

The Bucks County Montessori Charter School



Student/Parent Handbook for the School Year 2011-12

Dear Parents and Students of BCMCS,

On behalf of the administration, faculty, teachers and board of trustees at Bucks County Montessori Charter School, I wish to extend to you our warmest welcome. My first three years as Principal of BCMCS have been filled with many accomplishments, and I vow to work toward even greater successes this year as we continue in our pursuit of becoming ‘a model Montessori school’ and true learning community, where learners explore, cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and understand within the Montessori ideology. As always, our core principles will persist to be based on the philosophy and methodologies of Dr. Maria Montessori, who believed that children learned best by doing. At BCMCS, this goal is accomplished through active pursuit of many different, integrated learning experiences: physical, social emotional and cognitive. The nurturing and structured educational environment we provide facilitates intellectual, emotional and social growth, thereby empowering our students to become responsible, confident and caring global citizens. Our goal is to enable children to become young adults possessing strong independent and analytical thinking skills, as well as an enduring love and passion for learning. Know that we will always remain faithful to our mission by providing a quality Montessori program for all who attend.

The following Parent and Student Handbook includes valuable information regarding staffing, bussing, contact information, sick policy, dress code, extra-curricular activities, parent involvement, the school’s mission statements, and code of ethics. Therefore, it is extremely important that you take the time to read and discuss this handbook, familiarizing both yourself both yourself and your child with all that it entails. After reading and understanding this handbook, you should be well informed of our school’s general policies, procedures and activities.

As in the past, all scheduled school dates of importance, as well as additional school and other pertinent documentation, will be placed on the school’s website at www.bcmcs.com. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the school.

Wonderful days, weeks and months await us for this upcoming school year—I am truly looking forward to all that it entails during the journey. Take Care!

Sincerely,

Brian P. Long, Principal/CAO





Bucks County Montessori Charter School

219 Tyburn Road
Fairless Hills, PA 19030

Main Office Phone: 215-428-6700

Fax: 215-428-6702

Brian Long, Principal
Tony Stango, Operations Manager
Dori Smith, Administrative Assistant

SCHOOL MEMBERS **2011-2012**

SPECIAL Education

Sherry Walter, SPED Admin.
Christina Mahan, SPED Ass.

SCHOOL Nurse

Melissa Kosmorsky

PE/Physical Education

Judy Sweeney

IT Technician

Jason Doran

MUSIC

Music Forte

LIBRARIAN

Tobe Brownstein

ART

TBA

Rosetta Stone—Language

Ambreen Toor

KINDERGARTEN

Marina Russell, *Lead Teacher*, K
Anne Freeman, *Teacher Intern*, K

LOWER ELEMENTARY

Audrey Bernheim, *Lead Teacher*, LE1
Jill Spiro, *Teacher Intern*, LE1
Lori Carpenter, *Lead Teacher*, LE2
Jean Duffner, *Assisting Teacher*, LE2
Chris Lutz, *Lead Teacher*, LE3
Jordyn Fani, *Assisting Teacher*, LE3
Sandra Dietmeir, *Lead Teacher*, LE4
Jessica Titlow, *Teacher Intern*, LE4

BUILDING Maintenance

Sebastian Alvarez

BUSINESS Manager

Tim Heath

COMPUTERS/Technology

Kimberly McPoyle

UPPER ELEMENTARY

Shari Sissom, *Lead Teacher*, UE1
Chris Ogden, *Teacher Intern*, UE1
Michele Freiling, *Lead Teacher*, UE2
Stephanie Wittcoff, *Teacher Intern*, UE2
Katie McDevitt, *Lead Teacher*, UE3
Val Young, *Reading Specialist*, UE3

Board Of Trustees

Al Tenaglia, President
Ray Snyder, Vice-President
Debbie DeNofa, Secretary/Treasurer
Jeff Fogel, Trustee





COMING AND GOING!



