

North Star Montessori Academy

K-8 Student/Parent Handbook

2026-2027

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Notice of Nondiscrimination

It is the policy of North Star Montessori Academy district that no person on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, disability, weight, or height shall be discriminated against in employment, educational programs, or admissions. Questions or concerns regarding the policies should be directed to the Superintendent at 3030 Wright St, Marquette, MI 49855, and (906) 226-0156.

Authorized by Northern Michigan University with educational service provided by Teachers First

Updated 08/2026

North Star Montessori Academy

MISSION STATEMENT

North Star Montessori Academy fosters a Montessori environment allowing the whole child the freedom and support to question, think deeply, and make connections. Our Montessori environment yields confident, motivated, and self-directed learners able to think critically, work collaboratively, and become respectful citizens in an ever-changing world.

CORE VALUES

Stewardship

Students and staff take care of those in our charge by helping connect personal wellness to that of the prepared environment. We encourage awareness of others and where we find ourselves. We collaborate to take care of our environment on our campus, in our local community as well as globally.

Community

We are a family that supports, encourages, collaborates, and accepts the child and each member of our community.

Compassion

We are connected to, and care for all students in the school, both in classrooms and common spaces. We are willing to address issues as necessary. We are human beings and we treat one another with kindness and dignity.

Problem Solving

Problems are solved when students are empowered to resolve conflicts both on their own and in small group settings. Students are empowered to be self-motivated, self-disciplined, and independent learners by building relationships and gaining knowledge of their peers. Faculty and staff meet individual needs through these collaborative restorative justice practices.

Progressive

Our teachers are up-to-date on current national and state standards and how they relate to Montessori theory and practice. We are intentional and adaptable with our Montessori instruction and how these methods suit our current student population in order to best “follow the student”.

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North Star Montessori Academy
[Academic Calendar: 2026-2027](#) & [Special Events Calendar](#)

School Year: 2025-2026	Event
September 3	Welcome Back Night 4:00-6:00pm
September 8	First Day of School
September 16	Early Release 1:00pm
October 12	NO SCHOOL: Teacher Professional Development
October 21	Early Release 1:00pm
October 30	Early Release 1:00pm
November 18	Early Release 1:00pm
November 23 & November 24	Normal School Day: Parent Teacher Conferences 4:00-7:00pm
November 25, 26, 27	NO SCHOOL: Thanksgiving Break
December 16	Early Release 1:00pm
December 22	Early Release 1:00pm
December 23-January 1	NO SCHOOL: Winter Break
January 18	NO SCHOOL: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 20	Early Release 1:00pm
February 15	NO SCHOOL: Mid-Winter Break
February 17	Early Release 1:00pm
March 17	Early Release 1:00pm
March 22-29	NO SCHOOL: Spring Break
April 21	Early Release 1:00pm
May 19	Early Release 1:00pm
May 28	Early Release 1:00pm
May 31	NO SCHOOL: Memorial Day
June 7	8th Grade Graduation 5:30pm
June 11	Last Day of School: Early Release 1:00pm

What are Charter Schools?
(Public School Academies or PSA's)

- A local, public school district.
- Governed by appointed public officials.
- Tuition-free and enrollment is open to all—they do not charge tuition (K-8)
- Created “from scratch”, with school staff and parents determining the curriculum, any special focus, its primary programs and the overall school environment.
- Charter schools are independent public schools that operate under a performance contract called a charter. The charter, in North Star Academy’s (NSMA) case, is authorized by Northern Michigan University. NSMA has a written performance contract with NMU and NSMA is evaluated annually in many areas. A charter can be revoked and the school will close if performance is not adequate.
- Charter schools are required to employ certified teachers, students must take the state M-Step tests and other mandatory state tests, and the Board must publicize detailed budgets and annual audits, just as all other public schools.
- North Star Montessori Academy’s curriculum fully meets Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements.
- They are state-supported schools. Charter schools receive only the per-pupil state aid to cover ALL costs. Charters cannot levy millages for building or debt—which amounts to about \$1000 less per child than what Michigan’s traditional schools collect from taxpayers. That’s why you hear the term, “Charter schools do more with less.”

For further information go to www.charterschools.org

FOREWORD

This student handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that students and parents may have during the course of a school year. Because the handbook also contains information about student rights and responsibilities, each student is responsible for knowing the contents. Please take time to become familiar with the following information and keep the handbook available for your use. It can be a valuable reference during the school year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstanding when questions arise. If you have any questions, please contact the Principal. This handbook supersedes all prior handbooks and other written or oral statements regarding any item in this handbook.

MISSION OF THE SCHOOL

North Star Montessori Academy fosters a Montessori environment allowing the whole child the freedom and support to question, think deeply, and make connections. Our Montessori environment yields confident, motivated, and self-directed learners able to think critically, work collaboratively, and become respectful citizens in an ever-changing world.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex (including gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, or a related condition), age, height, weight, familial status, marital status, military service, veteran status, genetic information, disability, or any other legally protected basis, and prohibits unlawful discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, in any education program or activity that it operates, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about unlawful discrimination, including unlawful harassment and retaliation, may be referred to the District's applicable Coordinator and/or an agency with jurisdiction, such as the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the Department of Justice.

Designated Title IX Coordinator/Civil Rights Coordinator/Employment Rights Coordinator

Mary VanderMolen
3030 Wright Street, Marquette, MI 49855
(906) 226-0156
mvandermolen@nsacd.com

Designated Section 504 Coordinator

Miranda Roose, Special Education Teacher, 504 Coordinator
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The District's Non-discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Non-Retaliation Policy and Grievance Procedures is available at <https://northstaracademymqt.com/> To report information about conduct that may constitute unlawful discrimination, including unlawful harassment and retaliation, or make a complaint of such conduct, please contact the applicable Coordinator listed above.

SCHOOL DAY

North Star Montessori Academy start time is 8:30 am. Dismissal is at 3:30 pm. Bus schedules will be provided to parents and will be available on the school website. Parents/guardians are responsible for signing their students up for transportation. PK-8 students riding with parents should be dropped off at school no earlier than 8:15 am and picked up no later than 3:40 pm unless they are enrolled in the Before & After School Program and/or attending school sponsored clubs. School doors will open at 8:15 am. The third Wednesday of each month students will have an early dismissal of 1:00 pm for staff professional development.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The rules and procedures of the school are designed to allow each student to obtain a safe, orderly, and appropriate education. Students can expect their rights to freedom of expression and association and to fair treatment to be recognized as long as they respect those rights of their fellow students and the staff. Students will be expected to follow teachers' directions and to obey all school rules. Disciplinary procedures are designed to ensure due process before a student is removed because of his/her behavior.

Parents have the right to know how their child is succeeding in school and will be provided information on a regular basis and as needed when concerns arise. It is the student's responsibility to deliver information to the parents or guardians from school. If necessary, phone calls, mail, e-mail or hand delivery may be used to ensure contact. Parents are encouraged to build a two-way link with their child's teachers and support staff by informing the staff of suggestions or concerns that may help their child better accomplish his/her educational goals.

NSMA also offers middle school parents and students PowerSchool access in order to view grades and attendance via the internet, 24 hours a day.

At North Star Montessori Academy, we use **ClassDojo** schoolwide as our primary communication tool to connect families and the school in real time. ClassDojo allows teachers and administrators to share classroom updates, important announcements, photos, and celebrations of student learning in a secure, user-friendly platform. Families can receive messages instantly on their devices, helping to keep everyone informed, engaged, and connected to their child's educational journey. By using ClassDojo consistently across the school, we foster strong partnerships between home and school that support student success. **Classroom teachers will assist in enrolling and connecting all families.**

Students are expected to arrive at school prepared to learn. It is the student's responsibility to arrive on time and be prepared to participate in the educational program. If, for some reason, this is not possible, the student should seek help from the Superintendent or Principal.

STUDENT WELL-BEING

Student safety is the responsibility of the staff. All staff members are familiar with emergency procedures such as fire, tornado and other emergency drills and accident reporting procedures. Should a student be aware of any dangerous situation or accident, s/he must notify any staff person immediately.

State law requires that **all students have an emergency medical form completed (part of enrollment paperwork)**, signed by a parent or guardian, and filed in the school office. A student may be excluded from school until this requirement has been fulfilled. This form will be updated annually.

Students with specific health care needs must deliver written notice about such needs along with proper documentation by a physician to the school office. A written Medical Plan will be written as needed for individual students.

INJURY AND ILLNESS

All injuries must be reported to a teacher, office staff, or administration. If the injury is minor, the student will be treated and may return to class. If medical attention is required, the office will follow the school's emergency procedures. Parents will be notified of serious injuries and/or any accident/injury involving the student's head.

