood developmental concerns, and any health concerns that may impact learning. This comprehensive screening includes a review of the students' birth history, general concerns about overall and social emotional development, previous early education experiences, and any history of the need for early intervention services. The RN works with all educational teams and administrators to ensure students have full access to the curriculum and to identify interventions or accommodations that may mitigate the need for a future Special Education referral or need for services.

In addition, the RN coordinates and performs annual health assessments and developmental screenings for students including vision, hearing, height, weight, BMI, and postural screenings per Massachusetts Department of Education and Department of Health regulations. The following chart outlines which screenings are performed at the specific grade levels:

| Screening Performed                        | Grade(s) Screened  |
|--|--|
| Vision (Near, Far, Acuity, and Stereopsis) | KG through 5 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> grades          |
| Hearing                                    | KG through 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> grades          |
| Postural (Scoliosis)                       | 5 <sup>th</sup> through 8 <sup>th</sup> grades                 |
| Height, Weight, and Body Mass Index (BMI)  | 1 <sup>st</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , and 7 <sup>th</sup> grades |

Outside referrals for more comprehensive assessments or testing are made by the RN when a student is identified as having a vision, hearing or other developmental concern. These screenings are critical to be able to identify barriers that may impact learning in the classroom. Interventions, such as a student acquiring glasses, may be all that is needed in order for a student to fully access the curriculum, mitigating the need for a Special Education referral. Screenings are done annually and upon teacher or parent request. Vision and hearing screenings are often done prior to a Special Education or as part of an initial Special Education assessment. When requested by Special Education, a more comprehensive Health Assessment is done by the RN that includes a review of current immunization status, current health status, any past medical history, or other barriers that may impact learning. When appropriate an even more comprehensive Home Assessment can be done by the RN or in collaboration with the school Social Worker to identify other health or environmental barriers to learning that may need to be addressed. Often, a referral for outside services will give families tools needed to assist the students' ability to access the curriculum without the need for a Special Education referral.

#### **WHEN YOUR CHILD IS SICK**

Our main concern when children become ill is the comfort, well-being, and readiness of the individual child to learn, as well as the health of the other children and members of HVM staff. The following guidelines should be observed by parents:

Please **DO NOT** send your child to school if they have:

- fever of 100.3 or greater
- vomiting within the past 24 hours
- diarrhea within the past 8 hours
- rash not previously diagnosed by your child's doctor
- severe cold or cough
- conjunctivitis with drainage from the eye (may return after 24 hrs. of antibiotic treatment)
- impetigo (may return after 24 hrs. of antibiotics)
- strep throat (may return after 24 hrs. of antibiotics)
- any acute illness that does not allow them to fully participate in school activities.

If it is determined that your child develops any of the above at school, the parent, guardian, or a designated individual will need to pick your child up within an hour of notification.

The School Nurse and Administration may need to periodically revise any of the above guidelines based on local, state, or federal public health guidelines or mandates related to a public health outbreak.

The School Nurse will notify parents by a memo if there are any illness trends identified. It is important for you to notify the Health Office if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness.

If you have questions about a certain illness you may contact the School Nurse at any time at 978.521.2616, ext. 110.

### **Medication Administration at School**

The School Health Services Department requires that certain procedures are followed with regard to the administration of medications to children at school. All HVM parents and staff/faculty must follow these guidelines and procedures. Medication is given **ONLY** by the School Nurse and requires the following:

1. **Written parental authorization** which indicates that the medication is for the specific child and filled out by the parent and submitted to the school nurse.
2. **Written order from the doctor** for all long term and “as needed” medications. Short term anti-biotic treatment may be given as defined by the original pharmacy. The labeled medicine container must include the child’s name; the name of the drug; the dosage (number of times per day and number of days the medication is to be administered); and the doctor’s name written by the pharmacist. The pharmacist may need to divide the medication into two bottles so that one can remain home and one can be sent to school. It is not convenient to transport this medication back and forth and may lead to missed doses.
3. All medication sent to the school **MUST BE** in their original container.
4. The School Nurse will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication. The completed medication record shall be made part of the child’s health record.
5. At HVM all medications will be stored locked in the health office out of the reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. All unused medications shall be disposed of, or returned to the parent, when no longer needed.