STUDENT ARRIVAL POLICY

PARENT DROP-OFF

- Students are to **arrive** at school between **8:15 and 8:25 AM**.
- As the lanes in front of the school are strictly to be used for bus-
ing purposes, all parents driving students to school **MUST** drop
students off on the side area zone marked 'Student Drop Off',
which is along the side parking area. Teachers and Safeties will
aid in assisting students from the vehicles, directing them toward
the side-sidewalks which lead up to the main entrance doors.
- Once students arrive at the main entrance doors, they will greet
the Principal and then be directed by school personnel to class.
- Please note that parking spaces adjacent to the orchard area [far
right side of parking as you enter] is designated for 'Staff Only'-
parents wishing to conduct school business, or those arriving
late, must use the spaces located around the center island.
- Parents of students, if arriving after 8:25 AM, will need to report
to the office, sign-in their child, and fill out an **Admission Tardy
Slip** before the student is admitted to class.

BUS RIDERS

- Buses will exit along the walkway in the front of the building.
- Drivers will let the students exit promptly at 8:15am—students
will then follow the front sidewalk toward the main entrance.

VOLUNTEER and VISITOR Admission Policy-

All **volunteers** [pizza helpers, field trip supervisors, etc.] must check
in at the school office before entering student areas.

All other **visitors** [participations, special visits, etc.] need to **(1)**
register in the main office *and* **(2)** receive a designated pass before
entering the classroom or other school areas. School personnel may
ask for evidence of a visitor's pass—please do not be offended as
this only ensures the safety and protection of the students. For se-
curity reasons, all doors will be locked from outside access during
school hours, with the only access being through the supervised main
front side door.

STUDENT DISMISSAL POLICY

PARENT PICK UP

- **Dismissal will begin at 3:15 PM — 11:30 AM on half days.**
- Parent Pick-Up [PPU] — Parents are to park in one of the spaces
around the center island or side parking area, to then wait under-
neath the covered patio to the left outside area of the library for
your child to be released.
- A parent/guardian signed note stating permanent, partial or daily
PPU procedures must be made known to the school and your
child's teacher prior to PPU dismissal.
- When someone other than a parent is picking up a student, the
student will need to have a signed allowance note from the par-
ent, **and** the person taking the child will be required to produce a
picture form of ID in order for the child to be released.
- If you are late in picking up your child [3:30 PM (11:30 on half
days)], he/she will be placed in the/a After School Program,
whereas a fee may/will be applied.

**Important: To change your child's normal dismissal proce-
dure, you must write a note, confirm via e-mail or call the
school office prior to 2:30pm. We cannot accept verbal
notice from a student—dismissal via the usual mode of
transportation will hold precedence.**

BUS RIDERS

- Students who take the bus will gather at 3:10 PM in the Multi-
Purpose Room [MPR] and proceed directly to their bus lines.
- Bus lines will be exited in accordance to the bus order, departing
through the door of the Multi-purpose room, following the side-
walk leading toward the parking lot.
- Teachers will be on duty outdoors to assist where needed.
- A student who wishes to ride a different bus [**which must
match his/her home district**] needs to have a signed sending
and receiving note from both sets of parents for (1) the child's
teacher, (2) the administration, and (3) the bus driver. Final ap-
proval rests on the bus driver and school administration.



Bussing Information



BUS/BUS STOP SCHEDULE

Your child's bus schedule regarding the 2011-12 school year will either be directly mailed to you by the district, or posted on our school's website. Most districts provide this information on their websites; however, the school office can usually assist with bus schedules. Individual district transportation departments are in charge of bus drivers, stop, etc., and can be reached at the following numbers:

• Pennsbury:	215-428-4165
• Council Rock:	215-944-1010
• Bristol Township:	215-788-7841/215-547-1017
• Neshaminy:	215-809-6260
• Bensalem:	215-750-2800

BUS/BUS STOP RULES AND PROCEDURES

Appropriate disciplinary guidelines and policies are noted in the school's Code of Conduct, with the overriding authority given to district guidelines for which the student resides. Basic bus rules are as follows:

- Be at the bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time.
- Wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and off the roadway.
- Understand that the driver is in full charge of the bus—students must obey the driver's orders.
- Students may have assigned seats if warranted.
- Eating, drinking or chewing gum is prohibited.
- The use of music players, cell phones and other electronics need to adhere to the set district policy—ask the driver!