A student who becomes ill during the school day should request permission to go to the office. The Superintendent, Principal, or Administrative Assistant will determine whether or not the student should remain in school or go home. **No student will be released from school without prior parental permission. The parents will be called by school staff.**

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

ENROLLMENT

Admission: The Board of Directors will allow students who reside in Michigan to enroll in the School in accordance with limits they have established. Because space is limited, each student must reaffirm their intent to enroll each year. Preferences will be given to:

- Currently enrolled students
- Siblings of enrolled students
- Children of a person employed by NSMA

When maximum enrollment has been reached, applicants shall be placed on a waiting list and admitted on a first come first serve basis as space becomes available.

Admission – Due to facility limitations the Board of Directors establishes the enrollment numbers at the beginning of each school year.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to deny admission to any student who has a record of behavior that he/she believes would constitute a threat to the safety and well-being of fellow students and staff.

When applying, the parents or legal guardians must bring:

- Original or certified copy of Birth Certificate (with seal)
- Custody papers from a court (if appropriate)
- Proof of immunizations or Health Department Immunization Waiver

All documentation must be turned into the office prior to starting school. Students will be denied attendance until all documentation is obtained by the school office.

Application Procedure - To apply, contact the school to schedule an Informational Tour that will include the parent/guardian and student (when appropriate). During the Informational Tour participants will be given a thorough overview of the school and the expectations for student performance and involvement. The parent/guardian and student who wish to enroll must complete all forms. Once all items are complete, and there is an opening, the student may begin coursework at North Star Montessori Academy.

EARLY DISMISSAL

No student will be allowed to leave school prior to dismissal time without written request or contact from [1] the parent [2] a person whose signature is on file in the school office [3] or the parent coming to the school office to request the release. No student will be released to a person other than a custodial parent(s) or guardian without written permission signed by that custodial parent(s) or guardian or verbal agreement communicated to an NSMA staff person. **Students will not be permitted to make plans during the school day to leave with another student. All such arrangements should be made with parents prior to the school day and must provide staff with necessary permissions.**

TRANSFER OUT OF THE DISTRICT

If a student plans to transfer from North Star Montessori Academy, the parent must notify the Principal. Transfer will be authorized only after the student has completed the arrangements, returned all school materials, and paid any fees or fines that are due. School records may not be released if the transfer is not properly completed. Parents are encouraged to contact the office Administrative Assistant for specific details.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Each student must have the immunizations required by law or have an authorized waiver. If a student does not have the necessary immunizations or waivers, the Principal will remove the student and require compliance with a set deadline. This is for the safety of all students and is in accordance with State law. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the Administrative Assistant.

VISION SCREENING

Vision Screening is conducted by the Health Department for students in kindergarten and in grades one, three, and five. Other students are screened on a referral basis.

HEARING SCREENING

Hearing Screening is conducted by the Health Department for students in kindergarten and in grades two, four and six. Students may also be screened when referred by a parent or staff member.

DENTAL SCREENING

Dental Screening is conducted by the Health Department for students in kindergarten. Students may also be screened when referred by a parent or staff member.

USE OF MEDICATIONS

In those circumstances when a student must take prescribed medication during the school day, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- A. Parents should, with their physician's counsel, determine whether the medication schedule can be adjusted to avoid administering medication during school hours.
- B. The Medication Request and Authorization Form 5330 F1, F1a, and F1b must be filed with the respective building principals before the student will be allowed to begin taking any medication during school hours.
- C. All medications must be registered in the main office and will be administered by office staff based on the directions provided by the physician.
- D. Medication that is brought to the office will be properly secured. Medication may be conveyed to school directly by the parent. A two to four (2-4) week supply of medication is recommended. Medication **MAY NOT** be sent to school in a student's lunch box, pocket, car or other means on or about his/her person.
- E. Any unused medication unclaimed by the parent will be destroyed by school personnel when a prescription is no longer to be administered or at the end of a school year.
- F. A log for each prescribed medication shall be maintained which will note the personnel giving the medication, the date, and the time of day. This log will be maintained along with the physician's written instructions and the parent's written permission release.

Asthma Inhalers:

Students, with appropriate written permission from the physician and parent, may possess and use a metered dose inhaler or dry powder inhaler to alleviate asthmatic symptoms. Students may possess and self-administer a metered dose or dry powder inhaler for relief of asthma, or before exercise to prevent onset of asthma symptoms, while at school, on school-sponsored transportation, or at any school-sponsored activity in accord with the Superintendent's guidelines, if the following conditions are met:

There is written approval from the student's physician or other health care provider and the student's parent/guardian to possess and use the inhaler (Form 5330 F1c), and the building administrator has received a copy of the written approval from the physician and the parent/guardian.

Non-prescribed (over-the-counter) medications:

NSMA Staff **CAN'T** administer over the counter medications (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin) to students. Any over the counter medication will need to be prescribed by a physician and follow the protocols above. If a student is found using or possessing a non-prescribed medication without parent authorization, s/he will be brought to the school office and the parents will be contacted for authorization. The medication will be confiscated until written authorization is received. Any student who distributes a medication of any kind to another student or is found to possess a medication other than the one authorized is in violation of the school's Code of Conduct and will be disciplined in accordance with the drug-use provision of the Code.

Before any prescribed medication or treatment may be administered to any student during school hours, the school requires the written prescription and instructions from the child's physician accompanied by the written authorization of the parent. Both must also authorize any self-medication by the student. Before any non-prescribed medication or treatment may be administered, the Board shall require written consent of the parent along with a waiver of any liability of the District for the administration of the medication.

CONTROL OF CASUAL CONTACT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND PESTS

A school has a high concentration of people so it is necessary to take measures when the health and safety of the group is at risk. The school's professional staff has the authority to remove or isolate a student who has been ill or has been exposed to communicable disease or a highly-transient pest, such as lice. A parent or guardian will be called to come and get a student if a student is vomiting, has a high temperature, or has live lice on his or her scalp.

Specific diseases include; conjunctivitis (pink eye), diphtheria, scarlet fever, strep infections, whooping cough, mumps, measles, rubella, and other conditions indicated by the Local and State Health Departments.

Any removal will only be for the contagious period as specified in the school's administrative guidelines.

 My Child is Sick, now what? 26-27

CONTROL OF NON-CASUAL CONTACT COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

In the case of non-casual contact, communicable diseases, the school still has the obligation to protect the safety of the staff and students. In these cases, the person in question will have his/her status reviewed by a panel of resource people, including the County Health Department, to ensure that the rights of the person affected and those in contact with that person are respected. The school will seek to keep students and staff persons in school unless there is definitive evidence to warrant exclusion.

Non-casual contact communicable diseases include sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), ARC-AIDS Related Complex (condition), HIV (Human-immunodeficiency), Hepatitis B, and other diseases that may be specified by the State Board of Health.

As required by Federal law, parents will be requested to have their child's blood checked for HIV,

HBV, and other blood-borne pathogens when the child has bled at school and students or staff members have been exposed to the blood. Any testing is subject to laws protecting confidentiality.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

North Star Montessori Academy provides a variety of special education services for students identified as having a disability defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A student can access special education services through the proper evaluation, eligibility and placement procedure. Parent involvement in this procedure is required. More importantly, the school wants the parent to be an active participant in the process. To inquire about the identification process or services available, a parent should contact the school.

TITLE I

The goal of Title I is to provide extra instructional services and interventions that support students identified as struggling to meet the state's challenging performance standards in mathematics, reading, and writing. Identification will be based on a combination of grades and standardized test scores. Students eligible for special education will typically be provided these instructional services and interventions through their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and not through Title I.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

North Star Montessori Academy provides a Language Assistance Program for students who have been designated as English Learners. North Star provides support for eligible students to allow for meaningful access to the curriculum and in direct English language instruction. These services are provided by a Certified bilingual/ESL teacher.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT – SECTION 504

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires the school to ensure that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies not just to the student, but to all individuals.

Students with disabilities may be served within the regular education program with an accommodation plan developed by school staff. Parents, who believe their child may have a disability that substantially limits the child's ability to function properly in school, should contact the 504 Coordinator by calling the main office.

STUDENT RECORDS

Many student records are kept by teachers, counselors, and administrative staff. There are two (2) basic kinds of records – directory information and confidential records.

Directory information can be given to any person or organization for nonprofit-making purposes when requested, unless the parents of the student restrict the information, in writing, to the Principal.

Directory information includes: A student's name; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight, is a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; honor rolls; scholarships.

Confidential records contain educational and behavioral information that has restricted access based on the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Michigan law. This information can only be released with the written consent of the parents or legal guardians.