Parents may **NEVER** send medication to school with their child. It must be handed to the school nurse or teacher from an adult.

***In the event that the School Nurse or Substitute Nurse is not available, no medication will be given. The parent or guardian is required to come to the school and give the medication.*** This includes regular scheduled medication and over the counter medications. Epi-pens are an exception to this regulation. Massachusetts law allows trained staff members to administer Epi-pens in the case of a severe allergic reaction during the regular school day, at school sponsored events, and on field trips.

### **Medications on Field Trips**

Special arrangements must be made to allow medication on field trips. Parents must contact the School Nurse so that accommodations can be made.

### **Allergy Awareness Policy**

HVM is committed to the health, safety, and independence of all students and seeks to balance the freedoms of the school community with the needs of those who suffer from life threatening food allergies.

Children with severe allergies that may lead to anaphylaxis, a severe, life threatening condition must have an **Allergy/Food Allergy Action Plan** in place at the school along with specific medications the child’s doctor has ordered for the treatment of this condition.

### **Children with Asthma, Allergies, or any other Special Medical Needs**

For children who have other allergies or special medical conditions which will require limiting exposure to certain foods, pets, etc., parents must notify the school and the classroom teachers as soon as possible. Parents are required to update this information every year and are required to let the school know during the year if such a situation becomes known.

Children with other medical considerations such as diabetes, asthma, seizure disorder, or any other chronic medical condition should have an Individualized Health Plan (IHP), Asthma Action Plan (AAP) or an Emergency Medical Plan (EMP) in place. Contact the School Nurse for assistance with this at 978.521.2626 ext. 110. The School Nurse will

contact any parent or guardian who lists a special medical consideration or allergy on the enrollment or medical forms. All medical plans must be updated annually.

Copies of all health forms and plans will be kept in the Health Office and only shared with those who have a “need to know” in order to assist the child with day-to-day learning or health needs. Parents are required to sign a HIPPA/FERPA Privacy Release Form at the beginning of each year along with a health update and medication administration authorization.

### **Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, Equal Access to Education and Non-Discrimination Statement**

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVMCPS) is committed to equal education opportunity for all students and equal employment opportunity for all employees and students. HVMCPS’s policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity extends to all employment and academic considerations and programs. The Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty and staff recognize that to assure equal opportunity for all students and employees, HVMCPS must take affirmative action to provide sufficient role models among the school leaders, employees, and staff who reflect the various racial and cultural backgrounds of our students. The attainment of an all-inclusive, discrimination-free environment, within our school is the primary goal of the Affirmative Action Plan.

HVMCPS commits to equal employment opportunity and equal access to education without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, veteran, genetic information, or marital status. We commit to making all reasonable efforts to ensure an environment free of discrimination or harassment on account of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, veteran, genetic information, gender identity or marital status and encourage all members of our community to support and foster the acceptance and inclusion of all individuals.

The Board of Trustees further ensures that all personnel activities including recruitment, employment, training, compensation, benefits and all other terms and conditions of employment are administered according to equal opportunity principles and operate to eliminate practices that may result in inequities and/or discrimination.

This Policy applies equally to all HVMCPS students, employees, authorized volunteers, parents, and other members of the school community. This Policy applies to conduct at school, at school events, and away from school in all other instances when HVMCPS is represented.

*For the Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, Equal Access to Education and Non-Discrimination Statement, see the HVM website.*

### **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Hill View Montessori Public Charter School (HVM) seeks to promote an orderly, positive, productive learning environment in which all students are provided an opportunity to grow academically, emotionally, and socially. That being said, the purpose of 603 CMR 46.00, as it pertains to HVM students, is to ensure that every student participating in a Massachusetts public education program is free from the use of physical restraint that is inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00. Physical restraint shall be used *only* in emergency situations, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

- (a) To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and
- (b) To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

Nothing in 603 CMR 46.00 precludes any teacher, employee or agent of a public education program from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

This policy shall be provided to staff and made available to parents and guardians of HVM students annually. Through it and other communication with parents, HVM will engage parents in discussion about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure.