Riding the bus is a privilege—disciplinary actions and/or suspension of bus services can occur for failure to follow these or other rules as noted in the Code of Conduct or with the district.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

BCMCS will follow Pennsbury's emergency schedule for snow delays and/or cancellations. Be aware that your home district may follow a different closing/delay/early dismissal schedule.

PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING WHATEVER NECESSARY ACCOMODATIONS .

BCMCS will send a OneCallNow message for any/all emergency school closings, delays or early dismissals . In addition, BCMCS will post all emergency closings on its website's grey information bar located on the school's home page on **www.bcmcs.com**.

Delays

All delays will be in accordance with the stated delayed time. Hence, a two-hour early delay means that school will begin at 10:15. Dismissal will remain at the regularly scheduled time.

Early Dismissals

BCMCS will dismiss all students in accordance to each of the serving district's schedules, recognizing Pennsbury's early dismissal as BCMCS's *early dismissal time*. Thus, those students residing outside of Pennsbury will follow their home district schedules in the event that their *early dismissal time* is set before Pennsbury's. PPU and/or other like arrangements will need to be made in the event that a student's home district has a substantially later *early dismissal time* as that of Pennsbury's.

Every attempt will be made by the school to make outside district parents aware of early dismissal times when they differ among districts via the OneCallNow system.



WHO TO CONTACT?

TEACHER— If you need to communicate with your child’s teacher or staff member, the preferred method is via e-mail. All BCMCS staff follow the same address format: first initial, last name @bcmcs.com. For example, Dori Smith is dsmith@bcmcs.com. Teachers are not permitted to receive phone calls during the school hours of 8:15 AM—3:15 PM.

MESSAGE OR INFORMATION - In the case of a change in dismissal or a personal emergency, you may call the school at 215-428-6700 and talk to the secretary or leave a message. Messages left for staff will be answered, if need be, within 24 hours. If reporting a child absent, please follow the appropriate prompts when calling the school’s main number at 215-428-6700.

LUNCH GUIDELINES— Lunch is to be provided from home, and we ask that you please focus on nutrition. Soda, candy and high sugar snack foods are not acceptable lunch items and will be placed back into a student’s lunch box to be returned home. Microwavable food items are permitted at the discretion of the classroom teacher. A hot lunch program will once again be available for the upcoming school year through the PTA. Please visit the PTA website for all such **Information** related to the hot lunch program.

All information regarding Hot Lunch Program will be made available on the BCMCS PTA website which can be found via a link on the school site at www.bcmcs.com

PEACE EDUCATION/ CONFLICT RESOLUTION

PEACE EDUCATION/CONFLICT RESOLUTION

At Bucks County Montessori Charter School, it is important that the students clearly understand the policies set forth by BCMCS and possible consequences for violating rules within our policy.

We believe that our children are our most precious gifts. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare them to attain the highest levels of personal and social achievement so that they will become constructive contributors in our community and in future communities for which they will belong. With this in mind, it is essential that our ultimate objective is reflected in the methods of discipline used at BCMCS. Our approach is to lead children towards self-discipline. Our intention is to avoid spending unnecessary time responding and reacting to behavior problems; but rather, to focus the attention on prevention and preparation of independence in the children to handle circumstances themselves.

The Montessori Method addresses the need for change toward positive behavior through peer influences, lesson planning or instruction. Whenever possible it is integrated within the Montessori philosophy. Maria Montessori stated that ‘*discipline*’ needs to be more of a learning condition, and less a punitive experience. The child is more interested in the process of following rules, whereas the adults are typically more interested in the product. Montessori warned that if we judge children by our own measure, we will frustrate their efforts at self-development. If we recognize the children’s purpose of self-development, and respect their efforts, children will develop self-discipline through their work and, thus, obedience will follow.