Confidential records include: Test scores, psychological reports, behavioral data, disciplinary actions, and communications with the family and outside service providers. Confidential information that is in the student's record that originates from an outside professional or agency may be released to the parent only with permission of the originator. Such records shall be placed in a student's file only with knowledge of the parent. Parents may obtain such records from the originator and should maintain them in a home file. Parents may also provide the school with copies of records made by non-school professional agencies or individuals. Students and parents have the right to review all educational records generated by the School District, request amendment to these records, and obtain copies of such records. Copying costs may be charged to the requestor. If a review of records is desired, please contact the Administrative Assistant, Principal, or Superintendent, in writing, stating the records desired. The records will be collected and an appointment will be made within forty-five (45) days of the request with the appropriate persons present to answer any questions.

STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES

North Star Montessori Academy may charge specific fees for the non-curricular activities and programs. Such fees or charges are determined by the cost of materials, freight/handling fees, and add-on fees for loss or damage to school property. The school and staff do not make a profit.

- Fees may be waived in situations where there is financial hardship.
- Students using school property and equipment can be fined for excessive wear and abuse of the property and equipment. The fine will be used to pay for the damage, not to make a profit. More detailed information on computer fines can be found later in this handbook.

STUDENT FUND-RAISING

Students participating in school-sponsored groups and activities—those that are recognized and approved by the Superintendent and in some cases, the Board of Directors—will be allowed to solicit funds from other students, staff members, and members of the community in accordance with school guidelines. The following general rules apply to all fundraisers:

- Students involved in the fund-raiser are not to interfere with students participating in other activities in order to solicit funds. A student will not be allowed to participate in fund-raising activities for a group in which s/he is not a member without approval of the Superintendent.
- No student may participate in fundraising activities off school property without proper supervision by approved staff or other adults.
- No student may participate in a fund-raising activity conducted by a parent group, booster club, or community organization on school property without the approval of the Superintendent.
- Student fund-raising proceeds will be deposited/withdrawn from the appropriate NSMA account and accessed by authorized school personnel.

STUDENT VALUABLES

Students are encouraged not to bring items of value to school. Items such as jewelry, expensive clothing, and electronic equipment are tempting targets for theft and extortion. The school cannot be responsible for their safekeeping and will not be liable for loss or damage to personal valuables.

CELL PHONES & SMARTWATCHES

*Cell phones & Smartwatches are **not** permitted for PK-8th grade students during the school day.*

- To help maintain a focused, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment, student cell phones and smartwatches must be turned off and stored away during the school day.
- Cell phones must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack or locker.
- Smartwatches must also be turned off and stored in the student's backpack or locker. Students may not wear or use smartwatches during the school day.
- Devices may not be used for calling, texting, messaging, taking photos/videos, accessing social media, playing games, or other personal use during school hours.
- If a student needs to contact a parent or guardian during the school day, they may ask to use the school office phone.
- Parents who need to reach their child during the school day should contact the school office, and we will make sure the message is delivered.

We understand that many families provide phones and smartwatches for safety and communication before and after school. Students are welcome to bring these devices to school; however, from arrival through dismissal, they must remain turned off and stored away.

Students using their devices during the school day will be subject to the consequences below.

Consequences for not following the cell phone/smartwatch policy are as follows:

1st Offense - Verbal Warning

2nd Offense - Device will be confiscated by the teacher/staff for the remainder of the day

3rd Offense - Device will be confiscated by an administrator and the Parents/Guardians will be required to pick up the cell phone at the office during normal business hours.

REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

Parents have the right to review any instructional materials being used in the school. They may observe instruction in any class, particularly those dealing with instruction in health education. **Any parent who wishes to review materials or observe instruction must contact the Principal prior to coming to the school.** A Classroom Visit/Observation request form must be completed prior to visiting/observing a classroom. Parents' rights to review teaching materials, and instructional activities are subject to reasonable restrictions and limits.

FOOD

NSMA provides a free breakfast program to all students, prior to their first hour class. Middle School Students have the opportunity for “2nd Chance Breakfast” at 10am if they did not take morning breakfast. **Students will NOT be permitted to bring in restaurant/fast food and drink for breakfast (unless dietary restrictions and/or written permission from Administration).**

Restaurant/Fast Food and drinks during breakfast time has caused classroom distractions. Students can bring in breakfast items from home. Classroom teachers will allow for adequate time for students to eat breakfast in the classroom. After 9am any student arriving late that needs a breakfast will need to eat in the cafeteria prior to going to class.

Our lunch program features healthy and tasty food from Lawrys. All meals meet USDA school meal requirements. A monthly menu will be provided. Lunch begins at 11:30am and goes until 1:00 pm. All of our students will receive free breakfast and lunch for the 2026-2027 school year. Ala carte milk will be \$1.10 and extra lunches for students will be \$3.50.

Parents may drop off a check or cash at the front office in a marked envelope for their child/children’s account.

Students may also bring lunch from home, however please keep in mind that microwaves are not available. No caffeinated drinks will be allowed.

MEAL SERVICE

The school participates in the National School Lunch Program and makes free lunches available to all students. Students may also bring their own lunch to school to be eaten in the school’s cafeteria. Students must eat all food in the designated areas, sitting and talking quietly. Students are expected to follow the lunchtime supervisor’s directions.

NSMA IS A PEANUT/TREE NUT AWARE SCHOOL:

- Students may have peanut butter and/or other peanut/tree nut products at school if there is not an allergy within the classroom. Additional guidelines and procedures may be given for individual classrooms based on student need.
- This policy is subject to change based on the health and well being of students enrolled at North Star Montessori Academy.
- Please check in with your classroom teacher for verification of classroom guidelines and procedures.

LUNCH TIME

Elementary students have 20 minutes for lunch. Middle School students have 30 minutes for lunch and recess. **The multipurpose room is the only place where students may eat their lunch.** Students are expected to clean up after themselves and follow the directions given by the lunchroom supervisors. No caffeinated or energy drinks will be permitted.

All students must stay on campus for lunch. No student may leave the grounds on foot. Students

remaining on campus must be inside the building or in the designated sites.

Parents may not excuse their students from these rules to allow them to walk off campus for lunch.

Parents who order DOOR DASH for delivery will only be delivered to students during their assigned lunch period with the understanding that all food must be consumed during the assigned lunch period. Again, no caffeinated or energy drinks are permitted.

FOOD/BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION

Water and snacks are allowed in the classroom with the understanding that they do not cause a disruption to the daily classroom routine. Teachers allow for designated snack times throughout the school day. Dietary needs will be accommodated for students with administrative approval.

Students may only have water in the classroom. For health reasons caffeinated beverages are not permitted for all students. Sugary drinks/snacks are discouraged for all students. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics excess consumption of added sugars, especially from sugary drinks, contributes to the high prevalence of childhood and adolescent obesity. It also increases the risk for dental decay, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes.

All students must consume outside fast food and beverages prior to coming to school. They will no longer be permitted in classrooms during morning breakfast. Breakfast from home is still permitted.

Energy Drink Policy – The ability to concentrate and focus on instruction is an obvious need for students. As new research is being done on the effects of “Energy” and “Monster” drinks it is becoming clear that they are not helpful to students wanting to do their best and have been associated with students who engage in certain “high risk” behaviors, including substance abuse. These beverages contain large amounts of caffeine and sugar, as well as a number of dietary supplements, the long term effects of which are not fully understood. With these issues in mind, we believe that it is in the interests of student health and learning that we prohibit the consumption of these types of beverages at school. If discovered, these beverages will be confiscated from students. Open containers will be confiscated and emptied. Students who refuse to adhere to these restrictions will be treated in accordance with our progressive discipline policy.

The classroom teacher will have the final decision on what and when food/drink will be allowed in their classroom.

FIRE, LOCK DOWN, and TORNADO DRILLS

The school complies with all fire safety laws and will conduct fire drills in accordance with state law. Specific instructions on how to proceed will be provided to students by their teachers who will be responsible for safe, prompt, and orderly evacuation of the building. Tornado drills will be conducted during the tornado season using the procedures provided by the State. Lockdown and shelter in place drills will occur throughout the school year.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS AND DELAYS

If the school must be closed early or closed for the day because of inclement weather or other conditions, the School will notify TV6 as early in the morning as possible.

In addition NSMA families will be notified through the Bright Arrow system via phone and email. A post will also be made on the school-wide Class Dojo.

Parents and students are responsible for knowing about emergency closings and delays and students are expected to attend all days when school is not canceled by North Star Montessori Academy. Failure to do so may result in an extended calendar year in order to meet the required number of days and hours mandated by the state of Michigan.