*The Physical Restraint Procedures and Preventions Policy is available on our HVM website*

## Dress Code

### Dress Code Guidelines

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**Having a dress code promotes a more serious school atmosphere which emphasizes academics and promotes positive behavior. Hill View Montessori's dress code will encourage individuality, and self-expression, along with teaching scholars the importance of a respectable appearance which is a lesson that will positively impact each scholar's self-respect and confidence.**

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Scholars should arrive to school in clothing that will allow them to flourish not only in a high functioning learning environment but also as an individual. A scholar's presentation (including clothing, shoes, accessories, and cleanliness) may not disrupt the learning of others or threaten the safety and health of the community.

Scholars are expected to wear clothing or other apparel that will support their ability to focus while also fostering safety and health of the school community. This includes wearing items that promote products illegal for use by minors or clothing displaying obscene material, profanity, or references to prohibited conduct. The Dean of Students or any HVM staff may determine what constitutes "inappropriate/disruptive" to a learning environment. [M.G.L. Chapter 72 Sections 82-83](#)

When a scholar's appearance or mode of dress hinders the individual's educational process or constitutes a threat to health or safety, the scholar will be asked to modify his/her attire or speak with the Dean of Students. While examples are named below, modifications may also need to be made to items that are not listed.

- Hygiene concerns (clean clothing, brush, deodorant, showering, etc (when you look good, you feel good). Dean of Students or staff will contact parents to provide support if washing clothes is an issue.
- Sheer, see-through clothing may not be worn unless the scholar is wearing clothing underneath or over.
- No hats or hoods allowed in the school building. (including doo-rags)
- Scholars may not wear any item that may be a hazard to safety or may damage school property.
- Scholars may not wear items that advertise or promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gang activity, violence, or illegal activity.
- Scholars may not wear items that are sexually suggestive or that have lewd, profane, or obscene language or images.
- Scholars may not wear clothing or accessories that may be a hazard, damage school property, or harm self or others (e.g., billfold chains, spiked wristband, cleats, steel-tipped shoes, jewelry with razor blades).

## Dress Code Interventions

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If a scholar needs support following dress code guidelines, the Dean of Students or staff will have a conversation with the scholar in private. The primary focus will be adjusting or modifying the clothing so the scholar's outfit meets the dress code but while still allowing the scholar to feel comfortable and valued. The school nurse can also assist with suggesting clothing modifications. Adjusting/modifying clothing can include, but is not limited to, turning a shirt inside out, changing clothing or having a parent/guardian bring clothing, wearing a belt, etc. The adult will make efforts to not pass judgement on the scholar's character for their choice of clothing and will not be shamed. Whomever is assisting with the modification should always reach out to parents for appropriate reasons:

1. The parent should always be aware of any clothing changes regarding their child(ren)
2. We may offer assistance if a family is struggling to meet the dress code expectations.
3. Parents should be aware of what their child(ren) are wearing before leaving for school.

When a scholar's attire does not follow the guidelines named above or if attire is inappropriate in a way not addressed above, the school will respond in the following way:

- **First Incident:** Scholar conference and modification of clothing.
  1. Find out the reason for the chosen attire (with empathy).
  2. Hopefully it's a quick fix (replace item with clean and/or appropriate item - see nurse, turn inside out).
  3. If you're unsure or uncomfortable addressing the matter please notify Dean of Students for assistance
- **Repeated Incident:** Scholar conference, modification of clothing, and parent/guardian contact; parent/guardian conference as needed
  1. Find out the reason for the chosen attire (with empathy)
  2. If it is becoming a pattern, the families will be involved for added support.
  3. Provide resources for parents struggling with providing clothing i.e. clean socks, t-shirts etc...
  4. If you're unsure or uncomfortable addressing the matter please notify the Dean of Students.