In the Montessori class, the child’s opinion is asked for and respected and the child is invited to share his/her view. Montessori students want to follow the rules when the rules are clearly defined. When students are prepared in this manner, the children more readily assume responsibility for their behavior. Assuming responsibility for behavior is to understand and accept the consequences for violating set rules.

With *discipline being seen as a learning experience*, it will be executed by the staff and personnel of BCMCS in accordance with the school’s Code of Conduct, which can be located on the website at www.bcmcs.com.

For All Disciplinary Procedures—Refer to Code of Conduct.



"WHEN WE'RE SICK"

If your child is ill...

parents will need to **notify the school** via the main number [215-428-6700], following 'sick student' prompts, before 8:30 AM;

and **bring in a note**, explaining the reason (s) why your child was absent, within three (3) school days. All absences will be considered 'unlawful' without this notification. Please note:

- Your child **will not be permitted back to school** until fever or symptom free for **24 hours**. Contact the nurse for special circumstances or questions before wishing to re-admit a child who has become sick during school hours.
- Emergency contact information and phone numbers must be kept current for any/all such notifications.

Excused absences:

- BCMCS recognizes illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities and educational travel [with prior approval from the Principal] as the only lawful absences. Students will be responsible for all work and assignments missed during an absence. Arrangements with your child's teacher should be made in order to make up missed assignments/works.
- Absenteeism without a parent note explaining the reason for the absence will be considered **unlawful** — BCMCS will follow all set guidelines of unlawful absences per state law[PA-24-PS-13-1327]

Unexcused absences:

- Suspension, truancy, and befitting absences requiring prior approval without such, will be considered **unexcused**.
- In the case of an unexcused absence, the student will not receive credit for any/all assigned work (homework, class work, and/or tests) that was missed during or subsequent the absence.

Tardiness:

- Tardiness [students are to be in their classrooms by 8:30am] will constitute as absenteeism for the following situations:
 1. (5) tardies will comprise one absence
 2. any combination of tardies which constitutes the time of an instructional day [5.25 hours] will comprise one absence.

To Be or Not To Be...Absent: If your child experiences any of the following symptoms the evening before or the morning of school, please keep him/her home until the symptoms are completely resolved:

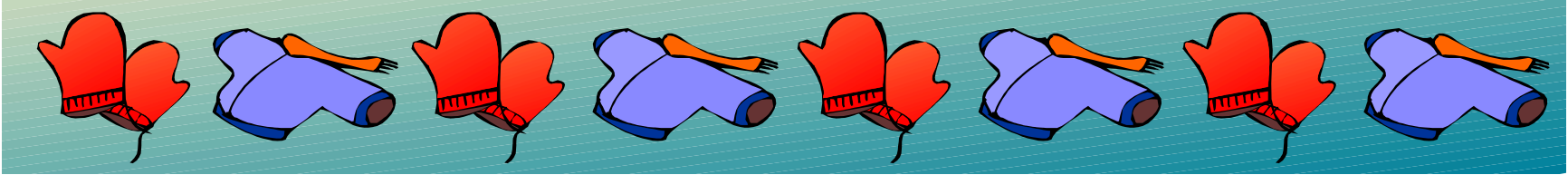
- **Temperature of 100° or higher** [Students should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school], **Vomiting or Diarrhea** [Students should be symptom free for 24 hours], **Thick green nasal discharge, Red and itchy eyes with a crusty/yellow discharge** [Students with conjunctivitis are excluded from school until on antibiotic drops for 24 hours], **Sore throat with white spots, Unknown rashes:** [Any rash that has not been seen and diagnosed by a physician], **Chicken Pox** [Students with Chicken Pox are excluded from school until all pox are healed and they are fever free], and **Head Lice** [Students with Head Lice are excluded from school until treated and the medication package is provided to the nurse upon returning to school].

Medication Guidelines

It is recommended that, whenever possible, all medications be administered at home by the parent or guardian. If your physician decides it is necessary for your child to receive a medication during school hours, the parent, or guardian, may request that the school nurse [or school administrator] administer the physician prescribed medication at scheduled times. Over-the-counter medications may be given at the school on a temporary basis, per parental permission documented on the Health Information Card that parents fill out at the beginning of each school year.