VISITORS

Visitors, particularly parents, guardians and advocates, are welcome at our school. In order to properly monitor the safety of students and staff, **each visitor must enter through the front door of the main building and report to the office immediately to sign in and obtain a pass and/or visitor tag.** Any visitor found in the building without a pass shall be reported to the Principal. **When leaving, the visitor must sign out with the office.**

If a person wishes to confer with a member of the staff, s/he should call or e-mail for an appointment prior to coming to the school, in order to ensure that the person is available.

Students may not bring visitors to school without first obtaining written permission from the Principal.

If a visitor will be volunteering in the school building. To volunteer, a [Volunteer Form](#) must be completed, and all volunteers must pass a background check.

USE OF SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Students must receive the permission of the teacher before using any equipment or materials in the classroom and the permission of the Superintendent to use any other school equipment or facility. Students will be held responsible for the proper use and safe-keeping of any equipment or facility they are allowed to use. Please see the Technology Agreement that all students using chromebooks must complete.

LOST AND FOUND

Please write students' names on tags in clothing and on belongings so they can be returned to the owner. The lost and found area is in the main office. Students who have lost items should check there and may retrieve their items if they give a proper description. Unclaimed items will be given to charity at the middle and close of the school year.

ADVERTISING OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

No announcements or posting of outside activities will be permitted without the approval of the Superintendent. A minimum of twenty-four (24) hours notice is required to ensure that the Superintendent has the opportunity to review the announcement or posting.

SECTION II –ACADEMICS

FIELD TRIPS

“Field trips” are offered to provide educational opportunities not available in the classroom and student participation is a privilege, not a right. Field trips are academic activities that are held off school grounds. There are also other trips that are part of the school’s co-curricular and extracurricular program. No student may participate in any school-sponsored trip without parental consent. **Students participating in field trips are expected to represent North Star Montessori Academy in a responsible manner and all school rules and procedures apply while students are on the trip.**

VOLUNTEERS

In an effort to ensure the safety of all of our students, NSMA requires a mandatory background check for all parents and/or guardians wishing to volunteer in a classroom, on field trips, or for any other school sponsored event. A volunteer form must be filled out and approved before any volunteer is able to participate at NMSA. Volunteer forms may be attained and returned to the main office or the online [Volunteer Form](#) may be completed.

GRADING

North Star Montessori Academy has a standard grading procedure, as well as additional notations that may indicate work in progress or incomplete work. The purpose of a grade is to indicate the extent to which the student has acquired the necessary learning of the content standards in each course. In general, students are assigned grades based upon classroom participation, projects, and test results. If a student is not sure how his/her grade will be determined, s/he should ask the teacher.

The **6th - 8th grading scale** is as follows:

A (100 – 92%) = Excellent
A- (91 – 90%)
B+ (89 – 88%)
B (87 – 82%) = Very Good
B- (81% - 80%)
C+ (79 – 78%)
C (77% - 72%) = Average
C- (71 – 70%)
D+ (69 – 68%)
D (67 – 62%) = Below Average D- (61 – 60%)
IP = In Progress

NC = No Credit

The **K-5th Grade Montessori grading scale** is as follows:

Not Applicable (NA)

- The student has **not yet been introduced** to this grade-level standard.

Introduced (I)

- The student has been **introduced** to the grade-level standard, but still requires **full support** from the teacher.

Emerging (E)

- The student is **beginning to demonstrate understanding** of grade-level standards.
- With support, the student can complete tasks but often requires **frequent guidance, modeling, or reteaching**.
- Skills and concepts are **in the early stages of development** and are **not yet consistent or independent**.

Developing (D)

- The student shows **partial understanding** of grade-level standards and can apply skills **with some support**.
- Progress is evident, but performance is **not yet consistent across contexts or tasks**.
- The student may still need **scaffolding or reminders** to demonstrate understanding independently.

Proficient (P)

- The student **consistently demonstrates understanding** of grade-level standards.
- Work shows **solid understanding and application** of key skills and concepts.
- The student performs **independently and accurately** with minimal support and can transfer learning to new situations.

Extending (X)

- The student **exceeds grade-level expectations** by demonstrating **deeper understanding, higher-level reasoning, and application** beyond what was taught.
- The student applies learning in **new, complex, or creative ways** and often **initiates independent inquiry or problem-solving**.
- Performance reflects **advanced understanding and independence**.

To view the complete document regarding Elementary Grading, please view the following document:

 [NSMA Standards-Based Report Card](#)

Grading Periods

Students shall receive a report card at the end of each term indicating their grades for each course of study for that portion of the academic term. Additionally, progress reports will be sent home and/or can be viewed on the Internet (for 6th-8th Grade). Progress reports tell a student's standing at that time and cannot be used as a true indicator of whether he/she will pass or fail.

When a student appears to be at risk of failure, notification will be provided to the parents so they can talk with the teacher about what actions can be taken to improve poor grades.

MUSIC

Music classes will be held in grades Preschool-8th Grade each week. Special emphasis is given to learning note values, the mechanics of reading music, and studying famous composers and their work to learn appreciation of music history, etc. Children are provided with opportunities to perform with a variety of rhythm instruments, recorders, as well as their own best instrument, their voice.

A special effort is created at North Star to provide opportunities to learn the art of performing as children are exposed to building level concerts each year with one held in December and one in the spring.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education classes will be held in grades Preschool-8th Grade each week. Parents must notify the school of any known medical condition that could prohibit or limit gym participation. Notification must be in writing. Extended absences require a doctor's statement.

Gym shoes must be worn to protect the floor as well as provide for safety during running activities. At times gym class will be held outside and students will need coats and outdoor clothing to protect them from the weather.

ART

Art classes will be provided in grades Preschool-8th Grade each week. Special emphasis will be on incorporating creative projects, the use of choice based activities, and the Grade Level Content Expectations to meet the Michigan Department of Education Standards and Benchmarks.

PROMOTION/PLACEMENT/RETENTION

At NSMA students are placed in classes with other students of mixed ages ('multi-age' classrooms). It is the student's responsibility to keep in contact with his/her teachers to ensure that all requirements are being met.

Students will be **promoted** to the next grade level at the end of the year if they have successfully completed the grade level objectives.

Students may be **placed** in the next grade level if they have not successfully completed the grade

level objectives. Reasons for placement could include:

- excessive absences
- failing two core subject areas
- negative behavior that interrupts academic progress.

Students will be recommended for **retention** in the current grade level if they have not successfully completed the grade/developmental milestones necessary to succeed in the next grade level.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (EDP)

North Star Montessori Academy, in accordance with the Michigan Department of Education, will provide grade-appropriate instruction on career development. In addition, students will be given the opportunity to develop an Educational Development Plan (EDP) that includes a talent portfolio during Grade 8. The plan will follow them to High School. The intent of the EDP is to guide the student in making decisions about their course of study and their postsecondary plans.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND NETWORKS

Because any student may enhance his/her school career through participation in the school's computer network, s/he and his/her parents must sign an agreement which defines the conditions under which the student may participate. **Failure to abide by all of the terms of the agreement will lead to termination of the student's computer activities and possible disciplinary action up to and including suspension/expulsion from school and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.**

The use of the computer network is a privilege which may be revoked by the district at any time and for any reason. Appropriate reasons for revoking privileges include, but are not limited to, the altering of system software or the placing of unauthorized information, computer viruses or harmful programs on or through the computer system in either public or private files or messages.

Use of the Internet – Terms and Conditions

Acceptable Uses – The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research, and in accordance with the educational objectives of the NSMA.

Unacceptable Uses – Includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Users should not lend their Internet account and/or password to other users, or use another's account.
- Using technology for commercial purposes or political lobbying is prohibited
- Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users; or misrepresent other users on the network; nor should they upload, create, or introduce a virus.
- Transmission or reception of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation that is sexist, pornographic, and obscene material; or information protected by trade secret.
- Abusive or otherwise objectionable language is forbidden.
- No use of the network shall serve to disrupt the use of the network by others: hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified, or abused in any way.

Students must have an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) signed by parents on file at NSMA in order to use the Internet. If you want your student to have this opportunity, please sign the form, have your son/daughter sign it, and return it. He/She will then be given permission to use the Internet at NSMA.

Middle School students and parents must also sign and return a [Chromebook Contract](#) in order for a chromebook to be assigned and used. Chromebooks must remain at NSMA at all times, unless permission is granted by Administration.

Netiquette – Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of computer etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assume that e-mail is NOT secure or confidential. Never send anything that you would hesitate to have viewed by others.
- Respect other people's privacy regarding mail or files.
- Avoid the use of sarcasm in electronic communication.
- The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of these privileges. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate and their decision is final. The administration and staff of NSMA may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges. In addition, NSMA will not be responsible for any damages suffered by the user. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruption caused by its own negligence or your errors or omissions. NSMA denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet.