## Dressing for the Occasion

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### Field Trip Attire

- Wear comfortable clothes that cover your body and allow for a lot of movement.
- Dress for the weather. If it is going to be cold, dress in layers and avoid cotton. If it will be rainy, bring a waterproof jacket and extra undergarments to stay dry.
- Wear sneakers or comfortable boots. Do not wear open toed shoes, sandals, or flip-flops.
- For overnight field trips, teachers will send home a packing list to provide further guidance.

**Evening Performance Attire**

- Dress more “professionally” than on a typical school day
- Dress for Success!
- Wear nice jeans, khakis, skirts, or dresses along with collared shirts, blouses, or solid color t-shirts.
- Please leave hats, shirts with logos and other type on them, tripp-pants, torn clothing, and “hoodies” at home.



## Appendix B

### Cell Phone Policy

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HVM discourages scholars from bringing cellphones to school. HVM recognizes, however, that for some families this is a necessity. HVM will not be responsible for phones that go missing to theft or loss.

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#### **During school hours (including school field trips and recess):**

Once our scholars enter the school building, they must place their phones, earbuds, and/or electronics directly into their bags. If a scholar doesn't follow the expectation, any staff in eyeshot of the phone and/or any electronic device has the authority to confiscate the device for the remainder of the day. A phone call home requesting parents to review the cell phone policy expectation will be the objective. Upon conclusion of the school day, the scholar will be allowed to retrieve the cell phone/electronic device. If the scholar continues to disregard policy expectations, the Dean of Students will confiscate the phone and/or any electronic device.

#### **Cell Phone Confiscation:**

When the cell phone is confiscated, the Dean of Students will schedule a meeting with the parent and/or guardian. The cell phone will be placed in possession of the parent and/or guardian along with reviewing the policy. The phone will remain in possession of the Dean of Students until the parent and/or guardian comes in for a meeting.

**\* The policy also includes Apple/Smart watches. If any scholar is using the watch for other than time notification, the watch will be confiscated.**

#### **Refusal:**

If at any point the scholar is refusing to hand over the phone and/or any electronic device, The Dean of Students will support the scholar in resetting the expectations.

#### **\*Exceptions**

Teachers and/or Special Instructors can allow earbuds for chromebook and other educational lessons. The earbuds should be placed back into the scholar's bag once the lesson concludes.

## **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

### **Summary**

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Scholars are encouraged to use the Internet for educational purposes. Scholars using the Internet for purposes not approved by teachers or staff could face disciplinary action including loss of computer privileges while at school. HVM has installed the federally-required internet filter and firewall to prevent access to inappropriate sites and to protect our scholars from outside interference.

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### **Guidelines for Technology Use & HVM Accounts (Acceptable Use Policy)**

#### **Educational Technology**

HVM provides scholars access to educational technology tools both at school and at home. At school this includes Internet access in classrooms, access to chromebooks, and HVM Accounts. The purpose of these tools is to support learning by providing scholars and teachers with access to resources and an opportunity for collaborative work. All uses of HVM technology must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives. All scholars who use HVM's technology resources are expected to read these Guidelines and/or to take part in a discussion of the Guidelines with a teacher. Adherence to the Guidelines is a condition for a scholar's privilege of access and use of technology and accounts.

#### **Scholars' Responsibility**

All scholars' use of the Internet is to be conducted under faculty supervision. Nevertheless, faculty members are not expected to monitor use at every moment. Each scholar is expected to take individual responsibility for his or her use of the internet and HVM accounts - while accessing them at school, at home or on a mobile device.

#### **Technology Access Is a Privilege**

Internet and email through the HVM system is a privilege. A scholar's access may be suspended or canceled by school Admin. if this privilege is abused. Inappropriate conduct on the HVM system will also be subject to disciplinary action, in conformity with the Code of Conduct.

#### **Personal Safety**

The Internet is accessible to the public. Unfortunately, this includes people who want to make contact with scholars for inappropriate purposes or under false pretenses. HVM cannot screen the Internet for such inappropriate uses. Therefore, scholars must be cautious and prudent about supplying personal information and arranging personal meetings. In particular, scholars should never arrange a personal meeting with a person who was met online without their parents' or guardians' knowledge and approval. Scholars should promptly inform their teacher, or school administrator of any online communication that the scholar feels is threatening, harassing, or otherwise inappropriate.