Immunizations: ...requirements for Entry to BCMCS

DPT/Dtap/DT [4 doses, one dose on or after the child's 4th birthday]; **OPV/IPV** [3 doses of polio vaccine]; **MMR** [2 doses, first dose on or after the child's 1st birthday, second dose at least one month after the first]; **Hepatitis B** [3 doses properly spaced, first 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart, third dose at least 16 weeks after first dose, at least 8 weeks after the second and not given before 6 months of age]; **Varicella** [2 doses or proof of chicken pox immunity either by (1) written statement of disease from parent/guardian or (2) doctor's verification of Varicella vaccine on or after the child's 1st birthday]; **Menningococcal Conjugate** [1 dose, NOTE: This is for entry INTO 7th grade and is listed as a courtesy—not required for BCMCS entry]. Please note that starting in August 2011, these new immunization regulations will take effect. Visit the Nurse's Corner on the school's website in the *Quick Link* teacher/department pages for further school health information.



STANDARD DRESS CODE and APPEARANCE GUIDELINES:

BCMCS's dress code has been developed to provide students with a feeling of pride and unity, while recognizing the unique personalities that appearance represents. The manner in which students dress not only influences their attitude about themselves and their work, but also correlates with basic safety accord. When students are dressed appropriately and securely, the desired learning and activities unite. After stating such, the BCMCS Dress and Appearance Guidelines will be adhered to as follows:

- Students are expected to dress in a manner that is neat and appropriate for school. Students may not wear clothes that in any way disrupt the educational process. No garments with foul language, violent content or such that displays images of cigarettes, drugs or alcohol is permissible
- NO sagging clothes or baggy pants; pants should be size appropriate and worn at the waist. Also, absolutely NO tattered, torn, slit or frayed clothing that drags on the floor or hangs in a manner deemed unsafe is permitted. Pajama pants or look-alike sleep ware are not permitted in school.
- Writing across the backside of pants is prohibited, as it draws attention to that part of the anatomy
- All tops (shirts and blouses) must strap over the top of the shoulders and completely cover the stomach, chest and back. No bare midriffs allowed. Tank top straps must be a minimum of two (2) adult finger widths
- Shorts, skorts and/or skirts must be size appropriate (with arm extended at side, short or skirt bottom must be within the middle finger's proximity length). When making such purchases, skirts, skorts and/or shorts length should be at mid-thigh. Tight fitting shorts, short shorts and cutoffs are not allowed
- Make up, glitter, tattoos, and artificial nails are not acceptable school accessories
- SHOES: It is mandatory for students participating in physical activities [i.e. PE, recess, etc.] wear appropriate footwear [i.e. sneakers, tennis shoes, etc.]. Acceptable footwear will be enclosed with sturdy uppers, a firm non-slip sole, without fully exposed toe and/or heel openings—low heels are required. Jellies/flip-flops are not acceptable footwear, as are shoes with roller blade or other like attachments.
- HATS/CAPS/SUNGLASSES: Students are permitted to wear caps, hats and/or sunglasses while participating in outdoor P.E., recess or other outdoor activities.

If there is ever any question about a garment or clothing item, please see school personnel prior to wearing it to school, either with the garment or a clear description of it so as to be sure it does not violate the school dress code.

Also note that it is the intent of BCMCS to take students outside every day—weather permitting. However, if your child does not have appropriate cold weather clothing (i.e. jacket, hat, mittens, sneakers, etc.), he/she will not be allowed to participate.

Any and all dress code and appearance guidelines may be altered by the school for specialized programs or events. Failure to comply with any of the above mentioned policies may warrant disciplinary actions and/or school dismissal until full conformity has been met.

"WHAT WE LEARN and DO!"