District Web Pages (Policy #7540.02)

The Board of Directors authorizes the creation of web sites by employees and students of the School District to be published on the World Wide Web. The creation of web sites by students must be done under the supervision of a professional staff member. These web sites must reflect the professional image of the District, its employees, and students. The content of all pages must be consistent with the School District's Mission Statement. The purpose of the website is to educate, inform, and communicate.

ASSESSMENTS

To measure student progress, students will be tested in accordance with State standards and District policy. Projects and assignments will require students to apply their knowledge and skills using rubrics and evaluation from teachers and peers. Assessment may come in the form of written, verbal, or project. Teacher observations and progress monitoring is ongoing throughout the school year to ensure that all students are receiving appropriate instruction at his/her level.

Students will participate in NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Assessment) three times per year. This online assessment tests students in areas of general science (Middle School), mathematics, and reading. NWEA allows students, parents/guardians, and staff to monitor yearly student growth and is used to determine appropriate support and interventions for students.

SECTION III – STUDENT ACTIVITIES

SCHOOL SPONSORED CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

North Star Montessori Academy provides students the opportunity to broaden their learning through curricular-related activities. The school may have student groups that are authorized by the School. It is the District's policy that the only authorized groups are those approved by the Board of Directors and sponsored by a staff member.

Extra-curricular activities do not reflect the school curriculum, but are made available to students to allow them to pursue additional worthwhile activities such as recreational sports, the arts, and the like. All students are permitted to participate in the activities of their choosing, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements. If a student does not participate or abide by the after school clubs rules, NSMA staff has the right to revoke permission to attend the after school club or activity.

NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Non-school sponsored student groups organized for religious, political, or philosophical reasons may meet during non-instructional hours. The application for permission can be obtained from the Principal. The application must verify that the activity is being initiated by students, attendance is voluntary, that no school staff person is actively involved in the event, that the event will not interfere with school activities and that non-school persons do not play a regular role in the event. School rules will still apply regarding behavior and equal opportunity to participate. No non-district sponsored organization may use the name of the school or school mascot.

Membership in a fraternity, sorority, or any other secret society as prescribed by law is not permitted. All groups must comply with School rules and must provide equal opportunity to participate.

ATHLETICS

Students participating in school sponsored sports must abide by the athletic code. Club sports may follow other guidelines.

PHYSICALS – All students must have a physician's statement/examination card for the current school year on file at the office before beginning or representing the school in athletics. The Physician's statement/examination card must certify that the student athlete has passed an adequate physical examination and that, in the opinion of the physician, the student is fully able to compete in athletic contests and practices.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Students must have passed at least 5 classes at the middle school level the Semester prior.
- Students must be passing 5 classes at the middle school level for the current Semester.
- Eligibility will be taken every two weeks.
- If a student is determined ineligible for academic reasons, they may not participate in competitions for the following week but must attend all practice sessions.
- The Principal and coaches will determine a method to check each student's academic eligibility.

SECTION IV – STUDENT CONDUCT

ATTENDANCE

North Star Montessori Academy believes that student success is directly related to regular school attendance. Attendance and punctuality are important to maximize learning opportunities. North Star Montessori Academy is a school of choice and students are expected to be in attendance during their scheduled time. The school specializes in Montessori, project based learning, community service, and has high academic expectations of all its students.

Attendance Expectations

1. Students are expected to attend all classes each day
2. Students are expected to be on time for each class during the school day.
3. Students are to remain in school the entire school day.
4. Students are expected to maintain a ninety percent (90%) attendance rate.
5. The District complies with the Michigan Compulsory School Law, which states that all students between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) are to attend school during the entire school year.

STUDENT/PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parents are expected to notify the school the day of, or the following day, of any absence or extenuating circumstances regarding illness or personal and family problems that may have an effect on attendance. Parents are encouraged to call in advance of an absence if at all possible. The Parent/Guardian must contact the administrative assistant 226-0156 ext.119 within 24 hours of an absence to report the absence and request it be excused. An email can also be sent to office@nsacd.com. Please do not rely on telling the classroom teacher, **the office must be notified**.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Excused absences are for:

- Illness (Doctor's Note for more than 3 consecutive days absent)
- Funerals
- Medical Appointments (Doctor's Note Required)
- Church Related Activities
- School Related Business
- Family vacations with prior notification

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Unexcused absences are any absences from class not listed as excused. These includes, but are not limited to:

- Oversleeping
- Skipping
- Not receiving parent / guardian contact for an absence within 1 school day

- Not following school sign-out procedures

Students who do not attend school regularly will receive the following supports and/or consequences. Supports and consequences will be implemented in the following order if attendance does not improve.

- Communication from North Star Montessori Staff (phone calls and/or email)
- Formal notification of absences (written letter)
- A scheduled meeting with NSMA staff to formulate a support plan
- Truancy Referral to Marquette Alger Mediation Services
- Petition to Marquette County Juvenile Court for Truancy

Should a student's attendance not improve after support has been made available, the student may be referred back to their home district.

NSMA 2026-27 Parent Attendance Letter

TARDINESS

Tardies are reported to the office each time they occur. If a student is tardy, they must check in at the office and have a written or verbal excuse from their parent/guardian. Students will then be given a pass to admit them to class. Students in grades PK-5th who arrive tardy in excess of one hour will be counted as a half-day absence. Students in grades 6th-8th that arrive after 8:45 am will be counted as absent for that period(s). The office will notify the student if an absence is recorded.

SIGN IN/OUT

When a student arrives after the school start time, he/she must have a parent sign them in at the office. Before a student leaves the building, he/she must have a parent or guardian sign them out from the office.

Before a student leaves the building, s/he must:

- Have permission from his/her parent or guardian, either written or verbally through the Superintendent, Principal, or administrative Assistant
- Sign out in the office with an office staff approving and initialing the departure

For appointments or planned departures, students must:

- Give a signed note from parent/guardian to the administrative assistant or have parent/guardian call the office
- Receive a pass to leave early from the office
- Give the pass to the teacher whose class they will be leaving
- Sign out in the office before leaving school property

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are expected to:

- **North Star Montessori Academy will follow the One Rule School/One Rule Classroom:**
 - *If what you are doing: **INTERFERES** with learning, **HURTS** someone's heart or **PREVENTS** you from being your best self...you shouldn't be doing it.*
- **Respect the inherent human dignity and worth of every individual.** Each student must not hamper any other student from pursuing an education.
- Be informed of and adhere to reasonable rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors, the Student Governing Board, and implemented by school administrators and teachers for the welfare and safety of all students.
- Study and maintain the best possible level of academic achievement
- Be punctual, present and alert.
- Conduct oneself as a positive representative of all members of North Star Montessori Academy while involved in school related activities, whether held on or off school grounds, during or after school hours.
- Exercise the utmost care while using school facilities, thus preserving school property and promoting a positive and healthy school/work environment.
- Refrain from libel, slanderous remarks and obscenity in both verbal and written expression.
- Abide by national, state, and local laws as well as the rules of the school.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES

North Star Montessori Academy is more than a school; it is a community. In this community, all members, including students and staff, enjoy many advantages and privileges that come from a learning environment where all are treated with respect; however, a community only works well when its members are willing to give something of themselves. With the privileges that come with the North Star Montessori Academy environment, there are certain obligations and responsibilities all of us share:

- **You may not like everyone at North Star Montessori Academy but you must respect everyone.**
- **No personal attacks.** You may attack ideas, but must not attack the person with whom you disagree.
- At North Star Montessori Academy we encourage you to be intellectual, to enjoy learning, to be curious about ideas, to read, to ask questions. **An atmosphere which encourages thought must be respected.**
- **It's okay to be different.** It's everyone's responsibility to make all members of the North Star Montessori Academy community feel comfortable and welcome. No one should feel the need to say the "right" things or wear the "right" clothes in order to belong.
- **We discuss many topics in class about which people have strong feelings.** Classroom discussions must end at the classroom door and be dealt with in that class. Things can easily get blown out of proportion when people who weren't in that class become involved.
- **We strive to treat everyone as an individual at North Star Montessori Academy.** No one solution is good for every person. Fairness, not uniformity, is our goal.

- **We purposely have students from many different backgrounds.** This is an important strength of North Star Montessori Academy. Often differences of opinion are real and deep.
- Discussions require that you learn to listen, skillfully (not just "hear"). You'll need to figure out the reasons and learn to judge the evidence that is offered to support arguments which you think are "wrong". The more you permit yourself to listen, to think, to open up to new ideas, the more you will understand the different backgrounds of the students (and the world) around you.