## **Unacceptable Uses**

The following uses of the HVM's technology, including HVM Accounts, are unacceptable:

1. Posting private or personal information about another person.
2. Accessing or transmitting obscene or pornographic material.
3. Posting chain letters or engaging in "spamming." ("Spamming" means sending annoying or unnecessary messages to large numbers of people).
4. Engaging in harassment of any type.
5. Participating in any communications that facilitate the illegal sale or use of drugs or alcohol; that facilitate criminal gang activity; that threaten, intimidate, or harass any other person; or that violate any other laws.
6. Plagiarism. "Plagiarism" means the taking of material created by others and presenting it as if it were one's own.

## **No Expectation of Privacy**

Scholars are reminded to assume no expectation of privacy while using technology at school, or when using online tools provided through an HVM Account (on any device, anywhere in the world). HVM reserves the right to monitor or review any information stored or transmitted on its equipment, network, or servers. Furthermore, HVM has the right to disclose all electronic communications, including email and Internet access, to school administration and law enforcement officers, if warranted. Lastly, HVM may retain records, including emails, electronic documents, etcetera, for a number of years after graduation--some of these records may be retained as part of the official scholarly record.

## Recess Expectations and Duties

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Recess is a privilege earned by scholars who follow the school's expectations. Scholars may bring equipment such as footballs and frisbees from home, but must use equipment according to HVM expectations. If scholars are not using the equipment safely, they will be asked to stop playing. This will be determined at the discretion of the HVM staff on recess duty.

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**Recess Leads will have access to walkie talkies and an emergency kit.**

Indoor Recess will be held (in lieu of outdoor recess) in the event of extreme weather (e.g. temperature greater than 95 or less than 15 degrees F; persistent rain or snow, thunder or lightening).

**Supervision:** Every staff on duty will have a specific duty

- All staff will be assigned a post to supervise and monitor
- There will be cones in certain areas signaling off limits.

**Staff Locations/Duties:**

- **The front area: The staff that is posted in front will be the Lead.** This staff member is responsible for timekeeping and facilitating classroom lineup at the end of recess (raising hand). This staff member posted will be responsible for scholars entering/exiting during recess. Staff will also monitor both playhouses to make sure appropriate behavior is conducted. Staff will monitor peer interactions.
  - **The soccer/football area:** The Staff member posted will be closer to the vehicles parked in the lot. Staff is responsible for keeping scholars within the field of play. Staff is responsible for stopping play when there are moving vehicles. Staff can give permission to scholar to retrieve a loose ball(s).
  - **Inside the playground:** The Staff member posted will make sure scholars are using the play pit equipment appropriately. Staff will monitor all peer interactions and maintain the safety inside the play pit.
  - **The Buddy Bench Area:** The Staff member posted will monitor that side of the playground. Staff will maintain boundaries of all scholars within that side of the playground. Staff will monitor the scholars using the equipment correctly and maintain eye-shot.
  - **The basketball court:** Feel free to officiate the games to maintain structure and safety. If you're not knowledgeable and may potentially add to the chaos, just make sure scholars are displaying sportsmanship. (No arguing, no fighting, no inappropriate gesturing and/or contact, and no profanity).
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**If you're absent coverage will be provided. The Dean of Students will check in with the crew on duty to modify changes.**

**Staff Duties: Upper El:**

- The Front Area (Lead)
- The Soccer/Football area
- The Basketball Court
- Inside the Playground
- Buddy Bench Area

**Staff Duties: Lower El:**

- The Front Area (Lead)
- The Soccer/Football Area
- The Basketball court
- Inside the playground
- Buddy Bench Area

**Recess Expectations**

Behavioral expectations of scholars are no different than any other part of the school day. Scholars are responsible for following the school expectations during indoor/outdoor recess. In particular, scholars must be physically safe, engage in prosocial behavior (e.g. no gossiping, talking about scholars behind backs, etc), and follow adult directions.