BCMCS Curriculum:

- Combining Pennsylvania State Standards with the Montessori Core Curriculum benchmarks

SUBJECTS:

- Reading:
Combination of Making Meaning and Junior Great Books
- Math
- Geometry
- Language Arts
- Handwriting/Formal Writing
- Life Sciences [Zoology & Botany]
- Social Studies [extensive Histories & Geographies]
- Computers:
 - Computer Lab
 - Integrated Subject/Classroom Activities
- Physical Education
- Rosetta Stone Language Program
- Art
- Music [All]/Instrumental [UE]
- Media/Library
- School Themes and Activities
- Human Growth and Development [UE]

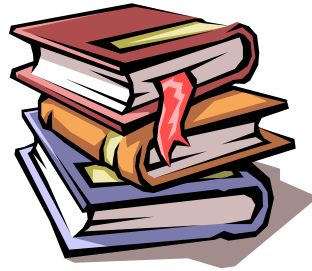
FORMALIZED TESTING

- PSSA [Grades 3-6]
- Terra Nova [Grades K-2]
- Albanesi [all grades]
- Classroom/Teacher Documented

CELEBRATIONS AND RECOGNITION

~Scheduled school-wide multi-cultural programs are noted in the calendar

~Birthday celebrations are to be arranged through the classroom teacher, with the time and arrangements to be predetermined between parent and teacher



Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

Classroom teachers and students plan field trips, off-school activities, and "going out" experiences for students that correspond with classroom curriculum. Parents are notified well in advance of such activities and permission slips are required for each student. Permission slips for each off-school trip must be signed and returned to the teacher upon the set timetable as noted. Students who do not have parental permission to leave school or who, in the judgment of the teacher, do not meet the behavioral expectations [as stated in the School's Code of Conduct] of the activity will remain at school. Students who remain will be assigned appropriate work for the day and an appropriate classroom or office space placement by the regular classroom teacher. If there are special health, behavioral or physical issues with a child, parents may be requested to attend the trip.

Students who choose not to participate in field trips or off campus activities are expected to attend school with a teacher-assigned alternate placement and work activities.

School Work at Home POLICY:

- Homework is a part of the total academic program for each student in Kindergarten through grade 6.
- Teachers will inform parents of the homework policy for their particular class, usually during Back to School Night.
- We encourage parents to provide a specified time and place, suitable for working, studying, discovering, etc., for their child AND spend time with their child reviewing homework before it is brought back to school.

COMMUNICATION/HOMEWORK FOLDERS

- Each child will have a BCMCS Folder [LE] or Planner [UE] provided by the school. These should be checked by the parents regularly.
- Parents can write notes and send school correspondence in these set folders or planners—the most optimal communication is via e-mail.
- The school's website, with teacher and PTA pages, is the best source of school delivered communication.
- Any/all pertinent and/or emergency information will be delivered through our OneCallNow messaging system.



STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND OTHER SCHOOL PROGRAMS



STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES and OTHER SCHOOL PROGRAMS:

- **SAFETY PATROLS**— 6th Year students desiring such are offered to act as Safety Patrols. The Safeties will rotate duties and schedules throughout the school year. These children will work under the supervision of the administration and a member of the faculty.
- **STUDENT GOVERNMENT**—The objective is to promote an awareness of the need for government and raise funds for certain programs so as to promote citizenship in a community and the democratic process to run a community. Open to all Upper Elementary Students.
- **READING OLYMPICS**—Students are always encouraged to read and share a variety of books, and this program offers a spirited twist in this endeavor. Teacher directors will coordinate students in grades 4th through 6th, forming a group which will compete with other local districts.
- **ODYSSEY OF THE MIND/GEOBEE**—These parent sponsored after school programs allows another spirited venue that connects creative solutions with varied quests in a cooperative, yet competitive, atmosphere.
- **SCIENCE FAIR**— Students will be able to choose, plan, perform, and present an experiment-based project for the entire school community.
- **UPPER ELEMENTARY PLAYS**—Students are offered the venue to present a theatrical presentation that is chosen, performed and offered in a true theatrical arena. Past proceeds have been augmented for our School's sign, with future profits to be designated in a similar fashion.
- **BUDDY ACTIVITIES**—This in school activity is integrated with our school's Reading program, allowing for students to interrelate and share in events and related ideas with older/younger students throughout the school.
- **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LESSONS**—Offered through MusicForte, students in the Upper Elementary are presented instrumental lessons in addition to the school's integrated lessons. Instrumentals offered are drums, guitar, and a variety of brass instrument.
- **SCHOOL STORE**— BCMCS has its own School Store! Students can ask for various positions needed to help run the program. These positions include, but are not limited to, cashiers, stockers, and gatherers. The School Store is coordinated by PTA parent volunteers.
- **SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIRS**—Two annual in-school and nightly events that promotes reading for fun and enjoyment. A variety of age appropriate books are offered at an extraordinary rate, with school reading goals, book donations and achievement marks affixed.
- **MONTESSORI WORKSHOPS**—Offered by the staff of BCMCS, these nightly lessons are geared to increase the Montessori knowledge and awareness within our parent community, giving insight to its unique style. Varied programs are offered in assembled groups consisting of Kindergarten, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary.
- **ART GOES TO SCHOOL**—Art Goes to School is a volunteer art appreciation program serving schools and communities in the Delaware Valley.
- **BCMCS READ-A-THON**—Program geared toward promoting reading and the reading process.
- **BCMCS CLUBS**—Being offered this year are an assortment of after school 'CLUBS' that provide a mixture of enrichment, academic, social and physical activities for a range of grade level student populations.

PLEASE LOOK FOR ENROLLMENT INFORMATION ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE OR THROUGH OFFICE NOTES FOR ALL STATED ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL FOR FURTHER INFORMATION RELATED TO ANY MENTIONED ACTIVITY OR PROGRAM IF NEED BE.

PARENT AND VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT: *The Key To success*

Essential Parent Involvement:

Conferences and Progress Reports

There are a total of 2 scheduled parent/teacher conferences that will be held throughout the year. The first of which will be a traditional Parent/Teacher conference that is set at the end of the first marking period. The other conference, set at the end of the third marking period, will follow a Parent/Teacher/Student Led format. Progress Reports, listing academic and social evaluations, will be presented at each conference, and will be sent home to be signed at the end of the second marking period as well, with a completed version to be sent home at the end of the school year.

Parent Participations

At least one parent from each family is expected to observe and participate their child's classroom environment. Traditionally, this takes place during our school's celebration of Montessori Education Week. This 'participation' will be scheduled with your child's teacher and should last no less than one-half hour. An observation in this 'participatory style' is the best way to understand what your child's academic abilities, truly creating a sense of pride for the child.

Home Environment

Our ultimate goal is for the home environment to mirror, as much as possible, our unique Montessori school environment. Information related to its philosophy can be attained at varied Montessori workshops offered throughout the year, as well as via literature that is periodically given. Also, be sure to research other ways of learning more about Montessori in the text box to the right->

Optional Parent Involvement:

Parent Teacher Association

For more information on the BCMCS PTA, please contact the PTA at pta@bcmcs.com or review their information on the a link on the school's website. The PTA has an designated shelf area at school that is checked weekly. Everyone is welcome to attend their weekly meetings, which are held in the school library on the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30PM.

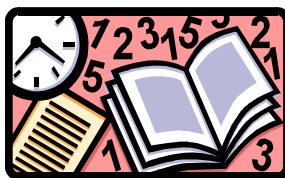


Volunteer Opportunities

There are plenty of volunteer opportunities available at school. Your child's teacher is an excellent person to contact if you are interested in working in the classroom environment or helping with material making.

Parent Education Classes

We will be holding a number of parent education meetings throughout the year. You, as the parent, are asked to attend at least one(1) of these information sessions. We will be discussing specific information about child development, Montessori principles, philosophy and educational methods. Montessori education is different in many ways from other educational philosophies. Student success and parent comfort at BCMCS are greatly increased when parents are well informed and have a deep understanding of Montessori philosophy and practices. School experiences are impacted by these philosophies and practices on a daily basis. Parents are expected to access available resources to keep themselves well informed and educated so as to facilitate coordination between home and school.