Remember, you represent North Star Montessori Academy:

- When visitors come to NSMA
- On field trips
- When speakers come to class
- At learning sites
- On jobs
- Everywhere!

DRESS AND GROOMING

Proper school attire is a parental responsibility and it is expected that all students will be sent to school properly dressed. Any fashion (dress, accessory, or hairstyle) that disrupts the educational process or represents a safety risk will not be permitted.

- Students will be expected to come to school well groomed and neatly dressed at all times.
- Shorts and skirts must be at a length that fully covers the students undergarments at all times (while sitting, standing, walking, at recess).
- See-through leggings, tops revealing midriffs/cleavage, bare backs, or visible undergarments are not acceptable.
- Shoes must be worn for health reasons.
- Shoes with wheels are not allowed.
- Clothing advertising alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, or those with obscene or sexually suggestive printing or ethnic slander will not be allowed.
- Parents will be called and asked to bring appropriate clothing to the school for the child to wear in such instances.

Children should be properly dressed for the cold weather. Boots, snow pants, hats and mittens will be worn on the playground during outside recess. It is best to send children to school in layers so they may put on or take off clothing depending on the weather.

The Superintendent and/or Principal will make the final determination of appropriate clothing and appropriate actions.

CARE OF PROPERTY

Students are responsible for the care of their own personal property. The school will not be responsible for personal property. Valuables such as jewelry, gaming systems, personal computers, or irreplaceable items should not be brought to school. The school may confiscate such items and return them to the student's parents. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen items in its possession.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE CODE

The Board of Directors has adopted the following Student Discipline Code. The Code includes the types of misconduct that will subject a student to disciplinary action. The Board has also adopted the list of behaviors and the terms contained in the list.

At North Star Montessori Academy, we believe it is our responsibility to create a safe, respectful, and orderly environment where all students can thrive. Discipline is guided by the principle that **students learn best when they experience both empathy and the logical consequences of their actions**. Our goal is to help students develop self-control, personal responsibility, and respect for others through fair, thoughtful, and individualized responses.

We understand that each child and situation is unique. While consistency in expectations is important, we focus on **fairness rather than strict uniformity**, making decisions that take into account the specific circumstances and needs of each student. When mistakes happen, we respond with respect, empathy, and solutions that allow students to reflect, repair, and grow.

Disciplinary decisions are made with the sound discretion of school staff and administration, and due process ensures that actions are taken only after reviewing the facts and circumstances. School expectations apply: On the way to and from school, At school and on school property, During school-sponsored events, On school transportation.

Level I Behaviors: These are minor, undesired behaviors that may include, but are not limited to:

- Interrupting inappropriately
- Disruptive behavior
- Not following directions
- Minor damage or misuse of school property
- Minor disrespect toward students or staff
- Dishonesty
- Dress code violations
- Horseplay
- Littering

- Teasing

Possible Staff Responses (depending on the situation and student needs):

- Private, respectful reminder of expectations
- Offering choices within limits
- Visual or nonverbal cue
- Reteaching expected behavior
- Logical consequence related to the behavior
- Loss of a related privilege
- Parent communication (phone call, message, or conference)
- Office referral for repeated or severe cases

Frequency and type of response will vary based on the severity, impact, and repetition of the behavior.

Level II Behaviors: These behaviors require immediate referral to the Principal and a written Incident Report. Parents/guardians will be contacted promptly. Examples may include:

- Significant disrespect or defiance toward staff
- Harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- Physical aggression or fighting
- Theft or vandalism
- Possession of prohibited items
- Severe dishonesty (e.g., forgery, plagiarism)
- Repeated Level I behaviors despite intervention

Possible Administrative Responses:

- Restorative conversation or mediation
- Development of an individualized behavior support plan
- Temporary removal from the learning environment to regain self-control
- In-school or out-of-school suspension (when necessary)

- Loss of school transportation privileges (when applicable)
- Referral to additional support services

Our intention is always to pair consequences with learning opportunities so students can return to the community with restored relationships and a renewed commitment to success.

Level II Behaviors include, but are not limited to:

1. Disobedience / Insubordination

School staff is acting "in loco parentis," which means they are allowed, by law, to direct a student as would a parent. This applies to all staff, not just teachers assigned to a student. If given a reasonable direction by a staff member, the student is expected to comply.

2. Gross Disruption of the Educational Process

The act of deliberate or willful conduct, verbal and/or physical, detrimental or disruptive to the educational process or persistent level #1 behavior that the honor level system has been unable to correct.

3. Misuse of Equipment / Technology

Note: Violation of this policy may lead to confiscation of the equipment or the student's use of the equipment being prohibited. This is in addition to other consequences.

4. Aiding or abetting violation of school rules

When a student assists another student in violating any school rule. Students are expected to resist peer pressure and exercise sound decision-making regarding their behavior.

5. Falsification of school work, identification, forgery

Forgery of any written document including hall/bus passes and excuses as well as false I.D.'s are forms of lying and are not acceptable. Plagiarism and cheating are also forms of falsification.

6. Refusing to accept discipline - When a student refuses to accept the usual discipline for an infraction, the refusal can result in a sterner action such as suspension.

7. Larceny/Theft - The act of illegally acquiring the property of another or others. The value of the property will determine if the police are notified

Minor: item valued less than \$100

Major: item valued at \$100 or more the police will be notified

8. Verbal Assault - Any willful verbal and/or written threat to inflict injury upon another person, under such circumstances which create a reasonable fear of imminent injury, coupled with an apparent ability to inflict injury.

9. Physical Assault - Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence. At school means in the classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held

on school premises.

10. Bullying - “Bullying” or “harassment” is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e., cyberbullying, through the use of internet, cell phone, computer, or wireless handheld device, currently in use or later developed and used by students) that is perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress and may be motivated either by bias or prejudice based upon any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic, or is based upon association with another person who has or is perceived to have any distinguishing characteristic. Bullying or harassment also include forms of retaliation against individuals who report or cooperate in an investigation under this policy. Such behaviors are considered to be bullying or harassment whether they take place on or off school property, at any school sponsored function, or in a school vehicle or at any time or place where a child’s imminent safety or overall well being may be at issue.

“Bullying” is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- is perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress.
- is directed at one or more students.
- is conveyed through physical, verbal, technological or emotional means.
- substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more students.
- adversely affects the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school district’s or public school’s educational programs or activities by placing the student in fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress.
- is based on a student’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above) or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

11. Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment is defined as conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- Employee quid pro quo
- Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and
- Hostile environment
 - Hostile Environment is defined as: “Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person’s equal access to the recipient’s educational program or activity.”

The complete copy of the board adopted policy (2266) may be viewed [here](#).

12. False Alarm / Bomb Threat - The act of initiating or circulating a report or warning of fire or an impending bombing or other catastrophe

13. Extortion - Extortion is the use of threat, intimidation, force, or deception to take, or receive something from someone else.

14. Damage to Property – The damage or destruction of property through willful or improper behavior. This shall also include tampering with, and/or causing the discharge of any sprinkler system

or other apparatus installed in a school building for the prevention of fire or for the safety of the school population or school property.

15. Drugs/Narcotics

The school has a “Drug Free” zone that extends 1000 feet beyond the school boundaries as well as to any school activity and transportation. This means that any activity – sale, use, possession, distribution, or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vape products, fake drugs, steroids, inhalants, or look-alike, and over the counter drugs is prohibited.

If caught or suspected, the school may:

- Remove the student from school on a short or long term basis up to and including expulsion
- Request law enforcement officials to interview and investigate
- Require that the student take a drug assessment within one week time frame, and sign a release so the school may know the recommendation only of the assessment; NSMA pays all costs of the assessment

A student may be suspected of substance abuse if s/he exhibits the following symptoms:

- Sudden personality changes that include abrupt changes in work or school attendance, quality of work, and work output
- Unusual flare-ups or outbursts of temper
- Physical indicators: color in whites of the eyes, flushed or pale skin, loss of balance or control, different speech patterns, having an odor or smell about the person or clothing
- Loss of interest in what were once favorite hobbies and pursuits
- Difficulty concentrating or paying attention
- Sudden jitteriness, nervousness, or aggression
- Wearing of sunglasses at inappropriate times
- Continually wearing long sleeved garments in hot weather or reluctance to wear short sleeved attire when appropriate
- Secretive behavior regarding actions and possessions; poorly concealed attempts to avoid attention and suspicion such as frequent trips to the restroom
- Preoccupation with drugs demonstrated by talking, conversations, drawing pictures or words

Parents may also note:

- Changes in friends and reluctance to have friends visit
- Deterioration of physical appearance or grooming
- Unusual borrowing of money from friends, co-workers, or parents
- Stealing small items from employer, home, or school

Smoking and other tobacco uses are a danger to a student's health and to the health of others. The school prohibits the sale, distribution, use, or possession of any form of tobacco or vape products during school time or at any school activity.