**Misbehaviors: (Just a few examples)**

- Pushing
- Fighting
- Profanity
- Wandering off shot
- Reckless climbing, jumping, running, etc.
- Throwing objects with the intent to harm
- Misusing the playground equipment
- Littering

**Responses to Misbehaviors:**

1. Have a conversation with scholar regarding Unexpected Behavior.
2. Repeated incidents by the same scholar: Have scholar sit and reflect for 5 mins. The scholar can sit next to you so you can time the reflection.
3. If the Unexpected Behavior continues, the scholar will sit for the remainder of recess and must complete a reflection the following day. (Dean of Students will facilitate a Reflection Circle before the scholars re-enter the recess community.) Dean of Students will use an available classroom for the Reflection Circle.

4. Dean of Students will send a morning email to staff regarding scholars reporting to the Reflection Circle. The location will also be provided.

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**Dress Code:****Winter Attire:** Must Have

- Snowsuit/snow pants
- Boots
- Hats/gloves
- Coat and sweater
- Socks

**Fall Weather Attire:** Must Have

- Coat
- Hat
- Gloves
- Sneakers/boots
- socks

**Spring/Summer Attire:** Must Have

- Closed-toe shoes (Sneakers)
- Light clothing due to heat temperatures
- Bottled water

## School Bus Rules & Expectations

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HVM's expectations for conduct on the bus/bus stop are the same as when scholars are at school. It is important that scholars are speaking softly to a seat partner and being respectful so the bus driver can concentrate on safely transporting scholars to and from school.

Misbehaviors on the bus/bus stop can result in loss of bus privileges and/or other responses as determined by the Dean of Students.

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### **Prior to Loading the Bus:**

1. Scholars have a responsibility to be at the designated stop on time. The driver cannot be expected to wait. Parents are responsible for their scholar's behavior prior to loading the bus
2. Scholars should stay at least 10 feet away from the roadway while waiting for the bus and at least 10 feet away from the moving bus and wait until the bus stops before approaching it
3. If a scholar is not going to be on the bus, he/she should let the driver know in advance. Parents may contact Coppola (978) 373-9891 (Please know your scholars' bus #)
4. Scholars will only be picked up at designated stops

### **While on the Bus:**

1. Scholars will respect the bus driver and monitor, other scholars, property and themselves.
2. Obey the bus driver's instructions/directions the first time given
3. Keep hands/feet off other people and their property
4. Sit forward while the bus is in motion
5. Speak only to those around them in conversational (inside) voices using respectful words
6. Communicate any problems or conflicts with the bus driver and/or monitor

### **After Leaving the Bus:**

1. If a scholar must cross the road after leaving the bus, he/she shall wait for the driver's signal and then cross in front of the bus
  2. If a scholar lives on the side of the road on which the bus stops, he/she shall move away from the bus immediately after getting off.
  3. Scholars will be dropped off only at designated bus stops
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### **Responses to bus misbehavior: (The Dean of Students will facilitate all responses)**

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all routes. Decisions regarding a scholar's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extra-curricular events (i.e., field trips or sports) will be the sole discretion of the Dean of Students. Parents or guardians will be notified of any disciplinary actions.

**\*Special Ed. students will receive discipline in conjunction with the student's I.E.P.\***

**First response: Students K-8**

1. Verbal Warning
2. Assigned seat
3. Scholar/parent conference reviewing bus expectations

**Bus suspensions: Students K-8**

1. \* 1st offense - 1 day bus suspension
2. \* 2nd offense - 5 day bus suspension
3. \* 3rd offense - bus suspension for the remainder of the school year.

**\*\*SEVERE VIOLATIONS WILL RESULT IN LOSS OF RIDING PRIVILEGES\*\* (determined by the Dean of Students)**

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**Based on the severity of a scholar's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school may also result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.**

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1. Repeated disrespect towards bus driver/monitor and/or peers
2. Fighting
3. Destruction of bus property will result in loss of privileges and depending on the severity, scholars may be required to pay for the damages.
4. In possession of drugs and/or weapons