Ways of Learning more about Montessori:

- Read *Educate the Human Potential*, *The Discovery of the Child*, and/or *The Absorbent Mind*, all by Maria Montessori.
- *Subscribe to Montessori Today*, by Paula Polk Lillard or *Montessori Life*, by The American Montessori Society
- Read *Theories of Childhood: An introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget, & Vygotsky* by Carol Garhart Mooney.

Grievance Protocol:

If a student or parent has a complaint of any sort, the student or parent should take the following steps toward clarification and remedy:

1. Try to resolve the problem directly with those involved. Classroom issues should be addressed first with the teacher.
2. The student or parent may then seek assistance from an administrator, if direct problem solving is unsuccessful or inappropriate. The administrator will assist in resolving the problem to the best of his ability.
3. If the matter is still not satisfactorily resolved, the grievance may be presented to the Board of Trustees IN writing. The board will review the grievance and advise the student or parent of the steps to be taken based on the nature of the grievance.

While BCMCS welcomes productive problem solving and opportunities to improve our program, personal attacks on staff members or other students/families will not be tolerated. When addressing a problem experienced at BCMCS, please be courteous and respectful and such will be the return.

C O D E O F E T H I C S

AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY [for which BCMCS is a Full Member]

© Adopted by the AMS Board of Directors October, 1960. Expanded June, 1975

As American Montessori Society members, we pledge to conduct ourselves professionally and personally in ways that will reflect our respect for each other and for the children we serve. We will do whatever is within our talents and capacity to protect the rights of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop his/her full potential.

PRINCIPLE I — Commitment to the Student

In fulfillment of the obligation to the children, the educator:

1. Shall encourage independent action in the pursuit of learning.
2. Shall protect the opportunity to provide for participation in educational programs without regard to race, sex, color, creed or national origin.
3. Shall protect the health and safety of students.
4. Shall honor professional commitments, maintain obligations and contracts while never soliciting nor involving students or their parents in schemes for commercial gain.
5. Shall keep in confidence information that has been secured in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

PRINCIPLE II — Commitment to the Public

The Montessori educator shares in the responsibility for the development of policy relating to the extension of educational opportunity for all and for interpreting educational programs and policies to the public.

In fulfilling these goals, the educator:

1. Shall support his professional society and not misinterpret its policies in public discussion. Whenever speaking or writing about policies, the educator should take the precaution to distinguish his private views from the official position of the Society.
2. Shall not interfere with nor exploit the rights and responsibilities of colleagues within the teaching profession.

PRINCIPLE III — Commitment to the Profession

The Montessori educator makes efforts to raise professional standards and conditions to attract persons worthy of trust to careers in Montessori education.

In fulfilling these goals the educator:

1. Shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the Montessori education profession.
2. Shall represent his/her own professional qualification with clarity and true intent.
3. Shall apply for, accept, offer, recommend, and assign professional positions and responsibilities on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
4. Shall use honest and effective methods of administering his/her duties, use of time and conducting business.

BCMCS Mission Statement



Bucks County Montessori Charter School will make an individualized educational experience consistent with Montessori principles available to elementary age students within the Pennsbury School district and surrounding districts. Montessori principles are based on the philosophy and methodologies of Dr. Maria Montessori, a physician in Italy at the turn of the twentieth century, who believed that children learn best by doing. In our Montessori school, this goal is accomplished through active pursuit of many different integrated learning experiences: physical, social, emotional, kinesthetic, as well as cognitive. The environment we provide facilitates intellectual, emotional, and social growth, thereby empowering our students to become responsible, confident, and caring global-citizens. Our goal is to enable children to become young adults possessing strong independent and analytical thinking skills, as well as an enduring love and passion for learning.

NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Bucks County Montessori Charter School not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, age, religion, national origin, handicap, or marital status in its educational program, activities or employment policies as required by Title IX.