16. Skipping - Student was on school grounds but left without the following sign out procedures or parent/guardian having sent the student to the school and the student failed to appear. This includes:

- A student who left at lunch and does not return - sign out must have occurred prior to student leaving
- A student who does not show up for their assigned class but remains on property (in the

bathroom, outside, etc.)

17. Refusal to accept discipline – When a student refuses to accept the usual discipline for an infraction, the refusal can result in a sterner action such as suspension

18. Inappropriate Conduct - Any conduct deemed by administration as being inappropriate. This is to include, but is not limited to, obscene language and/or gestures, racial slurs, creating a hostile environment for others, and/or any other conduct not conducive to a healthy, orderly, and safe school environment.

19. Robbery or extortion – The act of illegally acquiring the property of another or others. The value of the property will determine if police are notified as defined by the State of Michigan for reporting purposes:

- Armed Robbery: the taking of property from a person by force or threat while armed with a weapon or article representing a weapon.
- Unarmed robbery: the taking of property from a person by force or threat.
- Extortion: threatening another person for the purpose of extorting money or property, or to compel the threatened person to do an act against the threatened person's will.

20. Threatening Behavior Toward Staff Members - *Threatening behavior* is defined as behavior consisting of any words or deeds that intimidates a staff member or reasonably causes concern for his/her physical and/or psychological well-being. Such behavior is strictly forbidden. Examples of such behavior include: threats to cause bodily harm; stalking; bullying; threats to damage real or personal property at the workplace; unusual behavior that a reasonable person would consider threatening. Any student, parent, visitor, staff member, or agent of this board found to have threatened a member of the staff will be subject to discipline, exclusion, and/or reported to the authorities.

Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM)

Purpose

Our school is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all students, staff, and community members. To help prevent harm and respond early to concerning behaviors, we use a process called Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM). Our process aligns with state law - House Bill 5549 enacted in 2024 as Public Act 272 - which requires schools to establish threat assessment and management teams by October 1, 2026.

What Is BTAM?

BTAM is a proactive and evidence-based approach used to identify, assess, and respond to behaviors that may pose a threat to the safety or well-being of individuals or the school community. This process is not about punishment; it is about support, problem-solving, and ensuring everyone has access to the help they need.

When Is BTAM Used?

BTAM is initiated when a student's words, actions, or behavior raise concern about the potential for

harm to others. Examples might include verbal threats of violence, alarming writings or drawings, concerning internet posts, significant changes in behavior, or other warning signs.

The Process

When a concern is raised:

1. A trained multidisciplinary team reviews the situation. This team includes an administrator and school-based mental health staff, and may also involve a school resource officer, community police officer, or other relevant personnel, depending on the nature of the concern.
2. The team gathers information from multiple sources (e.g., teachers, peers, parents).
3. The goal is to understand the context of the behavior and determine whether there is an actual risk.
4. If necessary, the team creates a management plan, which may include safety measures, support services, behavioral interventions, and family involvement.

How to Report a Concern

Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to speak up if they see or hear something concerning. Reports can be made directly to a trusted adult, school administrator, or through our anonymous reporting system [insert system info].

A Shared Responsibility

School safety is a shared responsibility. BTAM reflects our commitment to prevention, early intervention, and the well-being of our entire school community.

DISCIPLINE THAT IS ELIGIBLE FOR EXPULSION and POLICE REFERRAL

Dangerous Weapon on/in school property or at a school event or school sponsored event The term “dangerous weapon” means a firearm, dirk, dagger, stiletto, iron bar, knife with a blade over 3 inches in length, pocket knife opened by a mechanical device, and brass knuckles. [MCL 380.1313(4)]. The definition of a “firearm” in section 380.11 refers to the definition of that term in the federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, which in turn refers to another section of federal law which defines a firearm as:

- Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will, or is designed or may readily be converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
- The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
- Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or
- Any destructive device

Arson on/in school property or at a school event or school sponsored event Arson means the willful or intentional damage or attempt to damage any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device (See MCL 750.71 to 750.80).

Physical assault student to employee or volunteer

A student in grade 6 (or above) who commits a physical assault against an employee or a volunteer of a district, at school or on school grounds, shall be expelled permanently, subject to possible reinstatement provided for in the law. The term “physical assault” means “intentionally causing or

attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence”

Rape on/in school property or at a school event or school sponsored event.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES OR CONSEQUENCES:

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

If the District determines that it will utilize restorative practices in addition to or as an alternative to suspension or expulsion of a student, it will engage in restorative practices which emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and school community caused by the student’s misconduct.

Restorative practices may include victim-offender conferences that:

- a) are initiated by the victim;
- b) are attended voluntarily by the victim, a victim advocate, the offender, members of the school community, and supporters of the victim and the offender (the “restorative practices team”);
- c) would provide an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm caused to those affected, and to participate in setting consequences to repair the harm, such as requiring the student to apologize; participate in community service, restoration of emotional or material losses, or counseling; pay restitution; or any combination of these.

The selected consequences and time limits for their completion will be incorporated into an agreement to be signed by all participants.

North Star Montessori Academy subscribes to the belief that positive interventions can change behavior and therefore will seek interventions and consequences that allow all students access to their learning environment, maintain their dignity, and the understanding of their actions. When deemed necessary, disciplinary consequences will relate to the infraction and strive to be logical and fair. For example, if an item is damaged, the consequence will be to replace it or pay for it. The administration will determine the consequences. In cases where the consequence means the repeated behavior must change, a Behavior Intervention Plan will be made in collaboration with the student, the parent/guardian, and other relevant staff members.

Possible Corrective Measures or Consequences may include:

- Detention: after school or at lunch
- Behavior Intervention Plan (for repeated behavior that must change)
- Skill Builders: skill teaching sessions – after school or at lunch
- Mediation: must be with the agreement of all parties involved
- Conflict Resolution: staff requires parties to meet and develop mutual agreement
- Denial of privileges or class suspension
- Restitution
- Assessments: mental health, substance, anger
- Placement into Online-Learning platform
- In-school suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
- Juvenile Probation Court referral
- Police referral; report filed
- Suspension from the program pending expulsion

- Expulsion by the Board of Directors in a scheduled meeting

Description of in-school Suspension

The following rules shall apply to in-school suspensions (ISS):

- Students are required to have class assignments with them and be expected to make progress toward completion of class work.
- Students are not to communicate with each other unless given special permission
- Students will not be allowed to put their heads down or sleep
- No phones, ipods, tablets, cards, magazines, or other recreational articles shall be allowed during the in-school Suspension

Description of out of school suspension

Out of school suspension (OSS) removes the student from school. It includes emergency removal for up to seventy-two (72) hours, suspension for up to ten (10) school days, and expulsion from school. Suspensions and expulsions may carry over into the next school year. Removal for less than one (1) school day without the possibility of suspension or expulsion may not be appealed. Other suspensions and expulsion can be appealed.

Students being considered for suspension or expulsion are entitled to an informal hearing with the building administrator, prior to removal, at which time the student will be notified of the charges against him/her and given an opportunity to make a defense.

If a student is suspended, the parents may appeal the suspension, in writing, to the Superintendent and a formal appeal hearing will be held. Suspension from co-curricular and extra-curricular activities may not be appealed.

When a student is being considered for expulsion, a formal hearing is scheduled with the Board of Directors and the parents will be given written notice of the hearing and will be expected to attend. The Superintendent and principal then take testimony and determine if a recommendation to expel is to be made to the Board of Education. This decision may also be appealed. In the case of expulsion, the student remains out of school during the appeal period. Work missed during an expulsion cannot be made up and usually results in a loss of credit.

If a student commits a crime while at school or a school-related event, s/he may be subject to school disciplinary action as well as to action by the community's legal system. These are separate jurisdictions and do not constitute double jeopardy (being tried twice for the same crime).

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are entitled to the rights and procedures afforded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Before a student may be suspended or expelled from school, there are specific procedures that must be followed.

Suspension from School

When a student is being considered for a suspension of ten (10) days or less, the administrator in charge will notify the student of the charges. The student will then be given an opportunity to explain his/her side and the administrator will then provide the student the evidence supporting the charges. After that informal hearing, the principal will make a decision whether or not to suspend. If a student is suspended, s/he and his/her parents will be notified, in writing within one (1) day, of the reason for and the length of the suspension. The suspension may be appealed, within two (2) school days after receipt of the suspension notice, to the Superintendent/Principal. The request for an appeal must be in writing.

During the appeal process the student shall not be allowed to remain in school. The appeal shall be conducted in a private meeting and the student may be represented. Sworn, recorded testimony shall be given. If the appeal is heard by the Board of Education, the hearing is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Under the Open Meetings Act, the hearing must be public unless the parents request that the meeting be conducted in a closed session. When a student is suspended, he/she may make-up work missed after being reinstated to the school.

Any learning that cannot be made up such as labs, field trips, skill-practices, or any learning that the student chooses not to make-up may be reflected in the grades earned. A student being considered for suspension of more than ten (10) days will be given due process as described in the expulsion section below.

Long-term Suspension or Expulsion from School

When a student is being considered for long-term suspension (more than ten (10) days) or expulsion, the student will receive a formal letter of notification addressed to the parents which will contain:

- the charge and related evidence
- the time and place of the Board meeting
- the length of the recommended suspension or expulsion
- a brief description of the hearing procedure
- a statement that the student may bring parents, guardians, and counsel
- a statement that the student may give testimony, present evidence, and provide a defense
- a statement that the student may request attendance of school personnel who were party to the action or accused the student of the infraction

Students being considered for long-term suspension or expulsion may or may not be immediately removed from school. A formal hearing is scheduled with the Superintendent/Principal during which the student may be represented by his/her parents, legal counsel, and/or by a person of his/her choice.

Within ten (10) days after notification of long-term suspension or expulsion, the long-term suspension or expulsion may be appealed, in writing, to the Superintendent/Principal. The appeal will also be formal in nature with sworn testimony before official(s) designated by the Board of Directors. The appeal will be heard in an open session unless the student or the student's parent or guardian requests a closed session. Again, the right to representation is available. All opportunity to earn grades or credit ends when a student is expelled.

North Star Montessori Academy makes a sincere effort to have disciplinary actions take place that will allow the student to remain in school.

Suspension/Expulsion of Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities are entitled to the rights and procedures afforded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Search of a student and his/her possessions may be conducted at any time the student is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education if there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is in violation of law or school rules. A search may also be conducted to protect the health and safety of others. **All searches may be conducted with or without a student's consent.** Students are provided lockers, desks, and other equipment in which to store materials. It should be clearly understood that this equipment is the property of the school and may be searched at any time if there is reasonable suspicion that a student has violated the law or school rules. Locks are to prevent theft, not to prevent searches. If student lockers require student-provided locks, each student must provide the lock's combination or key to the principal.

Anything that is found in the course of a search that may be evidence of a violation of school rules or the law may be taken and held or turned over to the police. The school reserves the right not to return items which have been confiscated. In the course of any search, students' privacy rights will be respected regarding any items that are not illegal or against school policy.

All computers located in classrooms, labs, and offices of the District are the District's property and are to be used by students, where appropriate, solely for educational purposes. The District retains the right to access and review all electronic, computer files, databases, and any other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with the District's computer system, and electronic mail. Students should have no expectation that any information contained on such systems is confidential or private.

Review of such information may be done by the District with or without the student's knowledge or permission. The use of passwords does not guarantee confidentiality, and the District retains the right to access information in spite of a password. All passwords or security codes must be registered with the instructor. A student's refusal to permit such access may be grounds for disciplinary action.

STUDENT RIGHTS OF EXPRESSION

The School recognizes and encourages the right of students to express themselves. With the right of expression comes the responsibility to do it appropriately. Students may distribute or display, at appropriate times, non-sponsored, noncommercial written material and petitions; buttons, badges, or other insignia; clothing, insignia, and banners; and audio and video materials. All items must meet the school guidelines.

Material cannot be displayed if it:

- is obscene to minors, libelous, indecent, or vulgar
- advertises any product or service not permitted to minors by law

- intends to be insulting or harassing
- intends to incite fighting or presents a likelihood of disrupting school or a school event

Materials may not be displayed or distributed during class periods, or during passing times between classes. Permission may be granted for display or distribution during lunch periods and after school in designated locations, as long as exits are not blocked and there is proper access and egress to the building.

Students who are unsure whether or not materials they wish to display meet school guidelines may present them to School Administration twenty-four (24) hours prior to display.

Freedom of Speech and Assembly

Students have the right to express their personal opinions, verbally and in writing. These opinions must not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves. Obscenities, profanity, or personal attacks are prohibited.

Students have the right to assemble peacefully in an appropriate setting and at an appropriate time. The Town Meeting process provides NSMA students the opportunity for this purpose. Conducting demonstrations that interfere with instructional time are inappropriate and prohibited.

All student meetings in school buildings or on school grounds may take place only with authorization from the Superintendent.

Freedom to Publish

Students have the right to express their personal opinions in writing. Any distribution or sharing of these materials must not interfere with instructional time. Any written expressions that are distributed must be signed by the author.

Students who edit, publish or distribute handwritten, printed, or duplicated material to their fellow students must assume responsibility for the content of the material. Slander, gossip, obscenity and personal attacks are prohibited in all publications.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Each student has the right to equal access to educational opportunity, to expect guidance in making educational decisions, and to a safe environment in which they can gain an education. North Star Montessori Academy does not discriminate regardless of race, religion, gender, handicap, or marital or family status. Each student will be afforded every opportunity to achieve their highest potential.

Democratic Process

NSMA operates with democratic principles. The method of operation allows for all members to participate equally in decision making processes. Because operating a program democratically is a dynamic and complex process, it is important for these persons choosing to attend North Star to understand these principles:

- democracy is an ideal
- it changes constantly because the community which chooses it changes constantly
- the ideal is never reached, because Democracy is a way to make decisions rather than the

- decision itself
- Democratic principles help to protect individual rights while providing the best possible environment for all community members
- Individual rights are protected only if they do not infringe on others and the good of the community

STUDENT CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS, AND GRIEVANCES

The school is here for the benefit of the students. The staff is here to assist each student in becoming a responsible adult. If a student has suggestions that could improve the school, s/he should feel free to offer them. Written suggestions may be presented directly to the Principal or to the Superintendent.

While concerns or grievances arise, the best way to resolve the issue is through communication. No student will be harassed by any staff member or need fear reprisal for the proper expression of a legitimate concern. As with suggestions, concerns and grievances may be directed to the Principal, the Superintendent or to the student government.

A student may have the right to a hearing if the student believes s/he has been improperly denied participation in a school activity or has been subjected to an illegal rule or standard. A student may not petition to have a change in grade.

SECTION V – TRANSPORTATION

BUS TRANSPORTATION

North Star Montessori will be providing hub-based bus transportation. Bus transportation schedules will be provided in August and be available on the NSMA website. Families requesting transportation must sign up with the NSMA office and agree to abide by the following rules/expectations. Riding the bus to school is a privilege and the following rules must be followed at all times. NSMA has the right to remove bus riding privileges from students if safety and behavior concerns are not managed.

BUS RULES

- All school and classroom rules apply when on the bus.
- Be courteous, use no profanity/inappropriate language or gestures.
- Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Keep the bus clean; no littering or throwing objects.
- Cooperate with the driver.
- Do not be destructive.
- Stay in your seat and remain seated. **The bus driver is authorized to assign seats!**
- Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus, to yourself, and out of the aisle.
- Cross in front of the bus.
- Fighting, pushing, shoving, and horseplay are not permitted.
- Students are forbidden to use or possess flammable or explosive devices.
- Possession or use of illegal/dangerous objects is not permitted.
- Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, or narcotics in any form is not allowed.
- Students are not permitted in the driver area at any time.
- Students **must be** silent at all railroad crossings.

- Students must be at the assigned bus stop 5 minutes prior to arrival of the bus. Drivers cannot wait for those who are tardy. Appropriate conduct is expected at the bus stop.
- Emergency doors are for emergencies only.
- Spitting is not permitted.
- Students are required to load the bus upon dismissal from school
- No animals or pets allowed on the bus.
- Backpacks, musical instruments, and school projects must be able to be held on the student's lap or will not be allowed on the bus.
- No skateboards, rollerblades, or scooters allowed on buses.

ANY VIOLATION OF THE ABOVE RULES WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINE THAT MAY INCLUDE BUS SUSPENSION UP TO AND INCLUDING EXPULSION FROM THE BUS.

OTHER SAFETY RULES MAY APPLY AT THE DISCRETION OF THE SCHOOL.

REMEMBER: THESE RULES PERTAIN TO ANY TIME YOU ARE RIDING ON A NORTH STAR MONTESSORI ACADEMY PROVIDED BUS (i.e. daily routes, field trips, athletic events).